

The Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research holds its 36th Annual meeting November 18-19 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 2011 (see page 2).

Student authors are encouraged to submit to the MAPOR Fellows Student Paper Competition for MAPOR 2011 (see page 3).

Nominations for MAPOR vice president/president elect and conference co-chair are being accepted through June 30. These are 2-year commitments. Contact MAPOR President Tim Johnson (timj@uic.edu) with nominations.

Meet the MAPOR Authors at AAPOR 2011 (see page 6).

MAPOR Executive Committee uses member survey to plan November conference. (See page 1).

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

After the conference see Illini vs. Badgers; Wolverines vs. Cornhuskers and Buckeyes vs. Nittny Lions.

Public Opinion Frontiers: MAPOR 2011

By Joe Murphy, MAPOR Conference Chair, RTI International



*F*rontier conjures up many images—rugged pioneers and covered wagons, conflict and confrontation at borderlands, even space... the final frontier. It was the Midwest (as we now know it) where Lewis and Clark and their Corps of Discovery made the transition in their famous expedition into an exploration of unknown space. The Midwest is also a place where we can begin an expedition to the frontiers of public opinion research. Our field is bordered by many complementary disciplines, such as political science, psychology, information technology, anthropology, economics and linguistics, as well as substantive areas of research like health and health care, public policy and government, education, energy, environment, and transportation.

The theme for the 2011 MAPOR conference is “Public Opinion Frontiers.” Let’s take a more expansive look at public opinion research and consider the topics and methods of importance in our own field as well as those at the borders of our traditional scope.

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MAPOR Continues to Serve Its Members

By Timothy Johnson, MAPOR President, University of Illinois



*W*elcome to MAPOR 2011. Our

Association’s Executive Board met this past March to begin making plans for this year’s activities. We’re planning to have an active presence during the New Member/All-Chapter Reception that AAPOR will be hosting during its May conference. We hope to use it as an opportunity to highlight MAPOR’s contributions and to encourage young professionals to join our organization.

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Call for Participation
36th Annual Conference of the
Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research
November 18-19, 2011
The Avenue Crowne Plaza Hotel and Suites, Chicago, IL
“Public Opinion Frontiers”

The Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research’s 36th annual conference welcomes paper, poster, and panel proposals exploring the frontiers of 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 public policy, social, economic, and political issues; data collection issues and strategies; quantitative or qualitative research techniques; cross-cultural or special population research; non-response; survey quality; and survey error. 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 or PDF format and no longer than 300 words. Please include a cover sheet indicating *all* authors' names, institutional affiliations, and e-mail addresses. 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 (announcement forthcoming).

Panel Proposals: Panels focus on a common theme and include 4 or 5 participants. Submit a written proposal in MS Word or PDF format and no longer than 300 words discussing the issues to be addressed and their importance. In addition, submissions should list the potential panelists, 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 30, 2011**. Accepted papers that share a theme will be scheduled for presentation during a paper session. Papers with more individualized topics may 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 or PDF format via e-mail to abstracts@mapor.org. Alternatively, abstracts may appear in the e-mail’s body. Abstracts also may be sent by regular mail to:

Joe Murphy, MAPOR Conference Chair
 RTI International, 230 W. Monroe St., Suite 2100
 Chicago, IL 60606

2011 MAPOR Fellows Student Paper Competition

In coordination with the 36th Annual Conference of the
Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research
November 18-19, 2011

The Avenue Crowne Plaza Hotel and Suites, Chicago, IL

“Public Opinion Frontiers”

The Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research invites eligible students to enter the association’s MAPOR Fellows Student Paper Competition. Two winning papers, one under the topic of public opinion and the other under the topic of survey research methodology, will each 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 2012 AAPOR conference in Orlando, Florida.

Eligibility: For the purposes of this competition, a student is someone enrolled as a degree-seeking student in a graduate or undergraduate program at the time of the Conference. To be eligible, all co-authors of a paper must be degree-seeking students. Students need not be members of MAPOR.

