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### Summary Observations on the ISQOLS Philadelphia Conference

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A Quarterly Review of Social Reports and Research on Social Indicators, Social Trends, and the Quality-of-Life.  
News Included of Working Group 6 on Social Indicators and Social Reporting of the International Sociological Association.  
Newsletter of the International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies

### REPORTS FROM THE SIXTH CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR QUALITY- OF-LIFE STUDIES, NOVEMBER 10-14, 2004, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, USA

#### A Message from the ISQOLS President Richard J. Estes

##### The Conference in Philadelphia

By all accounts, the Philadelphia meeting was a resounding success. Approximately 300 persons attended the meeting, half of whom traveled to Philadelphia from outside the United States. Especially large delegations attended from East and South Asia, the Russian Federation, and Western Europe. Thanks to the efforts of our colleagues in Mexico, Brazil and Argentina we also had large delegations from Latin America. As a result of the generosity of ISQOLS members and the Board of Directors, 60 advanced graduate students and members from low-income economy countries received partial or full *Conference Registration Scholarships* in support of their participation. The Philadelphia meeting also included four pre-conference workshops on QOL methodological issues. The income from these workshops was used entirely to support the participation of advanced graduate students in the conference.

In addition to our customary plenary and paper sessions, the Philadelphia conference also included 24 early morning workshops and 15 poster sessions. Peggy Schyns and Jeroen Boelhouwer, both of the Netherlands, provided leadership for these latter types of innovations.

The ISQOLS Awards Banquet was especially memorable given the impressive numbers of our colleagues who

were formally recognized for their stellar contributions in advancing QOL theory, research and practice during the ceremony. The list of awards and recipients is contained in the next article and photographs of many awardees are printed later in this issue of *SINET*.

##### Conference Documents Available for Purchase

The following documents relating to the Philadelphia conference are available for purchase from the ISQOLS Secretariat in Blacksburg VA:

- **Conference Program** (120 pages): \$15.00 members; \$20 non-members (plus postage and handling)

- **Conference Book of Abstracts** (338 pages): \$25.00 members; \$30 non-members (plus postage and handling)

- **Conference CD-ROM** (which in addition the above documents includes copies of selected papers and other presentations): \$10.00 members; \$15.00 non-members (plus postage and handling)

These publications may be ordered by sending a request and pre-payment via check (or credit card authorization) to:

Dr. Joseph Sirgy, Executive Director  
International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies (ISQOLS)

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Editor's Note: The Sixth International Conference of the International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies was held at the Radisson Plaza-Warwick Hotel in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 10-14, 2004. The Conference was organized and presided over by Richard J. Estes, ISQOLS President and Professor and Chair of the Concentration in Social and Economic Development, School of Social Work, University of Pennsylvania, 3701 Locust Walk, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6214, USA; Tel: 215-898-5531; E-mail: restes@ssw.upenn.edu The Conference had dozens of sessions. Over 300 persons attended the Conference. Professor Estes and his staff and assistants from the University of Pennsylvania did an excellent job in organizing the Conference and making it function smoothly for all participants. This issue of *SINET* is mainly devoted to a number of products of the Conference, including a statement from ISQOLS President Richard Estes, a summary of the 2004 ISQOLS Awards, photos from the Conference, and various Remarks and Observations by Conference Participants. ~ K. Land



# SINET

Social Indicators Network News

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## Richard Estes Assumes Presidency of ISQOLS

Richard Estes, Professor of Social Work at the University of Pennsylvania, assumed the presidency of ISQOLS from Wolfgang Glatzer during the 2004 meetings of ISQOLS in Philadelphia. As part of his acceptance comments during the presidential transfer ceremony Estes expressed deep appreciation for the two years of stellar leadership provided by Glatzer to the organization and acknowledged the many pledges of support already received from the ISQOLS Executive Committee and Board of Directors.

