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### Recommended Citation

Smith, Nathan Grant; Keller, Briana K.; Mollen, Debra; Bledsoe, Meredith L.; Buhin, Larisa; Edwards, Lisa; Levy, Jacob J.; Magyar-Moe, Jeana L.; and Yakushko, Oksana, "Voices of Early Career Counseling Psychologists in Division 17, the Society of Counseling Psychology" (2012). *College of Education Faculty Research and Publications*. 239.

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# Voices of Early Career Psychologists in Division 17, the Society of Counseling Psychology

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## Abstract

This article reports on a survey of early career members of the Society of Counseling Psychology (SCP). Seventy early career psychologists completed a survey assessing the usefulness and climate of SCP, barriers to and facilitative factors for involvement in SCP, inclusiveness of SCP regarding cultural diversity and professional interests, degree of involvement in various aspects of SCP, and their areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with SCP membership. In general, participants were split on the degree to which they were satisfied with SCP, with participants in faculty positions reporting significantly more positive views of SCP than their practitioner counterparts did. Faculty members viewed SCP as more useful to their careers and reported more positive social interactions within SCP than did non-faculty members. Open-ended responses suggested that satisfaction with SCP was related to availability of mentorship and opportunities for involvement in SCP. Suggestions for engaging new professionals in SCP are offered.

## Keywords

professional issues, adults

Membership in professional organizations offers many benefits to psychologists, including providing a professional home; interacting with leaders in the field; finding mentoring; and accessing awards, grants, and various other resources (Dodgen, Fowler, & Williams-Nickelson, 2003). These other resources include access to specialized knowledge, such as journals and other publications; the ability to earn continuing education credits and gain other opportunities for professional development; and advocacy and public policy activities on behalf of members and their interests (Bauman, 2008). Thus, professional organizations offer a wealth of activities and resources for members and play an important role in the development of professionals. Indeed, in discussing the role of professional organizations in the development of counselors, VanZandt (1990) stated, "It is difficult to comprehend how a counselor can 'grow' with the profession without belonging to professional organizations and taking advantage of their resources and services" (p. 244).

For psychologists, the largest professional organization in the world is the American Psychological Association (APA), with approximately 150,000 members (APA, n.d.-a). Like other professional organizations, APA provides members with all the benefits listed above and also serves an important role in creating and disseminating the code of ethical conduct for psychologists (see APA, 2002). Despite the various benefits APA affords early career psychologists (ECPs; defined as psychologists within 7 years of receipt of the doctorate), ECPs are underrepresented in APA's membership. Indeed, the 2010 APA membership survey revealed that the modal age range of APA members was 60 to 64, with only 18.4% of APA members younger than 40. In addition, the modal (36.6%) time since receipt of the doctorate was 25 or more years, and only 12.5% received their degrees less than 5 years ago, with an additional 14.8% having received their degrees 5 to 9 years ago (APA Center for Workforce Studies, 2011). Although the issues affecting ECPs span across the wide range of psychologists within APA, the current study specifically addresses those affecting membership in Division 17, the Society of

Counseling Psychology (SCP). It is our hope, however, that results of the current investigation and accompanying recommendations may inform the larger national dialogue about the importance of recruiting and retaining ECPs in all Divisions of APA.

Following trends more generally in APA, ECPs are underrepresented in SCP. In 2006, SCP served as the professional home for 2,341 members, of which only 195 (8.33%) were ECPs (APA Division Services Office, personal communications, February 26, 2007, and February 24, 2009). Moreover, Past-President Linda Forrest noted, "Of greatest concern to me is that the average age of SCP members is 57.5 and less than 10% of members are younger than 40" (Forrest, 2008, p. 287). Indeed, the average age of members in SCP has remained fairly steady over the past 5 years (i.e., 2006-2010, although data are not available for 2008), with the mean age ranging from 55.5 to 57.9 and members under age 40 making up 8.1% to 12.3% of all SCP members (APA, n.d.-c). These numbers are comparable to other APA practice-oriented Divisions. Over the past 5 years, the overall mean age was 60.18 for Division 12 (Society of Clinical Psychology), 57.75 for Division 16 (School Psychology), and 62.78 for Division 29 (Psychotherapy; APA, n.d.-c). Moreover, Munley, Pate, and Duncan (2008) found that, among counseling psychologists, a greater percentage of members of SCP were in the older age categories than were nonmembers of SCP. Of those younger than 40, 17% were members of SCP and 83% were nonmembers; of those age 65 or older, 27% were members of SCP and 73% were nonmembers.

The underrepresentation of early career members in APA in general and in SCP specifically is concerning for a number of reasons. First, in order for any organization to survive, there must be an influx of new members. As the membership of SCP ages, members will retire; without new members to replace those lost, overall membership is likely to steadily decline. Moreover, overall membership in SCP has declined in recent years. Munley et al. (2008) noted that the number of associates, members, and fellows of SCP fell from 2,706 in 2000 to 2,495 in 2003. The most recent data from APA show that this trend has continued. In 2010, there were 2,168 associates, members, and fellows of SCP (APA, n.d.-c). As such, there is a need to increase membership, and ECPs represent an important untapped resource. Second, ECPs have unique insights to provide to the field. Psychologists who are just entering the profession have had different training experiences and likely have had different personal, cultural, and historical experiences than more established psychologists. Finally, as noted above, professional organizations offer a wealth of benefits to members, many of which are especially important for ECPs (e.g., mentoring, networking). By not joining SCP, ECPs will have less access to the important professional benefits available with membership. In the spirit of increasing access for ECPs to the benefits of membership in professional organizations like SCP, combined with a need for applied Divisions within APA to increase their ECP membership, this study was undertaken to explore ways to best meet the needs of ECPs within SCP. Specifically, we hoped to (a) understand ECPs' experiences within SCP, their satisfaction with SCP, and their involvement in SCP and (b) determine ways to better serve early career members of SCP. By understanding the unique experiences of ECPs within SCP, SCP and other practice-oriented Divisions of APA can develop strategies to better recruit, retain, and engage their early career constituencies. Doing so will help to ensure that ECPs reap the maximum benefits from their involvement in professional organizations like SCP.

## A Review of Past Initiatives

Like most emerging professionals, ECPs have faced a variety of challenges while transitioning from the student role to the professional role. Subsequently, SCP leaders and members have a history of addressing ECP issues. Under the leadership of Don Zytowski, Lyle Schmidt, and others, more than 25 years ago the SCP Executive Committee established an ad hoc Committee on New Professionals in 1984. The goals of the group were to (a) help students stay involved in SCP as they finished school, (b) provide support to professionals for 5 years after graduation, (c) help new professionals get involved in SCP governance, and (d) make SCP leadership aware of issues concerning new professionals (APA Division 17, 1986).

