

AVAPL Annual Meeting
Toronto, Canada
August 7, 2015

Attendance: Executive Committee (Drs. McQuaid and Cortez-Garland), 11 attendees in person, 18 by phone

1. The Call to Order and Welcome was given by Dr. McQuaid
 - a. Dr. McQuaid wore the traditional "Chief of Chiefs" sweater
2. APA Representative for AVAPL – Dr. Heather O’Beirne Kelly
 - a. Dr. Kelly described recent barriers to her work in the past 6-12 months related to the APA Hoffman report. MVP updates and lunches were suspended temporarily. Coming up at the end of August (August 26th) Dr. Kelly and FOVA will participate in budget analysis talks related to VA research. Dr. Kelly also reported that she will keep us posted on congressional appropriations related to VA research.
 - b. Dr. Kelly described the initiative for all providers to ask patients coming in for a mental health appointment about a history of serving in the U.S. military.
 - c. Dr. Kelly with work with the AVAPL Executive Committee on the Title 38 white paper and how it could potentially be advanced in September 2015.
 - d. An issue from the audience was related to the hiring of other professionals in the VA (e.g., marriage and family therapists, licensed professional counselors) and how it could impact monies distributed for training leading to less psychology positions. A question was posed as to how we can work to accommodate these new professionals while also highlighting our expertise and doctoral level training. Dr. Kelly requested additional information regarding the issue and how it is impacting psychologists to be better informed. She would like to know what is needed of her in relation to this issue.
 - e. Another issue from the audience was related to the CHOICE act and the possibility of working with Dr. Kelly to modify the law to impact how it is being implemented. Also related to the CHOICE act is the issue of vesting as psychologists cannot vest patients which may be impacting the VA in terms of lost money.
3. Review and Approval of Minutes of the 2014 Meeting – Dr. Cortez-Garland – Approved
4. Passing of the "Mantle" to the New President- Dr. McQuaid and Dr. Kirchberg (by phone)
5. New President’s Address- Dr. Kirchberg (by phone)
 - a. Dr. Kirchberg highlighted the current time of transition for the VA and the continued dedication to the mission of the VA in serving Veterans. He discussed the issue of rebuilding the VA and demonstrating to Veterans and the public that we are committed to Veterans. Dr. Kirchberg highlighted that psychologists will play a large role in meeting VA challenges and that AVAPL will continue to address key issues such as the CHOICE act, vesting, and C&P to name a few. He expressed goals related to working together to protect the unique skills of psychologists and being committed to continued excellence that has come to be expected from psychologists. Dr. Kirchberg also expressed his thanks to Dr. McQuaid, the Executive committee, advisory committee, conference planning group, and Dr. Heather Kelly.

6. Financial and Membership Report- Dr. McQuaid (Dr. Shea present by phone)
 - a. Membership: 482
 - b. AVAPL general fund balance: \$ 60,746.82
 - c. Leadership Conference fund: \$ 27,915.66
 - d. Dr. Shea highlighted what has been done recently to increase membership: reminders to pay dues, focus on only keeping paying members on the listserve (with the help of Dr. Burk).
 - e. Dr. McQuaid also highlighted that the yearly VAPL conference has been reported by psychologists as one of the best conferences to attend which likely helps to increase membership as well.
 - f. A question from participants highlighted the need for a plan to manage the growing general fund balance so as not to affect our nonprofit status. Suggestions included using the funds to help support Executive committee members attend APA and VAPL conferences. Members present and on the phone expressed support.
 - g. It was also reported that the VAPL conference had a surplus in 2015
7. Results of the 2015 AVAPL Elections
 - a. President-Elect: Dr. Ron Gironda
8. Report on the 2015 VA Psychology Leadership Conference – Dr. Ameer Patel (on behalf of Dr. Sam Wan)
 - a. Dr. Patel highlighted the attendance which was just shy of the record (209 participants). Support from the APA Board of Educational Affairs aided some VA trainees to attend the conference. She highlighted the pre-conference APA site visitors training and the post-conference training on Servant Leadership development. Some highlights included keynote addresses by Dr. Barry Anton (APA president) and Dr. Carolyn Clancy (Interim Under Secretary for Health) as well as the participation of Dr. Jill Draime (Acting VHA Chief of Staff). Dr. Fjordbak was presented a post humorous award by APA president Dr. Anton. Dr. Dave Carroll was presented with the Pat DeLeon award. Members are reminded that they can still access conference presentations on the AVAPL website (thanks to Dr. Burk). The 2016 conference will be during the same time of year (May) and will remain in Texas. Contact Dr. Ameer Patel with any ideas/suggestions on content for the conference.
9. Dr. Genevieve Davis provided an update on the AVAPL newsletter. She expressed plans to publish two per year (January and June). She expressed being inspired by those she has spoken with in regards to stories of employee engagement, research and other activities by VA psychologists. There is a new submission portal to get information on the newsletter. Ideas are welcome and they would like to receive information on different programs taking place throughout the VA. Dr. McQuaid praised the wonderful work being done to produce such a wonderful newsletter.
10. Awards
 - a. Antonette Zeiss Distinguished Leadership Award: Dr. Jeff Burk
 - b. Leadership Award: Dr. George Shorter
 - c. James Besyner Early Career Award: Dr. Erin Andrews

