

Spring 2012

The Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research holds its 37th Annual meeting November 16-17 at the Avenue Hotel in Chicago (see page 1).

Papers and panels on all matters of survey methods and public opinion theory are welcome at MAPOR 2012 (see page 2).

Student authors are encouraged to submit to the MAPOR Fellows Student Paper Competition for MAPOR 2012 (see page 3).

Meet the Incoming Public Opinion Quarterly Editors at AAPOR 2012 (see page 6).

An update from the **MAPOR Executive Council** (See page 1).

MAPORtraits looks at member appreciation of MAPOR involvement (see pages 4-5).

A brief **Financial and Membership report** (see page 7).

After the conference see Illini vs. Boilermakers; Badgers vs. Buckeyes; Cornhuskers vs. Golden Gophers; and Wolverines vs. Hawkeyes.

Public Opinion Innovations: MAPOR 2012

By Kristen Olson, MAPOR Conference Chair, University of Nebraska-Lincoln



W

e are constantly changing what we

do, how we do it, and how we understand the world. With new technologies, new sample frames, new political and social movements, and new theoretical frameworks, the world in which we live and do research is rapidly changing. At the heart of studying these changes lies innovation – innovation in how we do public opinion and survey research and in how we understand the social, political and economic world around us.

The theme for the 2012 MAPOR conference is “Innovations in Measuring and Understanding Public Opinion.” Innovations can be seen in how data are collected, ranging from social media to web scraping to administrative records to smartphone and tablet surveys. Measurement devices, including biomarkers, interviewer observations, new wording for survey questions, and use of web trend data, are changing how we do public opinion research. Since 2012 is a Presidential election year, innovations in predicting likely voters and vote choice and in understanding the properties of non-probability sample-based election polls are always needed. Greater conceptual clarity in understanding why people think and do what they think and do, from advances in theory to new parameterization of existing theories, are the core of scientific innovation. *Continued on page 7*

An Update from the MAPOR Council

By Michael Traugott, MAPOR President, University of Michigan



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he MAPOR Council met in Chicago

in April and spent the better part of a Saturday dealing with a variety of issues related to the conduct of the chapter’s business. The chapter is on strong financial footing, and we have benefited from the careful planning of Tim Johnson and Joe Murphy for our 2011 Conference.

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Call for Participation
37th Annual Conference of the
Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research
November 16-17, 2012
The Avenue Crowne Plaza Hotel and Suites, Chicago, IL
“Innovations in Measuring and Understanding Public Opinion”

The Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research’s 37th annual conference welcomes paper, poster, and panel proposals exploring innovations in public opinion research. Abstracts on any topic related to public opinion research, theory, or methodology are equally welcome. These topics may include, among others: political polling; media influences on public opinion; public opinion on social, economic, and political issues; data collection issues and strategies; qualitative research techniques; cross-cultural or special population research; non-response and survey quality issues. In addition to presentation at the conference, authors will have the option to post accepted papers online at www.mapor.org after the conference.

Paper and Poster Presentations:

Submitted abstracts must be in MS Word format and be 300 words or less. Please include a cover sheet identifying the contact author and including the following information for **all authors**.

- Name,
- Institutional affiliation, and
- E-mail address.

The same author’s name may appear on a **maximum of two submissions**. To allow for blind review, please remove all personally identifying information from the abstract’s text before submission.

Note to student authors: If all authors are students who will be enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate program at the time of the conference, please indicate that the paper is a student paper. To be considered, a student paper must list the name of a faculty mentor on the abstract’s cover sheet. The faculty mentor must send a separate e-mail of 25 or fewer words endorsing the paper. Student authors also should consider participating in the MAPOR Fellows Student Paper Competition.

Panel Proposals:

Panels focus on a common theme and include 4 or 5 participants. Submit a written proposal (300 words or less) in MS Word format discussing the issues to be addressed and their importance. In addition, submissions should list the potential panelists, their institutional affiliations, email addresses, their areas of expertise, and tentative titles of presentations. Panels related to the conference theme are especially encouraged.

