

## 2020 Rep-at-Large Candidate Statements

**Nicole Cain, PhD** - I am honored to be nominated to serve another term as Representative at Large for SPA. Being a member of the Board for the past 2 years has provided me with the opportunity to give back and serve a society that has given me so much throughout my career. I began attending the annual meetings when I was a graduate student at Penn State under the mentorship of Dr. Aaron Pincus. At my first conference, it was immediately clear to me that SPA was a welcoming and collegial society and a professional home where I could learn and grow from the very best in the field of personality assessment.

As I transitioned from graduate student to faculty member, SPA has continued to influence and shape my career trajectory. I have regularly presented my work at the annual meetings and many of the publications that I am most proud of in my career have been published in the *Journal of Personality Assessment*. It has also been an honor to serve as an Associate Editor for JPA for the past 3 years. This position has given me the unique opportunity to connect with members of SPA in a different capacity and has allowed me to see firsthand the excellent research that is going on in our field.

I am actively involved in teaching, researching, and supervising personality assessment, with an emphasis on personality pathology and interpersonal processes. SPA's annual meetings always leave me inspired in my scholarship and in my clinical practice and I am passionate about training the next generation of psychologists who focus on personality assessment. As a mentor, it is wonderful to watch my graduate students present their work at SPA's annual meeting and for them to experience the collegial atmosphere that SPA fosters.

For the past 2 years, I have served as a Representative at Large on the Board, as Chair of the Student Matters Committee, and as a member of the Continuing Education Committee. These positions have given me the opportunity to be actively involved in the society and I welcome the opportunity to continue serving as a member of the Board. In my role as Chair of the Student Matters Committee, I advocated for the expansion of the eligibility criteria for the Diversity Support Grant to be more inclusive of a range of diverse identities, including but not limited to ethnic and racial minorities, professionals or students who are or were first-generation college students, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and people with disabilities. I am proud that this expansion led to SPA providing increased travel support to more individuals from diverse backgrounds during my time on the Board. I also strongly supported extending the qualifications for Early Career Members from 3 years post-graduation to 5 years post-graduation in order to ease the financial burden of membership for early career psychologists.

During my time on the Board, I have actively sought out ways to encourage student contributions and membership, and alleviate some of the roadblocks that make it difficult for students and early career psychologists to attend the annual meeting and stay engaged in our society. SPA was integral in my transition from graduate student to early career psychologist to associate professor, and I hope to continue to find ways to help others maintain their connection to our society as they move

through various stages of their career. As a Board member, I will continue to maintain and build on SPA's strong foundation to promote personality assessment in practice, teaching, and research.

**Raja M. David, PsyD, ABPP, LP** - With honor and gratitude for the opportunity, I am running for a Representative at Large position for the Society of Personality Assessment's (SPA) Board of Trustees. Personality and personality assessment have been at the core of my work as a clinician and educator since my doctoral research on the MMPI-A and Rorschach in forensic evaluations of juveniles. If elected, I endeavor to work with those in SPA to further promote the utility of personality assessment as a significant component of mental health treatment. In addition, critical goals appear to be that we continue to build SPA's membership, find innovative uses of technology, and ensure that we are an organization that values and embraces diversity.

Conducting psychological evaluations following the traditional clinical model and the Collaborative/Therapeutic Assessment (C/TA) model have been central to my work at my private practice in St. Paul, Minnesota. Since my doctoral internship I have conducted forensic evaluations, and early on learned the importance of combining objective and performance-based tests when measuring personality. In the past my forensic work included the evaluation of adults, but I have primarily worked with adolescents and their parents as part of the juvenile justice system. My current forensic work consists of the evaluation of adolescents for competency to stand trial and psychosexual evaluations. Regardless of the type of assessment, I strive to measure personality characteristics using valid methods and write about personality in ways that are meaningful to clients and referring professionals.

Over the last few years, I have focused on conducting, promoting, and teaching C/TA. Since my initial training in 2012, I have completed C/TAs with over 100 clients and have witnessed the power of this approach. My passion for C/TA has contributed to me writing articles for the TA Connection, co-leading SPA's C/TA Interest Group, and presenting on the model at SPA Conferences, the International Collaborative/Therapeutic Conferences, and the Minnesota Psychological Association Annual Conference. In addition to training clinicians, I have provided supervision and consultation to local psychologists and mental health centers looking to implement C/TA. Such consultation has focused not only on clinicians' knowledge and skills, but also logistical aspects such as billing, scheduling and documentation.