Under Estes' Presidency, work will commence on: the publication of a historic *Encyclopedia of Social Indicators and Quality of Life Studies* (Ken Land, Editor-in-Chief; see below); developing a series of specialty conferences focusing on different sectors of QOL theory and research worldwide; and increasing ISQOLS' financial stability. Estes also will work toward greater inclusiveness of members worldwide in the day-to-day decision-making and programmatic activities of ISQOLS. Increasing levels of cooperation with "sister organizations" engaged in QOL activities also will be pursued.

## 2006 ISQOLS Conference Slated for South Africa

The Board of Directors approved the scheduling of the next biennial meeting of ISQOLS for Grahamstown, South Africa (July 17-20, 2006)—the first of our meetings to be held in a developing region. Valerie Moller, Professor of Sociology at Rhodes University and Director of the university's Institute of Social and Economic Research, will chair the conference. Valerie also is ISQOLS' President-Elect and, with the Executive Committee, currently is putting together the International Program Planning Committee for the Grahamstown conference. The conference will focus on "Prospects for Quality of Life in the New Millennium".

## Ken Land to Head Development of Quality of Life Encyclopedia Project

In collaboration with the ISQOLS Executive Committee and Springer Publishers, Kenneth C. Land, former ISQOLS President and the Editor of SINET is the John Franklin Crowell Professor of Sociology and Demographic Studies at Duke University. He has agreed to take on the role of Editor-in-Chief of a planned four-volume series focused on Social Indicators, Quality of Life, Theory and Research. The objective of the Encyclopedia of Social Indicators and Quality of Life Studies is to create a defining statement of the field of quality-of-life studies in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that can be updated and improved upon as the field evolves and the century unfolds. The target publication date for the Encyclopedia is the year 2006. During the Philadelphia conference, Ken worked with the ISQOLS Executive Committee and a number of other participants to develop the following Editorial Advisory Board and General Contents of the Encyclopedia. Some tentative commitments from authors of chapters also were obtained at the conference. Ken would be pleased to have your feedback on suggestions for topics and potential authors for chapters on the topics described below; his email address is: kland@soc.duke.edu

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## ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SOCIAL INDICATORS AND QUALITY-OF-LIFE STUDIES

Kenneth C. Land, Editor-in-Chief

Target Publication Date: 2006

New York and London: Springer

Editorial Advisory Board:

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Joachim Vogel, Statistics Sweden and University of  
Umea, Sweden

Don Rahtz, College of William and Mary, USA

Joe Sirgy, Virginia Tech, USA

### Tentative General Contents

#### Volume I. Theoretical and Methodological Foundations

Introduction: The Evolution and Status of the Field of Social Indicators and Quality-of-Life Research ~ Kenneth C. Land

Possible Chapter Topics:

- Concepts of the Quality of Life in Philosophy and Social Theory
- Subjective Well-Being, Happiness, and Life Satisfaction
- Homeostatic Mechanisms and the Quality of Life
- Positive Psychology and the Quality of Life
- Values and the Quality of Life
- Social Structure and the Quality of Life
- Economic Development, Income, and the Quality of Life
- Measuring the Quality of Life and the Construction of Social Indicators
- Issues in Composite Index Construction
- National Subjective Well-Being Indices: An Assessment

#### Volume II. The Quality of Life in Societal Sectors

Possible Chapter Topics:

- Health and the Quality of Life: Population Perspectives
- The Quality of Life in Biomedical Research and Clinical Practice
- Education and the Quality of Life
- Work, Employment, and the Quality of Life
- Arts, Culture and the Quality of Life
- Sustainable Development, the Environment and the Quality of Life
- Spirituality, Religion and the Quality of Life
- Sports, Leisure, Recreation and the Quality of Life
- Travel, Tourism and the Quality of Life
- Community Quality of Life

#### Volume III. The Quality of Life of Specific Populations

Possible Chapter Topics:

- The Quality of Life of Children and Youth
- Population Measures of Child and Youth Well-Being
- The Quality of Life of Adults
- The Quality of Life of the Elderly
- The Quality of Life of Persons with Disabilities
- The Quality of Life of Refugees and Migrants
- The Quality of Life of Socially Excluded Populations

