

# MAPOR NEWS

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## Key Highlights:

- Submissions for MAPOR's 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference are due July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Congratulations to our new MAPOR Student Fellows: Linh Nguyen and Charlene Stainfield



## A Message from the President:

*Kevin Ulrich, MAPOR President, University of Chicago Survey Lab*

Greetings MAPORites! We hope you are enjoying your summer and beginning to look forward to the MAPOR conference in the fall. The call for participation is now active and details are included in this newsletter. We hope you will be able to join us in Chicago to share research and revel in camaraderie.

Also in this issue, Secretary/Treasurer Lindsey Witt-Swanson will provide some results from our conference and member survey. Thank you to all who participated! Also included are MAPORtraits of some of our Executive Council members. And finally, we have a warm tribute to Sharon Dunwoody, written from MAPOR Fellows and Past Presidents Lee Becker and David Weaver.

Our call for nominations for the Executive Council will go out early next month. Council members represent the membership of MAPOR and provide crucial leadership and oversight of our finances and initiatives, and of course aid in our conference planning and execution. If you or someone you know would like to take part in representing the membership, please consider nominating them or yourself for a position. If you might be interested in serving

on the council as a member at large, please reach out to us at [info@mapor.org](mailto:info@mapor.org).

And as always, if you have suggestions for MAPOR events or opportunities please contact me at [president@mapor.org](mailto:president@mapor.org).



## MAPOR's 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

*Leah Dean, Conference Chair, RTI International*

On behalf of the Awards, Grants, and Support Committee, I am pleased to announce the selectees for this year's MAPOR Student Fellowship Program. This program is a unique opportunity for students to work with a MAPOR fellow and receive guidance on the development of an original research project. Students selected to take part in the program are matched with a MAPOR fellow based on the topic of their abstract. Each selected student receives a monetary award and conference registration. This year we are excited to accept two promising scholars to the program. Linh Nguyen is a Ph.D. candidate in Survey Methodology at the Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex. Mrs. Nguyen is paired with MAPOR Fellow and Past-president Tim Johnson. The title of her paper is "Studying interviewer-respondent interactions in attitudinal questions with item-specific scales vs. agree/disagree scales". Charlene Stainfield is a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science at The Ohio State University. She is paired with MAPOR Fellow and Past-president Rob Daves. The title of her work is "Investigating Distrust in Political Polls". Congratulations to the students and an abundance of gratitude to Fellows Tim and Rob for agreeing to assist and mentor! We look forward to seeing their work presented at the conference!

Also, if you have not yet seen it, here is the call for submissions for our annual conference. Remember, submissions are due at 11:59pm on July 29<sup>th</sup>.

### **Turbulent Times: Public Opinion Research in a Changing Landscape**

There have been substantial (and surprising) shifts in both the way our work is conducted and the results of our work. Combined with the fact that this is a midterm election year, our conference theme asks the MAPOR community to consider the innovations and changes that have occurred in survey research in recent years. We encourage abstract submissions on all facets of research related to public opinion, communication, survey research, and their methodologies. Topics may include but are not limited to: questionnaire design; interviewers' role in data collection; total survey error; politics and public opinion; social media and public opinion; journalism, media, and public opinion; machine learning, big data, and data science; location and geographic information; challenges facing the field due to technological and societal shifts; the ethical use of public opinion and survey data; public opinion on social, economic, and political issues; data collection issues and strategies; qualitative and mixed-method research techniques; cross-cultural research; recruitment, participation, nonresponse; hard-to-reach populations; existing and new methods for collecting data from respondents; and data quality issues.

**Submissions:** Abstracts of 300 words or fewer can be submitted at [mapor.org](http://mapor.org). In addition to a title and abstract, you will be asked to provide the name, institutional affiliation, and email address for all authors. The same author's name may appear as first author on a maximum of two

submissions. To allow for blind review, please remove all personally identifying information from the abstract's text before submission.

**Note to student authors:** If all authors are students who will be enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate program at the time of the conference, you may submit your paper to the MAPOR Fellows Student Paper Competition. Please note that the criteria for the student paper competition has changed slightly for 2022. Please visit [mapor.org](http://mapor.org) for details. When submitting a student paper to the competition, the student submitter will be asked to provide the name and e-mail address of a faculty mentor. The faculty mentor will be asked to send an email of 25 words or fewer endorsing the paper when the full paper is submitted.

