

A Student Guide to the AAPOR Annual Conference 2013

Brought to you by the AAPOR Student Engagement Subcommittee, this guide is intended to provide helpful information about AAPOR and the upcoming annual conference for all students, but particularly for those who are new to AAPOR or are attending the conference for the first time. This guide is divided into six sections:

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I. AAPOR Student Engagement Subcommittee: Who We Are

The AAPOR Student Engagement Subcommittee is a group of volunteer AAPOR members who serve on the larger Membership and Chapter Relations Committee (MCR). MCR is responsible for recruiting and retaining AAPOR members, analyzing and reporting on membership trends, and serving as the liaison between the national AAPOR organization and the regional chapters. (We have more about regional chapters later in this guide).

The Student Engagement Subcommittee was set up to assist students in getting the most out of their AAPOR membership and to increase retention of AAPOR student members. We have planned several activities leading up to and during this year's conference to give students the chance to meet and interact with one another, and learn more about the benefits of AAPOR membership and how to get the most out of the conference experience.

Subcommittee Members

Below are pictures and quick bios of our subcommittee's members. Most of us will be at the conference, so feel free to look for us, ask questions, or just say hi! Our email addresses are also included below in case you want to reach out with questions before the conference.



Ana Lucia Cordova-Cazar (al.cordovacazar@huskers.unl.edu) is a PhD student in the Survey Research and Methodology Program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL). She obtained an MA in Political Economy from the Department of Government at the University of Essex (United Kingdom) and an MS in Survey Research and Methodology from UNL. Ana Lucía's academic interest is public opinion research as a means of giving a voice to the citizenry and strengthening the democratic processes, as well as the analysis of data to enhance evidence-based policy making.



Meredith Czaplewski (czaplewski-meredith@norc.org) is a Survey Director in the Health Care Research Department at NORC at the University of Chicago where her research experience includes mixed-mode, social network, and biomeasure data collection. Meredith has an MA in Political Science from Northwestern University. She has been a member of AAPOR since 2009.



Jennifer Dykema (dykema@ssc.wisc.edu) is Senior Research Scientist and Survey Methodologist at the University of Wisconsin Survey Center. She currently serves on AAPOR's Executive Council as the Associate Chair of Membership and Chapter Relations. Jen has been a member of AAPOR since 1992 and is also active with AAPOR's Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research (MAPOR), where she serves on the Executive Council as a Member-At-Large.



Liz Hamel (lizh@kff.org) is Associate Director for Public Opinion and Survey Research at the Kaiser Family Foundation. She currently serves on AAPOR's Executive Council as the Chair of Membership and Chapter Relations. Liz has been a member of AAPOR since 2002 and has also been active with AAPOR's Pacific Chapter (PAPOR), having served as chapter president in 2006 and conference chair in 2010.



Rebecca Medway (RMedway@survey.umd.edu) is a Survey Methodologist at American Institutes for Research. She completed a PhD in Survey Methodology from JPSM at the University of Maryland in December 2012. She has been a member of AAPOR since 2008, and is also a member of the DC Chapter (DC- AAPOR).



Clarissa Steele (crsteele@wisc.edu) is a Survey Researcher at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She helps design, implement, and analyze surveys and observation protocols for K-12 classrooms. Clarissa graduated with an MS in Survey Research and Methodology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in May 2010. She has been a member of AAPOR and the Midwest Chapter (MAPOR) since 2008.

II. Pre-conference and Conference Activities That Will Benefit Students

There are several programs and events leading up to and during the conference that we want to make you aware of. Some of these are geared specifically to students; others are aimed at new AAPOR members and first-time conference attendees more generally.

Before the conference:

- **New member welcome webcast:** On Wednesday, May 8 (about a week before the conference starts), the MCR and Conference committees will hold a welcome webcast for new members and first-time conference attendees to give you more information about the benefits of AAPOR membership and what to expect at the conference. If you're a new member or this is your first AAPOR conference, look for

an email with details about this webcast in the coming weeks.

- **Docent program:** The Conference committee also runs the Conference Docent program, which connects interested new members with longer-term AAPOR members who can help answer questions and provide a friendly face at the conference. If this is your first AAPOR conference, someone from the Conference committee will contact you in the weeks before the conference with more details about the program and to connect you with your docent.

