

### **An Exclusive Interview with the SAS Co-Chairs (2018-19)**

Ashley Schoener and Sam Colbert are the SAS Co-Chairs for the 2018-2019 term! They are both second year doctoral students at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. Read on for some excerpts of their interview!

#### **Why did you want to be the SAS co-chair?**

Sam: The main reason is that I believe in social justice. The Society of Counseling Psychology (SCP) and the Student Affiliates of Seventeen (SAS) Executive Board is very oriented towards social justice. Being able to advocate for social justice on a macro level is exciting and the opportunity to effect change is neat! We are both voting members on the SCP Executive Board. The fact that SCP gives students voting rights is a big indication of their social justice orientation! Also, given that we are the host institution, it is a real privilege while also being a large responsibility.

Ashley: It is amazing to have a network of individuals who are likeminded, passionate and have the same goals. Having access to such a large network of people who care about the same things is appealing. This network has given me the opportunity to get really involved in the field, which I wouldn't have had the opportunity to do, otherwise. I think it is wonderful to have the opportunity to have an impact and work towards those goals...it gives you the opportunity to engage in outreach and social justice that we value as professionals.

#### **What is your vision for SAS 2019?**

Ashley: My vision for SAS is to improve the connection within the vast network! I would like SAS to be more involved with our members and give our members more opportunities to get involved with SAS. We are trying to offer opportunities for members to be on different committees as to spread the power and privilege that comes along with being part of SAS and Division 17. We are trying to reach out to the community as much as possible even within our own pillars and committees. Lastly, we want to standardize a lot of processes and make them leader-proof so that the transition process becomes easier.

Sam: I really want to see us hand over SAS as a well lubricated machine to the next host institution. Doing this is pivotal! SCP is doing a strategic planning initiative and I am hoping to apply some of those strategies to our own Executive Board. Like Ashley said, the larger goal for me is to distribute the power within SCP and SAS. The way I see that is through resources—we are trying to be fiscally responsible to the organization and the students! Being a voice for students in psychology...that's a big deal! Even though graduate students are privileged in certain aspects, they are also marginalized in others. We are finding out ways that we can advocate for graduate students and taking that to the SCP Board.

#### **What has SAS accomplished in the last year?**

Ashley: SAS has done a lot with connecting our members, it has been extremely active this past year! We created a workshop about SAS, we have program representatives who are hosting

events, dinners for their members, and we are also equitably distributing resources. We are providing funding to each of the SAS regions, so members can reach out to us to apply for funding to host events. We did monthly webinars too, which are now available on our Facebook page! Also, at APA we had a SAS social which brought together people from all over the world. This gave people the opportunity to form relationships and strengthen their connections.

Sam: We give out over 2000 dollars in awards every year for students. During APA we have three hospitality suite hours for different programming that we do. We have expanded the SAS Executive Board as well, to inform people about SAS. We want to be able to continue to engage in webinars, send out letters of support for societal issues, and continue our outreach to communities and members.

**What are your goals for SAS 2018-2019?**

Sam: A big goal for me is to try and distribute financial resources strategically. We want to use these resources for student awards, projects, and getting resources to students in Counseling Psychology programs.

Ashley: To put it simply, we want to equitably distribute resources: whether that's financial or power. By distribution of power, we mean we want to provide members with more of a voice on the Executive Board for SAS, and consequently SCP. We want to be the voice of the students on the Executive Board. We are doing this by creating positions on the SAS Executive Board which reach out to graduate students and SAS members, like the Scholarship, Engagement, and Collaboration Pillar and Promotions Chair within SAS.

**What are you most excited about, for the upcoming year?**

Sam: We have been working on a lot of things lately, and I am excited to see some of those efforts come to fruition! Also, given that we have started multiple initiatives in the past year, I am excited to see the kind of impact they will have...I am also excited about working with our SAS Board because the members have a lot of energy and a lot of experiences, and I want to see what kind of ideas and projects they have and want to implement.

Ashley: I am excited for APA! I am excited to help and make it better from last year...I am also excited for the applications to come in for the next host institution. It will be cool to be a part of the transition of giving other people all this power...it's kind of like we get to leave our mark on the whole institution of SAS and this is a chance when we get to choose what that is!

**What would you like our readers to know?**

Sam: We want feedback as well! We have an email address and social media, please write to us!

Ashley: Get involved! An organization starts and ends with its members. The more activity there is all over the country, the more we can do! And the more gets done for our communities and for our members.

**What do you want to tell institutes who are applying for hosting SAS?**

Sam: It is a fantastic opportunity to have. We have a unique position to advocate for thousands of students... This is very important because we can influence change!

Ashley: It is a different kind of work, but it is unique! And that is what is special about it! It is very meaningful once you get involved and I would highly recommend institutions to apply!

Does your university want to be the next host institution for SAS? Click [here](#) to find out more!



Sam Colbert is a second-year doctoral student in Counseling Psychology at Ball State University. His clinical interests include working with individuals from marginalized communities, and his research interests consist of LGBTQ studies, prosocial behavior, and intersectionality.

Ashley Schoener is a second-year doctoral student in Counseling Psychology at Ball State University. Her clinical interests include individual counseling with children and young adults, and her research interests consist of the integration of neuroscience and counseling, and the effect of mindfulness on executive functioning.