**Panel Proposals:** Panels focus on a common theme and include 4 or 5 participants. A panel proposal requires a description of 300 words or fewer discussing the issues to be addressed and their importance. Also, submissions should list the potential panelists, their institutional affiliations, email addresses, and tentative titles of presentations. Panels related to the conference theme are especially encouraged.

**Submission Information:** All abstracts must be posted no later than **11:59pm CDT on Friday July 29, 2022**. Accepted papers sharing a theme will be scheduled during a paper session. Papers with more individualized topics will be scheduled during a poster session. MAPOR considers both types of presentation equally valuable. All submitters will be notified via e-mail by September 2nd of their abstract's acceptance status. For questions or problems with the submission process, please contact the 2022 MAPOR conference chair, Leah Dean at: [abstracts@mapor.org](mailto:abstracts@mapor.org).

**Travel Grants:** The MAPOR Council will be offering two types of support grants for the 2022 Annual Conference: the MAPOR Student Support Grant and the MAPOR Colleague Grant. More details on these awards can be found on [mapor.org](http://mapor.org).

**Location and Time:** MAPOR's 47<sup>th</sup> annual conference will be held November 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at the Embassy Suites Chicago Downtown.



## Secretary Treasurer's Report

*Lindsey Witt-Swanson, MAPOR Secretary Treasurer, University Of Nebraska-Lincoln*

The 2021-2022 MAPOR Conference and Member Survey was administered in March and April this year. The questionnaire contained questions asked in previous years. However, some questions were removed because they were already asked in the conference evaluation survey administered earlier and others were added to understand member attitudes towards a possible hybrid structure of the 2022 conference.

**Response Summary**

The survey was sent to 2022 MAPOR members (n=302) and was completed by 114 members for a response rate of 37.7% (AAPOR RR2). Respondents were primarily regular members (79.6%) followed by student members (15.9%) and honorary life members (4.4%).

**Membership Benefits**

The survey asked how important members view each of three MAPOR membership benefits. On average, opportunities to network with researchers in one’s field had the highest importance rating among respondents (3.2). Supporting a regional chapter of AAPOR (2.7) and discounted MAPOR member registration (2.5) for the annual conference were rated as less important than networking opportunities but between somewhat and very important on average.

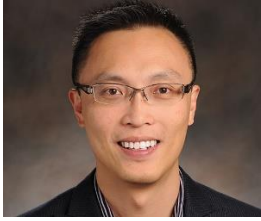
	Mean
Opportunities to network with researchers in your field	3.2
Support for a regional chapter of AAPOR	2.7
Discounted MAPOR member registration for the annual conference	2.5

Note. The Importance Scale included 1-Not at all Important, 2-Somewhat Important, 3-Very Important, and 4-Extremely Important. As a result, a higher mean indicates a higher level of importance on average.

**Membership Barriers**

Most respondents (76.1%) reported they plan to renew their MAPOR membership. The remaining respondents reported they either do not plan to renew (0.9%) or are not sure if they will renew (22.9%). Those who reported they either will not renew or are not sure if they will renew were asked if various potential barriers would prevent them from renewing their membership. Half (50%) said no longer attending the conference was a reason they may not or will not renew their membership. Four out of ten (40%) said there is another reason other than those asked about in the survey keeping them from renewing. A third reported that they may not or will not renew because they no longer live in the Midwest (36.4%) or do not receive enough benefits from their membership (33.3%).

	Reason to Not Renew Membership
I no longer attend the conference	50.0%
Other	40.0%
I moved out of the Midwest	36.4%
I did not receive enough benefits from my membership	33.3%
Membership is too expensive	26.1%
My employer no longer pays for it	21.7%
MAPOR is too narrowly focused on survey research	18.2%
I do not work in public opinion research	14.3%
MAPOR is no longer a relevant professional organization for me	13.6%



## MAPORtraits I

*Y. Patrick Hseih, Research Methodologist, RTI International*

I am a research survey methodologist and digital sociologist at RTI International's Survey Research Division. There is no better description about my career trajectory than the famous line in Forrest Gump: "Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're going to get." I came to Chicago to pursue my PhD degree, focusing on studying the phenomenon of digital inequality and how people use communication technologies like social media in their daily routines for their well-being. As opportunities emerged, I switched programs between different institutions and then decided to work out a dissertation focusing on enhancing a set of survey questions for collecting personal network data for the issues I want to research. Along my journey, MAPOR, is the best "chocolate" that I had, as it opens a door of a dynamic and rigorous profession outside academia and introduces me to a group of supportive professional colleagues who love to geek out about how to conduct surveys or scientific research more broadly. With the support and validation that I received from MAPOR, I was able to launch my career as a survey methodologist, it is only natural for me to get involved with MAPOR leadership to give back: to help foster the open and collegial culture and pay things forward as much as I am needed.

