

Report on Program Organization

Development of the 2013 PAA program began in early 2012 with two steps: the formation of a program committee and a call to members to submit suggestions for the program. We received 122 suggestions for regular sessions, invited sessions, and general ideas about how to improve the program. Our [program committee](#) took on the job of developing the Call for Papers. This involved consulting the member suggestions and the records of previous meetings and developing a list of 108 initial paper sessions that reflected contemporary work in demography across 11 topical areas. It also involved recruiting a total of 127 [session organizers](#). This number is larger than the number of sessions because we experimented this year by appointing co-organizers for sessions that we expected would attract a large number of submissions. The Call for Papers was issued on July 24, 2012 with a deadline of September 21, 2012.

The Call generated 2780 submissions for papers and posters sessions. This was slightly lower than the record of 2881 set for the 2012 meetings, but still at a level substantially above the number of submissions received in 2010 and earlier. The average number of submissions organizers received was nearly 50, and one session received 191. The submissions reflected some trends we have been seeing for several years. Most notably, the numbers of papers received on health topics has increased dramatically. This year 23% of submissions went to health and mortality sessions as a first choice, making health the number one topic for the first time ever, and submissions to the topic area of race, ethnicity, and gender declined.

Submissions by topic and year: PAA 2011-2013

Topic	2011	2012	2013
Fertility, Family Planning, Sexual Behavior, and Reproductive Health	18.2%	19.7%	19.7%
Marriage, Family, Households, and Unions	10.2%	13.3%	12.9%
Children and Youth	10.8%	9.9%	9.0%
Health and Mortality	16.8%	19.0%	22.2%
Race, Ethnicity, and Gender	4.9%	3.0%	2.9%
Migration and Urbanization	10.2%	10.0%	9.3%
Economy, Labor Force, Education, and Inequality	5.7%	7.7%	7.6%
Population, Development, and Environment	3.1%	4.1%	4.7%
Population and Aging	5.6%	3.4%	4.3%
Data and Methods	3.4%	4.2%	2.7%
Applied Demography	1.8%	1.7%	1.4%
Other or Poster Only	9.2%	4.1%	3.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Number of submissions	2638	2881	2780

Notes: counts refer to topic area of first-choice session; 2011 and 2012 counts include invited sessions, 2013 do not; %s for “other/poster only are not comparable between 2011 and 2012-13

During the month of October, session organizers reviewed the submissions they had received and formed 105 initial sessions for the program. We had to delete 3 of the original 108 session topics from the call for papers due to low submissions. However, we worked with the organizers to relocate the quality papers from those sessions into additional overflow sessions. Session organizers also proposed a large number of “overflow” sessions based on the high quality papers they had received and recommended other papers that were of high quality but did not fit easily in a session. The program chairs used their suggestions to create an additional 96 overflow sessions.

The PAA typically reserves 15 session slots for invited sessions. Some of these are routinely organized by standing committees of the PAA; others are suggested by members, and some are organized at the discretion of the Program Committee chairs. This year’s [invited sessions](#) include some in each of these categories. Together with the invited sessions, PAA 2013 will feature a total of 216 paper sessions, with 18 concurrent sessions occurring in each of 12 time slots. The distribution of sessions by primary topic area is shown below.

Number of Sessions by Topic, 2013				
Topic		Invited Sessions	Regular Sessions	All Sessions
Fertility, Family Planning, Sexual Behavior, and Reproductive Health		0	41	41
Marriage, Family, Households, and Unions		2	28	30
Children and Youth		0	17	17
Health and Mortality		4	43	47
Race, Ethnicity, and Gender		2	6	8
Migration and Urbanization		1	18	19
Economy, Labor Force, Education, and Inequality		0	16	16
Population, Development, and Environment		0	11	11
Population and Aging		1	10	11
Data and Methods		4	7	11
Applied Demography		1	4	5
Total		15	201	216
The total number of sessions by topic area listed above represents the sessions created from each of the call for paper topics. These numbers do not represent the extent to which the conference addresses each subject area. In many cases there is significant overlap in topics across areas. For example, while there were only 8 sessions under the Race, Ethnicity and Gender topic area, there are actually 16 sessions that explicitly indicate a focus on race, ethnicity and/or gender based on the session title.				

