

Archived SSSR Newsletter, 6-25-98

June 25, 1998

To: Members of SSSR

From: Ralph E. Reynolds, President

Re: News Update

Annual Meetings: Our fifth annual meeting in San Diego was in many ways the capstone of our society's first five years of operation. As an indication of just how far our group has come, it is instructive to take a comparative look at our first five meetings.

Although organizational meetings had occurred in the two previous years, the Society's first official meeting was at the Westin Hotel in New Orleans in 1994. This first meeting lasted a day and a half and was held in one small meeting room (capacity about 75). Approximately 75 members registered for the New Orleans conference to hear the presentation of 33 papers. Our next meeting was in San Francisco where 90 registered attendees gathered to hear the presentation of 35 papers. At the third conference in New York, total registration was 138 and 54 papers were presented. Last year in Chicago, our conference drew 143 registrants. Seventy-five papers were listed on the program. As with every previous meeting, the San Diego meeting established new highs for number of members registered (approximately 210) and number of papers presented (114). Moreover, the sessions in San Diego were characterized by strong papers, standing room only attendance, and many intense, animated discussions. In five short years, SSSR has experienced a 345% increase in papers presented and a 280% increase in conference attendance. While it is not clear that unlimited growth is desirable, it is clear that SSSR is tapping into issues of interest to outstanding scholars from around the world.

Members Assessment of San Diegg Conference: Although only a small number of members turned in the session evaluation sheets (about 50 out of 210), these data reveal a generally high level of satisfaction with the conference. Members rated their overall satisfaction with the conference as 4.28 -- on a five-point Lickert scale where 5 = excellent and 1 = poor (SD >50). The data were then broken down so that assessment was possible of the overall presentation quality of the papers presented in the various session types. These results are as follows: the awards session was ranked the highest by a wide margin followed by the plenary sessions, the concurrent sessions, and the poster session. However, all of the papers presented were generally given high marks (90% were rated 3.80 or higher).

Members were also asked to rate the effectiveness of each presentation format. The results from this question showed the same pattern of results as the quality question: the awards session was ranked the highest by a wide margin followed by the plenary sessions, the concurrent sessions, and the poster session. Several members noted that poster sessions would be more effective if there were ways provided to quickly identify the location of specific posters.

Finally, members were asked to rate their level of interest in the papers given in each session format. Again, the results showed the same pattern the quality question: awards session, the plenary sessions, the concurrent sessions, and the poster session.

Members written comments revealed that they particularly appreciated the handouts and one-page abstracts prepared by the presenters, the refreshments between sessions, and the fact that the all posters were in one room. Major concerns identified were the need for all presenters to provide handouts and abstracts, lack of time to share and discuss information after each presentation, and the non-stop pace of the conference.

Annual Meeting in Montreal: Next year, we will convene our sixth annual meeting in Montreal near the end of AERA. More specifically, SSSR will meet from 9:00 A.M. on Friday, April 23rd to 12:00 noon on Sunday, April 25th, 1999. These dates were chosen in a special e-mail pole of SSSR board members to avoid any conflict with the annual meeting of Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) which meets from April 15th to April 18th, 1999.

We are now in the process of negotiating for hotel accommodations in Montreal. We hope to avoid the problems we encountered during the San Diego meeting (meeting in two different hotels, numerous room changes, limited room capacity, etc.) by finding a hotel near the AERA venues that is not part of the AERA conference. That way, the attention of the hotel's staff will be on meeting our needs, rather than those of AERA.

I hope to see as many of you as possible in Montreal. If you have any suggestions regarding the organization of the meeting, please let us know. Be sure to urge your colleagues who are not yet members to attend as well.

Stockholm: At the business meeting held at the end of the San Diego conference, the members present voted unanimously to hold our annual meeting in the year 2000 in Stockholm, Sweden. We will meet in conjunction with the XXVII International Congress of Psychology - already scheduled to most from July 23rd to July 21st of that year. The SSSR Board will be working with Professor Ingvar Lundberg to plan the meeting. This decision is in line with an SSSR Board policy adopted in 1996 which commits the Society to attempt to hold Its annual meeting in Europe every fifth year.

Program Proposals Due: The Call for Proposals is enclosed. Note that the deadline is September 15th and that proposals are to be sent to Dr. Charles Perfetti, LRDC, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh PA 15260. E-mail submissions are welcome. (Perfetti+@pitt.edu).

Forthcoming Election. Also included in the mailing is a ballot on which to vote for one new member of the SSSR Board. Please vote as soon as possible by returning this ballot to Dr. Patricia Alexander. Her address is: University of Maryland, Dept. of Human Development, College Park, MD, 20742-1131

Distinguished Fellow of SSSR Award: This year the Awards Committee will select up to three recipients for the Distinguished Fellow Award. This award is a life-long title bestowed on individuals who, through contributions across their careers, have served extraordinarily to

advance the pursuit, application, and appreciation of the scientific understanding of reading. Distinguished Fellows have their annual membership dues waived for three years. John Carroll was named Distinguished Fellow three years ago. Bob Caffee will head this committee and will be joined by Rebecca Treiman, Anne Cunningham, Al Liberman, and Don Shankweiler. Be sure to send your nominations to Bob within the next few months.

Outstanding Scientific Contribution to the Study of Reading Award: this award recognizes specific empirical, theoretical, or scholarly work or collection of works that have served significantly to further the professional scientific understanding of reading, its acquisition, or its instruction. Rebecca Trieman will chair this committee. Be sure to send your nominations to her as soon as possible.

Journal: At the San Diego meeting, SSSR board members voted unanimously to request that current SSSR Editor, Dr. Joanna Williams, serve another term. Joanna has consented; hence, she will continue her fine work for another three years. Among many other things, Joanna is to be commended for maintaining excellent quality control over the articles that have been published in the Journal (89% rejection rate on first review). I wish to thank her, both personally and for the Society, for her willingness to continue.

Web Page: The SSSR Board has recommended we create a web page. We hope to have it operational by the end of August. We welcome your input and will take all feedback into account. Please email your comments to Donna Salmen (salmen@gse.utah.edu).

Membership Directory: If you have a chance, be sure to express gratitude to our Association Manager, Darlene Beeman, who handles so many matters promptly and with great care. Her latest accomplishment is the updated directory which is enclosed. Be sure to check the information listed and send any corrections to: Beemand@smtpgate.umkc.edu

Have a great summer! Don't forget to vote and don't forget to submit your proposals by September 15th, 1998.

Enclosures:

Call for Papers
Proposal Cover Sheet
Election Ballot and return envelope (Voting members only)
Membership Directory