Spring is here! Spring is a time of growth, and luckily, for us, we have the opportunity to grow in a variety of ways, including through the professional development that AOP provides. As you look at our events page, it clearly demonstrates, AOP stands to meet the needs for individuals to gain knowledge in health, public speaking, organization, mindset and how to improve our use of Excel.

If you have ideas for professional development do not hesitate to share them with us. We know we cannot meet everyone’s needs but, with the many resources available we will try to find something to meet your individual needs.

Just as you grow professionally, AOP must grow as an organization. Such growth relies on the concerted effort of members who are committed to working as part of the overall organization and stepping up to take positions of leadership when they arise. If you are interested in serving as a chair of a committee you can, contact me to find out what this involves and invest in yourself while supporting your fellow AOP members by becoming an AOP leader.

Another aspect of AOP’s growth requires us to conduct fundraising, the goal being to raise funds to offset costs of scholarships that we award for professional development. In these fiscally challenging times, this effort becomes even more important. Therefore, we need your help when you see us post about a fundraiser, whether it be to grab a meal or to purchase an item, see if you can support us through such purchase. Remember, you could potentially be awarded a scholarship to help attend professional development workshops or seminars.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Lewis
AOP President
Jennifer.lewis@usm.edu
Thoughts of Eating Healthy

We know that being healthy does not happen by chance. If only it was so, being healthy requires hard work and healthy eating requires taking the time to plan. To maximize your potential for success, use the weekend to plan your meals. First, make a grocery list and then go shopping for your ingredients. Then set aside some time during the weekend to prep your meals for the week to make it easier to be healthy regardless of how busy things get during the week.

Meal planning requires balance in the contents of each meal. As the Meal Planning Made Easy guide illustrates, overall balance represents keeping the foods group in mind as you plan across meals. This allows you to be sure that you are eating the recommended amounts of protein, grains, fruits and vegetables. The food group balancing means balancing the types of food you eat so as not to eat the same thing daily. For instance, you might be tempted to eat only one type of protein, but it is not healthy to do so. Instead, vary the proteins you eat to be sure you obtain each of the different amino acids that are present in protein in different proportions. An added benefit of varying the specific items you eat within the food groups is that this prevents you from becoming bored with eating healthy, which might tempt you to stray from your healthy eating habits. To learn more about ChooseMyPlate, go to their website.

Smart Goals Effective In Achieving Results

When 2018 started, I committed myself to using the SMART system by Charlene Johnson to achieve some important goals. The SMART system stands for specific/small, measurable, achievable, rewarding and timely. In terms of being specific or small, the goal needs to be short-term, in small pieces to avoid becoming overwhelmed or discouraged. Also, I need to establish a way of measuring whether or not the goal has been achieved. Just losing weight is not a measurable goal. Losing five pounds in three months is both specific and measurable. Moreover, it is achievable. I know that we all want to lose 10 pounds quickly, but a goal must be realistic both as to the overall achievement as well as in how long it will take, or its timeliness. Given that I have been at this for a few months, I wanted to share with you what worked and what did not work about this approach so that you too can reach your goals.

For me, changing too many things at once doesn’t work well, so I started with small things. First, I started with smaller portions at meals and eating slower; then fitting in exercise, even just a break at work to walk around. Things like that started showing changes, which made me feel better physically & emotionally. I admit I did get anxious when I started to show progress and tried to go faster, but all that did was disappoint me. I slipped and messed up my eating plan (never call it a diet), and gained weight. It’s important that if you have a setback to NOT give up! Take a breath, get back on track. Three months and six pounds later, I was able to shop for a smaller size! The best lesson I learned is to never compare your journey to anyone else’s; each person’s journey is their own. Best of luck achieving your goals.
Professional Standards Program

The Professional Standards Program (PSP) is a certification program for educational office professionals administered by our national association, the National Association of Educational Office Professionals (NAEOP). Members take college courses, attend seminars, and earn responsibility points through association membership and participation on association committees in order to prove their willingness to improve themselves. Progression through the program also allows members to achieve the distinction of Certified Educational Office Employee.