#### Volume IV. The Quality of Life in World Regions and Inter-Regional Comparisons

Possible Chapter Topics:

- Cross-National Comparisons of Quality of Life in Developing Nations
- Cross-National Comparisons of Quality of Life in Developed Nations
- Quality of Life in Australia and New Zealand
- Quality of Life in East Asia and China
- Quality of Life in Africa
- The Quality of Life in Muslim Populations: The Case of Algeria
- Quality of Life in the Caribbean and Latin America
- Quality of Life in Europe
- Quality of Life in North America
- Globalization and the Quality of Life



## 2004 ISQOLS AWARDS

The following awards were announced and presented at the **ISQOLS Awards Banquet, Thursday, November 11, 2004.**

### Betterment of Humanity Award:

- Recipient: **Annie E. Casey Foundation**, Baltimore, USA

### Distinguished Quality of Life Researcher Award:

- **Wolfgang Zapf**, Professor Emeritus of the J.W. Goethe University in Frankfurt, the University of Mannheim and the Free University of Berlin. Founder of the Social Indicators and Social Reporting movements in Germany and, through his work, elsewhere.

### Fellows Awards:

- **Jean Endicott**, Professor of Clinical Psychology, Department of Psychiatry, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, USA
- **Carol Ferrans**, Professor, University of Illinois at Chicago, College of Nursing, Chicago, USA
- **Anna Lau**, Professor, Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, CHINA
- **Krishna Mazumdar**, Associate Professor, Economic Research Unit, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata, West Bengal, INDIA

### Best of Social Indicators Research (Joint Award with Springer Publishers):

- **R.A. Cummins** (Deakin University, Australia), **R. Eckersley**, **J. Pallant**, **J. van Vugt** and **R. Misajon**, "Developing a national index of subjective wellbeing: the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index", SIR, Nov. 2003, Vol. 64, No. 2, pp. 159-190.

### Best of Journal of Happiness Studies (Joint Award with Springer Publishers):

- **Michael R. Hagerty** (University of California at Davis), "Was life better in the 'good old days'? Inter-temporal judgments of life satisfaction," vol.4, no. 2.

### First Place Award For Dissertation on Quality of Life:

- **Karen Hwang**, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University, 10 Seminary Place, New Brunswick NJ 08901. Currently, interning at the Hunterdon Development Center.

"Attachment, Disability, and Romantic Relationships"

Dissertation Chair: **Jeffrey Smith**

### Honorable Mention Certificate For Dissertation on Quality of Life:

- **Marjan Drukker**, Department of Psychiatry and Neuropsychology, South Limburg Mental Health Research and Teaching Network, EURON, Maastricht University, Maastricht, The Netherlands

"The Neighborhood Matters: The Neighborhood Social Environment and Differences in Self-Related Quality of Life and Mental Health"

Dissertation Chair: **M. DeVries**

### Honorable Mention Certificate For Dissertation on Quality of Life:

- **Shannon Michele Suldo**, Assistant Professor, School Psychology Program, University of South Florida, USA

"A Longitudinal Study Identifying Variables That Describe Youth With Very High or Low Life Satisfaction, and Variables That Predict and Co-Occur With Changes in Adolescent's Life Satisfaction"

Dissertation Chair: **E. Scott Huebner**

### Distinguished Service Award:

- **Wolfgang Glatzer**, Professor of Sociology, Goethe University Frankfurt-am-Main; ISQOLS' President for the years 2003/04

### Special Presidential Award:

- **University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work** in recognition of 100 years of Advancing Quality of Life Through Excellence in Education For Service to Others

### Alex Michalos: Canada's Gold Award Recipient

ISQOLS' Past President Alex Michalos was honored just prior to the start of the conference with receipt of the prestigious "Gold Medal for Innovative Research and Community Work" by the *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada*. The award recognizes Prof. Michalos's more than 40 years of advancing quality of life worldwide through theory, research and practice.