The topic of the paper must conform to the general areas of scholarship that MAPOR addresses, which are (1) public opinion or (2) survey research methodology. The papers need not be quantitative nor must they report data in order to qualify for consideration in this competition.

The author(s) must indicate whether the paper should be considered for either topic (1) public opinion or (2) survey research methodology when submitting.

Procedure: 1) Students first need to submit an abstract of their paper, conforming to the 2011 MAPOR Call for Papers (see the call at www.mapor.org for more information). The deadline for abstract submission is 5 p.m. CDT, June 30, 2011. 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 a student has been informed that his/her paper has been accepted for the 2011 conference, the student will need to submit a full paper electronically to Professor Albert Gunther (University of Wisconsin – Madison) at agunther2@gmail.com by September 23, 2011 to be eligible for consideration for the 2011 student paper competition. No hard-copy papers will be accepted. All papers must be accompanied by the student’s name, USPS address, phone number, email address, and the name and e-mail address of the student’s faculty sponsor for the paper.

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

Congratulations to the 2010 student paper competition winners

1st place: “Filmed in Front of a Live Studio Audience: Using Laughter to Offset Aggression in Political Entertainment Programming” by **Emily K. Vraga, Courtney N. Johnson, D. Jasun Carr, Mitchell Bard, Leticia Bode, and Bryan McLaughlin.**

Honorable Mention: “Do Latinos exist? Comparing the political engagement of Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Cubans in the United States” by **Mitchell Bard.**

MAPOR *traits:*



Sharon Dunwoody, University of Wisconsin-Madison

My most vivid memory of my first MAPOR meeting, in 1978, remains my encounter with my two Ph.D. mentors, Cleve Wilhoit and Dave Weaver, in the lobby of a downtown Chicago hotel. I was a newly minted assistant professor at Ohio State who, thanks to Cleve's and Dave's advice, had submitted an abstract to this new organization. And for the ensuing weekend, the pleasure of reuniting with these treasured individuals was matched only by my sense of discovery of a group well suited to my needs. MAPOR was small, welcoming, focused on intellectual ferment but also driven by a desire to build a community. All it took was one meeting to lure me into a career of annual MAPOR gatherings.

In many ways, MAPOR gave this young assistant professor a sense of self efficacy. I could plan my presentation knowing that both the discussant and colleagues in the audience would approach my work with the goal of improving the scholarship. Some of the best critiques of my work took place at MAPOR, perhaps because colleagues were inspired by such folks as master discussant Phil Tichenor. I look forward to networking with some of the best researchers in the business, many of whom became close personal friends. My colleagues will readily acknowledge that I am rarely short of self-confidence. I credit groups such as MAPOR for aiding my sense of self early in my career when such help is critical.

I have been continually struck by the tenacity with which we all stuck with the organization. Graduate students who experienced MAPOR during their doctoral years at Midwestern universities keep returning despite the long distances between Chicago and their subsequent homes. Through the early years, a contingent made the trek each fall from Colorado institutions. Folks also continue to pour in from New York, Florida, Texas. Researchers who became MAPOR regulars during their Midwest years maintain the habit no matter where they have landed. Former OSU colleague Lee Becker did not let a shift to Georgia stop him from attending virtually every MAPOR meeting.

In the end, it is a combination of intellectual richness, collegial heartiness and a real sense of being valued by the organization that keeps us heading for Chicago each November. Although I have spent half of my academic career engaged in administration for a portion of my responsibilities, making research presentations at MAPOR intermittent, the organization still makes me feel like a full partner in the research enterprise. We members all belong to something that is both important and enduring.

Al Gunther, University of Wisconsin-Madison

I first heard about MAPOR's annual November meeting long before I attended one. I was a grad student at Stanford in the mid-1980s and Steve Chaffee was my adviser. The first time Steve mentioned the idea of attending an academic conference he mentioned MAPOR. I heard stories about the numerous adventures of Chaffee & McLeod driving a batch of graduate students to Chicago in a UW van.