Prior to earning my Doctorate in Clinical Psychology at the Minnesota School of Professional Psychology (MSPP) at Argosy University, I taught middle school social studies. My teaching career continued when I became a psychologist, initially in adjunct positions and eventually as an Assistant Professor at MSPP. In that role, I taught a variety of doctoral level courses on the Rorschach, psychological assessment of children, and Therapeutic Assessment. Promotions led to administrative roles at MSPP as the Director of Training and then Program Dean, which placed me in the position of leading the program from 2016 through the Argosy closings of 2019. Both administrative roles helped me develop a greater level of understanding of competency in assessment and related supervision. I successfully shepherded the program through a 2018 American Psychological Association (APA) self-study and MSPP received 10 years of accreditation. The challenge of writing a self-study and preparing for an accreditation visit required me to deeply understand the APA Standards of Accreditation (SoA) and current trends in educating and training future psychologists. Leading the program through the Argosy closure was a lesson in leading an organization and its constituents during a time of crisis.

Lastly, from 2011 to 2016, I served on the Minnesota Board of Psychology, including two years as Vice-Chair, which contributed to my greater understanding of regulatory matters concerning the provision of psychological services. Being a board member and committee chair were lessons in themselves that would benefit me and the SPA Board of Trustees, should I be elected. When I left the Board, I received a cherished compliment from a colleague who described me as having “relentless common sense.” I see that descriptor as capturing my clear thinking when it comes to working toward a common goal and ensuring both the task and the relationships are properly attended to. I hope to use these abilities and my knowledge to contribute to an active board that supports the future development of SPA and personality assessment.

**Leonard J. Simms, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry, University at Buffalo

It is my pleasure and honor to be nominated for a representative-at-large position on the Society of Personality Assessment Board of Trustees. I have been involved in the assessment community—both as a researcher developing assessment instruments and as a clinician conducting and supervising assessments in the clinic—for over 20 years. Over that time, my assessment research has focused on the development of models and measures of personality, personality pathology, and transdiagnostic psychopathology constructs. I'm particularly interested in translating modern psychopathology models and measures into forms that can and will be useful for practicing clinicians.

As such, SPA is a natural home for me and my work, and I enthusiastically look forward to serving the organization as a representative-at-large and being part of its evolution moving forward. In particular, I am interested in initiatives that seek to promote modern assessment methods in the education and practice of clinical psychologists.

In terms of my qualifications, I earned my PhD in Clinical Psychology from the University of Iowa and have been faculty at the University at Buffalo since 2003. I currently serve as Associate Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry. In addition to my teaching and research, I am committed to service to the field. I currently serve as Co-Editor of *Personality and Mental Health* and Associate Editor of *Psychological Assessment* and the *Journal of Research in Personality*. Moreover, I have previously served on the Boards of the Society for Research in Psychopathology, Society for a Science of Clinical Psychology, and the Association for Research in Personality. In addition, I previously was awarded the Samuel J. and Anne G. Beck Award from SPA for excellence in early career research.

**Elizabeth Wheeler, PhD** - It is an honor to be nominated for a Representative at Large position on the SPA Board of Trustees. I would like to start by introducing myself. After completing my internship at the Charleston Consortium Internship Training Program, I obtained my doctoral degree in 2012 from Virginia Commonwealth University. During my career, I have worked in both private practice and state hospital settings. Currently, I am in a forensic practice in Virginia and conduct evaluations including competency, sanity, custody, sex offender, fitness for duty, and preemployment evaluations.

I began my career as an undergraduate when I worked as a psychometrician for a neuropsychologist. This provided an opportunity to explore the world of assessment and I was fascinated. My interest in assessment continued into my graduate training and my dissertation involved evaluating the incremental validity of psychometric test results in a sample of custody litigants. During my time at Central State Hospital in Virginia, I had the opportunity to collect data from a sample of individuals who had been found not guilty by reason of insanity and these data have yielded several studies and publications on this unique group of individuals. Since completing my doctorate, I co-edited the second edition of *Forensic Uses of Clinical Assessment Instruments* and currently serve on the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Personality Assessment*. I am the Co-Leader of the SPA Forensic Interest Group.

I first began attending SPA annual conventions in 2010 as a student affiliate and over the years SPA has become my professional home. My experiences at SPA have shaped my practice and my relationship to assessment. This has included workshops and seminars which led me to new areas of practice such as Federal Aviation Administration evaluations and immigration evaluations. I have learned that training does not stop at the conclusions of formal training sessions. I am indebted to several leaders in assessment who have taken the time to mentor me in the development of new assessment skills. This is a huge strength of our organization and is something that I hope to foster for others in the future.

I am motivated to run for a Representative at Large position by a desire to be of service to an organization from which I have obtained so much. I wish to help other young psychologists follow the path I was able to as they become a lifelong participant in our amazing community advancing from Student Affiliate to Early Career Member to Member. I would also like to foster ways to increase our visibility in the forensic arena. Forensic psychology is an area where growth is occurring and where continued personality assessment training and research is crucial. I wish to continue to support the range and exceptional quality of our conference presentations which I have come to value over my years of attendance. I believe enhancing the conference presentations will be instrumental in growing our membership.

In summary, I have the professional experience and history with SPA to provide leadership and assist the organization to continue to grow and attract not only seasoned professional psychologist but also those young professionals who will assist SPA to grow and expand.