

Letter from the President



Greetings, SAPOR members and friends.

I hope that the fall season is going well for each of you! I would like to thank everyone that was able to attend our 43rd Annual SAPOR Conference in-person and online in October. I'm so glad that the new location didn't hinder our ability to host a successful conference. The content from the presentations, panel discussions and the message from our keynote speaker were all awesome reminders of the impact of survey research and the work that we do.

Conference Chair **Rachael Buffkin** and Associate Conference Chair **Matthew Anderson** did an amazing job organizing and planning to make the annual conference a great success! Be sure to read Rachael's Conference Highlights in this newsletter for more conference insights.

Thank you to everyone that took advantage of the opportunity to participate in the post conference survey. We received a lot of valuable feedback that will be considered for next year's conference planning.

As we wrap up another year, I'm realizing that I have had the pleasure of volunteering to support SAPOR as an Executive Committee Member for the past four years. The experience that I've gained each year has truly been professionally rewarding.

Along with SAPOR I've shared the passion for increasing student and early career engagement within the southern region. I'm pleased that this year we were able to reach our goal of hosting SAPOR's first Spring Panel and Networking session focused on topics specifically for students and early career professionals. I hope that we will be able to continue to provide more opportunities to connect and be a resource to these groups for many years to come. If you have any ideas, suggestions, or know of any student focused events that SAPOR should participant in, please let me know.

The SAPOR Executive Committee always welcomes useful and innovative ways that we can serve the membership. Please reach out with suggestions for how we can enhance your SAPOR membership experience. Email feedback to president@SAPOR.us.

Enjoy the rest of the year, you'll hear from us soon.

Dakisha Locklear
2023 SAPOR President

Recap of the 43rd Annual SAPOR Conference



Thank you to our SAPOR board and membership for making this year's conference a success! Changing venues is enough to make even the most intrepid conference chair nervous, but the new location and venue were well-received and well-suited to our needs as an organization, making travel more convenient for the majority of attendees. This is of particular importance as we continue to see an increase in in-person attendance over the virtual option. In fact, nearly 90% of attendance was in-person this year!

Our keynote was delivered by **Dr. Sunshine Hilygus**, Professor of Political Science and Public Policy at Duke University. She presented the challenges of polling in a time of polarized politics. Echoing this theme, this year's panel focused on an academic perspective of best strategies for survey research in a climate of declining public trust, moderated by our new President, **Dr. Peter Francia**. Thank you to Dr. Francia (East Carolina University), **Dr. David McLennan** (Meredith College), and **Dr. Jason Husser** (Elon University) for joining us and sharing their insights!

Congratulations to our 2023 Student Paper Competition Winner, **Suhyen Bae** (Duke University)! This annual competition is sponsored by Odum Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. This year's paper was titled "Does Loneliness Matter to Political Participation?"

A special thank you to our outgoing President, **Dakisha Locklear** (RTI International), our Past President, **Mandee Lancaster** (RTI International), and to all of our 2024 Conference Sponsors!

Rachael Buffkin
2023 Conference Chair





Results from the post-conference survey



Thanks to all who responded to the survey! Overall, conference attendees gave positive feedback on the event and the change in location. However, respondents also gave useful feedback on how to improve. We provide a quick summary of the findings.

All events received high satisfaction, especially our keynote speaker, **Dr. Sunshine Hillygus**, and the social gathering at RTP Boxyard.

Events were well attended although attendance dropped off on Friday. A sizeable majority are very likely to return next year. We also heard that a virtual option has its fans.

The feedback on improvements centered around the Vendor Spotlights, the LOUD Table discussions, and the limited vegetarian options. The Vendor Spotlights was a new feature. While 60% of respondents thought it was a great addition, about 10% said it was not interesting or a waste of time. LOUD Table discussion have been offered for a couple years now with varying degrees of satisfaction. We knew from prior years that virtual attendees had difficulty following and participating in the discussions. In-person attendees are generally pleased with them though some felt the discussions lacked sufficient structure and focus to produce meaningful conversations.

Thanks to all who responded! We will use the feedback to improve the next conference.

Victoria Albright
2023 Secretary/Treasurer

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SAPOR | 1226 Little Creek Rd, Durham, NC 27713

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