The work of the ad hoc committee, led by Carole Bernard, Martin Heesacker, Edward Watkins, and Jane Swanson, started accelerating in 1986. For example, at the 1987 APA convention, the committee hosted a social hour, a networking lunch between new and senior professionals, and two symposia on new professionals in counseling psychology (APA Division 17, 1988). In addition, that same year, President Larry Brammer volunteered to send a note to new graduates inviting them to join SCP; the Early Career Scientist/Practitioner Award was created; and the SCP Executive Board voted to invite new professionals to work on special interest groups and subcommittees, attempt to have at least one new professional on each committee, and devote a section of each SCP newsletter to new professional issues (APA Division 17, 1988). A number of other promising initiatives were launched in the late 1980s. For example, Ellen Lent coordinated a mentoring network (APA Division 17, 1989) in 1988, but upon evaluation in 1994, the committee found that the network was underutilized and might benefit from a narrower focus, such as mentoring for those in independent practice (APA Division 17, 1994a). In addition, working with Bob Lent, President Naomi Meara agreed to send six free SCP newsletters over a 2-year period to new graduates who had not yet joined SCP as regular members (APA Division 17, 1990a), which seemingly resulted in an increase of young professionals joining SCP (APA Division 17, 1990b).

SCP's commitment to new professionals continued into the early 1990s. In 1991, under the leadership of Fern Lawler, the ad hoc Committee on New Professionals surveyed recent graduates regarding their issues, concerns, and reasons for not joining and engaging in SCP (APA Division 17, 1992), which resulted in recommendations to increase the visibility of the Committee on New Professionals, reserve a certain number of conference program slots for young professionals to present their work, and provide conference programs targeted to new professionals (APA Division 17, 1993a). Led by Cyndy McRae, the committee started working actively with the Membership Committee in 1992 to provide new professionals an opportunity to join SCP (APA Division 17, 1993b). As chair of the committee in 1994, Beth Haverkamp launched the Ad Hoc Reviewers Project, wherein six journal editors agreed to welcome nine young professionals as ad hoc reviewers and provide them with feedback about their reviews (APA Division 17, 1995). Haverkamp also suggested adding established professionals to the ad hoc Committee on New Professionals (APA Division 17, 1994b), but her idea was not able to be implemented because the committee was dissolved in 1995 and a New Professionals Special Interest Group was formed instead (APA Division 17, 1996). According to meeting minutes, discussions regarding ECPs at SCP Executive Board meetings seemed to cease for nearly 10 years until 2004.

Starting in 2004, SCP Executive Board members began more actively discussing the need to engage new professionals. As stated in the minutes of the SCP annual business meeting, incoming SCP President P. Paul Heppner indicated that one of his ten presidential goals would be "to promote the membership and involvement of younger members" (SCP, 2005, p. 585). To that end, he created the Mentoring Roundtable Special Task Group (STG) and the Mentoring Graduate Students and New Professionals STG (SCP, 2006). Furthermore, a presidentially appointed STG called Early Career Professionals, composed of individuals who had recently graduated, was created in 2005. William Parham continued SCP's focus on new professionals by instituting his Passing the Baton project in 2006 (SCP, 2007), which was also the year the Society established a formal Committee on Early Professionals. As noted above, during her term as SCP president-elect during the 2006-2007 academic year, Linda Forrest drew the executive board's attention to the fact that the average age of SCP members was in the upper 50s (Forrest, 2008; SCP, 2008a). Subsequently, during her presidency the following year, she encouraged increased inclusion of both graduate students and early career professionals in SCP governance and created a committee of each constituency to help plan relevant programs at the International Counseling Psychology Conference in 2008 (SCP, 2008b). Since that time, although the Committee on Early Professionals continues to plan programs, discussions about the importance of recruiting and retaining new counseling psychologists have seemed to wane.

Along with the work of the ad hoc Committee on New Professionals, discussions at the SCP Executive Board, and programming at conferences, the concerns of ECPs periodically have been addressed in major journals. An article on the role of transitions of new counseling faculty was published in the *Journal of Counseling Psychology* (Pipes, McEwen, Ittenbach, & Sutherland, 1986). Two years later, in a major contribution published in *The Counseling Psychologist*, Brammer et al. (1988) noted the importance of attracting young professionals to SCP, showing them how SCP related to their special professional interests and encouraging them to take active leadership roles. In 1992, *The Counseling Psychologist* published an entire issue called “New and Early Professionals.” The issue contained 12 major contributions about and 4 reactions to the experiences of young counseling psychology professionals working in faculty roles, college counseling centers, private practice, community mental health centers, and hospital or medical settings. As summarized by Good (1992), a few of the professional concerns expressed by the 10 young authors included challenges related to implementing the scientist–practitioner model, identifying with counseling psychology, coping with feelings of incompetence, finding employment satisfaction, and maintaining vitality. On the personal side, the authors struggled with work–life balance, sexism, and racism. In that same issue, Fouad and Carter (1992) published an article specifically on gender and racial issues for new counseling psychologists in academia. This special issue provided a rich description of the various issues facing early career counseling psychologists. However, the information provided in the special issue was limited in that it was based on a small sample, did not focus specifically on ECPs’ experiences within SCP, and is nearly 20 years old. As such, there is a need to reexamine early career counseling psychologists’ experiences with a current and larger sample. Likewise, there is a need to focus on ECPs’ experiences that are specific to SCP. Doing so will allow the Society to better meet the needs of early career members. Finally, it is unknown whether the issues that emerged in the special issue are the same issues facing ECPs today.

More broad-based attempts toward understanding the unique experiences of ECPs have been undertaken by APA. The Committee on Early Career Psychologists was created by APA in 2005 to “build bridges across constituencies within and outside of APA to promote, advocate, and develop resources for ECPs” (APA Committee on Early Career Psychologists, 2006, para. 1). To better understand the needs of ECPs, in 2007 the Committee and the APA Center for Workforce Studies (2008) conducted the first APA survey of early career members and nonmembers of APA. The survey revealed important information about the debt load, employment settings, and licensure issues of ECPs. Regarding debt load, three fourths of those surveyed had substantial education-related debt. In addition, ethnic minority participants reported higher debt than did non–ethnic minority participants. Regarding employment settings, approximately one third of those surveyed worked in more than one setting. Finally, regarding licensure, inability to obtain postdoctoral hours was cited as the largest barrier to becoming licensed.

One limitation of the APA early career psychologists survey (APA Center for Workforce Studies, 2008) was a lack of information on how ECPs view and interact with APA. Another limitation was a lack of attention given to between-group differences in terms of subfields of psychology. Although the survey results provided a broad picture of certain aspects of ECPs’ needs, it provided little information about membership issues and did not illuminate the unique views of ECPs in counseling psychology.

## The Current Study

To date, there has been little empirical effort to understand the unique needs and concerns of ECPs, especially in the past two decades. Given the dearth of research on ECPs in APA broadly and SCP specifically, combined with decreasing membership trends and underrepresentation of ECPs in APA and SCP, there is a need to devote empirical attention to this understudied group. To that end, we sought to elucidate the concerns, needs, and insights of ECPs in counseling psychology.

Because ECPs are currently underrepresented in SCP and because to date ECPs who are members of SCP have not been queried regarding their experiences in and perceptions of the Society, we decided to query current early career members of SCP. Utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods, the goals of this study were to better understand early career members' views of, satisfaction with, and level of involvement in SCP, as well as to understand how to better meet the needs of early career members. By exploring the views of ECPs in SCP, the society can gain important insights into better meeting the needs of its newest members and develop ways to recruit those not currently involved. In so doing, SCP can provide more and better resources to enrich the professional lives of ECPs. In addition, the insights from ECPs in SCP may be able to be generalized to other Divisions of APA, which can be used to better serve ECPs throughout APA.