Submission Information:

All abstracts must be received no later than **5 p.m. CDT on June 29, 2012**. Accepted papers that share a theme will be scheduled for presentation during a paper session. Papers with more individualized topics will be scheduled for presentation during a poster session. MAPOR considers both types equally valuable. All submitters will be notified by Aug. 15 of their abstract’s disposition. Please submit abstracts as electronic attachments in MS Word format via e-mail to **abstracts@mapor.org**. Abstracts also may be sent by regular mail to:

Kristen Olson, MAPOR Conference Chair
 University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Department of Sociology
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2012 MAPOR Fellows Student Paper Competition

In coordination with the 37th Annual Conference of the
Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research
November 16-17, 2012

The Avenue Crowne Plaza Hotel and Suites, Chicago, IL

“Innovations in Measuring and Understanding Public Opinion”

The Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research invites eligible students to enter the association’s MAPOR Fellows Student Paper Competition. Two winning papers, one in public opinion and the other in survey research methodology, will receive an award of \$200, one free conference registration and one free ticket to the Friday MAPOR luncheon. The winning papers also will be accepted for presentation during a session at the May 2013 AAPOR conference in Boston, MA.

Eligibility:

For the purposes of this competition, a student is someone enrolled in a graduate or undergraduate program at the time of the conference. A paper authored by more than one person is considered a student paper only if all authors are students according to the above definition. Students need not be members of MAPOR.

The topic of the paper must fall under one or both of MAPOR’s general areas of scholarship, which are (1) public opinion and (2) survey research methodology. When submitting, the author(s) must indicate the topic for which the paper should be considered. The papers need not be quantitative nor must they report data in order to qualify for consideration in this competition.

Procedure:

1) Students first need to submit an abstract of their paper, conforming to the 2012 MAPOR Call for Papers (see the call for more information). Deadline for submission is 5 p.m. CDT, June 29, 2012. Students should specify on a page accompanying the abstract that they are students. Send the submission by electronic mail to abstracts@mapor.org.

2) Once students have been informed that their paper has been accepted for the 2012 conference, they will need to submit a full paper electronically to Steve Everett at see@everettgroup.com, by September 21, 2012, to be eligible for consideration for the student paper competition. All should be standard letter size (8.5 x 11 pages), single column with Times New Roman 12-point font and one-inch margins, and follow the guidelines in the *POQ* instructions to authors (http://www.oxfordjournals.org/our_journals/poq/for_authors/general.html). No hard-copy papers will be accepted. All papers must be accompanied by the name of the author(s), USPS address(es), phone number(s), email address(es), and the name and email address of the faculty sponsor for the paper.

3) Student paper submissions must be accompanied by a nomination email of 25 or fewer words from a faculty sponsor endorsing the paper.

A committee composed of MAPOR Fellows will make the awards. Winners will be announced at MAPOR’s luncheon.

MAPOR *traits:*



David Chearo, University of Chicago Survey Lab

As one of many AAPOR chapters and affiliates, I feel we in MAPOR have license to be unassumingly satisfied with the peerless quality of our acronym. I admire the sense of Midwestern modesty and the positive attitude the name evokes when pronounced aloud. Some might argue that PAPER is stronger, but as an AASRO participant, I enjoy the respite from acronyms that look too much like real words.

As someone relatively new to the field and still learning the ropes, MAPOR has provided me with a tremendous “home” association. As the new director of the University of Chicago Survey Lab, I have benefited greatly from my four years of attending the MAPOR conference. I gave my first survey methods conference presentation there, preparing for AAPOR, and

found the discussant’s feedback and audience questions to be indispensable.

The Survey Lab is a small academic center, and MAPOR gives our staff and students the rare combination of professional development, networking, and bonding opportunities that we could not find or afford anywhere else. I love that we can bring graduate student project managers and undergraduate RAs, and that they are all able to find sessions of interest. I love that the post-presentation Q & A can turn into a brainstorming session, in which respected experts and students can freely inform one another’s thoughts on important methodological issues.