But now I have my own stories. I've only missed one or two MAPOR meetings since 1988. I only missed those because I was on sabbatical. MAPOR has always been everything that's good about a big international conference without any of the negatives. It's easy to get to, it's inclusive, it's a great venue for graduate students who often get their first crack at professional-level presentation to a very smart but also very collegial crowd, it's regional. There is a critical mass of people from what I call the MAPOR diaspora – one-time grad students from Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Iowa – who were weaned from MAPOR when they took jobs in Seattle, South Carolina, Florida or Texas, but who often return to Chicago in November. You see a lot of the same people from year to year and get to know them. Colleagues become friends. It's a great honor to be a Fellow.

What else is good about MAPOR? It's in one of the world's great cities. Great food (I still haven't gone to Charlie Trotters). Great museums (where to start?). Great architecture (Architecture Foundation tour; the Aqua building). Great comedy (nearly every great person on Saturday Night Live started at Second City). Great art (there's a new wing at the Art Institute; Millennium Park and Cloud Gate).

You might describe MAPOR as a great training ground for grad students. But it would be a mistake to think it's a notch below any big national meeting. I've listened to some of the best talks I've heard anywhere at MAPOR. I've



thought of some of my best thoughts at MAPOR. The biggest grant I've received began with a conversation during the cocktail hour at MAPOR. If there's one place I know I'll be every year, it's Chicago in November, planning how to cross Michigan Avenue before the parade starts.



Mandy Sha, RTI International

MAPOR has been on my regular conference schedule since 2004. I enjoy the quality of the presentations, the pedagogy hour, and the keynote speech during the luncheon is always something not to miss. As a survey methodologist at RTI International's Chicago office, I know firsthand what a great venue MAPOR offers to attendees – the proximity to Chicago's Magnificent Mile is perfect for getting Christmas shopping under way!

MAPOR is student-friendly. For example, I assisted Joe Murphy with setting up a book exhibit last year, where all the books were free to students at the end of the conference. There was even a raffle for a \$350 research method encyclopedia! The MAPOR conference is also a welcoming venue to exchange research ideas with both established and early career researchers. At the 2010 conference, I presented a paper on translation pretesting method and received thoughtful, actionable feedback from Dr. Tim Johnson as well as from graduate students who are studying this topic. The feedback helped me to shape my research idea and gave me the confidence to share my findings with a larger audience at the national conference this May.

Eike Rinke, University of Mannheim

A PhD student from south Germany, it might seem surprising for me to be a member of MAPOR. But the organization and its annual conference have become a symbol of my connection to the U.S., a line that connects the dots of my U.S. experiences during the last couple of years.

It was during my time as a Fulbright student at George Washington University when through some channel – I don't remember which – I was alerted for the first time to a call for papers for MAPOR's annual meeting, an occasion that happily coincided with the completion of a course paper I thought was interesting enough to warrant presentation in a conference setting. I wound up giving my first ever presentation at a non-German conference at MAPOR. This was in 2007 and with hindsight I can say that this was probably the best thing that could have happened to me. It was a travel into the blue – but luckily MAPOR proved to be a very welcoming place for a young and inexperienced scholar, even for one who was neither born nor studied in the American Midwest. When I came back the U.S. last year to work at the University of Washington, it was thus logical for me to make use of the opportunity and visit MAPOR again.



To me, MAPOR's strong points are its hospitality and collegiality, the professionalism exhibited there, and the fact that it provides a common space for basic and applied public opinion research alike – benefits that will make me come back whenever I have the chance to do so.

Kristen Olson, University of Nebraska-Lincoln



I am an assistant professor of Sociology and Survey Research and Methodology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I teach applied sampling, analysis of complex survey data, and total survey error classes in the SRAM program and the statistics course for undergraduate sociology majors in the Sociology department. My research areas are in survey nonresponse, the intersection of nonresponse and measurement errors, and interviewer effects in sample surveys. I am the editor of the research synthesis section of *Public Opinion Quarterly* and am honored to be MAPOR conference co-chair this year.