## Method

### Procedures and Participants

ECPs were defined as those psychologists who received their doctoral degrees within the past 7 years. A list of all members of SCP who had received their doctoral degrees within the past 7 years ( $N = 195$ ) was provided by the APA Division Services Office in February 2007. After receiving university institutional review board approval for this study, we contacted each member on the list via his or her e-mail address listed in the APA membership directory. Members whose e-mail addresses were not listed or to whom e-mails were undeliverable (i.e., the e-mail "bounced") were mailed a letter to the address listed in the APA membership directory. All members were informed of the purpose of the study and provided with a URL link in order to anonymously complete the study online through psychdata.com, an Internet data collection service. Two weeks after the initial e-mail or letter was distributed, all members were sent a reminder e-mail or letter.

A total of 70 current early career members of SCP participated in the study (36% of the total early career SCP membership). Of this sample, 57% ( $n = 40$ ) were faculty members, 13% ( $n = 9$ ) were employed at university counseling centers, 9% ( $n = 6$ ) were in private practice, 3% ( $n = 2$ ) were completing postdoctoral fellowships, 1% ( $n = 1$ ) was employed at a career center, and 1% ( $n = 1$ ) was employed at a community mental health center. Ten percent ( $n = 7$ ) indicated their employment setting as "other," and the remaining 6% ( $n = 4$ ) did not provide employment information. Almost all participants had PhDs (88%,  $n = 62$ ), with 3% each having a PsyD ( $n = 2$ ) or an EdD ( $n = 2$ ). Six percent ( $n = 4$ ) did not indicate their degree type. The average age of participants was 38.83 (range = 31-65,  $SD = 7.31$ ). With regard to sex, 64% ( $n = 45$ ) identified as female, 30% ( $n = 21$ ) identified as male, and 6% ( $n = 4$ ) did not identify their sex. As for the racial and ethnic makeup of the sample, the majority self-identified as White or European American (64%,  $n = 45$ ), followed by multiracial (14%,  $n = 10$ ), Hispanic/Latino (6%,  $n = 4$ ), Black or African American (4%,  $n = 3$ ), Asian American (3%,  $n = 2$ ), and American Indian (3%,  $n = 2$ ). Four participants (6%) did not self-identify with a racial or ethnic group. The sex and racial composition of our sample is similar to, although slightly more diverse than, graduate students in APA-accredited programs. For the 2005-2006 academic year (the latest year for which data are available), 76% of graduate students in accredited doctoral programs were women and 25% were ethnic minorities (APA, n.d.-b). Our sample is more similar to the overall applied psychology graduate student population than to the larger membership of SCP. The most recent data from all members of SCP revealed that, in 2010, 48% of members were women and 15% were ethnic minorities (APA Center for Workforce Studies, 2010).

The sexual orientation of our sample was predominately heterosexual (77%,  $n = 54$ ) with 13% ( $n = 9$ ) identifying as lesbian or gay and 4% ( $n = 3$ ) identifying as bisexual; the remainder (6%,  $n = 4$ ) did not self-identify their sexual orientation. All participants lived in the United States of America, with 79% ( $n = 55$ ) being native citizens, 8% ( $n = 6$ ) being naturalized citizens, and 6% ( $n = 4$ ) being noncitizens; 5 participants (7%) did not indicate their citizenship status. No participants identified as differently abled or having a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The majority of the sample was Christian, with 19% ( $n = 13$ ) identifying as



Catholic and 19% ( $n = 13$ ) identifying as Protestant, followed by “other” (21%,  $n = 15$ ), agnostic (14%,  $n = 10$ ), atheist (7%,  $n = 5$ ), Jewish (4%,  $n = 3$ ), Buddhist (3%,  $n = 2$ ), and Muslim (2%,  $n = 1$ ). Eight participants (11%) did not provide their religious affiliation.

## Instrument

A questionnaire specifically designed for this study was used to assess the opinions and needs of early career members as it related to their experiences with SCP membership. Forty-four items were generated to measure ECP members' views of the usefulness and climate of SCP, the barriers to and facilitative factors for involvement in the Society, and the inclusiveness of SCP with regard to cultural diversity and professional interests (the items are listed in Table 1). The authors, who are all members of SCP and were all ECPs at the time, generated the 44 items. In addition, we received input on the items from several other ECPs who are members of SCP. Item generation was based on relevant literature and on our experiences as ECPs who have varying degrees of involvement in SCP. Several items were designed to elicit views regarding issues related to the scientist–practitioner model (e.g., Good, 1992; Heppner et al., 1992) and maintaining an identity as a counseling psychologist (e.g., Good, 1992). In addition, issues related to the social and professional climate of SCP were identified.

**Table 1.** Mean Ratings, One-Sample *t* Tests Comparing Individual Items to Overall Mean, and Independent-Samples *t* Tests Comparing Faculty Members to Non-Faculty Members of the Society of Counseling Psychology (SCP)

Item	Mean ( <i>SD</i> )	Range	One-Sample <i>t</i> Tests			Independent-Samples <i>t</i> Tests				
			<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	$\alpha$	Faculty Members Mean ( <i>SD</i> )	Non-Faculty Members Mean ( <i>SD</i> )	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	$\alpha$
My dissertation advisor/graduate school mentor would approve of my making the decision to be involved in (or just join) SCP	4.47 (0.68)	2-5	<b>14.74</b>	< <b>.0001</b>	<b>.0011</b>	4.63 (0.54)	4.38 (0.64)	1.65	.105	.0036
SCP is inclusive of racial/ethnic diversity.	4.23 (0.79)	3-5	<b>10.00</b>	< <b>.0001</b>	<b>.0012</b>	4.40 (0.74)	4.00 (0.82)	2.03	.046	.0031
SCP is inclusive of sexual orientation diversity.	4.19 (0.77)	3-5	<b>9.86</b>	< <b>.0001</b>	<b>.0012</b>	4.38 (0.77)	3.96 (0.72)	2.18	.033	.0028
SCP is inclusive of gender diversity.	4.13 (0.78)	2-5	<b>8.99</b>	< <b>.0001</b>	<b>.0013</b>	4.26 (0.79)	4.00 (0.80)	1.28	.205	.0050
Others in my field have supported my decision to join SCP.	3.77 (1.18)	1-5	<b>3.47</b>	<b>.001</b>	<b>.0015</b>	4.30 (0.91)	3.00 (1.20)	<b>4.99</b>	< <b>.0001</b>	<b>.0012</b>
There are people who are similar to me in SCP.	3.70 (1.20)	1-5	2.92	.005	.0017	4.15 (1.05)	3.12 (1.18)	<b>3.73</b>	< <b>.0001</b>	<b>.0015</b>
SCP materials (e.g., website, brochures) have made it easy for me to join.	3.70 (0.97)	1-5	<b>3.61</b>	<b>.001</b>	<b>.0015</b>	3.85 (1.00)	3.58 (0.90)	1.13	.265	.0071
SCP is inclusive of ability/disability diversity.	3.66 (0.95)	1-5	<b>3.32</b>	<b>.001</b>	<b>.0016</b>	3.60 (1.11)	3.77 (0.71)	-0.76	.452	.0083
SCP is inclusive of gender identity diversity.	3.65 (0.94)	1-5	3.28	.0016	.0016	3.67 (1.13)	3.65 (0.63)	0.06	.954	.0500
I think being affiliated with SCP will help me professionally.	3.63 (1.17)	1-5	2.48	.016	.0018	4.10 (0.96)	3.04 (1.18)	<b>4.01</b>	< <b>.0001</b>	<b>.0013</b>
I am aware of various interest sections within SCP.	3.59 (1.14)	1-5	2.27	.026	.0019	4.03 (0.89)	3.08 (1.22)	3.35	.002	.0017
I have friends in SCP.	3.54 (1.39)	1-5	1.57	.121	.0025	4.15 (1.08)	2.65 (1.41)	<b>4.60</b>	< <b>.0001</b>	<b>.0012</b>
I have role models in my chosen career who encouraged me to join SCP.	3.53 (1.40)	1-5	1.47	.146	.0029	4.03 (1.14)	2.73 (1.49)	<b>3.78</b>	< <b>.0001</b>	<b>.0014</b>
I feel that membership in SCP allows me to stay abreast of the current research in the field.	3.53 (1.19)	1-5	1.74	.087	.0024	3.78 (1.19)	3.23 (1.18)	1.83	.073	.0033
SCP is inclusive of religious/spiritual diversity.	3.53 (0.93)	1-5	2.22	.030	.0021	3.53 (1.06)	3.62 (0.70)	-0.42	.678	.0100

