

## Research Summit July 26, 2015

Dear Executive Councilors,

The research summit took place as planned on Sunday July 26th, 8am-1pm, at Macht Auditorium at Cambridge Hospital. Forty-two people participated. The group included APsaA researchers, non-APsaA researchers from the U.S., Argentina, Belgium, Germany and Italy, and non-researcher members of APsaA who are interested in supporting psychoanalytic/psychodynamic research. There were three Past Presidents of APsaA, the current President and President-elect and the Executive Director present. Also present were the President-elect and two Past Presidents of the Society for Psychotherapy Research.

The purpose of the meeting was to sharpen and reinvigorate APsaA's support for research. The following report is a summary of the meeting and of initial ideas on how to advance that goal. It is important that you as Executive Councilors are aware of the process as it evolves. Your questions, feedback and input will be needed to help the process move forward.

The conversation was lively and wide-ranging. It included differences of opinion regarding what would be most important for APsaA to support: large randomized controlled studies; small pilot projects; outcome/process/conceptual research; psychoanalytic or psychodynamic therapy research or both. The possibility of defining a common ground, perhaps in the form of support for one large study, was discussed, but a pluralist approach to research seemed the most persuasive.

Charles Fisher, the new Chair of the Fund for Psychoanalytic Research, announced a Multiple Portal concept for the Fund. This approach will invite proposals for outcome, process, and conceptual projects and have projects of similar nature compared with each other in a review process conducted by experts in that area. There was general agreement that the Fund should be up and running again by noon the same day. I expect Chuck will be recruiting expert reviewers and have a formal process underway very soon.

The necessity of APsaA's joining the public discussion of the recently released Institute of Medicine report was emphasized, as was the necessity of being aware of the requirements of the Affordable Care Act and being willing to study ways of making analytic approaches to patient care broadly accessible.

The need to consult with non-analysts about research design and direction was emphasized. An approach to the teaching of research in APsaA institutes that would engage psychoanalytic clinicians in understanding and supporting research was discussed, as was the need to develop a next generation of psychoanalytic researchers from departments that no longer value psychodynamic principles.

In the context of cogent differences of opinion about priorities, there was an overall enthusiasm and commitment to psychoanalytic/psychodynamic research expressed throughout the day. It seemed clear that the scientific discussion should be pursued over time by the experts who were present at the research summit and others who could not attend but would wish to participate. I am hopeful the attendees (and others) will want to participate in a Research Advisory Council that will help APsaA's Science Department stay fresh and updated in its outlook and sense of priorities. The mission of the Science Department will include, in turn, ensuring an ongoing dialogue with the Executive Council about analytic research and possible organizational priorities.

It seems timely to revive and revamp APsaA's commitment to research. A number of preliminary ideas about how to do that arose from the research summit. They are summarized below. Insofar as they include a restructuring of the Science Department and budgeting for a new part-time staff person for research, your approval will be required. With your input and feedback along the way, I would like to bring a proposal to the Executive Council in January 2016.

Some emphasized an urgent need for large scale randomized controlled trials (RCT's) of psychodynamic psychotherapy and felt without them reimbursement for non-CBT psychotherapy would cease. Others cautioned if APsaA supports RCT's it could put other important research priorities at risk. Large scale studies require funding beyond our internal capacity, but we can play a crucial role in 3 ways:

1) Funding pilot studies that can be used as proposals to outside funders for larger scale studies;

2) Demonstrating member commitment to this effort by an internal fundraising campaign (A high percentage of APsaA members donating to research even if dollar amounts are low shows potential donors that the experts think this is important);

3) Spearheading a true development campaign seeking outside funds for research.

Some members have talked about these fundraising ideas before; it's time for all members to help put them into action.

Here are some other key points to consider. Psychoanalytic researchers need and want a home. Establishing the PPRS was an attempt to provide researchers in psychoanalysis who are not clinical analysts an organizational home. It is not clear that this is the best approach or that it is serving the needs of our researchers and the field optimally. I will be talking with the leaders of the PPRS to get their views and bring a proposal back to you.

An idea that arose from the research summit is to create a new category of membership in APsaA - Research Scientist. This membership category would acknowledge advanced involvement in psychoanalytic/psychodynamic research and an agreed upon level of scholarship. It is a change in membership categories that would require a bylaw amendment. However, it is an option worth seriously considering.

A new Head of the Science Department will be appointed as Andrew Gerber has decided to step down. His new job at Austen Riggs is too demanding for him to give the Department the attention he feels it deserves. A new structure of the Science Department might include five committees: a Research Advisory Council, the Fund for Psychoanalytic Research, the Scientific Paper Prize Committee, the Poster Sessions and Research Symposia Committee, and a Development Committee.

The Research Advisory Council could be composed of willing participants from the research summit (many are eager to continue to be in conversation) as well as additional interested APsaA researchers and others, including interested members and Executive Councilors. Its role would be to gather a wide range of opinion and expertise in order to advise the Department (and APsaA) on such matters as national and international research collaborations, evolving funding priorities, and inreach/outreach related to science. It would elect a chair who would organize internet and face-to-face meetings of the Research Advisory Council and would report to the Head of the Department. The Head of the Department and Chairs of the Fund, the Research Advisory Council and the other committees of the

Department would join the Department Head in a Steering Group whose job it would be to make sure things are moving forward in an integrated fashion. The Department Head would be accountable to Executive Council for biannual reports from each of the Department's committees.

An effective Science Department would need a committed staff member, one-half or three-quarter time. The activities of this new staff position would include: managing grant applications (getting them to the chair of the Fund and his designated reviewers and helping with follow-up to funding applicants); providing information about grants and projects to the Public Information Department so that members and the public can be informed of research results; helping to create materials and organize appointments for fundraising; maintaining communications within the APsaA research community and with colleagues in the IPA to keep our members updated on psychoanalytic research world-wide and potential collaborations; helping APsaA's Director of Public Affairs with social media and press contacts regarding research. An out-of-budget funding request in January for such a position would represent the beginning of an ongoing commitment to supporting research and science in APsaA.

I hope you will be interested in learning more and giving your input to the sort of structural, administrative and fundraising plans I described. Until a new Head of the Science Department is identified I will fill in as contact person. After I hear your thoughts and reactions to this communication and consult with the PPRS leaders, I will offer a concrete next step for your consideration.

Best wishes,  
Harriet

Harriet Wolfe  
President-elect  
Moderator, Research Summit July 26, 2015