



SAPOR Newsletter

The Southern
Association for Public
Opinion Research

March 2016

Letter from the President

Victoria Albright, President

I extend warmest wishes to all our SAPOR members and survey research colleagues in the in the Southeastern United States. In so many ways, your work ripples through the fabric of society affecting thousands of people. Your professionalism, skill, and commitment to scientific methods provides guidance our nation can count on to steer the course of the 21st century. SAPOR stands by you to help you achieve the highest professional standards possible.

So let me begin by saying **Thank You!** to all my hard-working colleagues who planned and pulled off our 2015 Annual Conference. Chris Jewett, our Conference Chair, recounts high points on page 3. Nicole Pankiewicz's interview with Keynote Speaker, Brian Southwell (page 5), digs deeper into what makes this media visionary tick. Tamara Terry

tabulates findings of our Conference Satisfaction Survey and lessons learned to make the 2016 conference even better. Ken Kluch recognizes our generous sponsors who made it possible to offer so much more than our conference fees can support.

Get up close and personal with our 2015 presenters as they are interviewed by Brian Southwell, host of WNCU's talk radio show "The Measure of Everyday Life".

Post-conference, the Board and dedicated colleagues dove into planning 2016 events. We are cooking up new opportunities for survey professionals to meet socially and professionally across the region. We are building relationships with kindred professional organization in the area. Invitations are going out to speakers for our long-time conference favorite, the Hiring Panel.



Victoria Albright,
2016 SAPOR President

We invite you to become involved and make this the best year we've had.

I almost forgot to mention... As of December 7, 2015, the SAPOR membership year will coincide with the calendar year, just like AAPOR. If you signed up for SAPOR at the 2015 SAPOR Conference in the Fall, your membership will extend through all of 2016.

Best wishes,
Victoria Albright
2016 SAPOR President

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The 2016 Annual AAPOR conference is in our region so we're hosting a SAPOR Chapter Event on Friday, May 13th from 8:00 PM to Midnight on the rooftop deck at Micheladas Café y Cantina— 333 E 2nd St, Austin, TX 78701— just a few blocks away from the Hilton!



See you in Austin!



The 2016 Annual SAPOR Conference will be held on October 6th-7th, 2016 at the City Club Raleigh! We hope you will make plans to attend! More information will be sent soon!

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 2016 SAPOR Executive Committee

Valrie Horton, Secretary

Elections were held at the 2015 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 2016 and launch our plans for the annual conference in October, we would like to welcome and congratulate our new Executive Council members. We are very excited to have such a great leadership team.

President: Victoria Albright
Vice-President: Tamara Terry
Treasurer: Ken Kluch

Conference Chair: Angelique Uglow
Vice-Chair: Stacey Weger Bell
Secretary: Valrie Horton



Valrie Horton
Secretary
secretary@sapor.us

We would also like to extend our thanks and heartfelt gratitude to the SAPOR members who are transitioning out of their roles: **Karl Feld**, 2015 President; **Chris Jewett**, 2015 Conference Chair; and **Katrina Ladd**, 2015 Treasurer.

Thank you for your time and dedication to our SAPOR community!



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Review of the 2015 SAPOR Conference

Chris Jewett, 2015 Conference Chair

We held the 2015 SAPOR Conference this past October, and I am pleased to say it was another success! Over 80 attendees from myriad academic, commercial, government, and non-profit organizations joined in the event.

The conference began Thursday morning with presentations covering a variety of topics such as new qualitative research approaches, survey methodology, respondent recruitment strategies, and current social and foreign issues. Following the morning presentations, we held our Keynote Panel discussion featuring Brian Southwell of RTI International and host of radio show "The Measure of Everyday Life: Stories from Social Science". Brian's presentation, titled "Public Understanding of Social Science and Why It Matters", eloquently discussed the public's understanding of social science research and how we can more effectively communicate our academic efforts in the current information landscape. The conference continued through the afternoon with presentations covering political opinion research, field and phone interviewer performance, and values research. To wrap of the first day, a large number attendees walked over to Busy Bee Café in downtown Raleigh for great food and drinks! Like last year, 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. This session focused on international research. Presentations covered topics such as survey non-response, maximizing response rates and representativeness, and survey methodology. Following the morning presentations was the Institutional Research Panel featuring Bobbie Frye of Central Piedmont Community College and Mary Lelik of North Carolina State University. Moderated by Kenneth Fernandez of Elon University, the panel offered varying perspectives of institutional research as a research discipline and discussed the variety of challenges facing the field. Following lunch, we held another panel, titled "Hiring in Public Opinion Research" where representatives from five major firms in the Research Triangle Area discussed what they are looking for in new employees and career trajectories in their firms. Moderated by Victoria Albright of RTI, the panel featured Nicole Jones and Bryan Shepard of SAS, Charles Knott and Christine Wilkerson of RTI, Jeff Scagnelli of Nielsen, Mark Schulman of Abt SRBI, and Michelle Seifert of Survey Sampling International.