**ACCEPTANCE REMARKS**  
**ON RECEIPT OF THE**  
**BETTERMENT OF HUMANITY AWARD TO THE**  
**ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION, BALTIMORE,**  
**USA**  
**BY WILLIAM O'HARE, ANNIE E. CASEY**  
**FOUNDATION**

On behalf of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the KIDS COUNT project, I would like to thank ISQOLS for this award.

Over the past ten to fifteen years, there seems to be increasing interest in social indicators. The emergence of ISQOLS is one reflection of that. But given past trends there is no reason to believe this interest be sustained unless we can build an organizational infrastructure to support it.

Other professions from plumbers to teaching have organizations that facilitate growth of the members and the profession. Those of us working in the social indicators movement do not have such an organizational infrastructure yet. To be sure, many professional organizations involve aspects of social indicator development and use, but they are usually pretty tangential. Demographers, statisticians, sociologists, and psychologists, all have professional organizations that promote their discipline. Social indicators experts current have none.

Over the past several years, I have constantly been learning of new work and new organizations focused on various dimensions of social indicator development and use from community activism to international comparisons. But I am struck over and over again by the extent to which these efforts take place in isolation.

To sustain and expand the social indicators movement we need to develop an organizational infrastructure that can accomplish several things. We need to have a regular set of meetings where professionals can get together to share findings, develop a common language, build human links, and build a sense of common effort. We need a newsletter to keep members up-to-date on activities relevant to members. We need a list serve to exchange information easily and quickly.

While this organizational infrastructure needs to be broad enough to include the many interests of people working in this area, it needs to provide enough specificity so people with common interests can find a place to exchange ideas.

I think ISQOLS may be the single best hope for developing such an organizational infrastructure. We should start thinking about subgroups within ISQOLS that allow member to be more focused. The model I have in mind is the American Statistical Association. While the ASA covers an enormous range of statistical professionals, interest groups within the organization, such as Social Statistics or Government Statistics, allow member for focus more clearly on their particular interest.

As we leave this meeting in Philadelphia and go back to our individual endeavors, I hope you will think about ways we can build ISQOLS into the kind of organization that will sustain the social indicators movement.

**THE COMMUNITY INDICATORS CONSORTIUM**  
**(CIC)**  
**AND ITS NEWSLETTER**

The Community Indicators Consortium (CIC) is a still forming group of practitioners and researchers interested in promoting the increased and better use of indicators as one tool for improving conditions in cities, towns and neighborhoods. It has published the first issue of its *CIC Newsletter*, which is intended to help members connect with the expanding world of community indicators, to keep members abreast of a small sample of the news and progress in community indicators, and, in so doing, help them consider the broad world of indicators as an exciting and inviting realm to explore and adventure. In addition to the newsletter, CIC is developing a website as a source of information and a mechanism to cultivate its network. The newsletter and other information about upcoming events and ongoing projects will be added to the site over the next few weeks. The CIC website is currently at:

<http://market1.cob.vt.edu/isqols/cic/home.asp>

A new home (with a shorter address) will be found in the near future.

The current plan is to produce the *CIC Newsletter* every two months. For comments, suggestions, and additions to the mailing list or a rant to share, contact Ken Jones at [kjones@gmied.org](mailto:kjones@gmied.org) or by phone (802) 229-6072.

A brief history of the CIC is as follows. At the 2002 meeting of the International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies (ISQOLS) in Williamsburg, VA representatives from several organizations met informally to consider a collective effort to promote the improved development and use of community indicators. One focus for this group was to find a way to coordinate the efforts of the many institutions that support community indicators and pursue research to improve the practice. Another focus was to provide a support network for the hundreds of on-going projects that may benefit from the ideas and experience of others. As a result of the common interests, an *ad hoc* committee formed to pursue the idea of a Community Indicators Consortium.

In March of 2004, the CIC helped sponsor a meeting of indicator researchers and practitioners in Reno, Nevada. Strong attendance and a lively exchange of ideas affirmed that maintaining opportunities for a stronger community indicators network is important. Therefore, plans are underway for the next annual meeting of Community Indicators practitioners. The *ad hoc* Steering Committee will meet on December 3 to finalize plans for the meeting. After that meeting, all recipients of the *CIC Newsletter* will be provided with an announcement of the location and dates.