The pedagogy hour has been one of my favorite parts of the MAPOR conference. Sitting down with such a diverse group of experts and students to learn something new is a great feeling. We face many challenges in the survey research field and will see much innovation in the coming years, and I can’t imagine a better environment for the incubation of ideas.

Clarissa Steele, University of Wisconsin-Madison

I attended my first MAPOR meeting in 2008, as a first-year master’s student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. MAPOR was my first professional introduction to the field of survey research. I had a bit of trepidation going to the conference as I had just switched professional fields (from international education) and I was unsure what to expect. Fortunately, the people I met at the conference were friendly and encouraging and the presentations from practitioners and students were interesting and insightful. The next year when I presented research from my summer internship, my worries had left as I looked forward to meeting new colleagues and learning more about my chosen field.



Now as the lone survey researcher in my educational research department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I continue to attend MAPOR conferences to reconnect with other survey researchers, meet new students from regional university programs, and learn about the latest research in the field. MAPOR is my chance to stay current on survey methodology and to present new work. At MAPOR, I can talk about surveys and methodology in a way that I usually can’t in my office. And, because of the smaller size of the annual MAPOR conference compared to the AAPOR conference, I have the opportunity to meet other colleagues in small survey “shops” who understand the challenges I face daily being the sole survey researcher in my unit.

I am grateful for the opportunities that MAPOR provides its members to learn and grow in the profession. We are lucky to have a regional chapter dedicated to promoting good research and making connections year round and colleagues willing to trek hundreds of miles to attend MAPOR’s annual conference every November.



John Stevenson, University of Wisconsin Survey Center

I'm the associate director here at the UW-Madison Survey shop. The center has grown over the years from a small shop of 7 or 8 full time employees to a fairly large one with more than 40. In that time, the role of MAPOR has changed and grown. My first attendance was at the request of Professor Dietram Scheufele, and to be honest, my major goal was simply to avoid getting arrested. In recent years however, this has changed dramatically. Now it serves a multitude of purposes for our center and staff, and last year I found myself wanting to figure out how to help better give back to the organization. And, of course, to distance myself from the organization's "undesirables."

For us, I think we are just beginning to develop a deeper relationship with MAPOR. In the past five plus years, Jen Dykema has developed a rather extensive program of in-house methodological experimentation here at the UW Survey Center. We have begun attending and presenting results from our experiments annually, and are encouraging graduate students and other staff to attend and present at MAPOR. As our center has grown, we have begun using MAPOR (& AAPOR) as an opportunity to expand our opportunities for professional growth and for increasing our methodological knowledge. The MAPOR conference provides a great space for us, our graduate students and our staff to present new findings, learn from colleagues and network with other great Midwestern universities. Do I really need to note that people from places like Illinois, Nebraska, Michigan and Wisconsin are naturally just much better company than people from the coasts?

Certainly the most enjoyable thing about MAPOR is the opportunity to meet up with old friends and colleagues and make new friendships and partnerships. The work lives we have are extremely busy, with rarely enough time to catch our breath. Having the opportunity to meet up and talk with all these fantastic midwestern survey researchers in a relaxed but thoughtful atmosphere is always both stimulating and entertaining. I find the MAPOR conference just right - serious, yet relaxed enough to allow colleagues to have the time and space to develop their ideas, and converse with colleagues without being rushed off to some endless banquet (Ok, now I'm just pandering for laughs).

As for giving back, word has it I will be helping to raise money for MAPOR in the future. So when I call, please: no refusals.

Congratulations to the 2011 student paper competition winners

Public Opinion Winners:

Bryan McLaughlin and David Wise, University of Wisconsin-Madison, "Testing the God Strategy: How Candidates' Religious Discourse Interacts with Voter Religiosity to Affect Political Outcomes".