A special thanks to all our panelists for sharing their knowledge and wisdom! Following the panel, we finished the afternoon with presentations covering the use of mobile devices for data collection and the use of incentives in survey research. Lastly, closing remarks were made and the gavel passed on to the 2016 President, Victoria Albright.

We especially want to take a moment to thank our sponsors for the 2015 annual conference. We are grateful for the kindness and support of RTI International, GfK Custom Research, Nielsen, Marketing Systems Groups, Headway Workforce Solutions, Abt SRBI, The Odum Institute of UNC, Survox, and ReconMR. 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 2015 was inspiring, and can only mean that even better things are to come for SAPOR in 2016. We hope to see you all at our annual conference next Fall as we continue to improve the experience for our members!

"The enthusiasm and collaboration of our SAPOR members in 2015 was inspiring, and can only mean that even better things are to come for SAPOR in 2016."





SAPOR 2015 Conference Survey Results

Tamara Terry, Vice President/President-Elect

Overall people enjoyed the conference and our keynote speaker

Most people attended both days of the conference

49% of the conference attendees were first time attendees

44% presented at the conference

25% traveled more than 100 miles to attend

85% liked the number of sessions; No more no less!!

Things to consider:

Split decision on whether to have a poster session at SAPOR in future years

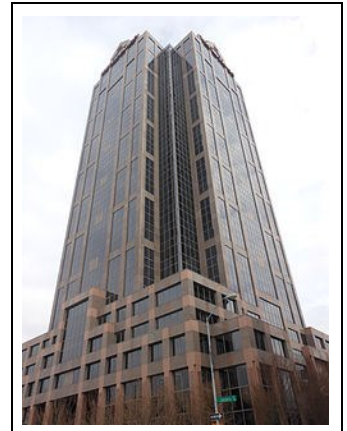
Beverage choices could be improved

Length of refreshment times could be longer

40% attended the social; those that did not attend had no interest in attending or scheduling conflicts

74% think we should continue to have socials

66% voted no/maybe for a short course offering at SAPOR



President's Corner

Victoria Albright, President

Behind the curtain, SAPOR officers and volunteers work hard to make SAPOR more efficient, more organized, and more effective at representing your interests as survey and opinion research professional. I would like to take the issue of the Newsletter to thank these people, tell you a little about what they do, and invite you to become part of SAPOR.

KUDOS TO:

Shane Trahan, SAPOR's longtime Webmaster, for guiding SAPOR out of the darkness and creating our online presence.

Nicole Pankiewicz, Graduate Student Representative, for teaching us how to Tweet and learn to like Facebook.

Valrie Horton, Secretary, for keeping us organized.

Katrina Ladd, Past Treasurer, for keeping us out of debtors' prison.

Karl Feld, Past President, for a masterful job of heading cats (with spectacular results).

Angel Uglow, Conference Chair, for her vivacious snap-crackle-pop and promises to raise the fun bar in 2016.

Robert Agans, fearless leader of our student paper competition

New to the Board (but not new to helping SAPOR and AAPOR)

Tamara Terry, 2016 Vice-President/2017 President)

Stacey Bell, 2016 Vice-Chair/2017 Conference Chair

Ken Kluch, 2016-2017 Treasurer

It's never too early for succession planning. Next September 2016, terms are up for 3 two-year positions:

- 2017 Vice-President/2018 President,
- 2017 Vice-Conference Chair/2018 Conference Chair, and
- Secretary (2-year term).

We have left plenty of room for you to bring your own special expertise and vision to SAPOR. In the meantime, get your feet wet volunteering in 2016. Contact anybody listed on page 2 if you have an idea, opinion, or question. ~Vicky



SAPOR Members Featured on The Measure of Everyday Life Radio Program

Stacey Weger Bell, Vice Conference Chair

Late last year, several SAPOR 2015 conference presenters and attendees were featured on the public radio show, The Measure of Everyday Life. The show, hosted by researcher, professor, and 2015 conference keynote speaker, Dr. Brian Southwell, is a weekly interview program that explores current trends in social science research. During the conference, Dr. Southwell conducted interviews with Charles Dahan, of University of Florida; Davis Brown, of Maryville University; Stacey Bell, of RTI International; David Eagle, of Duke University; Jennifer Hunter Childs, of the US Census Bureau, and Sofia Pinero Kluch, of the Gallup World Poll. The specific topics ranged from presenter to presenter, including religiosity, health measures, demographic research, terrorism, and the challenges and changing climate of public opinion research both in the U.S. and abroad.

The show originally aired on 11/15 and is available as a podcast at the following link:

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/the-measure-of-everyday-life/id956844695?mt=2>

We would like to thank Dr. Southwell for inviting SAPOR members on to the show, and for highlighting some of the important research we are conducting!

Interview with Dr. Brian Southwell

Nicole Pankiewicz, Graduate Student Representative

What motivated you to study health and science communication?

