

News from the field

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CONFERENCE NEWS

How to win friends and improve science: Notes from the first meeting of SIPS (the Society for the Improvement of Psychological Science)

Inaugural Meeting of the Society for the Improvement of Psychological Science (2016, June). Charlottesville, VA.

The field of psychology has recently been discussing means to improve the rate of successful replications and increase the efficiency of scientific work. To discuss these issues the Society for the Improvement of Psychological Science (SIPS), held an exploratory conference in Charlottesville Virginia from June 6–8, which I attended.

The meeting's purpose was to encourage the sharing of ideas and new initiatives to facilitate the conduct of better science practices. It was supported by the University of California, Davis, and the Center for Open Science (COS; <http://cos.io>). Everyone who inquired was invited to attend, amounting to approximately 100 individuals, including pre-tenure and post-tenure faculty, postdocs and grad students. The majority of attendees were divided between social and personality psychology while a sizeable minority were from cognitive, education, developmental, and clinical disciplines. Also in attendance were representatives and journalists from APS, SAGE Press, *Nature*, and *The Atlantic*.

SIPS began its first-ever meeting with an open discussion of what issues are most crucial to the field. One of the most frequently mentioned concerns was “widening the

tent” by getting more people involved in open practices. There was a clear sense that recommendations for changing scientific practice would be controversial and therefore any outputs from the meeting should be accessible to the broadest and most diverse audience possible. There were a considerable number of technical suggestions. For example, it was suggested that XML and R Markdown should be allowable formats for journal submissions which would allow metadata and code to be part of a paper, permitting reanalysis by reviewers and readers.

As a cognitive psychologist, it was exciting to see our colleagues in the social and personality areas of psychology taking the lead in facilitating these discussions. Brian Nosek commented that psychology is rapidly becoming known across other scientific disciplines as a leader in developing innovations for open and reproducible science practice. I was also impressed by the willingness to offer time freely in pursuit of these goals, the highly proficient technical skills, and the spirit of warm acceptance toward a variety of viewpoints that was present throughout the meeting.

There was little discussion of encouraging universal adoption of Bayesian methods and overhauling the journal system, which was surprising because these two topics are most often debated in relation to scientific reform. Instead, the meeting functioned as a working group, with attendees joining breakout groups to discuss problems and identify immediate, practical solutions. A guiding example was the badge system adopted by *Psychological Science*, which seems to have increased adoption of open data practices (Kidwell, Lazarević, Baranski, Hardwicke, Piechowski, Falkenberg, and Errington, 2016). The information and

resources associated with these projects are available to the public at the OSF page for the SIPS meeting: <https://osf.io/jtcu9/>. Those interested in contributing should contact the administrators of a group. There is also a mailing list that can be joined by contacting Simine Vazire, through <http://www.simine.com/>.

I came away impressed by the warm attitude and the technical competence of this community of individuals who are interested in improving science. The summer is a good time to refit my lab's infrastructure and I am looking forward to sharing some of the tools that we're developing at the next SIPS meeting, which is scheduled for July 30-August 1, 2017 in Charlottesville, Virginia. – Brad Wyble.

Reference

Kidwell, M. C., Lazarević, L. B., Baranski, E., Hardwicke, T. E., Piechowski, S., Falkenberg, L. S., & Errington, T. M. (2016). Badges to acknowledge open practices: A simple, low-cost, effective method for increasing transparency. *PLoS Biology*, *14*(5), e1002456.

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