I am satisfied with SCP.	3.46 (.99)	1-5	1.48	.143	.0028	3.75 (1.06)	3.15 (.73)	2.71	.009	.0021
SCP is inclusive of social class diversity.	3.45 (1.17)	1-5	1.19	.239	.0033	3.43 (1.28)	3.48 (1.09)	-.18	.859	.0125
I am familiar with the benefits of membership in SCP.	3.41 (1.09)	1-5	0.94	.349	.0042	3.73 (1.01)	2.96 (1.02)	2.96	.004	.0019
The climate of SCP feels warm and welcoming	3.37 (1.17)	1-5	0.64	.525	.0063	3.73 (1.20)	2.96 (0.92)	2.93	.005	.0020
I find the members in SCP to be welcoming.	3.34 (1.24)	1-5	0.41	.683	.0010	3.80 (1.18)	2.77 (1.03)	<b>3.64</b>	<b>.001</b>	<b>.0015</b>
There are opportunities for me to get involved in SCP.	3.34 (1.20)	1-5	0.42	.67	.0083	3.68 (1.23)	3.00 (1.02)	2.42	.018	.0024
My professional interests are represented within SCP.	3.33 (1.29)	1-5	0.33	.743	.0013	3.68 (1.25)	2.92 (1.29)	2.34	.022	.0025
My current employer values my decision to be a member of SCP.	3.32 (1.32)	1-5	0.26	.797	.0167	3.87 (1.21)	2.73 (1.08)	<b>3.85</b>	< <b>.0001</b>	<b>.0014</b>
I feel that membership in SCP affords me opportunities to network for postdoctoral internships, and/or employment.	3.26 (1.21)	1-5	-0.15	.884	.0500	3.79 (1.03)	2.65 (1.09)	<b>4.27</b>	< <b>.0001</b>	<b>.0013</b>
Others (peers, previous mentors, etc.) have encouraged me to join SCP.	3.24 (1.38)	1-5	-0.24	.812	.0250	3.85 (1.19)	2.35 (1.20)	<b>5.01</b>	< <b>.0001</b>	<b>.0011</b>
It is easy for me to know what is going on in SCP.	3.21 (1.20)	1-5	-0.47	.639	.0071	3.58 (1.26)	2.81 (0.94)	2.66	.010	.0023
I feel that membership in SCP provides me opportunities to collaborate with others in the field on research and scholarly projects.	3.19 (1.23)	1-5	-0.66	.515	.0056	3.50 (1.20)	2.81 (1.23)	2.27	.027	.0026
I do not have enough time to be involved with SCP.	3.18 (1.27)	1-5	-0.69	.495	.0050	2.79(1.22)	3.88 (1.09)	<b>-3.62</b>	<b>.001</b>	<b>.0016</b>
I feel that membership in SCP enhances others' professional views of me.	3.17 (1.29)	1-5	-0.72	.474	.0045	3.68 (1.31)	2.54 (0.91)	<b>3.86</b>	< <b>.0001</b>	<b>.0014</b>
My current colleagues value my decision to be a member of SCP.	3.13 (1.35)	1-5	-0.95	.345	.0038	3.70 (1.29)	2.38 (0.98)	<b>4.44</b>	< <b>.0001</b>	<b>.0012</b>
I find the SCP newsletter useful.	3.12 (1.11)	1-5	-1.25	.216	.0031	3.33 (1.20)	2.88 (0.95)	1.60	.115	.0039
It is difficult to make a name for myself within SCP.	3.11 (1.21)	1-5	-1.16	.250	.0036	2.78 (1.37)	3.46 (0.71)	-2.67	.010	.0022
Membership in SCP provides me with access to a role model in my chosen career (i.e., someone I can look up to and learn from by observing).	3.04 (1.31)	1-5	-1.51	.135	.0026	3.51 (1.32)	2.31 (1.05)	<b>3.91</b>	< <b>.0001</b>	<b>.0013</b>

There is effective communication between the leadership of SCP and its members.	3.04 (1.07)	1-5	-1.87	.065	.0023	3.23 (1.14)	2.92 (0.89)	1.14	.259	.0063
I find the SCP website useful.	3.03 (1.09)	1-5	-1.95	.056	.0022	3.20 (1.16)	2.85 (1.01)	1.27	.207	.0056
SCP is attentive to my professional needs.	3.00 (1.04)	1-5	-2.28	.026	.0020	3.25 (1.13)	2.69 (0.84)	2.16	.034	.0029
I find the SCP listservs useful.	2.90 (1.23)	1-5	-2.60	.011	.0017	3.13 (1.30)	2.65 (1.06)	1.55	.127	.0042
Becoming actively involved in SCP is easy.	2.88 (1.40)	1-5	-2.36	.021	.0019	3.31 (1.47)	2.38 (1.06)	2.94	.005	.0019
Early career psychologists are visible within SCP.	2.68 (1.02)	1-5	<b>-4.89</b>	< <b>.0001</b>	<b>.0014</b>	2.90 (1.07)	2.54 (0.81)	1.45	.151	.0046
I am familiar with the governance structure of SCP	2.65 (1.25)	1-5	<b>-4.20</b>	< <b>.0001</b>	<b>.0014</b>	3.03 (1.23)	2.12 (1.13)	2.98	.004	.0018
Membership in SCP is too expensive.	2.49 (1.05)	1-5	<b>-6.23</b>	< <b>.0001</b>	<b>.0013</b>	2.49 (1.12)	2.46 (0.99)	0.10	.925	.0250
I have been mentored within SCP.	2.32 (1.53)	1-5	<b>-5.23</b>	< <b>.0001</b>	<b>.0014</b>	2.82 (1.67)	1.65 (1.06)	<b>3.45</b>	<b>.001</b>	<b>.0016</b>
Involvement in SCP is a waste of my time.	2.00 (1.00)	1-4	<b>-10.65</b>	< <b>.0001</b>	<b>.0012</b>	2.65 (0.83)	2.48 (1.09)	-3.27	.002	.0017
My current employer pays for my membership in SCP.	1.79 (1.54)	1-5	<b>-7.96</b>	< <b>.0001</b>	<b>.0013</b>	1.87 (1.61)	1.81 (1.55)	0.15	.881	.0167
Average score	3.28 (0.63)	2- 4.65	-	-	-	3.65 (0.69)	2.95 (0.58)	-	-	-

Items are arranged according to mean score of the total sample rather than the order in which items were presented to participants. Bolded entries denote *t* tests that are significant using a modified Bonferroni correction.