Past President: Dr. Steven Lovett was recognized for his contributions to AVAPL

11. President's Address- Dr. McQuaid

- a. Dr. McQuaid highlighted the eventful year which included funding opportunities and resources to benefit out Veterans that can bring challenges to implement. Other challenges included growth in staff without space to house them and new collaborations with other disciplines. He acknowledged the assistance of outside partners who are supportive of VA psychology including APA and the VSOs. Dr. McQuaid described positive achievements in the last year including the Title 38 white paper, the start of the new C&P SIG, and a wonderful midwinter meeting with APA, VSOs, VACO and congressional staff. He expressed the need for continued open lines of communication, the building of a safe workplace, continued work on the implementation of the CHOICE act, and ongoing partnerships. He expressed thanks for the newsletter and to the Executive committee and APA. Dr. McQuaid also expressed thanks for the membership and those who have taken on leads in the SIGs. He hoped for another great year and continued growth.

12. Dr. Randy Phelps addressed the group and expressed the gratifying nature of the work that he completed with VA and VA psychologists. He expressed excitement about the movement to Title 38 and the work that was done together with APA. He discussed the Give an Hour program started by his wife, Barbara Van Dahlen, and the new push for recognizing the 5 signs of suffering. He reported that work is being done to create an MOU with the VA to continue this work. He expressed the need for psychology to be at the forefront of this movement to help change the culture of mental health.

13. Dr. Pat DeLeon also addressed the group and discussed issues related to the movement toward privatization of the VA and how AVAPL can work with Division 19 to have a joint voice in relation to this issue. He advocated for support in relation to the prescriptive authority movement.

14. Dr. Lisa Kearney gave an update on MH VACO

- a. She highlighted the continued focus on access to care which includes access to the full treatment of care not just the initial appointment. There continues to be a large vacancy rate in the field due to difficulty hiring and retaining psychologists. There is a VA recruiter at APA in the 1000 Row.
- b. There is a focus on MH managers to support staff, help prevent burnout, and work to retain and rejuvenate staff. There is work to build tools to assist staff in being better leaders and managers. In addition, there are efforts to train staff in skills related to data such as SAIL including how it is used and misused.
- c. There is continued focus on measurement-based care including both administrative outcomes and patient self-report outcomes. There will be a large movement in the next few years to also include provider and Veteran satisfaction surveys.
- d. There is a second Friday (2pm EST) conference call for managers and supervisors. This Friday the topic will be CHOICE and CHOICE first.
- e. Mentors continue to be needed for the MH mentorship program. There was a recent call for applications but more mentors are needed.
- f. Dr. Kearny expressed how wonderful it is to be involved with the organization and the ability to celebrate others. She encouraged the membership to find ways to encourage each other as we all serve Veterans.

15. Open Floor Discussion

- a. A question was raised regarding any mechanism that is in place to evaluate community providers? No answer was provided during the meeting but the importance of qualified professionals working with Veterans to provide good care was highlighted.
- b. A comment was made by a member advocating for the use of general fund monies to assist Executive committee members in attending conferences such as APA. It was further discussed that the funds might also be used for travel opportunities for some of the members of the Executive committee to attend other events in a formal role.
- c. There was a discussion regarding the paper, "Iron triangle", which discusses the change in the relationship the VA has with the VSOs and Congress. This is part of the discussion of the privatization of the VA.
- d. Dr. McQuaid was thanked for another great year for AVAPL and VA psychology. He adjourned the meeting.

Dr. McQuaid's award comments:

Antoinette Zeiss Distinguished Leadership Award: Dr. Jeff Burk

Dr. Jeff Burk completed his BA at UT Dallas and his Ph.D. at the University of Missouri-Columbia. He completed his internship at the Dallas VA in 1987, and has been a VA psychologist since. He has served in numerous roles from a staff psychologist, director of training, acting chief, assistant chief of psychology, Chief of Psychology for the Gainesville VA, and now National Mental Health Director for Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Services.