MAPOR has always been a friendly place for students and early researchers to gain experience presenting papers in a professional setting. The conference is intimate and MAPOR members are collegial. I have attended MAPOR conferences since my days as a graduate student at the University of Michigan. Many of my fondest memories from grad school come from driving minivans from Ann Arbor to Chicago, struggling to find parking near the MAPOR hotel, and getting out of town before the holiday parade closes entry and exit points from downtown. As a professor, I now enjoy bringing my students to the annual meeting (although Nebraska is too far for a weekend drive). Having attended two Midwestern universities and teaching at a third, MAPOR is a natural home away from AAPOR for me.

MEET the (MAPOR) Authors at AAPOR 2011

On **Thursday, May 12 (Thursday) from 3:00pm to 4:00pm**, book signing and an interactive session are scheduled for the *Handbook of Survey Research* (2010, Emerald Group Publishing). This volume is a comprehensive guide to the major components of survey research design and data analysis. State-of-the-art essays by acknowledged authorities in the field, including 2011 MAPOR President **Tim Johnson**, veteran MAPOR member **Tom Smith** and Fellow **Paul Lavrakas**, outline the techniques and practical applications of every aspect of survey research. Tim, Tom, and Paul will make an appearance at this event and copies of the *Handbook* will be on sale at a special price to conference attendees.

On **May 13 (Friday) from 3:15pm to 4:15pm** MAPOR member and 2011 Officer **Kate Kenski** will hold a meet-the-author (MTA) session feature her book *The Obama Victory: How Media, Money, and Message Shaped the 2008 Election* (2010, Oxford University Press). Kate and her coauthors draw upon The National Annenberg Election Survey, as well as interviews with key advisors to each campaign, to illuminate how media, money, and messages shaped the 2008 election. Copies of the featured book will be on sale at the AAPOR book store next to the session with discounts to conference attendees.

While you're in Phoenix, be sure to stop by both events!

MAPOR Continues to Serve

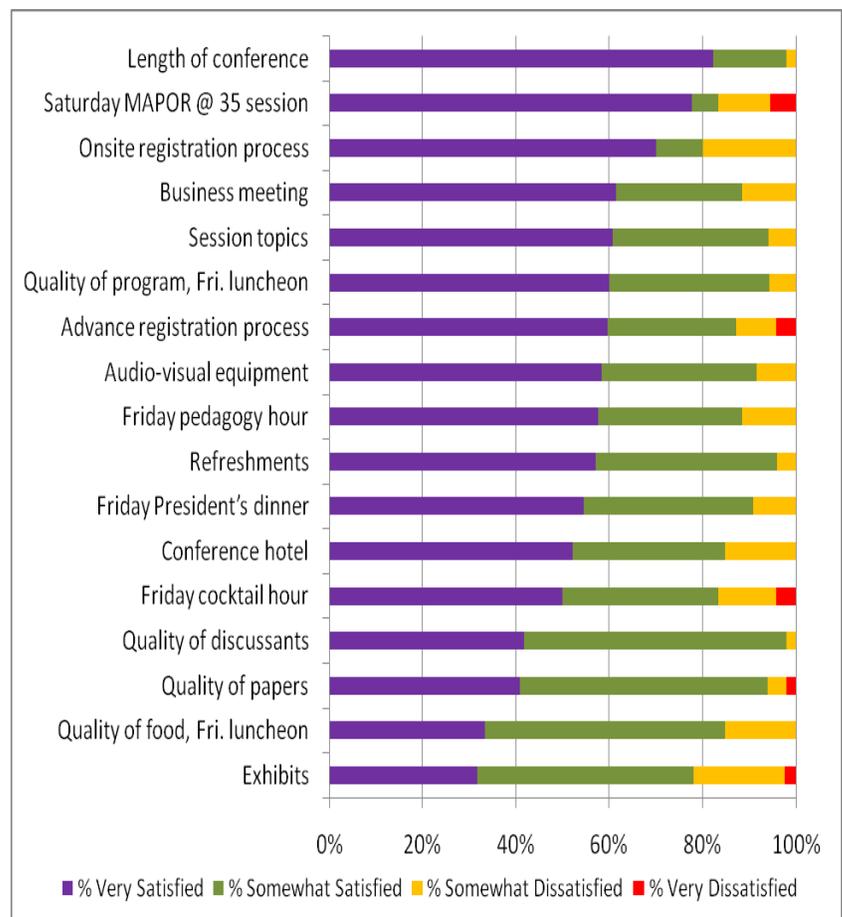
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If you will be attending AAPOR this year, please stop by on Thursday evening (May 12) at 6pm.