At the conference, for all new members:

- **AAPOR Passport Program:** All first-time conference attendees will receive a “Passport to AAPOR.” The objective of the passport program is to introduce new members to different aspects of AAPOR and get you to meet more folks at the conference. You can get your passport “stamped” at multiple locations at the conference, and those who turn in a completed passport will be entered into a drawing to win a \$100 Amazon gift card.
- **New Member/All-Chapter Reception:** This reception, held on Thursday evening of the conference, gives new members a chance to mingle with long-time AAPORites and all members the chance to meet and greet with representatives of AAPOR’s regional chapters, as well as learn about exciting chapter initiatives and events (plus more chances to win great regional prizes). Tables will also be set up for new members to meet their docents early in the evening (a great chance to get your passport stamped), and tables will be reserved at Thursday evening’s dinner for docent groups to sit together to continue networking and learning about AAPOR.
- **AAPOR Booth:** MCR committee members will be on hand at the AAPOR Booth (located near the Conference Registration) to welcome members, provide information about AAPOR membership, and generally offer a friendly face. We encourage you to stop by the booth as soon as you’ve finished at the registration desk to connect with us!

At the conference, for students specifically:

- **Boston walking tour (Thursday 5/16, 9AM-1PM):** Get to know other students before the conference begins, and learn more about local historical sites, by joining us on a walking tour of Boston. Meet at the AAPOR registration desk at 9:00AM (we’ll stop for lunch at historic Faneuil Hall and be back to the conference center by 1:00).
- **Student meet-and-greet (Friday 5/17, 6-7:30PM):** Don’t miss this chance to meet other students and members of the MCR committee, and to provide us with feedback about what you like about AAPOR and what additional benefits you’d like to get out of your membership. Refreshments will be provided.
- **Friday evening dinner out (Friday 5/17, 7:45PM):** Whether or not you make it to the student meet-and-greet, we’ll be organizing a group of students (whoever is interested) to go off-site for dinner on Friday evening. (Friday is the one night that dinner is not provided during the conference.) Email Clarissa Steele (crsteele@wisc.edu) for more information or to RSVP.

III. Practical Information About the AAPOR Annual Conference

Travel and Hotel

This year’s conference takes place at the Seaport Boston Hotel in Boston, Massachusetts. The AAPOR web site at http://www.aapor.org/AAPOR_Annual_Conference.htm has the latest information about the conference, including information about room availability, alternate hotels in the area, and travel options. Note that rooms at the Seaport have

already sold out for most nights during the conference, but the website lists several alternative hotels nearby.

A consistently great part of the AAPOR annual conference is the location. This year's hotel is no different. The Seaport Boston hotel web site lists some of the amenities available, such as the Wave Health and Fitness Club, as well as amenities nearby like golf and sailing. You can read more on these and other activities and amenities at the Seaport Hotel's web site at <http://www.seaportboston.com/GuestServices/SpaFitness/Wave-Health---Fitness.aspx>.

Your registration packet will have maps of the hotel conference rooms that AAPOR will be using during the conference. AAPOR also has signs, either electronic or posters on easels, for every room, as well as conference volunteers who can help direct you where you are going. The hotel provides an overview of their meeting spaces on their web site at <http://www.seaportboston.com/meetings-and-events/event-venues.aspx>, which you can use when the final conference schedule is published online to help you find the sessions you are interested in.

Food at the Conference

Another great part of AAPOR is the food. On Friday and Saturday mornings, the conference provides a continental breakfast of pastries, coffee, tea, and juice available in the Exhibit Hall, where we also have refreshment breaks during the morning and afternoon. This is a great time to casually network with other AAPOR attendees and visit booths and exhibits in the hall before sessions begin for the day.

Several meals are also included with your conference fee, including lunch on Friday and Saturday. Dinner is provided on Thursday before the plenary session and on Saturday night during the Awards Banquet. There is no assigned seating during lunch and dinner, so many AAPOR members take this opportunity to sit with colleagues they do not often see or to meet new colleagues from different organizations.

Friday night traditionally is open for AAPOR conference attendees to dine out. The MCR committee is organizing a student dinner away from the hotel on Friday night so that students have a chance to meet each other and network apart from the conference. Look for an email from us with more details on this event as the annual conference approaches.

The hotel also has many restaurants on site, including Tamo Bar (bar and grill), Seaport Cafe (sandwiches and snacks), and Aura Restaurant. More information on the resort restaurants can be found at <http://www.seaportboston.com/dining/eat-in.aspx>. The Seaport is also conveniently located right on the waterfront within walking distance to many restaurants. The hotel provides a list of restaurants within walking distance that they recommend, which can be found at <http://www.seaportboston.com/dining/eat-out.aspx>.