Survey participants responded to the 44 items on a 5-point Likert-type scale with anchors of 1 (*strongly disagree*) and 5 (*strongly agree*). Although the items covered a variety of topics, they appeared to represent a unitary construct. The Cronbach's alpha for the 44 items was .96 (the items "It is difficult to make a name for myself within SCP," "Membership in SCP is too expensive," "I do not have enough time to be involved with SCP," and "Involvement in SCP is a waste of my time" were reverse coded for the purposes of calculating the reliability coefficient). An exploratory factor analysis revealed (via a scree plot) one or two underlying factors. The one-factor solution accounted for 39.58% of total variance, whereas the two-factor solution accounted for 50.17% of total variance. The two-factor solution (with varimax rotation) had a number of cross-loaded items; moreover, no clear pattern of results emerged. Because of the problems with cross-loadings and lack of meaningful factors, as well as the small amount of decrement in total variance explained, the one-factor solution was deemed most appropriate.

In addition to the 44 items that were designed to elicit and quantitatively measure participants' general perceptions and experiences with the Society, participants were asked about their involvement in various aspects of SCP and the larger APA. Finally, a series of six open-ended questions was developed to allow participants the opportunity to share their idiosyncratic satisfactions and dissatisfactions with SCP. More specifically, the questions were as follows: "What three things most contribute to your satisfaction with Division 17?" "What three things most contribute to your dissatisfaction with Division 17?" "Please comment on the climate of Division 17," "Please comment on how useful Division 17 is to your career," "Please describe ways you would like to see Division 17 meet your needs more fully," and "What do you think are the challenges/barriers facing Division 17 early career members?"

Analytic procedures adapted from grounded theory methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, 1998) were utilized to analyze the six open-ended questions in the survey data ( $N = 70$ ). Two of the authors, who have experience conducting qualitative research, were responsible for this portion of the study. First they reviewed relevant literature on grounded theory (Fassinger, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1994, 1998) and discussed its application to the analytic process for the qualitative data in the survey. They then divided up the questions, and each individually analyzed the responses for three of the six questions. They each identified and labeled meaning units or concepts, similar to a process called *open coding* in grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, 1998). This yielded a total of 381 meaning units across the six questions. The researchers exchanged their lists of meaning units and reviewed them independently. They then discussed the list of meaning concepts for agreement before proceeding to the next step of the analysis.

These meaning units were then organized into general categories (e.g., professional networking) for each question, in a process similar to *axial coding* (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, 1998). It should be noted that open and axial coding often happen simultaneously, as meaning units are identified and then organized with others to better understand the phenomenon of interest. Examples of categories identified included "not knowing ways to get involved" and "mentorship within the Society." While this process was conducted by the researchers individually for their assigned three questions, they again exchanged their results and discussed any questions or disagreements in the groupings. The researchers continued to revise the category labels until they felt that they were descriptive of the responses that were included. This process resulted in a total of 57 categories across the six questions.

Finally, the researchers together identified those categories that were the most prominent responses for each question. When necessary, categories were revised or combined after discussion. The final responses are summarized below, with illustrative quotes from participants.

# Results

## Quantitative Findings

### Opinions about SCP

Mean responses to the 44 questions concerning participants' opinions about SCP are displayed in Table 1. To determine if participant responses to specific items were significantly different from responses to all other items, one-sample *t* tests were conducted to compare the mean response of each item to the overall mean of 3.28. These analyses were conducted to determine if participants were responding in a more extreme manner to certain items. Because 44 separate *t* tests were conducted, a modified Bonferroni was used to control for familywise error. Using the modified Bonferroni correction, the means of 13 items were found to be significantly different from the overall mean (see Table 1). Of note, SCP was viewed as being particularly inclusive of several diversity issues. However, mentoring and visibility of early career members were viewed as lacking in relation to participants' overall views of the Society.

### Views of SCP based on participant characteristics

To determine if views of SCP were different based on participant characteristics, a series of *t* tests was calculated. Each *t* test examined differences in the average of the 44 items, with the four items mentioned above recoded so that positive scores were indicative of positive opinions toward SCP. There was no difference in views of SCP between European American participants and participants of color,  $t(64) = -.57, ns$ . Likewise, there was no difference in views of SCP between women and men,  $t(64) = -.61, ns$ , or between heterosexual and lesbian, gay, and bisexual participants,  $t(64) = 1.00, ns$ . There was a significant difference between faculty members and non-faculty members in their views of SCP,  $t(64) = 4.30, p < .001$ . Faculty members ( $M = 3.65, SD = 0.69$ ) reported significantly more favorable views of SCP than did non-faculty members ( $M = 2.95, SD = 0.58$ ).

To better understand the differences between faculty members and non-faculty members, we compared the responses between the two groups on all 44 items. Again, a modified Bonferroni was used to control for familywise error. The means for faculty members and non-faculty members are displayed in Table 1. Faculty members found SCP to be more useful to their careers and more useful in finding mentors and networking. Likewise, faculty members felt that mentors, role models, peers, and employers were more supportive of membership in SCP. Finally, faculty members were more satisfied with social interactions within SCP, such as having friends and similar peers in SCP, being mentored within SCP, and finding members to be welcoming. Non-faculty members felt more strongly that they did not have the time to be involved with SCP.

Pearson's product-moment correlations were used to test the association between views of SCP and age and year of degree confirmation. There was no significant association between views of SCP and age ( $r = -.21, ns$ ). There was a positive correlation between views of SCP and year of degree confirmation ( $r = .25, p < .05$ ), with longer time since degree confirmation associated with more positive views of SCP.

### Involvement in SCP

Participants were members of an average of one SCP section ( $M = 1.00, SD = 0.96, \text{range} = 0-4$ ) and fewer than one special interest group ( $M = 0.33, SD = 0.67, \text{range} = 0-3$ ), special task group ( $M = 0.24, SD = 0.47, \text{range} = 0-2$ ), and committee ( $M = 0.42, SD = 0.73, \text{range} = 0-3$ ). The modal number for each was 0, with 22 reporting no section membership, 42 reporting no special interest group membership, 43 reporting no special task group membership, and 40 reporting no committee membership.