From his nomination letters:

Perhaps Dr. Burk's most illustrious accomplishment in VA psychology training was his significant role in the formation of the VA Psychology Training Council (VAPTC). As founding chair of the VAPTC, he helped guide the structure and development of the council, which consists of all VA Psychology Training Directors nationwide and held its first meeting in 2008 as a pre-conference at the VA Mental Health conference. Working in tandem with Dr. Toni Zeiss and others, Dr. Burk assisted in giving VA Psychology Training Directors a critical voice at the national level, with representation on the Council of Chairs of Training Councils as a separate entity. Dr. Burk served both as the Acting Chair and Past Chair of the VAPTC, providing significant leadership in the development of its foundation. Since its inception, the VAPTC has gone on to accomplish extraordinary tasks, including, but not limited to, the development of an extensive SharePoint widely used by VA Training Directors, creation of active subcommittees in administration and clinical areas, creation of didactic materials and guiding documents in VA training, and the active mentoring of new psychology training directors. It is stunning to see all that the council has accomplished in such a short period of time and speaks volumes of Dr. Burk seminar work.

Another area that Dr. Burk demonstrated groundbreaking leadership was his work in establishing and promoting the VHA's Peer Support Programs. Under the strong pressure of Congress for this very high profile endeavor, Dr. Burk and his team were able to successfully implement the policy and lead a revolutionary shift in care. This included publishing of comprehensive VHA Handbook and Directives, addressing such complex issues as policies on classification, documentation, as well as the training and certification of this new class of provider for VHA. Dr. Burk led the implementation of this key program and met President Obama's Executive Order that required more than 800 Veterans be hired as Mental Health Peer Specialists and Peer Apprentices nationally within a 6 month deadline. The new profession of Peer Support within VA now serves as a model for the nation.

In summary, Dr. Burk has been the quintessential psychologist leader. His work has had far reaching impact on VA psychologists and the VA in general. Beyond that, he is an incredibly lovely human being, a tireless worker, a gracious and generous man who always makes time for others, no matter how busy he is. Notably, he's least likely person to draw attention to himself and is content to work behind the scenes to make so much happen. He epitomizes every ounce of what the Antonette Zeiss Award is intended to honor.

It's important to look at a career like Jeff Burk's when thinking of awards because it is people like Jeff who make the VA work well. Among the set of accomplishments representing Dr. Burk's career thus far, there are specific, notable achievements, to be sure. But even as he has made these contributions, much of his greatest work and most meaningful accomplishments are hidden from view. They are hard to quantify and to list. First, some of these accomplishments are attributable to his influence on others around him, which is very hard to capture and convey. Second, because he will deny any ownership of his legacy. His humility will simply not allow for such recognition. Jeff Burk is a public servant, a friend, a quiet, resolute, ethical, and generous person whose influence will endure in my mind and in my behavior as a psychologist, as a leader, and even as a human being for the rest of my life. I think it's important that he is chosen for this distinguished award based on the whole of his work; based on what he has provided to others.

It was a wonderful experience, working together with Jeff. I choose my words deliberately when I say that; I was working with Jeff for Veterans. There was never any doubt about the purpose of our mission; we served Veterans by serving the Staff Psychologists. We enabled them to serve. I am not the only person who would honor Jeff in this way. I am not the only person works for Veterans and for the Psychologists who serve them who will credit Jeff's guidance and help for their success. Jeff, as humble as he is, won't tell you how many of us there are. In fact, I'm not sure he could even begin to account for all of us he has helped. I am sure that he gives himself no credit at all, though. Let's take this matter into our hands. Let's take a moment to recognize great leadership. Jeff Burk is an excellent choice for the Antonette Zeiss Distinguished Career Award.

Leadership Award: Dr. George Shorter

Dr. Shorter received his Ph.D from Auburn University and completed his internship at the Gainesville VA. He has held many hats in the VA, including SUD program team leader, EAP coordinator, Assistant Chief of Psychology, Chief of Psychology, Acting Director of recovery services and MHICM, and Acting Director of Mental Health

From his nominators:

Dr. Shorter's career illustrates an impressive commitment to investing in the professional development of psychology trainees and early career psychologists. He demonstrated this commitment early in his career when he became a highly sought-after supervisor for interns and postdoctoral fellows at the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System (NF/SGVHS). Dr. Shorter was, at the time, the manager of the Substance Abuse Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (SARRTP) at the Lake City division of the NF/SGVHS. Being 40 miles away from the main campus, Lake City was not often seen as a desirable location for training. Dr. Shorter made his rotation so interesting and exciting that his supervisees did not seem to mind the drive.

