

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Brought to you by the PSA's Student Affairs Committee

Thank you for attending the PSA Conference! We know that many of you are new to conferences and may have questions. We wanted to offer you a few tools to use in order to make this conference a fun, positive, learning experience.

## **How should I dress?**

While some conferences are very formal, the PSA is designed to be comfortable for all participants. You will see people in suits as well as in jeans. You are still networking and meeting new people, so you will want to look 'presentable' but how you define this is up to you.

## **There are two sessions I am interested in attending, but they both meet at the same time. Is there anything I can do?**

Sit in the back of the first session and slip out when the speaker that you are interested in seeing is done. It is acceptable, and common practice, for people to move between sessions provided they do it quietly and respectfully. A helpful tip is that the order that the presenters show on the program is *usually* (but not always) the order that they will present in.

## **Can I bring food or drink into the sessions?**

There are water and glasses outside or on the side/rear of the session rooms (the ones on the front table by the presenters are for the presenters), which you are welcome to bring into the rooms. Other drinks, such as coffee or soda, are also fine to bring in (but please pop open cans before the presentations start!). In respect for the presenters and those around you, food should generally be consumed outside of the sessions.

## **Do I really have to go to the Student Reception?**

We cannot make you go, but it is a great way to meet and connect with fellow sociology students and get some free snacks. We usually have free books and some surprise cash for students who are registered for the conference and who are members of PSA (so bring your name badge given to you at registration and your ID!).

## **How do I mingle/network?**

This is a tough question, because some people just seem to know how to do this and others are uncomfortable with the mere concept. The best we can do here is to remind you to wear your nametags and don't be shy. Review the sessions and presentations, go to the ones you're interested in, and remember that

you are encouraged to approach the presenters afterwards with any questions you may have.

## **I am presenting at a session. What should I expect?**

If you are presenting at an undergraduate roundtable or poster session, you will receive information from the Undergraduate Coordinator, Robert Kettlitz—pay attention to this!

Undergraduate roundtable presentations are far less formal than a paper session. There will be a faculty or advanced graduate student Discussant at your table who will lead the session. Generally, each presenter will present their work, and then the table Discussant will engage you in a discussion about your work. They may have individual comments for each presenter, or moderate a larger table discussion among all participants. The advantage of a roundtable is that it is informal; it's a great way to get feedback on your work, talk about difficulties you may have had in collecting your data, etc. (and find that other students have had the same problems). It's a great way to share ideas and share your research experiences with other students. Often you will pick up some good suggestions on how to improve your work from both your table Discussant and the other students.

Undergraduate poster sessions are scheduled just as other sessions (during a particular 1 ½ hour time period). Bulletin boards and tacks are provided to display posters, set up in a high traffic area so that meeting attendees can walk through and look at your work. You are required to be standing by your poster during the scheduled session so that people can stop and talk with you about your work. Posters are visual representations of your work and are viewed by many people—often more people than attend either a paper or roundtable session.

At PSA graduate students present in regular sessions, alongside faculty and other professionals; you will receive more information to help you prepare. There are different types of regular sessions, but the two most common are Research in Progress and Formal Paper sessions. Depending on the number of presenters, you will have approximately 10-14 minutes to present your information, and a few

minutes to take questions. People in the audience will be walking in and leaving throughout your presentation – do not take it personally and try not to become distracted. A powerpoint or similar is an excellent idea (bring it on a thumb drive!), as it gives the audience something to look at while you are talking. There will be a basic laptop, projector and screen in each room all set up and connected. If you choose not to prepare a powerpoint, try to refrain from just “reading” your presentation – it is a supportive environment and an excellent chance to practice your professional presenting skills. Note: Any requests for special technology *had to be* made with your submission.

### **I noticed on the program sessions called Presidential or Thematic. What does that mean?**

These are special sessions that are organized around the conference theme by the President and Program Chair, etc.. They generally have high profile presenters and are highlights of that year’s meeting. You can, and should, attend these if the topic interests you.

### **What is the Presidential Address & Awards Ceremony? Am I expected to go?**

This is where the president addresses members of the PSA and various awards are given, including the Distinguished Undergraduate Student Paper Award, Distinguished Graduate Student Paper Award, Distinguished Scholarship Award, Distinguished Teaching Award, Distinguished Contribution to Practice Award, and the Social Conscience Award (not all of these are given each year). It is a good idea to go to hear what the presidents of the PSA have to say regarding their vision for the organization of which you are a member, and the discipline of sociology in general.

### **What is the Presidential Reception? Am I expected to go?**

This is a great networking event held after the presidential address. Not only does it have free food, but it is a way to mingle and visit with other PSA members. Generally faculty and students attend, so you have a wide variety of people to mix with.

### **How do committees work? Can anyone who is interested go to a committee meeting?**

Yes, anyone who is interested in a committee meeting may go to that meeting, with the exception of a few committees that need to have confidential discussions, like the Awards Committee. If, for example, you are interested in attending the

committee meeting on the Status of Women, or the Status of LGBTQIA+ Persons, or Rights, Liberties, and Social Justice, you are welcome to attend. When you go to the committee meeting, arrive a few minutes early, locate and introduce yourself to the chair of the committee, and tell him or her that you are interested in the work that committee does and would like to sit in.

### **What is involved with being in a committee? How do I express my interest in being involved in a committee?**

Students can be appointed members to all committees except for the Awards Committee and the elected committees (Committee on Committees, Nominations, and Publications). If you wish to be considered for appointment to a committee, indicate your interest when you pay your PSA fees, or email the PSA Secretary [secretary@pacificsoc.org](mailto:secretary@pacificsoc.org). Please DO NOT approach a committee chair or committee member and ask to be appointed to that committee. There is a special committee of the PSA, the Committee on Committees, that makes appointments to all committees. Terms are for two years/three conference—so you need to be committed to attending for this time!

### **Who do I go to if I have other questions?**

We have all been new to conferences, and know that there can be anxiety when faced with new experiences. You can approach almost anyone and ask your question—if they cannot answer, they may be able to send you in the right direction. A good place to start at the conference is at the PSA registration area The For Students page on the PSA website and the program app resources and announcements areas are helpful before you arrive at the conference.