How to Dress

The conference program states that dress at the conference is "business casual," though actual attire worn by attendees often ranges from casual (shorts and polos) to formal (suits and ties - particularly among those who are presenting). People tend to "dress up" more for the President's Reception and the Awards Banquet on Saturday evening. Also note that while average high temperatures in Boston in May are usually in the mid-60s, the weather can vary significantly. Hotel meeting rooms can be quite cool, so you may want to bring a sweater or jacket regardless of what the weather is in Boston that weekend.

IV. Conference Tips and Highlights

Presentation Sessions

The AAPOR annual conference has hundreds of presentations and posters on research conducted by AAPOR members and others. The preliminary conference program, including schedules and session titles, is available on the AAPOR website at http://www.aapor.org//AM/Template.cfm?Section=AAPOR_Annual_Conference and the final program, including a full list of presentations, authors, and abstracts, will be posted on the website during the first week in May, and provided in hard copy at the conference.

The sheer volume of presentations can be daunting, and we encourage first-time attendees to look through the final program before arriving at the conference to identify the sessions, papers, and posters that may be of particular interest to you. Presentations and posters cover a variety of fields, including survey research methods, health care, politics, economics, education, public policy, and many others. Many AAPOR attendees divide sessions into two types: those that focus on public opinion and those that focus on research methodology. You may get the most out of the conference by planning to attend both types of sessions, regardless of your research interests, since the conference is a good place to learn something new.

AAPOR presentation sessions generally consist of 4-5 papers presented by different authors. At previous AAPOR conferences, most presentation sessions were assigned a chair (who introduces the speakers and manages the question-and-answer period after the presentations) and a discussant (who provides a summary of the papers presented and offers feedback to the authors). This year, the chair and discussant roles have been combined into a single facilitator/moderator, a role that is intended to go somewhat beyond the traditional chair role in terms of summarizing themes and offering feedback to the authors, but not quite to the level of discussants (who often would prepare a full presentation summarizing their feedback on the research presented).

It is acceptable to “float” between rooms during sessions if you want to hear one paper in a given session and another in a session taking place at the same time; just be courteous by sitting on the aisle or near the back of the room and try not to leave in the middle of a presentation. Also, we encourage you to ask questions of the presenters at the end of the session or to ask for a copy of the presenter’s paper, which they can usually email to you during or after the conference.

Poster Sessions

Poster sessions are more informal than presentation sessions. There are three poster sessions during the conference, one each on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Poster presenters set up their posters in the Exhibit Hall and talk about their research as attendees look at the posters during the poster session time. At the same time in the Exhibit Hall, several events will be going on including demonstration sessions of products from companies attending the conference, “Meet the Author” sessions near the book exhibit, and snack or dessert breaks. Like session presentations, we encourage you to ask questions of the poster presenters as well as for copies of their papers when you are interested in knowing more about their research.

Short Courses

We would be remiss not to mention the short courses available at the AAPOR annual conference. The short courses occur on Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning before

the conference begins, and on Sunday morning (the last day of the conference), and are led by subject experts in the field. The short courses are not only an opportunity to learn more specific information about a topic of interest to you and your research, but they are also an opportunity to meet leading experts in the field and ask questions about the short course subjects. Short courses are not part of the conference registration, so there is a separate registration for those. You can see the short courses available for this conference at the AAPOR Short Courses page at http://www.aapor.org/Short_Courses5.htm.

Networking

An important aspect of the AAPOR annual conference, and a reason that many members attend year after year, are the networking opportunities available. As previously mentioned, networking often happens at meals during the conference, but the schedule also includes other chances for new and old members to meet and connect with one another. One tip for students: don't be afraid to approach unfamiliar faces and strike up conversations, including with those who are senior in their fields. Most long-term AAPOR-ites are thrilled to meet students and learn about their research as well as share their own professional experiences.

On Thursday and Saturday evening before dinner, we have two receptions where you can meet and mingle with other AAPOR members. As highlighted above, the **New Member/All-Chapter Reception** takes place on Thursday at 6 p.m. This is a great time for new members to meet their docents (volunteers who will answer new member questions and help them get acclimated at the conference) and learn more about the regional chapters. Each chapter will have a table at the reception, including giveaways and regionally-themed raffle items. For more information on the seven AAPOR regional chapters and to find out which chapter covers your region, check out the AAPOR Chapters page at <http://www.aapor.org/Chapters1/5554.htm>. The **President's Reception** on Saturday evening is another great chance to mingle.