In addition to Dr. Shorter's strong commitment to mentoring, he has shown a career long dedication to advocating for the profession of psychology in VA and to service of his fellow psychologists by taking on

leadership roles in professional organizations. This is highlighted well in his advocacy work as President, Past President, and President Elect of AVAPL. Dr. Shorter is a dynamic speaker and communicator. He speaks articulately in meetings with congressional staffers and Veterans Service Organization leaders, advocating for the critical role of psychology in service of Veterans. While others might become anxious in such meetings, Dr. Shorter always shone brilliantly, communicating clearly the mental health services needs for Veterans and the needs of the staff serving those Veterans.

In summary, Dr. Shorter truly personifies the traits deserving of recognition for the AVAPL Leadership Award and I cannot recommend anyone more highly. We are honored to have him as a colleague. His dedication to VA psychologists, expansion of recovery oriented services, and mentoring the next generation embodies what is the focus area for this award.

James Besyner Early Career Award: Dr. Erin Andrews

Dr. Andrews completed her Psy.D at Wright State University in 2008, and her internship and fellowship at the James A. Haley VA in Tampa. She is ABPP in Rehabilitation Psychology. She has already assumed the role of Supervisory Psychologist at the Central Texas VA Healthcare System in Austin, supervising 24 psychologists as 3 LPCs, 4 peer specialists and a psychology technician. She also serves as the director of psychology training, including an internship and practicum affiliations with UT Austin, Texas A & M and Baylor. Dr. Andrews also holds a clinical assistant professor position at Texas A & M. Dr. Andrews is active in scholarship and research as well. Drawing from the nomination letter:

Dr. Andrews represented the American Psychological Association (APA) in 2013 during a congressional briefing regarding parents with disabilities, and wrote several articles for APA newsletters and blogs summarizing research findings on disability and parenting as a member of APA's Committee on Disability Issues in Psychology (CDIP). She served a 3-year term on CDIP from January 2011-December 2013, and was co-chair in 2013. Dr. Andrews was also elected member-at large for the APA Division 22, Rehabilitation Psychology for a 3-year term from 2010-2013. Since 2010, she has served as Chair, Special Interest Group: Psychologists with Disabilities for Division 22. Dr. Andrews received the APA Division 22 Rehabilitation Psychology Early Career Practice Award in 2013.

Dr. Andrews is currently working as a Co-PI for a \$10,000 grant from Brandeis University to develop the Disability Parenting Project (DPP), a digital participatory action research project. In 2013, Dr. Andrews collaborated with interdisciplinary colleagues in rehabilitation medicine to compile a number of case studies on the experiences of women amputees, including women Veterans, which was published in *Rehabilitation Nursing*. Later that year, she was the first author on a collaboration among several Division 22 members on providing culturally competent supervision to trainees with disabilities; this groundbreaking article was published in *Rehabilitation Psychology*. Her next scholarly contribution in the area of disability and psychology training was in 2014 when she mentored a graduate student in completing the first known quantitative study of the experiences and characteristics of psychology trainees with disabilities; initial results were published in *Rehabilitation Psychology*. Most recently, Dr. Andrews and her junior colleague published an important analysis of several sources of data on disabled trainees in psychology, including APPIC and APA data; this article has been published online first and will appear in a forthcoming issue of *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*.

Dr. Andrews and her CDIP colleague Dr. Dana Dunn published an important scholarly work in *American Psychologist* in April 2015, challenging traditional approaches to disability language and integrating a disability studies perspective with a social psychological viewpoint. This article has implications for the

ways in which disability is written and spoken about and is likely to influence future versions of the APA Style Manual. In addition to these significant publications, Dr. Andrews has published several book chapters on disability and rehabilitation topics. She collaborated with Dr. Tim Elliott on a chapter on physical rehabilitation program in an updated volume of the *Handbook of Clinical Psychology in Medical Settings: Evidence Based Assessment and Intervention* and on psychology in physical rehabilitation settings in the latest iteration of *Clinical Psychology: Roots and Branches*, a volume of the *APA Handbook of Clinical Psychology*. Her chapter with a junior colleague on parenting with a disability will be included in the forthcoming APA book, *From Inequity to Equity: Improving the Health and Well-being of Women with Disabilities*.

Dr. Andrews serves as co-editor for disability issues of the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) Newsletter, and is on the editorial board of *Sexuality & Disability*. She is a reviewer for *Rehabilitation Psychology* and the *Journal of Clinical Psychology in Medical Settings*.

Dr. Erin Andrews has contributed substantially to public service and VA psychology by her scholarly, clinical, and advocacy work around disability, in a manner particularly impressive for an early career psychologist. I firmly believe that the reviewers for the James Besyner Early Career Award for Distinguished Contributions to VA Psychology will agree that Dr. Andrews exemplifies all the characteristics for the award.