Over the past 5 years, participants had attended the annual APA convention an average of 2.66 ( $SD = 1.92, \text{range} = 0-5$ ) times. To determine the extent to which those who attended APA conventions participated in SCP convention activities, they were asked to estimate the frequency with which they attended several activities (on

a Likert-type scale where 1 = *never*, 2 = *rarely*, 3 = *sometimes*, and 4 = *always*). Fourteen participants had not attended any annual APA convention in the past 5 years. Of those who did attend the convention at least once in the past 5 years ( $n = 53$ ), the average participant reported attending most SCP activities *sometimes*: SCP social hours  $M = 3.15$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ , range = 1-4; SCP poster sessions  $M = 3.15$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ , range = 1-4; SCP keynote addresses  $M = 2.77$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ , range = 1-4; and SCP Fellows addresses  $M = 2.62$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ , range = 1-4. However, the average participant attended SCP business meetings only *rarely* ( $M = 2.13$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ , range = 1-4).

Participants had published an average of 0.48 articles ( $SD = 1.27$ , range = 0-8) in *The Counseling Psychologist*. Using a Likert-type scale with anchors of 1 (*never*) and 5 (*always*), participants tended to read *The Counseling Psychologist* (TCP) frequently ( $M = 3.55$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ , range = 1-5). A similar result was found for frequency of reading the *Journal of Counseling Psychology* (JCP) ( $M = 3.49$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ , range = 1-5).

## Qualitative Findings

Qualitative responses revealed several areas regarding how satisfied ECPs are with SCP, how useful they felt the Society was, and challenges and barriers they found to being involved and connected with the Society. Across most questions, participants were split in their satisfaction and their assessment of its usefulness, but it should be acknowledged that these responses were based on only 70 participants.

About half of the participants reported they were satisfied with SCP and found it to be useful to their careers. These participants reported they found SCP members to be welcoming and helpful, and the primary variables that contributed to their satisfaction with the Society were professional and social networking opportunities, the Society's emphasis on diversity and multiculturalism, and mentorship. For example, one participant stated, "Membership in SCP is a way to identify myself as a counseling psychologist and to get connected with more professionals in this area." Another noted, "The attempts of the Society to be inclusive of different cultural facets (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation) is a source of satisfaction; I appreciate the connection SCP has with Division 45 [Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues]." Finally, another stated, "I'm proud to be a counseling psychologist and feel Division 17 provides a good source of support for us."

About half of the participants reported SCP had been somewhat or very useful to their careers because of the networking opportunities it provided and the opportunities to stay informed and current in the field. For example, one participant noted, "Membership in SCP has provided me with a 'home' within APA; it has also provided mentors, friendships, and colleagues that I can rely on and feel supported by in my career." Another stated,

Networking is an important part of anyone's career and engaging with the Division is a helpful way to do this. The fact that I am involved in a very unique research program coupled with my Counseling Psychology background has been helpful when interacting with other counseling psychologists.

A final example of the professional value of networking within SCP was exemplified by this statement:

I think Division 17 could be very useful to my career if I can navigate well. I've been urged by administrators to take on national leadership, yet in order to publish enough I need to be careful not to get in over my head. I think the main way that Division 17 could be useful is if I could meet other people who share my interests. Then I could feel more empowered to propose symposia because I'd know who to approach. Also, others would know my work and that would be helpful when it comes time for external letters in the tenure process. I think I need to get more involved in Division 17.

Finally, about one-third of the participants indicated access to SCP journals, newsletters, electronic mailing lists, and websites contributed to their satisfaction.

In contrast, half of the participants reported that they were dissatisfied with SCP and that the Society had not been useful to their careers, and they reported that the climate of SCP was partially responsible for this dissatisfaction. Several participants were dissatisfied because SCP did not seem welcoming of ECPs and the leadership of the Society appeared elitist and “cliquish,” and several ECPs did not know how they could become involved. As one participant noted, “The same small group of individuals publish in *JCP* and *TCP*, hold elected office within the Society, and are known to everyone. It’s hard to break into that group, which contributes to SCP feeling insular and exclusionary.” Another stated that SCP is

rather elitist—there’s a core group that is rather exclusionary—even when one offers to volunteer, people don’t necessarily follow through on taking you up on your volunteering and, on occasion, I’ve even received rather cold responses to offers to volunteer.

Another stated, “The Division seems to be most run by very senior people in the field who don’t seem to have much use for, interest in, or appreciation of early career folks.”

In addition, several reported that the Society’s apparent focus on researchers, rather than practitioners, left them feeling as though it did not meet their needs. As another participant stated,

Those who do not fit the mold of scientist-practitioners—with the emphasis on science—tend to be marginalized. So, you can have people with 40,000 client hours working in the classic definition of counseling psychology yet their contributions can be overlooked since they have not published an empirical . . . article.

Similarly, another noted,

Division 17 and APA in general do little to advocate for private practitioners in the market place. The public does not understand the difference between psychologists and other providers. The Division seems geared toward researchers rather than practitioners, and more specifically to PhDs versus PsyDs.

Participants reported several ways in which improvements could be made to the Society in order to help it feel more inclusive to ECPs. Multiple respondents noted that changes or additions to the current major foci of SCP, as well as more formal and informal opportunities for mentorship, would be useful. Regarding the societal foci, several respondents noted that SCP could improve by attending to the needs of psychologists who are involved primarily in clinical work versus the perceived focus on those in academia. In addition, the feedback was mixed, with some respondents wishing to see more focus on “traditional” domains of counseling psychology, such as vocational psychology and college counseling centers within Division programming, training, and publications, whereas others noted a broader range of foci is necessary to be more inclusive and welcoming of Division members. For example, one participant noted,

There is not much of a focus on issues outside of multicultural counseling, vocational, and other traditional issues. . . . I’d like to see the foci of the Society move beyond being so narrowly defined. . . . There needs to be more inclusion of young professionals who are doing research that is not traditionally counseling psychology but are contributing to the literature in related areas. In essence, many of us look to other Divisions or journals for which to present and submit our work. I have not submitted to SCP for APA for the past 4 years due to this reason (same goes for the journal). . . . I submit my work to other more relevant Divisions and journals because I feel that it will not be valued in Division 17.

Suggestions for increasing formal and informal mentoring opportunities centered on the ideas of senior members of SCP actively reaching out to and embracing early career members who may not be well-known faculty members at research-intensive universities and on providing more meaningful opportunities for ECPs to get involved in Division leadership. Indeed, several participants noted that when they tried to get involved in the



Society, they felt as if they were being “allowed” to participate or that they had to do a lot of work in order to be noticed by the senior members, whereas others were not aware of what opportunities for involvement existed within the Society for ECPs. Overall, multiple respondents noted that more ECP activities and opportunities for formal networking that are made known to members through welcome packets and other forms of communication from Division leaders would serve to make ECPs feel more valued and informed.