Survey Research Methodology Winner:

Brian M. Wells, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, "Accounting for Nonresponse Bias in the Nebraska Behavioral Health Consumer Survey".

Honorable Mentions in the Public Opinion category:

(1) Brendan R. Watson, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, School of Journalism & Mass Communication, "The Agenda-Setting Effect of "A-List" Political Blog: A Time-Series Analysis of Presidential Approval Ratings in 2009".

(2) Samara Mani Klar, Northwestern University, Department of Political Science, "Identity Matters: Independents as Politically Engaged Citizens".

Honorable Mention in the Survey Research Methodology category:

Christopher Antoun, University of Michigan, Program in Survey Methodology, "Interviewer Ratings of Respondents Who Changed their Answers about Sex Partners".

MEET the Incoming *Public Opinion Quarterly* Editors at AAPOR 2012

On **Friday, May 18, from 3:15pm to 4:15pm** in Mediterranean 4 & 5, Patricia Moy and Tom W. Smith will be greeting AAPOR members and answering questions.

While you're in Orlando, be sure to stop by this event!

An Update from the MAPOR Council

Continued from page 1.

We have appointed Kumar Rao as our webmaster. We will propose a procedure for electing a member to the position of Associate Secretary Treasurer at our annual business meeting at the November conference. We expect to appoint an Associate Secretary Treasurer shortly thereafter.

We will be actively participating in the All Chapter Reception on the evening of Thursday, May 17, at the AAPOR annual conference in Orlando. We hope that those of you in attendance will stop by and enter into our jelly bean count guessing game. A major prize will be awarded at the end of the reception for the closest guess. This will provide an opportunity for you to connect with other MAPOR members and to talk up the chapter to new AAPOR members who have not signed on with us yet.

The recently completed Member Survey after the 2011 conference shows continued high levels of satisfaction with our conference arrangements and the conference hotel. At our meeting last fall, a small subset of the Council negotiated an extension of our relationship with the Avenue Hotel. The rates will increase slightly, but we have made a new arrangement for internet access in some areas of the hotel without charge. We are also considering alternative arrangements for on-site registration that should speed up the process and avoid the congestion that sometimes occurs. We look forward to your reactions to these arrangements after the next conference.

By now you should have seen both the 2012 Conference Call for Papers and the announcement of the Student Paper Competitions. Kristen Olsen will be organizing the conference around the theme of "Innovations in Measuring and Understanding Public Opinion," and we expect that this will produce a large number of proposals. The conference will include a short course and a poster session as well. And we will plan for a luncheon speaker who will address what looks like a very interesting election campaign that is taking shape.

Please feel free to contact me or any other Council member with any questions or suggestions that you have about MAPOR and its operations. Our goal is to be as responsive as possible.

Brief Financial and Membership Report

Diana Greene, RTI Secretary/Treasurer, RTI International

I'm pleased to report that MAPOR has continued to grow this past year. We have increased conference attendance and membership while decreasing conference expenses. Below is a brief report:

Conference Attendance

2011: 200
2010: 144

Dues paying membership

2011: 243
2010: 197

Conference Expenses

2011: \$19,453.53
2010: \$27,262.00

Conference Revenue

2011: \$25,234.00
2010: \$22,406.00

Let's try for over 200 conference attendees this year!

Continued from page 1.

Many other topics are sure to come to mind for this year's conference. As always, we welcome abstracts on any topic related to public opinion research, theory, or methodology. These topics may include, among others: political polling; media influences on public opinion; public opinion on social, economic, and political issues; data collection issues and strategies; qualitative research techniques; cross-cultural or special population research; non-response and data quality issues.

As in 2011, in addition to presentation at the conference, authors will have the option to post accepted papers online at www.mapor.org after the conference.

Please see the call for papers included in this newsletter and at www.mapor.org for details. We look forward to seeing you in Chicago this fall!

2012 MAPOR Leadership:

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