

# SPAGS Candidate Statements for 2019-2020 Election

## **PRESIDENT CANDIDATES:**

### **Chloe Bliton**

Hello! My name is Chloe Bliton, and I am privileged to be running for the President-Elect position on the Society of Personality Assessment Graduate Student (SPAGS) Association. For the past two years, I have served as a Member at Large and Chair of the Education Committee, and I look forward to the possibility of participating on the SPAGS Board again.

I am a Clinical Psychology doctoral student at Pennsylvania State University and work with Dr. Aaron Pincus. Broadly speaking, my interests include the conceptualization and assessment of personality pathology and examination of the intersection of personality pathology and interpersonal functioning. I am specifically interested exploring and validating the utility of dimensional models of personality pathology, such as the Alternative Model of Personality Disorders. Current research projects include building personality inventories; exploring the link between personality dysfunction, interpersonal problems, and relationship satisfaction; and validating dimensional models of psychopathology.

The use of assessment effortlessly bridges the gap between research and clinical practice. In my clinical work, I integrate personality assessment into treatment to clarify and conceptualize clients' functional difficulties and create specialized treatment plans. In turn, clinical work also identifies areas of research that could improve assessment, conceptualization, and treatment for clients struggling with personality pathology.

Being elected as President-Elect and continuing to serve on the SPAGS board aligns with my aims to become an advocate for individuals and groups, immerse myself in the personality assessment community, and enrich my training experience as a graduate student. I currently serve as a Member at Large and Education Committee Chair for SPAGS, the student representative for the Gender Equality Committee, and Social Media Coordinator for SPA and have served as the Clinical Training Committee Representative for my cohort. These positions have given me the opportunity to learn how large, successful organization function, to facilitate communication between faculty and students, and build a collective voice that represents and speaks for a group. If elected as President-Elect, I am committed to building the SPAGS presence throughout the year as well as at the annual conferences, creating more opportunities to foster the exchange of research ideas among researchers and clinicians, and creating more involvement and networking opportunities specifically for graduate students and early-career professionals. Above all, I am open to suggestions and ideas on how to improve the experience of the SPAGS member.

If granted the opportunity to serve as President-Elect on the SPAGS Board, I will strive to uphold SPAGS's mission of facilitating communication of ideas and advancing the field of personality assessment.

In my free time, however limited, I enjoy competing in elite powerlifting, adventuring with my pup, and planning a wedding.

### **Callie Jowers**

My name is Callie Jowers, and I am excited to be considered for the President-Elect position of the SPAGS executive board. I am a second-year clinical psychology doctoral student at the University of Detroit Mercy, where I work with Dr. Steven Huprich and Dr. John Porcerelli. Broadly speaking, my research interests include personality, personality disorders, personality assessment, and the role of therapist and patient personality in psychotherapy process and outcome. Recently, I have been working on a few projects exploring the convergence and divergence of personality disorder prototypes across several assessment measures (e.g., SWAP-200, Psychodynamic Diagnostic Manual, and DSM-5), as well as comparing their pathological trait profiles. In addition to these projects, some of my work has focused on the role of patient and therapist personality in psychotherapy. Particularly, I am studying whether personality pathology (e.g., anaclitic and introjective depressive features) improves (or does not) as a result of psychoanalysis. I am also finishing a project that examined how therapist personality relates to psychotherapy technique. Specifically, I have explored the relationship between therapist personality and the use of self-disclosure and immediacy, as well as its relationship to patient and therapist ratings of the session in which these techniques were used.

In addition to research, I am also passionate about student organizations and serving in a leadership role within those organizations. Some of my experiences include acting as vice president of Psi Chi as a graduate student, as well as secretary when I was completing my undergraduate degree. As an undergraduate student, I also served as vice president of a philanthropic, all women's social organization. While completing my master's degree, I believed that undergraduate students could benefit from graduate student mentorship. As a result, I worked with the psychology department faculty to develop an undergraduate-graduate student mentorship program. I see myself as someone who enjoys connecting with other students, as well as working toward the advancement of the organization as a whole. I find that I have a strong commitment for service, and I believe that these experiences have prepared me for holding a leadership role in SPAGS. I would truly appreciate the opportunity to be a voice for the graduate student members of SPA, as well as develop and foster relationships with other student members and the larger organization.