I think that we've generally made some progress in understanding how the human body works or how to launch a rocket. We have made considerably less progress in really understanding how to motivate people to eat healthier or to sign up to become an astronaut and I've been drawn to find ways to help in that regard. I also am interested in instances of failure; there is much to be learned from media campaigns that don't work, for example, and the overlapping arenas of health and science offer lots of failure to study.

Can you tell us a little bit about how you got where you are today, career-wise?

My career to date has been both highly coherent and yet also iterative and exploratory. In some ways, that reflects me, I guess. When I went to graduate school, I knew I was interested in harnessing mass media to promote social change; over the years, I've done that in various ways – a quick Google search will even turn up some of my old documentary work, e.g., So Now Look, for example – but somewhere along the way I demonstrated sufficient capacity in conducting data analysis and in teaching about it that I was invited to become a full-time faculty member, which is what I did for roughly a decade. As gratifying as that work was, I also have long been interested in helping to shape public policy, and my current set of appointments allow me to do that in working with federal government partners while also still getting to teach regularly. I feel quite lucky to have the chance to get paid for some of my talents and to do work that interests me.

Why did you decide to create "The Measure of Everyday Life"?

I believe that much of the work that social scientists do is much more interesting than many people assume. People generally are interested in human behavior and human psychology; we study that every day and yet somehow have yielded the floor to journalistic outlets that don't have a grounding in academic research, per se. With The Measure of Everyday Life, we are just trying to encourage people to see the work that social scientists do as being worthy of discussion over the Thanksgiving dinner table, just as the latest football score is.

How do you choose the topics for your show?

We look for a combination of compelling and interesting guests and timely topics. We are careful not to be driven too much by what is in the headlines a particular month, though. To date, we have drawn quite a bit on researchers from universities in the Research Triangle Park area as well as from non-profits like RTI International, but we also have had success interviewing government officials such as U.S. Congressman David Price and Assistance Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education Johan Uvin. Our guest list is going to continue to expand geographically and that is quite exciting.

What advice would you give people who are just starting out in the field of public opinion research?

I think that you should take as many methods courses as you can, and be open to learning new measurement and sampling techniques. The popularity of methods seems fluid over time and so it is best to understand the general logic of research and have practice moving between different approaches as much as you can.

What advice do you have for professional public opinion researchers?

Don't be afraid to start a line of work on a new topic that others have not pursued yet. We are too often led by what's been done previously.

Many thanks to our 2015 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 2015 SAPOR Conference Sponsors included:

RTI International
GfK Custom Research
Nielsen
Marketing Systems Group
Abt SRBI
Headway Workforce Solutions
Survox (CfMC Marketing)
ReconMR
The Odum Institute of UNC

If your company is interested in becoming a donor or sponsor for the 2016 conference, please email Ken Kluch, SAPOR Treasurer, at treasurer@sapor.us

It pays to join AAPOR!

Have you never been a national AAPOR member before? Do you want to help SAPOR make money?

Join AAPOR between now and May 11, 2016. If you have never been an AAPOR member before:

- You will get \$50 refunded to you after your eligibility has been confirmed.
- Half of the dues you pay to National AAPOR will come back to the chapter.

This will help us have more money for chapter events and support programming and other needs at the chapter, and you will be able to take advantage of all the benefits of being a full AAPOR member!

Sign up today!

Data Matters Short Course Series

The Data Matters short course series sponsored by Odum and others will be held June 20-24, 2016. Six survey methods offerings have been added this year! Data Matters is sponsored by the H.W. Odum Institute for Research in Social Science at UNC--Chapel Hill, the National Consortium for Data Science, and RENCI, and is held at the Friday Center for Continuing Education in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. For more information and to register, see www.datamatters.org.

2015 James W. Prothro Student Paper Competition

Robert Agans, Prothro Student Paper Competition Chair

"...The 2015 James W. Prothro Student Paper competition award goes to Robert Richards, a PhD student at the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University...."

Foundations of Public Opinion on the Affordable Care Act

Robert Richards, Duke University, robert.richards@duke.edu

Winner of the 2015 James W. Prothro Student Paper Competition

Despite some preliminary research on the nature of public opinion regarding the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA), there is still work to be done in understanding how people form and change their opinions of this important policy, as well as how analysts should interpret those opinions. For example, do people judge the ACA based on provisions contained in the law itself? If encouraged to think in this manner, are they capable of doing so, and does this change their opinions in any way? This paper reports results of a survey experiment fielded in late November 2014 designed to give insight into the underpinnings of public opinion on the ACA. Respondents, recruited using Amazon's Mechanical Turk, were asked a series of questions about the ACA and about specific provisions within the reform law, with the order of some questions varied randomly to create a priming effect. Based on this study, I find that both favorability toward the ACA and correlates of ACA opinion vary according to the kind of information with which a respondent is primed. Priming different policies elicits different patterns of change in opinion distributions. It seems that not only is public opinion on the ACA responsive to the kinds of information presented to respondents, but the ways in which opinions are formed may also be malleable. Future work could explore these ideas further, but this survey experiment represents progress in our understanding of public opinion on the ACA.

