

SPAGS Board Candidate Statements

President Elect Candidates:

Jenn Boland

Hello! My name is Jenn Boland, and I am excited for the opportunity to be considered as your next SPAGS President-Elect!

I am currently a fourth-year doctoral student at Sam Houston State University, where I work under the mentorship of Dr. Jaime Anderson. My research interests focus broadly on the assessment and study of personality pathology; specifically, my research has investigated the online social media behaviors of individuals with pathological personality traits and the utility of dimensional models of personality pathology, such as the Alternative DSM-5 Model of Personality Disorders (AMPD), in research and clinical settings. My ongoing dissertation research investigates the effectiveness of the AMPD in reducing clinician bias against clients with borderline personality disorder, and the status of this dimensional model and its associated measures among clinicians and mental health trainees. In addition to attending classes and conducting research, I also pursue clinical interests related to forensic assessment.

For the past several years, I have become increasingly involved with SPA, from attending and volunteering at the annual convention for the last three years, to growing and maintaining the SPA Twitter account over the past two years, to serving as a board member-at-large on the SPAGS board over the past year. During the course of my involvement with SPA, I have had the privilege of providing student input on several issues related to the society's growth and the management of its online presence, and I have served on the SPAGS diversity committee and organized student-focused panels and presentations for the annual convention. These experiences have given me the opportunity to learn more about the organization and structure of SPA, as well as the ability to connect with both student and nonstudent members of SPA.

This foundation of involvement has left me uniquely equipped to facilitate communication between the SPAGS board and the full SPA board. As President-Elect of the SPAGS board, I would endeavor to keep the lines of communication between both boards open, and I would take seriously my responsibility for raising student concerns and viewpoints to the board.

If elected to serve as President-Elect of the SPAGS board, I am committed to continuing my work in expanding student presence in the society, particularly through the use of relevant student-focused programming at the annual convention. I will also work towards providing a space for student members of the society to share their concerns and ideas in a supportive, productive environment, and I will work with the rest of the SPAGS board to compile resources specifically tailored for students within the field of personality assessment (e.g., an internship database, research collaboration systems).

In sum, I believe my history of involvement in SPAGS and SPA has made me a highly qualified candidate for your next SPAGS President-Elect, and I am eager and ready to accept this responsibility. I would be honored to serve in this position for the upcoming term, and I am grateful for your careful consideration.

Callie Jowers

My name is Callie, and I am excited to be considered for the President-Elect and Member-At-Large positions of the SPAGS executive board. I am a third-year clinical psychology doctoral student at the University of Detroit Mercy, where I work with Dr. Steven Huprich and Dr. John Porcerelli. Broadly speaking, my research interests include personality, personality disorders, personality assessment, and the role of therapist and client personality in psychotherapy process and outcome. Recently, I have been working on a few projects exploring the convergence and divergence of personality disorder prototypes across several assessment measures (e.g., SWAP-200, Psychodynamic Diagnostic Manual, and DSM-5), as well as comparing the pathological trait profiles of prototypes across methods. I have also studied the role of therapist personality in psychotherapy. I truly appreciate the role of personality in clinical work and have been excited about studying personality within multiple areas of the field.

I am also passionate about student organizations and serving in a leadership role within those organizations. Some of my experiences include acting as vice president of Psi Chi as a graduate student, as well as secretary when I was completing my undergraduate degree. As an undergraduate student, I also served as vice president of a philanthropic, all women's social organization. While completing my master's degree, I believed that undergraduate students could benefit from graduate student mentorship. As a result, I worked with the psychology department faculty to develop an undergraduate-graduate student mentorship program for the department. I see myself as someone who enjoys connecting with other students, as well as working toward the advancement of the organization as a whole. I find that I have a strong commitment for service, and I believe that these experiences have prepared me for taking on a leadership role in SPAGS. I would truly appreciate the opportunity to be a voice for the graduate student members of SPA, as well as connect with and foster relationships with and between other student members and the larger organization.

Outside of academia and clinical work, I enjoy socializing with my cohort (whom I consider dear friends as well as colleagues), working out, traveling, and trying new coffee shops and restaurants around the metro Detroit area. Again, thank you for your consideration of my nomination for the President-Elect and Member-At-Large positions.

Thank you,
Callie

Member-at-Large Candidates

A. Esin “Essie” Asan

Hi! My name is Esin Asan, I go by Essie, and I am running for a Member at Large position in the Society of Personality Assessment Graduate Student Association. I am a Clinical Psychology doctoral student at the Pennsylvania State University, working with Dr. Aaron Pincus. Specifically, I am interested in enhancing our assessment measures of traits, perceptions and interpersonal behaviors of personality disorder patients. As I develop my program of research, I hope to employ novel quantitative methods to examine the validity of assessments measures through the lens of interpersonal theory. I am currently working on a study in Dr. Pincus’s lab using Continuous Assessment of Interpersonal Dynamics in addition to various personality assessment measures in order to understand how personality traits influence interpersonal behavior.