Overall, I truly appreciate the role of personality in clinical work and am excited about studying personality within multiple areas of the field. In terms of my interests outside of academia and clinical work, I enjoy socializing with my cohort (whom I consider dear friends, as well as colleagues), traveling, and trying new coffee shops and restaurants around the metro Detroit area. In conclusion, thank you for your consideration of my nomination for the President-Elect position. I look forward to potentially serving the organization in this capacity.

## **SECRETARY CANDIDATES:**

### **Amber Sitz**

Hello, my name is Amber Sitz. I am currently a second year student in the Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program at the University of Tulsa (TU). I am seeking the opportunity to complete my nomination as a candidate for the Secretary position for the Society for Personality Assessment Graduate Student Association (SPAGS). The following outlines my previous leadership and organizational experiences that speak to why I would be successful as your SPAGS Secretary.

I have sought leadership positions in a variety of domains throughout my education. As the Secretary for my High School Class Officers Board, I was responsible for book keeping; currently, I am organizing post-graduation events (e.g., 5<sup>th</sup> year class reunion). In my undergraduate career at Kent State University, I served as Vice President of Chapter Operations and Chapter President of my sorority, Alpha Phi. Here, I was able to grow as a leader by working with the House Corporation Board, the Advisor Committee, and the University's Panhellenic Council on behalf of my 218-member organization. I was able to attend the Undergraduate Interfraternal Institute, an annual gathering of Greek leaders aimed at further developing leadership abilities at the individual and organizational level.

As a TU graduate student, I am serving as a laboratory manager in the Individual Differences Laboratory working with Drs. Allan Harkness and John McNulty. Through this position and administrative role, I worked to develop a comprehensive laboratory manual, individual study protocol materials, and redesign the laboratory website. Additionally, I have incorporated agendas and minutes to make weekly meetings more efficient. Furthermore, I have sought after the opportunity to organize and oversee TU's Clinical Graduate Program Interview Day 2019 for student applicants. This responsibility entails planning schedules, meals, and events during the weekend prospective students will be visiting TU. My committee and I are maximizing our resources to ensure that applicants have a fantastic time in Tulsa while obtaining an accurate depiction of the program and life in Tulsa.

Generally, I am interested in personality assessment and individual differences. My research to this point has focused on personality dimensions and the Imposter Phenomenon. Clinically, I am developing outpatient therapy and assessment skills at a community-based training clinic, working with Dr. Joanne Davis on Exposure, Relaxation, and Rescripting Therapy for treating trauma-related nightmares, and a growth mindset/mindfulness based psychoeducation program developed by the Laureate Institute for Brain Research.

I believe I am particularly suited for the position of SPAGS Secretary. My leadership skills, ability to foster a collaborative environment, and tireless work ethic are strengths that would lead me to successfully serve as the SPAGS Secretary. My deep experience working with organizations and interpersonal skills emphasizing teamwork and collaboration are ideal characteristics to share with the SPAGS membership. I also consider my work ethic a strength. As a graduate student, I take on many roles and am often working on multiple projects. It is essential I maintain organization and optimize my time for maximum productivity. I am able to do this by back scheduling deadlines (i.e., planning in designated time to work on

time-limited tasks), making weekly goal lists (i.e., to-do lists), utilizing resources, and maintaining physical health. I enjoy wearing these multiple hats and am eager to serve as SPAGS Secretary.

### **Tessa Long**

I am currently a third-year doctoral student at Sam Houston State University under the mentorship of Dr. Jaime Anderson. Broadly, my research interests include cultural diversity, the assessment of personality pathology, and dimensional models of conceptualizing personality. I am specifically interested in the cross-cultural validation of personality measurements and the cultural sensitivity of psychological tests. As such, my dissertation will focus on the comparison of the Spanish vs. English versions of the MMPI-2-RF and measures of psychopathology and functional impairment. As a SPAGS board member, I aim to focus on continuing the growing interest of multicultural assessment within SPA and foster the intercultural growth of the organization. Beyond being a graduate student, I enjoy running (most recently in the Disney Wine and Dine Half Marathon), rock climbing, and traveling.

### **MEMBER-AT-LARGE CANDIDATES:**

#### **Jennifer Boland**

I am currently a third-year clinical psychology doctoral student at Sam Houston State University, studying under the mentorship of Dr. Jaime Anderson. My primary research interests broadly include the study of personality pathology. Specifically, I am interested in the online social media behaviors of individuals with personality disorders, dimensional models of personality pathology, and the effects of clinician bias on the treatment outcomes of clients with borderline personality disorder. In addition to attending classes and conducting research, I also pursue my clinical interests related to forensic assessment, and I scour academic Twitter to promote content on SPA's social media accounts! In the future, I aim to continue my research pursuits in an academic position, where I will have the opportunity to train and mentor other students who are passionate about research. Outside of school, I can usually be found playing video games, napping with my cat, or doing Pilates.