As I further my professional career as a survey methodologist and develop my expertise in incorporating new communication practices or technologies into survey research, MAPOR is certainly the most rewarding and enjoyable professional experience that I have to date. It is the "sweetest" spot for me to meet colleagues who are highly committed to developing technical expertise and maintaining high standards of quality in the profession. MAPOR annual conference provides the best space and opportunity to meet up and talk with the fantastic survey researchers in a relaxed and thoughtful atmosphere. Given its affordable cost and the big/small enough size of the attendance, I can always expose myself to nuanced research and have a stimulating conversation about new research ideas to address the emerging issues in our profession. Better yet, I always have a fun conversation with other foodies, enthusiasts of wine and craft beer, or baseball fans at our annual conference.

I am grateful for my MAPOR chocolate when I unwrap it during a very uncertain time of my professional life. I would love to keep contributing to the organization to support all our colleagues for their professional career. Just like Chicago, MAPOR is my home.

## MAPORtraits II

*Leah Dean, Research Scientist, RTI International*

I attended my first MAPOR in 2018 to present a portion of my dissertation work. I was new to the survey research field and found MAPOR to be such a warm and welcoming environment, especially for students. I now work for RTI International and I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to volunteer at MAPOR. As an At-Large board member I worked with the Conference

Chair to coordinate the 2020 virtual conference, and I became the Associate Conference Chair in 2021.

As this year's Conference Chair, I am excited to take on the challenge of putting together another successful MAPOR conference, and to get back to meeting with MAPOR members in person. We have an exciting lineup of speakers for this year, and I am thrilled to be able to provide two short course offerings for this year. I encourage everyone to visit the MAPOR website for more information on this year's conference. Looking forward to seeing everyone in November!

## MAPORtraits III

*Kevin Ulrich, Director, The University of Chicago Survey Lab*

I attended my first MAPOR conference in 2006 and presented a paper as graduate student from the University of Chicago. I found the feedback extremely helpful, and the willingness of what were then strangers to go out of their way to guide me in the right direction was a considerable boost. I also recall the amazement of realizing there were so many others working through the same technical issues and problems as myself; it was like being in Nerd heaven. MAPOR provided me the ability to informally connect with persons from a diverse set of organizations and allowed me to consider formerly unconsidered career trajectories. MAPOR was my gateway drug to the field of survey research! Having had such a successful and eye-opening experience I have always used my positions within my organizations to advocate for, encourage, and sponsor students to attend. It is a cordial and supportive group and the conference is a great platform for networking and guidance for persons of all levels in their careers.

In 2014 I returned to Chicago after managing the Survey Research Program for Group Health in Seattle, Washington. My former coworker and friend David Chearo suggested I try to get on the council as a way to connect with other survey programs and researchers in the field. His suggestion was spot on. I joined the Executive Council as many others have done before me, by losing an election. I agreed to a two-year stint as an at-large member and was asked to work as the webinar coordinator. I stayed in that role for two years before being elected as Associate Secretary. I then served as Secretary Treasurer for two years before being elected in 2020 as Vice-President/President-elect.

I am very fortunate to have served with so many talented and motivated colleagues on the Executive Council over the years! It has been a great ride and a truly rewarding experience to have served. I can honestly say I don't think of anyone as strangers when I'm at the conference anymore, it's now all colleagues and friends.





## A Tribute to Sharon Dunwoody

*Lee Becker and David Weaver, MAPOR Fellows*

*Pictured on the left: Sharon with four other MAPOR Fellows and Past Presidents--from left to right: Leo Jeffres, Cecilie Gaziano, Lee Becker, Sharon, and Dave Weaver*

Former MAPOR President and Fellow Sharon Dunwoody passed away on Friday February 4, 2022, after a courageous battle with cancer. Sharon was president of MAPOR in 1989-90 and named a Fellow in 2005. Over the years, she made many presentations at MAPOR meetings and was an extremely well liked and respected leader in the fields of public opinion and science communication. Her infectious laughter and good spirits endeared her to those of us who had the privilege of knowing her for so many years.