I am looking forward to learning effective ways to integrate my assessment focus with psychotherapy in my clinical work, as well. SPA's symposia and workshops that focus on therapeutic assessment will enrich my experience as a researcher and a student therapist, helping me create specialized treatment plans for patients with significant personality pathologies. Being a Member-at-Large of SPAGS would allow me to be an integral part of the biggest personality assessment convention in the country, which fosters career development opportunities for assessment scientists, students and professionals alike. Understanding personality structure is the key to understanding human behavior. It is imperative that our assessment measures validly and reliably measure the personality constructs we are aiming to conceptualize. I am thus privileged to run for a position in the graduate student association of an organization dedicated to developing sound measures of personality traits and structures. One of my aims is to increase effectiveness and personalization of psychotherapy through interpersonal assessment. I am passionate about advocating for the inclusion of personality assessment in all clinical assessment and psychotherapy settings. It is thus imperative that there are organizations like SPA that foster the exchange of ideas between scientists and clinicians. I aspire to contribute to SPA, as I know that I would not have the opportunity to share a rich academic environment with such prominent assessment psychologists elsewhere.

As an international student and a queer Middle Eastern woman, I am looking forward to helping out with the Diversity Committee, to make sure that SPAGS supports the inclusion of underrepresented communities in assessment science. Diversity is vital. Making sure we provide research and academic opportunities for people who may not be fully heard in our field would revitalize the community!

Outside of all this, I love cross-stitching, watching cooking shows, and (unsuccessfully) creating my own recipes.

Kelci Davis

Hi there! My name is Kelci Chezem Davis, and I am excitedly running for a Member at Large (MAL) position within the Society for Personality Assessment Graduate Student Association (SPAGS). I recently completed my master's degree at Sam Houston State University, and am currently in the first year of my Clinical Psychology doctoral program at the same university. For both my M.A. and Ph.D., I have been mentored by Dr. Jaime L. Anderson, an active member of SPA and the broader personality field.

Personally, this is my second year as a SPA student member. Last year, I presented both a paper presentation and a poster, and will be continuing to present this coming 2020 convention with a poster and a roundtable discussion. Although I have only experienced one year with SPAGS, I have found a welcoming environment that encourages personal and professional connection. I hope to continue cultivating, and enhancing, this same environment as a MAL. As a first-year doctoral student who entered with a master's, I am in the fortuitous position to have both free time and experience to commit to this board in my representation of its fellow members.

As a potential MAL, I hope to bring forward my research, clinical and personal experiences to provide a new perspective to this position. Specifically, my research focuses on multicultural and intersectional approaches to personality psychopathology, as well as furthering the understanding of dimensional models of personality and assessment. Meanwhile, my clinical work has been focused around forensic and inpatient settings. These demanding settings have helped me being developing into an adaptable and multifaceted practitioner. As someone dedicated to multiculturalism, forensics, social justice, and activism play a large role in professional identity, and I enjoy using my experience and knowledge to help educate and advocate within our field.

Additionally, I have previously been involved with a wide variety of psychology-related student organizations over my career which would make me an asset as a MAL. These experiences include programming, problem-solving, inter-organization communications, event planning, and broad organization skills. In my undergraduate career at the Missouri University of Science and Technology, I served as president for both the departmental psychological organization as well as our chapter of Psi Chi, as a peer-educator of health and wellness, and co-founded an organization for students in recovery from drug and alcohol use. As a graduate student, I have been grateful to have served as both member and Master's Vice President of our graduate student psychology organization, and currently serve on the Department of Psychology and Philosophy's Diversity Committee.

In conclusion, I would be honored to represent my fellow graduate students as I work to help SPAGs continue its mission of providing for its members, facilitating change and development, and providing an inclusive space of professional networking. I believe my past experiences, as well as my passion, will guide me to be a successful resource on the SPAGS board. Thank you for your consideration!

Alexandra Halberstadt

My name is Alexandra Halberstadt, and I am excited to be running for a Member at Large position in SPAGS! I am currently a first-year clinical psychology doctoral student at Pennsylvania State University, working with Dr. Aaron Pincus. My interests broadly center around validating and exploring different aspects of the Alternative Model of Personality Disorders (AMPD) in the DSM-5. My undergraduate thesis at Carnegie Mellon University involved looking at AMPD personality trait correlates of smoking behavior and nicotine dependence, and I hope to continue validating the structure of the AMPD through understanding how personality traits predict different behavioral outcomes. As I continue in my program of research, I hope to add to the growing body of knowledge that looks at the AMPD through an interpersonal lens.

Sound personality assessment is imperative to answering the scientific questions I am seeking to answer. That is why I am honored to run for a position in a society that values well-researched measurement instruments for personality, where I can advocate for and learn more about the wide breadth and depth of assessment research that is being conducted. In addition to personality measures being used in my research, I intend to incorporate personality assessment into the conceptualization of clients in psychotherapy. I believe that understanding personality structure and dynamics is imperative to understanding the manifestation of a disorder and the best treatment recommendation, regardless of whether that disorder is a personality disorder or not. Being a Member at Large of SPAGS will allow me to gain a broader understanding of the personality assessment research community, and I hope to expose more graduate students to the opportunities that SPA can provide in the area of assessment. To me, being a Member at Large means I advocate for the importance of assessment research and for the integration of personality assessments in research and practice. I will strive to introduce more graduate students to these ideas.

Outside of my work in personality, I enjoy rock climbing, musical theatre, and reading! I am always down for book recommendations, whether or not they are about personality.