One of the recurring challenges in organizing the PAA meetings is balancing the desire to include as many participants on the program as possible while maintaining high standards for quality. Last year President Dan Lichter added an additional paper session on Saturday, extending the meetings until late in the afternoon. This year, thanks to advice from a subcommittee of the Program Committee chaired by Ren Farley, we heard that members would prefer that the meetings end earlier. After discussion with the PAA Board of Directors, we decided to keep the number of sessions at 216, but to shorten the sessions to 90 minutes. This permitted us to add a session on Thursday and a lunch break on Friday, and still adjourn the meetings at 2:00 PM Saturday. The new schedule is available in the [preliminary program](#). The change to the schedule means that sessions run until 6:00 PM on Thursday and the Membership Meeting will be held on Saturday from 8:00 to 9:00 AM.

Once the paper sessions were organized, over 1,500 papers that had not been included in a paper session went forward for consideration for the poster sessions. Papers were forwarded only if the authors had indicated they were willing to be included in a poster session. Those submissions were combined with 75 papers that had been submitted for consideration as posters only. A total of 750 were selected for the final program. In the spirit of including as many quality submissions as possible, the number of poster sessions was expanded to nine this year. Participants and visitors will find the poster sessions organized thematically.

As of February 1, there were 2835 unique participants appearing on the 2013 PAA program. This is a tribute to both the community of researchers and the quality of the submissions.

The final task of meeting organization is creating a schedule that provides a balance of subject matter within each time slot on the schedule, distributes similar topics across the schedule for the program, and does not require any individual to be in two places at the same time. As part of this effort, the program created an informal “Applied Demography” track, identifying a session in each time period of interest to our members with applied interests.

With 18 concurrent sessions, no schedule can meet everyone’s needs. There are bound to be concurrent sessions that force tough choices for meeting attendees. Program chairs are advised to stick to the order of presentations in the printed program for the benefit of those who attempt to hear papers in different sessions. However, in the end, even attendees with focused interests will find it hard to hear all the papers they would like to hear and see all the posters they would like to see. Papers and poster abstracts are posted on the PAA meeting website for exactly this reason: to provide access to material that has to be missed.

As is clear from the account above, the job of organizing the 2013 meetings could not have been accomplished without the contributions of a great many people and institutions in addition to the virtual army of PAA member volunteers noted above. In 2013, Princeton University continued to provide a platform for meeting planning that has served the PAA beautifully for over a decade. The meeting software, PAMPA, was developed by Germán Rodriguez; the painstaking work of managing meeting organization on PAMPA was expertly carried out by Irene Rodriguez. Throughout the planning process, Irene was always there, answering questions, advising on precedents, solving problems, and attending

to the many details that have to be addressed to produce a successful program. We owe both Irene and Germán, as well as the Office of Population Research and Princeton University, a large debt of gratitude.

The University of Maryland also contributed substantially to the meeting organization in 2013. The Department of Sociology supported the work of Alice Nixon, who played a major role in communicating with program committee members and session organizers, designing sessions, keeping the process on track, and keeping the PAA President sane. The Maryland Population Research Center provided support for communications and many other requirements for meeting preparation.

Stephanie Dudley and the staff of the PAA Office also play a major role in meeting planning. Lois Brown processes payments, responds to member questions, assists people with the registration process, and runs the onsite registration. Cynthia Miller handles many administrative details related to member-initiated meetings, exhibits, travel awards, onsite registration, and poster session award photos. Both Lois and Cynthia help to keep the wealth of information about the meetings up to date on the PAA website. Phil Devin developed the onsite registration and badge generation software and attends the meeting every year to set up this process. And, of course, Stephanie herself oversees all activities leading up to the meeting as well as handling negotiations with our sites, overseeing production of the printed program, and much else.