



SAPOR Newsletter

The Southern
Association for Public Opinion
Research
www.sapor.us

March 2015

Letter from the President

Karl Feld, President ([Karl](#))

I extend New Year's best wishes to all our members and I hope the holidays treated each of you well. Your new Executive Committee has met three times since the annual conference and new initiatives for 2015 are well underway. The energy your officers bring to each meeting is exciting. Valrie Horton's article below tells you more about changes to Committee membership as a result of the elections in October at the annual conference.

By all accounts our conference last year was a success! Chris Jewett's article below summarizes the conference and its new location and format for those who could not attend and Katrina Ladd discusses the generous sponsors who made it possible. The results of the membership survey are in and Victoria Albright tells us about the findings below. I can say almost everyone gave the event high marks. The Executive Committee is currently

discussing how the survey findings inform our conference design for this year. We are cooking up even more exciting changes and look forward to sharing them with you as things develop.

Moving forward, the Executive Committee is creating more opportunities for SAPOR members to informally connect outside of the Annual Conference. This year I would like to build our sense of community and closer connectedness. In keeping with our theme of Southern collegiality and hospitality, we are cooking up other opportunities to meet socially and professionally. We are also looking at ways to connect with members in more remote locations of our geographic area. As a first step, we are overhauling the website. Valrie tells us more about that below. We also have a few new ideas which we will unroll to you, the members, as they develop.



Karl Feld, 2015 SAPOR President

As part of this process, SAPOR will be soliciting member input on initiatives throughout the year. We want to design and deliver events which are meaningful and entertaining for you. You can expect to hear from us every so often as we invite your feedback on ideas and how we are doing.

I look forward to a year of energetic change for SAPOR and invite you to come along with us.

- [Karl](#)

The 2015 Annual SAPOR Conference will be held on October 1st-2nd, 2015 at the City Club Raleigh. Brian Southwell, host of WNCU

"The Measure of Everyday Life" is scheduled as Keynote! [Click here for current conference info!](#)

Keep up with Brian on Twitter (@MeasureRadio)



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The Southern Association for Public Opinion Research (SAPOR) is the chapter of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) which serves the southern states in the US from Texas to Virginia.

Our members enjoy Southern-style hospitality and friendly atmosphere when we meet to discuss the technological, scientific and social change in our field which our region represents.



Meet Your 2015 SAPOR Executive Committee

Valrie Horton, Secretary ([Valrie](#))

Elections were held at the 2014 SAPOR Conference last October. Thanks to all of our members who participated in the election, whether you nominated someone, accepted a nomination, or cast ballots in the election. We appreciate your participation in this process!

As we begin 2015 and launch our plans for the annual conference in October, we would like to take the time to welcome and

congratulate our new Executive Council members. We are very excited to welcome them to the leadership team in their new roles.

President: Karl Feld
Vice-President: Victoria Albright
Conference Chair: Chris Jewett
Vice-Chair: Angelique Uglow
Katrina Ladd: Treasurer
Valrie Horton: Secretary

We would also like to take a minute and extend our thanks and heartfelt gratitude to the SAPOR members who are transitioning out of their roles ~ Sarah Cook, President; Christina Touarti, Conference Chair; and Dave Bergeron, Secretary. Thank you for your time and dedication to our SAPOR community!



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Review of the 2014 SAPOR Conference

Chris Jewett, 2015 Conference Chair

We held the 2014 SAPOR Conference this past October, and I am pleased to say it was a huge success with the largest attendance in recent memory!

Over seventy attendees joined us from 28 organizations. Commercial, government, and non-profit organizations were represented. We would like to acknowledge Christina Touarti, the 2014 Conference Chair, and the number of conference volunteers who contributed. Many thanks to everyone who assisted!

The conference began Thursday morning with presentations covering a variety of topics such as project team development, survey operations and methods, and respondent confidentiality. Following the morning presentations, was held our Keynote Panel discussion featuring Pearce Godwin of Duke University, Dr. Jason Husser of Elon University, Tom Jenson of Public Policy Polling, and Dr. David McLennan of Meredith College. Moderated by Karl Feld of GfK, the panel addressed the political and social changes taking place in North Carolina and discussed their polling efforts leading up to the November 2014 mid-term elections. A special thanks to all our panelists for this informative and insightful discussion!

The conference continued through the afternoon with presentations covering political opinion research and public opinion research on issues such as global warming, religious issues, and the development of parks and recreational programs. To wrap up the first day, a large number attendees

walked over to Busy Bee Café in downtown Raleigh for great food and drinks! The social hour/dinner was a huge success as it gave everyone a chance to informally socialize and network with other SAPOR members. Thank you to all that attended—it was a lot of fun!

The conference continued on Friday with another round of presentations in the morning. The presentations covered topics such as data collection challenges, respondent privacy and confidentiality, as well as new survey recruiting methods.