## Discussion

The purpose of this article was to report the results of a recent survey of ECPs’ views and experiences with their membership in SCP in an effort to illuminate issues that contribute to ECPs’ satisfaction with and engagement in the Society. Results suggest there is a noteworthy divide among the early career members regarding their views of and satisfaction with membership in SCP. Membership in the Society was generally viewed positively among respondents who are university faculty members; however, among nonfaculty ECPs, SCP membership was seen as much less satisfying or useful to their careers. According to Munley et al. (2008), approximately 20% of counseling psychologists are members of SCP, with more than 70% of these nonmembers being counseling psychologists employed in practical settings. However, slightly more than half of counseling psychologists employed in academic settings are members of SCP. Likewise, approximately 60% of the ECPs who participated in the current study were employed in faculty positions. Thus, our results confirm previous research that suggests that practice-oriented members are underrepresented in SCP. The limited membership of psychologists in practice settings, and subsequent reduced number of visible role models and opportunities for networking, may have contributed to the lower levels of satisfaction among non–faculty member respondents.

SCP has two challenges relating to sustaining and growing its membership. The first challenge is to attract and retain ECPs who work outside of academia. The majority of counseling psychologists are employed in nonacademic settings (Munley et al., 2008). Thus, the best chance for growing the membership of SCP is to attract and retain early career counseling psychology practitioners. A second challenge is retaining those early career counseling psychology faculty members who are members of SCP while recruiting additional faculty members to SCP membership. Although academic counseling psychologists represent a majority in SCP, a theme that emerged in our data was that ECPs perceived the foci of SCP interests to be too narrow (i.e., focused on issues of diversity and vocational psychology) and not inclusive of other broader, but traditional, counseling psychology areas (e.g., college counseling, health psychology, talent development).

Two issues emerged that may help explain the more negative perceptions of SCP. First, there was a general unawareness of the governance structure of SCP. The perception shared by about half of the sample that SCP is not focused on issues salient to practitioners or to researchers outside of diversity issues is likely inaccurate; however, due to a lack of awareness of and involvement in these initiatives, this perception persists. Second, several participants expressed great concern about the social climate of SCP. The Society was described as “cliquish,” and many respondents were unsure how to engage with other SCP members. This issue may be of particular relevance to women and ethnic minorities, who may perceive the personal and collegial aspects of work environments (and by possible extension, membership in professional organizations) as more salient than European American men do (Fouad & Carter, 1992; Good, 1992). However, it should be noted that there were no sex or race differences in the quantitative data. Again, perception of the social climate may be more variable, as several respondents reported positive relationships and interactions with more senior Society members. The problem remains that if this negative perception persists, whether accurate or not, the underrepresentation of ECPs in SCP membership may continue. Moreover, when ECPs have negative interactions with the SCP, they risk losing the many professional benefits offered by the Society. As such, it is in the best interest of both ECPs and SCP that the Society work to better address the unique issues and concerns of ECPs.

## Recommendations

The Society's past efforts to draw attention to the unique needs of early career professionals are laudable. However, to increase the benefits of SCP to ECPs, maximize the potential contributions of the field's newest entrants, and secure the longevity and vitality of the discipline, additional continuous and sustained efforts to include ECPs in all facets of the Society are needed. Table 2 offers a list of recommendations designed to be responsive to the needs of ECPs in SCP. In the ensuing section, we expand upon these recommendations, offering tangible suggestions to the Society. Although these recommendations are specific to SCP, many of them could be adapted and implemented in other Divisions of APA.

**Table 2.** Summary of Recommendations for the Society of Counseling Psychology (SCP)

Mentoring	
	Develop formal mentoring program
	Focus on specific constituencies (e.g., practitioners; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community)
Conferences	
	Dedicate conference hours to early career programming
	Widely advertise early career programming
	Identify and advertise programming conducted by early career psychologists (ECPs)
	Host early-career-focused social hours, networking opportunities
Electronic Resources	
	Highlight activities of ECPs
	Publish list of mentors who are willing to work with ECPs
	Develop web presence on social networking sites (e.g., LinkedIn)
	Consistently include report by Committee on Early Professionals in newsletter section reports
	List newly graduated psychologists so others can reach out to them
	Highlight activities of nontraditional SCP members
Awards and recognition	
	Establish award that recognizes professionals within 5 years of receipt of the doctorate
	Establish travel grants to attend conferences
	Create additional awards that recognize excellence in nontraditional areas (e.g., interdisciplinary research award)
	Develop mechanisms for inviting exceptional ECPs to apply for American Psychological Association Fellow status
Leadership and Governance	
	Dedicate at least one ECP seat on each committee
	Develop a leadership mentoring program
Students	
	Reach out to departmental and internship training directors
	Provide students concrete information about the benefits of joining SCP
	Create institutional student memberships, where student membership fees are paid by departments
	Host joint social hours with ECPs
	Create ECP–student mentoring network

## Mentoring

Mentoring is operationalized as a partnership through which a more experienced psychologist provides career support (such as visibility and coaching) and psychosocial support (such as role-modeling, acceptance, encouragement, and friendship) for a less experienced psychologist (Kram, 1983, 1985). Collectively, the participants in this study stated that they had received little mentorship in SCP. The Society has been making strides in attending to the mentorship needs of ECPs since 2004, such as through the efforts of the Society's Committee on Early Professionals and other groups such as the Mentoring Roundtable STG, which have organized several successful speed mentoring events that addressed different career paths and included mentors who represented diverse cultural backgrounds. This has been one of the most organized forms of mentorship at the Society level. On the other hand, unlike Division 42's (Psychologists in Independent Practice) mentoring program, which was recently mentioned in *APA's Monitor on Psychology* (Martin, 2008), SCP does not have a formal mentoring program.

Mentoring opportunities may be especially critical to the success of new professionals from historically marginalized groups (e.g., ethnic minority groups; the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender [LGBT] community; and people with disabilities), as well as those in nontraditional careers. Russell and Horne (2009), for example, noted particular challenges facing LGBT mentors and mentees, including navigating environments characterized by sexual prejudice, being asked to represent all LGBT individuals, and dealing with cohort differences given sociopolitical changes in the past several decades.

## Conferences

Opportunities abound for increasing the visibility of ECPs at conferences, offering programming specifically related to their needs, and enhancing opportunities to make connections with other professionals. Consistent with APA's efforts, perhaps SCP could dedicate Divisional conference programming hours to issues of importance to ECPs, including obtaining licensure, establishing a research agenda, succeeding as a new faculty member, launching a practice, managing finances and reducing debt, networking, developing leadership skills, and maintaining self-care. In addition to relevant programs at conferences, ECPs could benefit from meeting together informally through ECP social hours or organized meals; this type of activity might be especially meaningful for ECPs who are not faculty members, as our survey indicated that they felt they were lacking social connections in SCP. Another idea, which has been implemented successfully at recent conferences, is to hold networking roundtable sessions or social hours that bring together ECPs and eminent SCP members. Perhaps ECPs could be recognized at the annual SCP business meeting, which might help mitigate our survey's findings that few ECPs attend the business meetings. Finally, to bring attention to the important work of ECPs, perhaps SCP could publish a list of ECPs presenting at conferences and the titles of their sessions so that other members with similar interests can make a point to attend their sessions.

