Overview
In 2020, the Psychonomic Society established a Task Force on Racial Justice. With recent international protests for racial justice, as a community, we have embarked on a new period of self-reflection within the academy about our lack of racial diversity. African American, Latinx, and Indigenous scholars are missing at the faculty and graduate level, and this problem is especially acute in cognitive psychology and neuroscience. In order to examine ways in which the Psychonomic Society itself could become more welcoming and inclusive with the goal of ameliorating this inequity in representation, PS established its Task Force on Racial Justice.

The Task Force held a series of meetings during 2020-2021. It was guided by two goals:

**Goals: 1) Study the problem of racial inequity and the lack of representation within the Psychonomic Society, and 2) Make recommendations that will change the demographic trajectory of the society.**

In support of these goals, the PS Task Force on Racial Justice drafted the following recommendations for discussion and feedback. Each recommendation includes a list of suggested supporting activities. We invite you to review each recommendation, and then to share your comments and suggestions. We welcome feedback on individual recommendations, as well as on the spirit of the recommendations as a whole.

The Psychonomic Society also wants to publicly acknowledge that D&I is not a program. It is not a list of check boxes to be marked as complete. Genuinely addressing issues related to diversity and inclusion means addressing root causes of cultural norms, behaviors, and attitudes, which is a long, messy, difficult process. It is a process we are committed to for the long-term. That said, programmatic activities can support these deeper conversations by creating more welcoming and inclusive environments, and by drawing our attention to areas where continued growth is needed. For this reason, the Task Force has included suggested activities alongside each of their recommendations. The suggested activities, like all programs, will be adopted as needed, but their intent is to build and support a more welcoming, inclusive environment for all scientists in our field.

*Please submit your feedback by March 31, 2022.*
RECOMMENDATIONS

#1: Equity in Psychonomic Presentations

Background: Abstracts for the PS Annual Meeting have traditionally been selected based on a priority ladder which gives Fellows priority over Members and Graduate Student Members when presenting talks. It has been argued that, since there are a limited number of spoken sessions in the program and PS Fellows are majority White, this approach is leading to a structural inequity in the program, where minoritized members of the field are less likely to present talks.

Intent: Address the structural inequity in the annual meeting program that is contributing to minoritized members of the field being less likely to present talks.

Suggested Activities:

1. Make a concerted effort to gather more demographic information about the PS membership.
2. Collect demographic information on authors during the abstract submission process.
3. Conduct a 2-year experiment, where Fellows and Members may cede their priority placement on the program to a Graduate Student Member of the society. Track demographic data on the Fellows and Members who cede their talk slot and the Graduate Student Members who accept the ceded talk slot, comparing the demographics of the two groups to see if this approach would increase racial diversity among spoken presenters at the meeting.

Please note: Section #1 recommendations have already been implemented, but we are still requesting feedback on your observations from this past year. PS requested demographic information from all presenters at the 2021 annual meeting, and Fellows and Members were allowed to cede their priority placement in the 2021 program to a Graduate Student Member. Sixty-one (61) slots were ceded to Graduate Students in 2021.

#2: Outreach to Undergraduates from Minoritized Groups

Background: Increasing undergraduate interest in cognitive psychology among minoritized groups could play a major role in changing the demographic trajectory of the society over time, while reaching beyond the issue of PS membership and helping to increase diversity among the field at large. The Psychonomic Society currently does not allow undergraduate students to become members (membership is limited to graduate students or those with PhDs), but it welcomes undergraduate students to attend the annual meeting for free, and undergraduate students may also submit poster abstracts if sponsored by a member or fellow.
Intent: Raise the visibility and understanding of the field of cognitive psychology among undergraduate students from minoritized groups.

Suggested Activities:

1. Allow undergraduate students to become members of the Psychonomic Society
2. Offer reciprocal memberships to undergraduates who are members of societies that focus on minoritized groups in other STEM fields (e.g. SACNAS).
3. Improve visibility of research by Psychonomics members by using media platforms that appeal to younger students (Instagram, TikTok, etc.)
4. Create undergraduate chapters of the Psychonomic Society at Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs). These chapters would be directed or chaired by PS Fellows at their respective institutions. Chapter benefits might include small stipends to cover pizza at meetings; awards for Best Poster and Best Talk to be given at chapter conferences; a chance for undergraduate students to present their research as a poster at the PS annual meeting, etc.
5. Offer online workshops or trainings about applying to graduate programs in cognitive psychology, targeting minority serving institutions. These workshops or trainings would be created in partnership with professionals and organizations who are active leaders in D&I, such as the SPARK Society, WiCS, and Visibility.
6. Actively repackage and market PS resources, such as digital content and the One World Seminar Series, to appeal to undergraduates, and share this new collateral as a free resource for instructors at MSIs.

#3: Equity and Diversity in Graduate Admissions and Faculty Hiring

Background: Biases and structural barriers often exist within the graduate admissions and faculty hiring processes that contribute to minoritized groups being less represented in our field than they are in our communities. Contributing factors include such things as the use of GRE scores in admissions; rating scales on diversity statements; lack of substantial outreach efforts to minoritized groups; and much more.