Following the presentations was the Career Panel discussion featuring James Cassel of the State Center for Health Statistics, Jennifer Childs of the U.S. Census Bureau, Dr. Russ Foushee of SciMetrika, Teresa Edwards of the Odum Institute, and Carla Jackson of Abt SRBI. Moderated by yours truly, each panelist discussed their educational and professional background and provided audience members with sound advice on how to begin a career in survey research, how to grow and develop, as well as how to change career paths. This was SAPOR's first career panel and the discussion received great reviews from attendees! A special thanks to all our panelists for not only sharing their knowledge and wisdom, but also

setting the bar high for future career panels! Following the panel, we finished the afternoon with presentations covering the use of mobile devices for data collection, and the use of social media in social science and survey research. Lastly, closing remarks were made and the gavel passed on to the 2015 President, Karl Feld.

We especially want to take a moment to thank our sponsors for the 2014 annual conference. We are grateful for the kindness and support of RTI International, GfK Custom Research, Nielsen, Marketing Systems Groups, University of Michigan Institute for Social Research, Headway Workforce Solutions, Avar Consulting Inc., Greene Resources, and CFMC. Their generous contributions allowed us to offer a high-quality professional conference at an affordable price to attendees.

The enthusiasm and collaboration of our SAPOR members in 2014 was inspiring, and can only mean that even better things are to come for SAPOR in 2015. We hope to see you all at our annual conference this Fall as we continue to improve the experience for our members!

[- Chris](#)

“The enthusiasm and collaboration of our SAPOR members in 2014 was inspiring, and can only mean that even better things are to come for SAPOR in 2015.”





SAPOR 2014 Conference Survey Results

Victoria Albright, Vice President/President-Elect ([Vicky](#))

1. Attendee Characteristics
2. Attendee Priorities
3. What We Did Right in 2014
4. Where We Have Room for Improvement
5. Other Takeaways

(Abbreviations: A=Attendee)

1. Attendee Characteristics

Description: Among the 27 survey respondents,

- 10 (about 1/3) were presenters
- 15 were from RTI, 6 from a University (not students), 4 were students, and 5 were "other"
- Only about half are AAPOR members
- About half were first timers
- About half were 30-39

Takeaway: The fact only half our 'A's were AAPOR members and half were first-timers suggests we are able to attract new people from outside the normal AAPOR circles.

2. Attendee Priorities

Description: These 'A's want the conference to be:

- Interesting
- In an accessible location
- Moderators and discussants who are engaging, enthusiastic, and involved
- Lots of opportunities for interaction and socializing
- Comfortable venue
- Welcoming, especially to new people

- At a time when they don't have scheduling conflicts

Takeaway: No surprises here except to emphasize how important it is to make new people feel welcome and want to come back. Also, the fact that scheduling conflicts are important to attendance suggests we should work hard to get the conference on people's calendars as early as possible. Advertise heavily and early! That is probably as important as picking the best dates.

3. What We Did Right

Description: 'A's were highly satisfied with the 2014 conference. They liked the venue and their hotels. They were fine with a two-day conference, with the number of sessions, and with panels instead of keynote speakers. The panels on careers and Southern politics were rated good or higher. 'A's liked the opportunity to go off-site to socialize. And the available information on the conference was good.

Takeaway: Good job to the 2014 conference planners!

4. Room for Improvement

Description: 'A's would have liked our moderators and discussants to be more proactive in leading discussions and working to make the content more relevant and engaging. The topics of the panels were good but not great. People like having poster sessions (but aren't terribly interested in doing them).

'A's to content, people mentioned interest in presentations that focus on:

- Linking theory and practice

- Methods to personalize recruitment and survey methods
- Best ways to use social media for recruitment
- Project management
- Survey methods and methodology

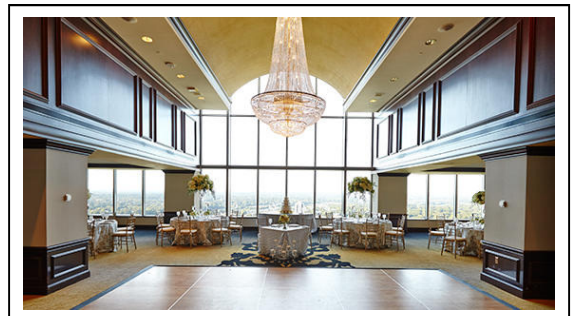
Takeaway: The 'A's comments give us some direction to focus on for topics. More important, though, we need to have moderators, discussants, and panelists that are interesting, who are enthused about their topics, and who initiate discussion about the topics.