Further information regarding PSP requirements can be found on the website, or by contacting us. The next filing deadline is May 15, which means for your first certificate you need to have contacted Pam or Cory by April 15 (four business weeks) to get started. Those who need to upgrade should, allow at least two business weeks before the May 15 deadline. We are proud to see several of our members taking steps to become certified and demonstrate their growth and leadership skills.

Article by Pam Posey, CEOE and Cory Williams

Why Should I Join AOP

One of the reasons I like to go to conferences is that you meet people who understand your challenges and who share in the intimate details of your work. Sessions titled “Birds of a Feather” gather colleagues around a table to discuss daily issues as well as long-term plans. They understand the strange events that take place in your world. Some days you wonder if anyone else deals with the weird scenarios that you encounter. You meet someone who recounts a story, laugh, and say, “I thought that only happened where I worked!” If you work as an office professional at The University of Southern Mississippi, you don’t have to travel to a conference to find that camaraderie. We have an association that allows for the gathering of professionals to support each other and to grow. The Association of Office Professionals (AOP) is the group that understands the work that you do. We can come together on our own campus as birds of a feather.

My position as a manager in the information technology team may not be exactly like other office professionals, but we share several similarities. We first serve the students of our university. We want the students to succeed and we do a little extra for our students because it is the right thing to do. Sometimes we wonder if anyone notices all the things we do to help our respective organizations succeed. If processes flow smoothly, our work goes unnoticed. The AOP is a group that understands the small things that make an office successful. Attention to paperwork details, following up on requests, persistence in helping a student, and investigative work to determine how things work in our environment are some of the skills that can be taken for granted. The members of AOP do not take these things for granted. It is what makes them effective in their jobs. Join AOP to find birds of your feather.

Another reason I like to get out to conferences is the exposure to new ways of doing things. Our budget situation limited travel to conferences this year and I am looking for ways to stay fresh and grow. I took advantage of the AOP lunchtime sessions and discovered a lot of good information.

I learned about developing and keeping a growth mindset from Dr. Amy Miller, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. It is encouraging
to know that our brains can continue to change if we keep active and keep learning. Did you know that your brain will rewire itself and physiologically grow to adapt to new learning? We are amazing creatures! Dr. Miller recommends a book by Carol Dweck titled “Mindset”. Dr. Dweck teaches about the power of yet. You may say, “I am not good with technology” which is finite. Alternatively, you can say, “I am not good with technology yet” which means you are still learning and growing. We can all adapt and expand with work and persistence. Dr. Miller’s presentation led me to watch one of Dr. Dweck’s TED Talks where she expounds on the exciting power of yet and a growth mindset in K-12 education.

Dr. Wynde Fitts taught us about leadership characteristics that define our leadership style. I learned that I have a green leadership style. Knowing your personal style and the style of one’s coworkers impacts the way that we work with other “colors”. Understanding strengths and weaknesses of the other colors helps with communications and how we influence others. We were reminded that leadership is a choice. It is not a title or a position. I believe we can lead within our circle of influence and make a difference.

Michelle Howard from Student Counseling Services spoke to us about using resiliency to manage stress. We need some positive stress or eustress in our lives to motivate us toward positive action, while distress can lead us to physical and emotional harm. Michelle discussed ways to protect ourselves from distress and ways to build resiliency. We performed mindful meditation to teach us how to let feelings or emotions float by and not to allow painful feelings or emotions remain with us. It was a reminder that we should practice building both personal and workplace resilience.

Jona Burton from Career Services spoke to us about building a resume. Admittedly, I went to the session to think about how to enhance my own resume. Jona reminded us that staff in departments help students with their resumes and a lot of the information Jona shared can be used to help students. Career Services helps students build their resumes and we should encourage students to schedule an appointment with their office. The biggest lesson I learned was how to customize a resume for a specific job or for a specific time in one’s career.