The **Exhibit Hall**, including the **book exhibit** and **Meet the Authors** is also a great way to meet professionals in the field. The Exhibit Hall includes booths from conference sponsors ranging from commercial survey vendors, to software providers, to academic research programs. The book exhibit is open whenever the Exhibit Hall is open and students often like to peruse the books and find some they would like to add to their collection. In the afternoons on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, authors from some of the books displayed will be available to talk about their books and other research. Many of the authors teach students and enjoy speaking with students at the conference, so take the chance to introduce yourself and meet an author from the field. You can also purchase books at a discount at the book sale, which takes place on Saturday from 1:15-2:15 in the Exhibit Hall. The sale is very popular with AAPOR conference attendees, so be sure to make your selections and attend early.

AAPOR also organizes a formal networking activity called **Speed Networking**. Organizations that are either looking to hire in the coming months or who want to promote their business take time to meet interested conference attendees. Students often sign up for these networking sessions to learn more about organizations they may want to work with after they graduate, and to begin making connections that may lead to a future job. Sign-up sheets for the 15-minute Speed Networking slots will be available at the conference registration desk. Speed networking sessions fill up fast, so sign up as soon as you know who you would like to talk to.

Other conference events

We also want to highlight two other events at the conference that may be of interest to students. First is the **AAPOR Town Hall**, on Friday from 3:15 pm to 4:00 pm. Come and meet *your* AAPOR leadership team and ask any question you like! Learn what is on the minds of members like you and what the Executive Council, committees and Chapters are doing to serve your interests. This is a first-time event, and it should be fun and insightful.

Want to know more about what goes on “behind the scenes” at AAPOR? The **AAPOR Membership and Business Meeting**, held on Saturday from 4-6PM, is a great chance for students to learn more about how AAPOR works, and to hear about the association’s recent accomplishments and future initiatives. All members are encouraged to attend, and to ask questions and exchange ideas with members of AAPOR’s Executive Council and other leaders in the association.

Tweet your conference experience!

Many AAPOR members (those attending the conference as well as those not attending) make use of Twitter during the conference to share interesting tidbits of information they picked up, offer opinions on happenings at the conference, pose questions, or announce events. If you are a Tweeter, join the conversation using hashtag [#AAPOR](#)! There will also be an electronic Twitter board at the conference where you can read what others are posting.

V. Fun Stuff to Do at the Conference

Fun Run/Walk

If you like competition, or just want a good workout while at the conference, the Fun Run/Walk is for you. This annual event happens early on Saturday morning, usually around 7 a.m. (look for the exact time in the final conference program). This year’s Fun Run/Walk will take place along two miles of the Seaport’s beautiful waterfront. All AAPOR conference attendees are welcome to participate, and prizes are awarded to the fastest runners and walkers.

Annual AAPOR Golf Outing

If you love to golf, make plans this year to arrive early enough to play a round during the Annual AAPOR Golf Outing before the annual conference begins. The annual outing will be held on Thursday, May 16, at the William J. Devine Golf Course at Franklin Park, with tee times starting at 7:30 a.m. William J. Devine Golf Course is the second oldest public golf course in the nation and has been rated by Golf Digest as one of the best places to play in 2007, 2008, and 2009.

Applied Probability

The Applied Probability session, better known as poker, happens Saturday night after the awards banquet. Many AAPOR conference members enjoy the Applied Probability session, and new conference attendees are always welcome. More details about where Applied Probability will be held will be available in the final conference program.

Fenway Park Tour

Join your AAPOR colleagues at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, May 17, for an evening tour of the famous ballpark complete with a ride on the Old Town Trolley, appetizers, and a non-alcoholic beverage at the Bleacher Bar. Find your own way back to your hotel while stopping to enjoy any one of hundreds of options that Boston has to offer.

Around Boston

Even though Boston is one of the largest cities in the country, its accessibility is unparalleled with many sites to easily see. Information about Boston activities and tours can be found on the AAPOR conference web site at <http://events.bostonusa.com/aapor/>.

VI. Getting The Most Out Of Your AAPOR Membership

There are many ways to learn about the various benefits of AAPOR membership, and we encourage you to visit the AAPOR website, attend the new member welcome webcast (mentioned above), and stop by the AAPOR booth at the conference. Below are just a few highlights of AAPOR member benefits that may be of particular interest to students.

