



President's Message

November 2024

Dear IAAP Members,

Picture this scene: An applied psychologist arrives from another galaxy, only to find herself on Earth—a culturally diverse planet brimming with potential. The year is 2024, and while Earth faces its share of challenges, it's also filled with people striving toward a better future, guided by aims like the Sustainable Development Goals. “How in the world,” she wonders, “can the delicate balance among people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnerships be accomplished, given the diversity of individuals, communities, environments, and complex systems involved?”

She scratches her heads, puzzling over this for a few moments. Suddenly, it dawns on her: a deep understanding of people, behavior, and organizations is essential for achieving these goals. Psychology, she sees, is a vital part of the solution—providing the insights needed to bring about meaningful, lasting change.

Recognizing the importance of strength in numbers, our newcomer seeks a community—a home where new voices and longtime members alike bring unique, valued perspectives. She's looking for a place with a strong foundation, built from lessons of the past but never stuck in it. A place where every new connection holds the potential to inspire and where applied psychologists from around the world unite to learn, grow, and expand psychology's role in helping individuals and societies flourish. This is the IAAP we're building, one day at a time—and each of you is part of this vibrant global community.

As many of you know, we've been discussing our strategic aims recently. This month, I want to share more about the second of our three strategic goals: *to increase the number and diversity of engaged members by improving the value and accessibility of IAAP.*

Let's break this down by considering three key words embedded in this goal: *number, engaged, and diversity.*

Number is about growth—adding members who bring fresh perspectives and enriching our community. More members mean more opportunities for learning, collaboration, and

connections that might brighten your day or spark a new idea. Since joining IAAP, I've had the privilege of countless interactions that broadened my understanding and deepened my connection to the field. Every new member isn't just a number; each represents an opportunity for growth, dialogue, and shared purpose.

But numbers alone don't create impact; we also need *engagement*. When members are engaged, they enrich both their own experiences and those of the community. Engagement can take as many forms as we have members. Some may run for an IAAP election, volunteer to edit a divisional newsletter, or submit a proposal for ICAP 2026. Others might organize a webinar watch party, share IAAP content on social media, or connect with a colleague across divisions to explore ideas for a collaborative project. Engagement means participating in ways that deepen connections, inspire shared learning, and support our shared goals, no matter the form it takes.

And finally, *diversity*. IAAP has long been international at its core, and maintaining and enhancing this diversity offers a tremendous opportunity to learn from one another. We're working to expand our reach, including in regions like the Global South, knowing that each diverse voice strengthens our insights and relevance. The perspectives we gain from different cultural and professional backgrounds create a richer understanding of human behavior and psychology's role worldwide. We have so much to learn from each other.

I was reminded of this a few weeks ago, as I represented IAAP at the 30th Congress of the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) and the 10th Congress of the Pan African Psychology Union (PAPU), followed by a visit and talk at the University of Cape Town, which included members of the Réseau PTO-Sud network and the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology of South Africa (SIOPSA). It was an honor to meet with leaders from these associations and spend quality time with leaders from the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS). Reflecting on the foresight it took to organize PsySSA in the same year as South Africa's first democratic election is humbling—an inspiring reminder of how associations can arise to serve their unique contexts and support the growth of psychology.

I've increasingly come to appreciate how essential associations are for both our individual growth and our collective ability to drive meaningful change within the field of psychology. Earlier in my career, I thought of psychology associations mainly as places to present research, reconnect with colleagues, and share studies. Now, I see them as key drivers of progress. National, regional, and global associations connect psychologists across specialties and borders, fostering dialogue, building synergies, and organizing the kinds of collaborations needed to address complex, large-scale challenges. Fortunately, colleagues in Africa understood this long before I did, as did IAAP's founders, who established our

association over a century ago to build a more interconnected and impactful psychology community.

As we continue working toward our shared goals, I'm pleased to share some recent developments within IAAP. In this month's eNews, you'll find updates from our divisions, highlights from recent events, and a look at what's on the horizon. Together, we're building an IAAP where every member feels connected, valued, and empowered to make an impact. Thank you for being such an essential part of this journey.

Warm regards,

Lori Foster

President, International Association of Applied Psychology