During the Executive Board meeting, results from the first-ever survey of MAPOR's membership were reviewed. This survey, which was conducted by graduate students at the University of Illinois at Chicago during February 2011, produced a response rate of 49.7% (AAPOR RR2 formula). It queried respondents regarding 2010 MAPOR conference activities, asked for recommendations regarding the organization of the 2011 conference, and elicited thoughts regarding other non-conference initiatives that MAPOR might undertake in service to its members. Thank you to those 96 members who responded to the e-mail invitation and completed the online questionnaire.

Just over half of our survey respondents (52%) reported attending the 2010 MAPOR conference. Most attendees were very satisfied (64%) or somewhat satisfied (28%) with the conference as a whole (8% were somewhat dissatisfied). Satisfaction with specific conference events and services are summarized in the figure nearby. These data indicate that members generally were satisfied with those facets of the conference that were asked about, although there was variability in degrees of satisfaction across them. We will be using these findings to continue improving our already strong annual conference.

Please rate your satisfaction with...



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MAPOR Continues to Serve

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And, looking ahead to the 2011 conference, members indicated an interest in having their presentations posted on MAPOR's website. A majority who gave papers in 2010 (57%) said they would be very likely to contribute their presentations for this purpose, with another 34% indicating they would be somewhat likely to do so.

I'm pleased to report that we are now planning to offer this opportunity to presenters this year in hopes of beginning an online archive of MAPOR contributions. Survey respondents also indicated interest in returning poster sessions to our annual meeting (74%) and offering pre-conference short courses (57%). You can also plan to see these activities added this November. Some final good news: four out of five respondents (81%) said they were very or somewhat likely to attend our 2011 meeting. Members also answered questions about other services that MAPOR might develop or sponsor. Majorities indicated support for several of these, including the following:

- Organizing professional networking opportunities, endorsed by 80%.
- Making job postings available on MAPOR's web site (79%).
- Offering short courses in Chicago (72%).
- Offering webinars (59%).
- Providing mentoring opportunities (52%).

Our Executive Board will continue exploring these and other possibilities for expanding MAPOR's service to its membership, with the goal of having specific proposals to share during our business meeting at this year's conference. In the meantime, I would welcome hearing from members who might be interested in helping develop these ideas. You can reach me easily at: timj@uic.edu.

MAPOR Frontiers

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Many possible topics come to mind. How are social media and new communication technology impacting public opinion and our research methods? What novel approaches for media and content analysis are being undertaken that can inform our work? What issues arise as we seek to include new or hard to reach populations in our studies?

I'm sure many other examples in your area of research come to mind as you read this.

We welcome paper and panel submissions broadly related to the theme of public opinion frontiers as well as any others in the area of public opinion research, including 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; and non-response and other survey quality issues, among others.

Finally, we can use this opportunity to consider the frontiers of MAPOR itself. We welcome researchers whose focus may be on the borders of public opinion. This way, we can grow as an organization and encourage a richer discussion with additional perspectives.

Please see the call for papers included at the end of this newsletter or at www.mapor.org. We look forward to some interesting and thought-provoking submissions and a fascinating conference this fall!

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