

APA Division 52  
Division of International Psychology  
A Brief History

### Introduction

On February 21, 1997, the APA Council of Representatives approved a petition to create a new division: APA Division 52, the Division of International Psychology. The creation of the division was the result of years of planning and work by a small group of people dedicated to fostering an international outlook within the APA. The APA had been involved in international activities at some level for years before the approval of the Division 52 petition, particularly through its Committee on International Relations in Psychology (CIRP). However, the new division held the promise for a different focus and direction, and that promise was soon fulfilled.

Ernst Beier, PhD, a clinical psychologist with both a university and a private practice background, was one of the prime movers in starting the division. He and Frances Culbertson, PhD, worked with various APA boards and committees, gathering support. Among the other “division pioneers” were Leonore Loeb Adler, PhD, Florence Denmark, PhD, Henry David, PhD, and Gloria Gottsegen, PhD. Sarah Jordan and Joan Buchanan, both of APA, were also very important in offering early support for the division. One of the first hurdles for the group was to collect the required number of signatures for presentation to the APA Council. In the end, 788 signatures were collected. All are identified as “charter members” of the division.)

Ernst Beier, PhD, Florence Denmark, PhD, and Frances Culbertson, PhD, comprised the initial Executive Committee and recruited additional members for the Board of Directors. In all, fifteen individuals who had been active in forming the division assumed various offices on a “pro tem” basis. Regular elections were scheduled for May, 1998. The first formal meeting of the division took place during the 105<sup>th</sup> annual APA Convention, held in Chicago, from August 15-19, 1997. Although there had been no opportunity to develop a program in time to meet the customary convention deadlines, the division was able to share some convention time with the APA Committee of International Relations in Psychology (CIRP).

Initial dues were set at \$12/ year, beginning in 1998. The Board requested donations from the charter members to support the operation of the division during the remainder of 1997. The first issue of the newsletter, the *International Psychology Reporter*, consisting of 10 pages, appeared in June, 1997. The publication of the early issues was possible through the financial assistance of Raymond D. Fowler, PhD, Chief Executive Officer of the APA. Ivan Kos, PhD was the founding editor of the newsletter.

### Early growth and change (1997-1998)

By the fall of 1997, several initiatives were underway. A set of proposed bylaws for the division, developed under the leadership of Gloria Gottsegen, PhD, appeared in the *Reporter* (10/97). Student membership in Division 52 became a reality and William

G. Masten, PhD, was appointed web-page chair. The official web site became available in January, 1998. Mary Reuder, PhD and her fellows committee were at work preparing criteria for fellow status in Division 52. Since APA requirements state that no one can become a fellow of a division until they have been a member for at least one year, no Division 52 Fellows were eligible until February, 1998. (In August, 1998, 72 charter fellows of the division were approved.) By early 1998, Division 52 was represented on the APA Council of Representatives by a single seat.

Harold Takooshian, PhD, and Joy K. Rice, PhD, as Program Committee chair and co-chair respectively, began preparing for the division's first full APA program, to be presented during the annual convention that was held in San Francisco, August 14-18, 1998. Harold and Joy sent e-mails to the heads of twenty international behavior science groups to ensure that there would be international representation on the program. They were rewarded with submissions from six continents -- the first arriving in September from Australia. In all, 39 countries were represented in the inaugural program.

#### Permanent status and further initiatives: (1999)

At the APA Council of Representatives (COR) meeting, held from February 19-21, 1999, in Washington, DC, Division 52 was granted permanent status. Two special interest groups within the division were approved by President Denmark -- an International Committee for Women with Joy K. Rice, PhD, as chair, and a Committee on Aging with Margaret M. Hastings, PhD, as chair. Student membership continued to be strong. Amendments were proposed to the division bylaws and approved by the division Board of Directors in August, 1999.

Other changes included the formal establishment of a webmaster position and a new standing committee, the International Committee for Women. The proposed amendments appeared in the *International Psychology Reporter* (fall/winter, 1999, pp. 11-13) with the request for a member vote by January 15, 2000. At the Board of Directors meeting held on August 19, 1999, Irene Deitch, EdD, was appointed chair of the Public Relations Committee and Richard Velayo, PhD, was appointed chair of the 2000 Program Committee.

#### The division enters a new century: 2000-2007

The number of fellows of the division continued to grow so that by August, 2000, the division had 126 fellows (72 charter fellows in 1998, 18 fellows in 1999, and 36 fellows in 2000). Membership issues continued to be of concern. Between 2000 and 2001, the total paid membership decreased from 923 to 783. During the same period, unpaid membership was up slightly, from 118 to 133. It was noteworthy that several other divisions within the APA were adding international interest groups to their organizational structure. It was beginning to appear as if a "new" international psychology was coming of age.

Innovative activities continued to be introduced by the division. With the help and expertise of APA Div. 13 (Consulting Psychology), the division began a series of "visioning sessions" at its Board meetings to facilitate long-range planning. The division

voiced its strong support for a resolution on cultural and gender awareness in international psychology. In 2004, “Adopt a Psychologist” was begun, a program in which U.S. members not only pay the division dues for psychologists from other countries, but also try to establish an ongoing relationship with their sponsored colleagues. In a related program, Div. 52 members were asked to participate in a “mentoring program” in which established psychologists try to help their more junior international colleagues through some of the pitfalls of professional development.

Several new awards were created to honor important contributors to various aspects of international psychology. The division participated in a project with “Half the Sky Orphanage” to sponsor a young female adoptee. An online newsletter, *International Psychology Bulletin*, was begun with Senel Poyrazzli, PhD, as editor, replacing the hard-copy *International Reporter*. In 2005, the division agreed to co-sponsor a new Erlbaum series on global and cross-cultural psychology, with Uwe P. Gielen, PhD, and Harold Takooshian, PhD, as editors. The first volume in the series (*Toward a Global Psychology: Theory, Research, Intervention, and Pedagogy*, edited by Michael J. Stevens, PhD, and Uwe P. Gielen, PhD, appeared in February, 2007). Other volumes should soon follow.

As the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the division approached (2007), the division reached its goal of more than 1,000 members. The division also had several new initiatives in various stages of development including the establishment of the Ursula Gielen Global Psychology Book Award, the creation of a videotape on international psychology, and (with APA Divisions 1 and 2), the initiation of a national speakers bureau. The division continued to fulfill the promises made at its creation through its vibrant and wide-reaching activities.

John D. Hogan, PhD  
St. John’s University, New York, USA