AAPORnet

AAPORnet is a listserv for AAPOR members only. It offers a great way to ask questions about research and methodology, share ideas, see job postings, or just to gain insight into what leading professionals in your field are discussing. AAPORnet is also a useful place to ask questions and get information about the conference from those who have attended many times before.

Social Networks

Find AAPOR on **Facebook** at www.facebook.com/pages/American-Association-for-Public-Opinion-Research-AAPOR/51165007173. Be sure to “like” us and check back often for the latest updates. Facebook is also a great place to see who else is a member of AAPOR and/or will attend the conference. Through Facebook, you can get to know other conference attendees in advance.

AAPOR is also on **LinkedIn**. Learn more about, and join the group at <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/American-Association-Public-Opinion-Research-1573607/about>. LinkedIn is great for job-seekers as well as those looking to network or to post and answer questions about public opinion research, market research, and the like. Some of AAPOR’s chapters also have their own LinkedIn groups, which may include local job opportunities:

- NYAAPOR (<http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=1913912&trk=group-name>)
- PAPOR (<http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=2396275&trk=group-name>)
- DC-AAPOR (<http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=3850098&trk=group-name>)

Webinars

In 2011, AAPOR began offering webinars on a broad spectrum of research topics. This is a great way to learn new skills and information right from your home or office. For students who are members of AAPOR, participation in most webinars costs only \$15. For more information on upcoming webinars or to purchase recordings, see the AAPOR Webinars page at <http://www.aapor.org/source/education/>.

Public Opinion Quarterly (POQ)

Your AAPOR membership includes a free subscription to *Public Opinion Quarterly (POQ)*, including hard copy and online access. Published since 1937, *POQ* is among the most frequently cited journals of its kind and is rated in the top ten scholarly journals in communications, political science, and interdisciplinary social sciences. *POQ* selectively publishes important theoretical contributions to opinion and communication research, analyses of current public opinion, and investigations of methodological issues involved in survey validity including questionnaire construction, interviewing and interviewers, sampling

strategy, and mode of administration.

Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology (JSSAM)

AAPOR recently announced the addition of a new interdisciplinary journal to be published in conjunction with the American Statistical Association (ASA). The purpose of *JSSAM* is to publish cutting-edge articles on statistical and methodological issues for surveys and censuses. It also will publish empirical and theoretical papers as well as applied papers and review papers. In addition to *POQ*, AAPOR members will receive a free subscription to *JSSAM* beginning with the inaugural issue, expected in July 2013.

Survey Practice

Survey Practice is AAPOR's e-journal journal. It provides current information on issues in survey research and public opinion useful to survey and public opinion practitioners, new survey researchers, and those interested in survey and polling methods. Check it out at <http://www.surveypactice.org/index.php/SurveyPractice>.

AAPOR Website

AAPOR's website (www.aapor.org) contains many great resources, some public and some of which can be accessed only by members. These include the **Events Calendar** (www.aapor.org/Events_Calendar.htm), listing upcoming events of interest to AAPOR members; the **Career Center** (jobs.aapor.org) for posting and reading job listings; the **Blue Book** (www.aapor.org/Blue_Book1.htm), a directory of organizations that provide public opinion research services and information; and a section on **Resources for Researchers and Students** (www.aapor.org/Content/aapor/Resources/ForResearchers/default.htm), including links to best practices, white papers, and task force reports.

Regional Chapters

A great way to learn more about AAPOR while connecting with a smaller group of professionals in your own geographic area is to get involved with one of AAPOR's seven local chapters.

Most chapters hold their own local events, ranging from two-day conferences, to short courses and workshops, to happy hours and networking events. Chapters charge an additional fee for membership beyond the AAPOR membership fee, but for students these fees are small (all are under \$20), and like AAPOR, many offer students their first year of membership for free.

You can learn more about the chapters at <http://www.aapor.org/Chapters1/5554.htm>, or by visiting the individual chapter websites:

- Midwest (MAPOR): www.mapor.org
- Pennsylvania-New Jersey (PANJAAPOR): www.panjaapor.org
- New York (NYAAPOR): www.nyaapor.org
- Pacific (PAPOR): www.papor.org
- Southern (SAPOR): www.southernassociationforpublicopinionresearch.org/
- Washington, D.C.-Baltimore (DC-AAPOR): www.dc-aapor.org
- New England (NEAPOR) : http://www.aapor.org/New_England.htm