#### **Margie Achee**

Hello! My name is Margie Achee. I am a second-year doctoral student at the University of Tulsa. I work in the Individual Differences Lab under the primary mentorship of Dr. Allan Harkness. Our lab is engaged in a longitudinal study of personality from a multimethod perspective including self-report, genetic, and physiologic measurement. With regard to this project, my primary role has been developing physiologic measures personality. My research interests broadly involve developing tools that can be used in conjunction with self-report measures to better understand the relationship between personality and physiology. In addition to developing the physiologic branch of our data collection, I am the lab project manager. In this capacity I am responsible for overseeing all lab projects, updating lab members on the status of our projects, and maintaining our database. As lab project manager I regularly help our undergraduate members become involved with or develop their own research projects. Working with our undergraduate members has been very rewarding in that it has not only allowed me to develop skills as a mentor/supervisor, but I also genuinely enjoy helping younger students discover a passion for research.

Clinically I have focused on working with individuals from low-income or rural areas. In working with those populations, I have relied heavily on my assessment training and research. I believe that an effective battery of assessments can be an efficient clinical guide, which is of the utmost importance when resources are limited.

I have been a member of SPA for the past year and was a symposium presenter at the most recent conference. This is my first time running for a member-at large position and I look forward to the opportunity to become more involved with the personality assessment research community. In particular, I believe engagement with the larger research community facilitates and improves the research process as it strengthens the lines of communication between colleagues. I hope to be able to serve in the Member-at-Large position so that I can promote SPAG's mission and begin to develop professional relationships within the personality assessment field.

## **Alana Fondren**

Hello! My name is Alana Harrison Fondren, and I am honored to apply for the position of Member-at-Large in the Society for Personality Assessment Graduate Student Association (SPAGS). I completed my master's degree at Michigan State University, and I am currently a second-year student in the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. program at University of North Texas. I have the great fortune of receiving research and clinical mentorship from Dr. Sharon Jenkins, a long-time member of SPA. My research interests broadly include the clinical utility of psychological assessments. I am specifically interested in the efficacy of collaborative therapeutic assessment; predictability of therapeutic outcomes, such as alliance and attrition; diagnostic reliability and validity of personality and projective assessments; and interaction of personality variables between therapists and clients. I have served as a SPAGS Member-at-Large for the past year, and it would be an honor to represent my fellow graduate students for another term.

I first joined SPA as a student affiliate in 2014, and I have presented annually at SPA ever since. It is such an exciting experience to interact with so many luminaries within the field of personality assessment. I also enjoy attending and volunteering at SPA workshops, as well as networking with my fellow graduate students and learning about their current research. It was through these events that I feel invested in SPA and want to contribute more. During my 2018 term as a Member-at-Large, I helped with SPAGS recruitment, as well as planning the annual SPAGS social. I am truly excited about returning to SPA in 2019, and I hope to continue to represent our graduate students for a second term.

I feel that my involvement in other psychological student organizations will be an asset as a Member-at-Large. At Michigan State University, I served as a member of the Clinical Diversity Committee. At the University of North Texas, I currently serve as the Community Outreach Chair of Graduate Association of Students in Psychology, as well as the Secretary of Psychology Advocates for Social Change. I am also the Graduate Student Assistant to the Director of Clinical Training. These roles all entailed event planning, intra- and inter-departmental communication, and extensive organizational skills.

As a Member-at-Large of SPAGS, I hope to continue the organization's goal of fostering professional development for graduate students. I want to uphold the practice of communicating with members and soliciting feedback regarding topics of interest. I would accordingly work together with my fellow SPAGS board members to offer relevant panels and workshops for students at the annual SPA meetings. I also hope to increase research collaboration between members by creating a database of ongoing student projects. Overall, as a Member-at-Large, I want to promote and maintain a sense of community for the student members of SPA.

In conclusion, by serving as a Member at Large for a second term, I will strive to uphold SPAGS's mission of facilitating the exchange of ideas, research, and other correspondence between graduate students within SPA. I am excited by the possibility of continuing to serve those who contribute to the innovation, the exploration, and the enhancement of personality assessment. Thank you for your consideration.