Pattie Teague from the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity shared ideas about implicit bias. We all have biases that are learned or are acquired from our experiences. It does not make us bad people. We need to be aware of our biases and be aware if we are acting out on biases in a way that produces negative results. A great quote from Anais Nin on one of Pattie’s slides reads, “We don’t see things as they are, we see them as we are.”

The speakers provided timely and relevant information for professionals at all levels. We have good resources within our university. Without exception, every speaker was passionate about their work and their topic. I am very proud to call them colleagues at Southern Miss and happy that I was able to learn from them. Please consider becoming a member of AOP. For a very small membership fee, I was able to attend all the sessions listed above at no extra charge. It was worth it.

Article by Valeria Craig
Spring 2018 Workshops

Lisa Wright
Women’s Health Spotlight: Take Control of Your Health in 2018

Wynde Fitts
Leadership 101: Nurturing the Leader In You

Pattie Teague
Implicit Bias

Dr. Amy Miller
Mindset Matters

Jona Burton
Resume Building 101

Michelle Howard
Understanding the Impact of Resiliency

Presenters
USM AOP Members Recognized For Years of Services

Lucy Cameron
40 Years

Delores McNair, CEOE
20 Years

Valarie Craig
20 Years

Kayla Mashburn
10 Years

Member Birthdays

Lisa Wrigth
April 8

April Broome
April 12

Carolyn Soniat
April 18

Chelsea Nichols
April 21

William Dempster
May 11

Melissa Coker
May 20

Karen Shaw
May 24

Cynthia Crosby
May 30
Upcoming Events

Qualtrics Training
Presented by: Cory Williams
05/23/18
12 to 1 p.m.
Locations:
  Hattiesburg: Cook 123
  Gulf Coast: Hardy Hall Room 316 (via IVN)

Objectives:
- Why use Qualtrics?
- Question Types – What types are available?
- Distribution Methods – Link, Distribute via e-mail, Anonymous Submission
- Reporting – How to pull the information together for comparison
- Support Resources

PSP (Professional Standards Program): Approved for 1 (one) hour PSP credit.

Cost to Attend:
Free for AOP Members
Non-AOP members pay a $10 admissions fee for this event or can purchase the Events package

Membership Recognition Luncheon- Gulf Coast
05/14/18
11:30 to 1:00 p.m.
Hardy Hall 316
Registration Information to be provided by early April

Membership Recognition Luncheon- Hattiesburg
05/30/18
11:30 to 1:00 p.m.
Baptist Student Union
Registration Information to be provided by early April

2018 Officer Installation
06/15/18
11:30-1:00 p.m.
Baptist Student Union
By Invitation- Invitations To Be Sent out in late April
Interested in presenting on a topic near and dear to your heart. Willing to share your knowledge with your fellow members. Want to earn Professional Standards Points (PSP) toward your certificate.

Contact jennifer.lewis@usm.edu to discuss presenting this coming Spring.

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**Mississippi Association Educational of Office Professionals**

**2018-2019 Officers**

- Jewel Adams, CEOE
- Cory Williams
- Jennifer Lewis
- Pam Posey, CEOE

- Director of Affiliations
- Director of Membership
- Secretary
- Professional Standard Programs
AOP Gulf Park On The Move

Left to right: Paige Cannon, Jona Burton and Karen Shaw

Left to right Paige Cannon, Ralph Savarese, the Aramark Account Manager for Beach View Café at USM Gulf Park Karen Shaw
AOP Board Directory

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Erin Sessions
Treasurer/Budget Chair
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Elizabeth Killinger
Vice President /Membership Chair
Interim President Elect

Carlos Sterling
Historian/Publicity Chair
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Jennifer Jones
Secretary/Hospitality Chair
Email: JM.Jones@usm.edu

Cory Williams
Immediate Past President
Email: Cory.williams@usm.edu
If you have news you want to share send it to Jennifer, Lewis at Jennifer.lewis@usm.edu. We look forward to hearing from you!

AOP Board Directory

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