## Final Plenary Session: Comments on Shaping Our Future, November 13, 2004

### Remarks By Alex Michalos, Past-president of ISQOLS

I think that the quality of a person's life is a function of the actual conditions of that life and what a person makes of those conditions. What a person makes of those conditions is in turn a function of how the conditions are perceived, what a person thinks and feels about those conditions, and finally, what a person does. People's own actions, then, have an impact on their own and others' living conditions.

Taking the two main variables together (conditions of life and what people make of them), one can construct four scenarios which, with some exaggeration, may be described as different kinds of paradise and hell.

1. If one's living conditions are good and one generally feels good about them, we may describe that as *Real Paradise*.
2. If one's living conditions are bad and one generally feels bad about them, we may describe that as *Real Hell*.
3. If one's living conditions are bad but one generally feels good about them, we may describe that as the classical *Fool's Paradise*.
4. If one's living conditions are good but one generally feels bad about them, we may describe that as a *Fool's Hell*.

While the first two cases are uncontroversial, the second two are not. In fact, what is most interesting to me about the second two cases is that some people seem very supportive of one or the other as ideal. This is revealed most clearly by the numbers of publications around the world in which the quality of people's lives is measured on scales consisting only of objective indicators (e.g., counting things like crime rates, mortality and morbidity rates, education achievement rates, per capita income) or only of subjective indicators (e.g., life satisfaction, happiness, subjective wellbeing, positive affect balance, high morale). While there are many researchers who recommend the use of both kinds of indicators and there are some mixed indicator sets (e.g., the German social welfare system), there are many more in which one or the other sort of indicator is simply omitted from consideration.

The single most important point I want to make here is that I believe the classical notion of a Fool's Paradise requires at least the sort of two-variable model I mentioned in the first paragraph, and I believe both of these kinds of variables should never be neglected in research on social, economic or environmental indicators of the quality of life. In particular, we must never forget that the world contains many people living in poverty, lacking adequate food, shelter and medical care, and facing life chances that are extremely severe. The good life that we must want and achieve for all people is not just a life in which people feel good, no matter how terrible their real life conditions are, but one in which they feel good with the best of all reasons, because the objectively measurable conditions of their lives merit a positive assessment.

## Final Plenary Session: The Contributions of ISQOLS in Advancing National & International QOL, November 13, 2004

### Remarks By Ed Diener, Past-president of ISQOLS

In my discussion of ISQOLS and quality of life research, I made three points:

1. Citation Counts. Alex Michalos informed us of the citation classics in *Social Indicators Research*, but also cautioned us about some of the shortcomings of citation counts. I pointed out that citation counts are often considered an important measure of eminence by those who study scientific contributions, and they correlate substantially with other measures of eminence such as ratings by experts and publication counts. At the same time, citation counts have shortcomings, such as the fact that the number of citations will depend on the size of the field in which an investigator works. Thus, citation counts are one of several indicators that can help assess the importance of an article or the eminence of a scientist, but they are best used in combination with other indicators of eminence.
2. National Indicators of Subjective Well-Being. Objective social indicators are widely used in modern nations to help guide policy, for example measures of crime, pollution, education, longevity, and infant mortality. What is lacking, however, is a set of systematic indicators of subjective well-being to complement the objective indicators. We do not have systematic measurement system of job engagement, marital happiness, leisure enjoyment, meaning in life, and so forth to help guide policy makers and other leaders. In an article entitled *Beyond Money: Toward an Economy of Well-Being*, I and Martin E. P. Seligman make the case for the role of such indicators (Psychological Science in the Public Interest, July, 2004) in policy formation. Given the state of our knowledge about subjective indicators, they are now ready to take their place among the objective indicators to help guide societal decision-making.
3. The Desirable Future. I made the case that we need a vision of the desirable future if we are to craft new measures of quality of life. We know that we would like to eliminate undesirable things such as crime and pollution. However, we also need a clear vision of the desirable things we want to achieve. Positive psychology argues that it is not enough to get rid of problems and move people up to the zero point; we need to move people upwards in the positive zone. What are the desirable things that we want societies to possess? For example, is more education beyond college or beyond high school desirable for everyone? Do we need more parks and forests? How much more? Most importantly, how do we decide what is the desirable future? While there is substantial agreement about many of the problems societies face, there has been less thought given to the nature of desirable future alternatives. A leisure society built around self-fulfillment is one type of possible future utopia, but there are other alternatives, and as a society we should devote some thought and discussion to these. Many objective social indicators are improving in economically developed nations, suggesting that quality of life is improving. But we need to develop a vision of the positive characteristics we hope societies possess, not merely the negative conditions we hope to avoid.