Intent: Reduce barriers within the graduate admissions and the faculty hiring processes that discourage minoritized groups from applying for graduate school and faculty positions.

Suggested Activities:

1. After careful consideration, we have concluded that this area is outside the purview of the Psychonomic Society because these decisions are department wide (not just among cognitive psychology) and requires a more holistic approach at the department and/or program level.
2. We support empowering stakeholders, however, and propose making the annual diversity-related symposium a permanent part of each PS annual meeting. As an example, see the diversity-related symposia that were held at the PS 2020 and 2021
annual meetings. Future diversity-related symposia could cover topics such as: “Growth mindset, belonging, and inclusion: How to facilitate educational equity in teaching and outcomes in STEM.”

#4: Increasing Diversity in Psychonomic Society Journals

Background: There has recently been a push in STEM fields for more transparency in information about the demographics of authors, subject populations, and citations. The Psychonomic Society lacks data on the diversity of authors who publish in its journals, whether there are barriers to access, and whether non-native English speakers face challenges in publishing.

Intent: Identify and address barriers to access for the Psychonomic Society journals, including barriers to access that disproportionately affect minoritized groups and non-native English speakers.

Suggested Activities:

1. Consider incentivizing authors submitting research to PS journals to report the demographic information of participants, including race and gender. For instance, PS journals could adopt “equity” badges for journal articles that report demographics or discuss efforts in recruiting diverse subject populations. Authors could also be encouraged to make a statement about whether and how they attempted to recruit a diverse sample.
2. Collect and track author demographic information.
3. Track gender and racial imbalances in citations. This could be done through existing tools, or the Society could consider collecting its own database of author demographics and developing its own metrics.
4. Double-blind reviews may be more equitable. Explore a mandatory double-blind review process, perhaps with a single journal at first.
5. Collect demographic information of PS journal editorial boards and editors, then review and publish this information annually. Remind Editors-in-Chief that diversity is a key requirement for scientific rigor.
6. Reduce open-access fees for researchers at Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs).

Please note: The feedback on this set of recommendations will first be reviewed by the Task Force on Racial Justice, then it will be reviewed and discussed by the PS Publications Committee and the PS journals’ Editors-in-Chief.

#5: Supporting Minoritized Graduate Students at the Annual Meeting

Background: One barrier to diversity in the Psychonomic Society is improving inclusion and access. One of the common themes that emerged in the 2020 Town Hall on Diversity and the 2021 Diversity & Inclusion Discussion was how minoritized members feel isolated at the PS
annual meeting. Being a marginalized person in a predominantly white space is hard. It’s hard to get excited about being there, and it’s hard to invite others to join you when you know they may feel the same way.

Intent: Intentionally promote inclusion of minoritized graduate students within the Psychonomic Society community.

Suggested Activities:

1. Create intentional spaces at the annual meeting that celebrate and honor people of different backgrounds, religions, nationalities, and ethnicities.
2. Create a Donor’s Circle that will support additional networking opportunities for underrepresented graduate students at the conference. Fellows choosing to join the Donor’s Circle would contribute $1,000 USD. Each $1,000 contribution would be awarded, dollar for dollar, as a scholarship to a graduate student from an underrepresented group. Recipients would have the option to use their scholarship funds to support their travel to the conference. If they choose to attend the conference, they would be invited to a Donor’s Circle reception, where they would have a chance to meet Donor’s Circle members and fellow scholarship recipients. The Donor’s Circle would be named after a Black scholar(s) such as Kenneth and Mamie Phipps Clark.
3. Create a program modeled on the Society for Neuroscience’s Neuroscience Scholars Program, a two-year online training program for underrepresented graduate students and postdoctoral researchers that is focused on career advancement issues, the research process, and cutting-edge scientific content. This is a larger, more expensive effort, but it might have the greatest success in terms of increasing the number of underrepresented scientist members of the Psychonomic Society.

Request for Feedback (Submit feedback by March 31)
PS members and professionals within the field of cognitive psychology and allied sciences are invited and encouraged to submit their feedback to the Task Force recommendations. To submit your feedback, please visit the PS website.

The Task Force for Racial Justice will review and discuss all received feedback after the feedback window closes. The Task Force recommendations will then be updated and submitted to the PS Governing Board for discussion and a vote.

Questions? Contact the Lou Shomette, PS Executive Director, at lshomette@psychonomic.org.

Special thanks to the members of the PS Task Force on Racial Justice: Duane Watson (Co-Chair; Vanderbilt University), Mary Peterson (Co-Chair; University of Arizona), Karen Campbell (Brock University), Scott Gronlund (University of Oklahoma), Timothy Nokes-Malach (University of Pittsburgh), Ian McDonough (University of Alabama), Natasha Tokowicz (University of Pittsburgh), and Nichole Wicha (University of Texas at San Antonio).