## Electronic resources

Electronic resources can help ECPs connect with one another, meet mentors, and be recognized by the Society at large. The SCP website would be an ideal repository for information pertaining to the successes, contributions, and needs of ECPs. An ECP subsection of the SCP page currently exists and contains important resources for ECPs. Additional resources could include a list of SCP committees seeking ECP representatives, which would make it easier for ECPs to become involved in leadership. Stories of individuals from diverse backgrounds who successfully navigated the transition from school to a variety of postgraduate work settings could be highlighted, thereby sending the message that SCP welcomes members from academia, practice, and other settings, which is important given the low level of satisfaction among the high number of ECPs working in nonfaculty roles.

## Awards and recognition

ECPs often feel invisible because there are few ways to be recognized in SCP unless one is a student or an accomplished professional. Currently, there are eight awards for which experienced professionals can apply and two that support students. In contrast, there is only one award geared toward ECPs, the Fritz & Linn Kuder Early Career Scientist/Practitioner Award. However, some SCP sections are already giving early career awards. For example, the Section for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues has a yearly early career psychologist award. Perhaps the larger SCP can establish additional awards that recognize the contributions of ECPs. A second way ECPs could be recognized is through travel grants to attend conferences. Financial constraints are a limitation for many ECPs, as they often move across the country to start positions, begin repaying loans, open independent practices, purchase licensing study materials, and register for licensing examinations. Furthermore, those working as practitioners or in other roles outside academia often do not receive financial assistance from their employers to attend conferences. These factors prevent new professionals from presenting their work, learning about cutting-edge research and interventions, and connecting with SCP colleagues at conferences, which are the keys to engaging professionals in the Society, expanding Divisional perspectives, and ensuring the longevity of SCP.

## Leadership and governance

The vitality of SCP is dependent on emerging professionals taking an interest in governance and contributing ideas to committees, special interest groups, and task forces. Likewise, serving in governance positions can allow ECPs to network and collaborate with senior leaders in the society. The SCP president could encourage each committee to include at least one ECP among its members, preferably an ECP who is from a diverse cultural or ethnic background, working in a nontraditional venue, and/or studying an atypical research topic. The SCP Executive Board could send notes of congratulations to new degree recipients and invite them to participate in special interest groups and task forces. This was done in the late 1980s and perhaps since then, though inconsistently. Finally, SCP could create a program for mentoring ECPs in engaging in leadership and governance. As of summer 2011, SCP President-Elect Barry Chung (2011a, 2011b) was finalizing plans for developing a leadership academy.

## Students

The Society should make additional efforts to reach out to current counseling psychology students, doctoral candidates, and predoctoral interns because doing so will help socialize trainees into SCP and encourage their continued membership (Munley et al., 2008), as well as help students gain knowledge and connections to enhance their professional success. SCP has made initial steps in this direction, as students are now voting members of the executive board.

As Munley et al. (2008) noted, one potential way to encourage the inclusion of new professionals would be to establish an institutional student membership, whereby academic training programs pay a fee and their students enjoy Divisional membership benefits. This would promote SCP membership among students, therefore making outreach to students who are involved in Division 17 and its Student Affiliates of Seventeen (SAS) group more effective. Holding joint social hours (for students and ECPs) at conferences would likely help ease the transition for students as they move from the student role to the professional role, by potentially minimizing the degree to which they feel they have lost a social group when they transition to ECP status. Furthermore, creating a mentoring network between ECPs and students would provide new professionals with a meaningful way to engage in the Society.

## Strategies for ECPs

Recognizing the mutual benefit of professional organizational involvement both to SCP and ECPs, we offer five suggestions to ECPs for becoming more involved in SCP. First, we encourage ECPs to consider joining Divisional

sections, both for the opportunity to work in smaller groups and to collaborate with those professionals with similar, specific interests. Second, we suggest ECPs attend regional conferences as well as social hours and Division poster sessions at the national convention, all of which allow for smaller venues in which to network and meet other members. Next, we suggest ECPs peruse electronic resources such as electronic mailing lists, newsletters, social networking sites, and SCP's website in order to be kept apprised of the most current information. Fourth, ECPs can seek peer support from their alumni and colleagues regarding professional development and opportunities for ongoing collaboration. Finally, we encourage ECPs to reach out to current students and recent graduates, recognizing that emerging and new professionals might be particularly receptive to welcoming gestures from ECPs.

In summary, opportunities abound for SCP to more actively invite, engage, include, and support new professionals. Although SCP made important strides in this area between 1984 and 1995, as well as between 2004 and 2008, continued, sustained efforts are critical to ensure the long-term vitality and identity of the Division as well as to maximize the professional benefits of SCP to ECPs. Current and incoming leaders of our Society should make outreach to emerging professionals a chief priority. The responsibility for enhancing the pipeline, however, rests with all counseling psychologists. All members are encouraged to engage with and support emerging professionals. Ensuring the success of SCP and the success of the field's newest members will take the combined efforts of established psychologists, new professionals, and students.

## Limitations and Conclusions

The finding of this study should be viewed within the context of three primary limitations. First, the findings of this survey were based on responses from 36% of the total early career membership in SCP. In terms of percentage of total population of interest, our response rate was acceptable; however, it is unknown if those who choose not to respond to the survey hold similar or differing views from our sample. Of particular concern was the dearth of cultural diversity in our sample, most notably the small number of African American participants. However, our sample was comparable to (and even slightly more diverse than) students in accredited psychology programs (APA, n.d.-b). Second, this survey was limited to current ECP members of SCP, and no information was collected from former Society members or those who never joined SCP. Although it would be valuable to have information from ECPs who are not members of SCP or who have withdrawn from the Society, having data from current early career members of SCP provides a unique opportunity to focus efforts on membership retention and understand the needs and concerns of those who are still affiliated with the Society. Finally, the items used for the current study were developed for this investigation and have not been validated. In addition, the qualitative items were somewhat brief and did not generate large amounts of data from participants. Future studies that use the same questionnaire will help to add to the validity of the instrument and shed additional light on the unique issues affecting ECPs, whereas future qualitative research might consider using focus groups or interviews to gain more information about this topic.

Additional areas for future research include comparing the experiences of ECPs with those of more senior members of SCP. In addition, research could compare the views of SCP among those ECPs who chose to join the Society and those who chose not to join the Society. Likewise, research is needed comparing views of ECPs in SCP to those of ECPs in other Divisions of APA. This study is one of the first to specifically query ECPs as a group; thus, directions for future research are plentiful.

In conclusion, ECPs are divided in their evaluations of SCP membership and its utility in their careers. The results suggest several areas for improvement, particularly around climate, recruitment of members to leadership positions, and opportunities for ECPs to become involved in the Society in meaningful ways. The Society has a great deal of potential for better meeting the needs of ECPs through increased mentorship. Suggestions for enhancing the recruitment, retention, and engagement of new professionals offer a range of options for

ensuring the future viability and vibrancy of SCP, as well as providing professional affiliation and support to its early career members. Likewise, despite the focus of this study on counseling psychologists, many of the recommendations would likely translate to other APA Divisions interested in better serving their early career constituencies.

## Acknowledgements

The fourth through ninth authors are listed alphabetically, and all contributed equally to this article. Thanks to Jennifer Teramoto Pedrotti and Theodore Burnes for their input on the study design and feedback on an earlier draft of this article.

## Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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