Sharon began her career in the School of Journalism at the Ohio State University after earning her doctorate in 1978 from Indiana University. She moved to the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Wisconsin—Madison, in 1981 and spent the remainder of her career in Madison. She retired in 2013.

Sharon was a gifted scholar, teacher and mentor. An inspiration to legions of students and colleagues, she was an exceptional role model for what others wanted to achieve during their careers. She was a leader in research on science communication for many years and was the first woman to win the prestigious Deutschmann Award from AEJMC in 2011 for career-long excellence in research. She published widely in the field of science communication and won many awards for her work. Her graduate study focused on science communication, and her long and distinguished research career retained that emphasis, while broadening her inquiry to include health and environmental communication, and public opinion..

When she began her research career in the mid 1970s, there were only three or four other scholars actively pursuing work in the area of science communication, all of whom stood on the intellectual shoulders of the late Hillier Kriegbaum, whose 1967 book, *Science and the Mass Media*, set an intellectual agenda. Very soon after she began her own research, Dunwoody was collaborating with those scholars, and in less than a decade, Dunwoody became one of the pillars of science communication research. She was recognized for her success in 1986 with the Hillier Kriegbaum Under-40 Award from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC).

Sharon produced many publications, including books, book chapters, journal and magazine articles, reports and book reviews, and she gave hundreds of paper presentations at conferences. Among her publications were two co-edited books that are considered classics in the field: *Scientists and Journalists: Reporting Science as News*, and *Communicating Uncertainty: Media Coverage of New and Controversial Science*. In many ways, her work was foundational for other research efforts as it explored a wide variety of topics and research methodologies to address important issues. These included: scientist-journalist communication; mass media coverage of

various scientific issues; uncertainty, complexity and information seeking, particularly related to risk communication; and information processing using the World Wide Web.

She held many senior offices in professional organizations and won numerous recognitions, including from MAPOR. She also was a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the Society for Risk Analysis, and the International Communication Association. She served twice as head of the AAAS section on General Interest in Science and Engineering. She was president of AEJMC in 2006.

Sharon was a Fulbright Distinguished Lecturer in Brazil, a visiting journalism fellow at Deakin University in Australia and the Donnier Guest Professor at Stockholm University. She was a Distinguished Alumni Fellow at her alma mater, Indiana University. At the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Sharon was the first woman director of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, serving from 1998-2003, and later served as UW-Madison's Associate Dean for Graduate Education. In 2019, the Journalism School created the Sharon Dunwoody Early Career Award to honor outstanding Ph.D. graduates of the school for their accomplishments in research and teaching.

Sharon Dunwoody represented the rare scholar who was able to build a highly productive research career from the conceptual underpinnings of her dissertation and to use it to work collaboratively with other outstanding scholars, essentially to create a new field of study, science communication. She was always interested in public opinion and knowledge about science and scientists as part of the field of science communication, and she always enjoyed the insights and findings from presentations at MAPOR.

More than all of her scholarly accomplishments, however, Sharon will be remembered for her engaging personality, wonderful sense of humor, kindness and gift for putting people at ease. She had a deep concern for nature and preserving the environment, and was active in the Aldo Leopold Foundation and supported many environmental causes. She was an avid gardener with her partner Steve Glass, who frequently joined Sharon at MAPOR conferences. Sharon was also an enthusiastic birder, caring for birds in her own woodland garden and taking trips all over the world, with Steve and friends, to see several thousand bird species.

Sharon was loved by her many friends, colleagues and former students. As one of her colleagues said, Sharon was such an awesome person -- taking everything in stride, always even-tempered and thoughtful. Her passing is a huge loss for all of us who had the privilege to know her.



## MAPOR Vision

MAPOR is a leading voice in public opinion, survey, and social science scholarship, methods, and practice among regional professional associations. We are an inclusive and supportive community that enables our diverse members to achieve their educational, professional development, and networking goals.

## MAPOR Mission

We provide high-quality educational and conference programs to encourage scholarly exchanges across disciplines and geographies, broaden member access to mentors and resources, and bolster opportunities for leadership and innovations. We join forces with AAPOR, academic institutions, and government and industry employers to develop a thriving community that supports all MAPOR members, including students, scholars, and professionals in every stage of their career.

## 2021-2022 MAPOR Executive Council

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