

Letter from the President continued

When we surveyed members last year an overwhelming number of members indicated that they joined MPA to belong to a community. As such, it is important that we continue to create an organization that allows individuals to feel connected, while inviting and valuing diversity. For, it is the integration of various cultures and diverse populations that allows us to continue to grow as individuals and as a profession, as we address the many needs of our clients. This is what makes a strong community.

As you may recall, MPA created a three-year strategic plan. One of MPA's strategic goals is to increase diversity and address diversity issues within MPA. One of our first events that focused on diversity was our annual conference. It was great to see so many of our members attend the annual conference, which had many great speakers addressing issues related to racial and cultural inequalities in healthcare, cultural issues in therapy, immigration issues, and addressing cultural bias in the media. I want to thank Drs. Emily Mohr and Daniel O'Donnell, co-chairs of the conference committee, and the members of the conference committee (Drs. Luana Bessa, Mary Dee Glynn Roux, Christina Morley, Sukanya Ray, Tracey Rocha Phelon, Abigail Seibert, Wendy Vincent, Tanya Vishnevsky, and Valene Whittaker) for creating such a thought-provoking conference. This conference was just the stepping stone in which we will continue to advance.

As we strive to join together as a community, we have also started to have social events, in which members can get together informally to meet each other and have conversations. I most recently attended an event hosted by CEMA (Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs), in which several MPA members gathered together and enjoyed fabulous food at Joyful Garden. I have to say that it was one of the most enjoyable events I have attended, as I was able to meet and get to know members of MPA. During this time, we also brainstormed about how we can continue to address issues of diversity as members of MPA. I want to thank Drs. Mabel Lam and Martin Pierre (co-chairs of CEMA) for organizing this event, and I look forward to attending more social events in the future.

As we continue to address diversity issues, MPA has taken action in response to the executive order pertaining to immigration and border security, impacting many individuals from several countries. As psychologists we are aware of the negative impact discriminatory actions can have on individuals, and as a profession it is imperative that we give a voice to those affected and advocate for them. As such, the MPA Board resolved to voice our opposition to this executive order in a public statement that cites numerous research studies that indicate the harm that such discriminatory actions can have on individuals and society. As these issues present, MPA is committed to being a strong voice in advocating for populations that may be underrepresented and vulnerable.

I want to remind us all that while we, as individuals and as an organization, may feel challenged by recent events, *this is an opportunity to strengthen our organization and our community*. With new challenges it will be important to remain engaged, while also recruiting new members to join us so that we have a strong voice in the battles we fight. We need to empower one another to have a voice, and not to remain silent. This is what makes a strong community.