5. Other Takeaways

- **Opportunities to socialize:** Opportunities to socialize seemed important to these 'A's. 'A's who did not attend the offsite dinner did so because of needing to attend to other responsibilities, the downside of having so many 'A's from the local area.
- **Geographic location:** A couple 'A's mentioned Atlanta and Charlottesville as desirable locations.
- **Length:** Two days was the preferred conference length. A few wanted it shorter, but no one wanted it longer.
- **Not Costs:** Schedule conflicts were noted as reasons for not attending; costs did not seem to be an important issue.



"Attendees were highly satisfied with the 2014 conference. They liked the venue and their hotels."





SAPOR Conference from a Graduate Student's Perspective

Nicole Pankiewicz, Graduate Student Representative ([Nicole](#))

SAPOR is an incredibly valuable resource for graduate students. Presenting at the 2014 conference gave me the opportunity to discuss my research with an audience of professionals and to find out what life is like on the non-academic side of public opinion research. SAPOR is a different kind of conference – the environment is welcoming, friendly, and low-pressure, yet you will leave the conference having received meaningful feedback. I strongly encourage graduate students and other academics to join us in October.

2014 James W. Prothro Student Paper Competition

Robert Agans, Prothro Student Paper Competition Chair ([Robert](#))

The 2014 James W. Prothro Student Paper competition award goes to Laura Frankel, Ph.D. candidate at Duke University in the Department of Political Science. Her research examined attrition data from the General Social Survey (GSS) panel (2006-2010) and provides practical advice for reducing both bias and attrition in longitudinal studies.

Panel Attrition: What's Sex Got to Do with It?

Laura Lazarus Frankel
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Department of Political Science
Duke University

July 9, 2014

Abstract

This research examines the effects of matching interviewer and respondent sex on panel attrition. While the majority of research on matching interviewer and respondent characteristics suggests that matching (homophily) yields higher quality data, little work has examined whether this pattern holds true in the area of panel attrition. Based on social theories of human interaction and exploratory research on panel attrition, I hypothesize that gender homophily yields higher rates of attrition in longitudinal surveys, contrary to its broader effects on nonresponse and data quality. However, while homophily increases attrition propensity, it also reduces bias on certain items, producing a tradeoff for scholars and survey designers. The implications of these patterns and areas for further research are discussed.

The Southern Association for Public Opinion Research

Many thanks to our 2014 SAPOR conference sponsors for their generosity and support. Each year, the sponsors of the annual SAPOR conference play an important role in making the conference financially possible, including accommodating increasing attendance and keeping registration costs low for students.

The 2014 SAPOR Conference Sponsors included:

RTI International
GfK Custom Research
Nielsen

Marketing Systems Group
Headway Workforce Solutions
Avar Consulting

University of Michigan, Program in Survey
Methodology
CfMC Marketing
Greene Resources

If your company is interested in becoming a donor or sponsor for the 2015 conference, please email Katrina Ladd, SAPOR Treasurer, at treasurer@sapor.us



New Website

The SAPOR website has a new home: www.sapor.us

Many thanks to our Website & Communications Committee Chair, Shane Trahan for transitioning us to our new site!

A Warm, Southern Welcome

We'd like to welcome back recently returned and new SAPOR members who have joined since Annual Conference. We're glad to have you!

James Cassell, Raleigh, NC

Marcus Berzofsky, Research Triangle Park, NC

Scott Brees, Chapel Hill, NC

Deb Ward, Lebanon, TN

SAPOR Members - We Want to Hear from You!!!

As always, we hope to connect with all of our SAPOR members on a regular basis and not rely only upon our annual conference as a way to catch up with you. Please consider sending us updates throughout the year so that we can highlight your accomplishments and share information about your research activities with other SAPOR members. Our Executive Council members are here to serve you, so always feel free to contact any of us with questions or suggestions for improving and growing our organization. You can also find out more about SAPOR on our website. Be sure to check in every now and again for conference updates, calls for papers, networking and volunteering opportunities, and more! In the coming months volunteers from our chapter may reach out to you by phone or email to discuss how you would like to see our chapter grow. Watch for those emails and/or phone calls!



"I encourage every member to respond, as the results will shape how we change the organization and its activities for some time to come."

2015 SAPOR Membership Survey

Karl Feld, President ([Karl](#))

SAPOR is planning to host a variety of events at different locations throughout 2015 for our membership. We will be sending out an invitation to members for a survey in which we will solicit ideas and feedback on what you, the members, would like to see as other opportunities to gather formally and informally for chapter meetings. I encourage every member to respond, as the results will shape how we change

the organization and its activities for some time to come.

There is of course no need to wait for the survey. If you have ideas for events or social gatherings for SAPOR and would like to see them asked of membership, please feel free to send me an email at president@sapor.us and we will float your ideas within the

Executive Committee and across the membership. Who knows, maybe you have the next great event idea? We'd love to hear it.

Please keep an eye out for future invitations and take the time to respond. It will shape how we all get to know each other better.