# RESEARCH PROGRAMME OF QUALITY OF LIFE

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## FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS SOCIALES

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### UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOMAS DE ZAMORA, ARGENTINA

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Director: Dra. Graciela Tonon de Toscano

The Faculty of Social Sciences-Universidad Nacional de Lomas de Zamora, Argentina, created by resolution n° 497/04 the Research Programme of Quality of Life. The objectives of the Programme are:

- a. Develop non-traditional research in different areas of quality of life, trying to be consider for local government as available information about the conditions of population quality of life.
- b. Collaborate with other institutions and university groups, dedicated to the study of quality of life, in different parts of the world.
- c. Generate new avenues to integrate theory and practice for the students of the Faculty of Social Sciences.
- d. Organize conferences, seminars and different kinds of scientific events dedicated to the study of quality of life.

For more information contact: [edelvais@arnet.com.ar](mailto:edelvais@arnet.com.ar)

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## Summary Observations on the Philadelphia Conference

By Filomena Maggino

Generally at the end, people who have attended a conference, among other types of comments, remark about the way in which the event was organized and, sometimes, show disagreement concerning the number of sessions, the time conceded to each presenters, and so on. Briefly, let see what happened at the conference in Philadelphia.

It was organized around various substantive "tracks" related to quality of life theory, research and practice (e.g., world regions, sectors, population groups) and six types of presentation formats.

*Workshops:* Workshops consisting of half- and full-day workshops sessions – occurred on Wednesday, November 10. Apart from the particular subject of each workshop, this form of presentation was very successful for participants. Persons who attended workshops showed a great appreciation of this format – which focused on the methodology of quality of life research and practice and which was carried out with a style not expressly didactic and with the purpose of submitting scientific proposals and suggestions useful from a practical point of view. This form provides "hands on" opportunities for researchers and practitioners to enhance their skills in QOL assessment and measurement and encouraged exchanges of ideas creating relationship between persons beyond the conference. I believe we will see fruitful consequences of this.

*Concurrent Paper Sessions:* This format was limited to two to four topically-focused presentations in a 1.5 hour time slot, and, in some cases, a discussant. A particular form of paper session was that identified as *symposia*; each symposium was focused on particular methodological topics on a selected group of presentations.

Persons attending conferences were not always able to pick and choose easily among the great number of interesting paper sessions. It was not an uncommon situation to see attending people running from one room to another having a try to follow different 'not-to-be-missed' presentations and with the precious *final-program* volume in their hands.

The inevitably short time that each discussant had at her/his disposal (15 minutes) did not sacrifice the general clarity of presentations, having allowed the involvement of the audience. Very often, the questions and answers between listeners and discussants went on and were extended to the coffee-breaks.

It sometimes happened that a presenter, enthralled by the passion for his/her work, took more time to get the end of presentation, in spite of the chairperson's attempts (sometimes desperate, some sometimes funny) to make the presenter know that the time was breakdown!

*Plenary Sessions:* Each plenary session was limited to four presentations on a single theme, scheduled for 1.5 hours. Usually, the themes, covering Quality-Of-Life issues of global nature, were discussed by a series of roundtables that preceded the plenary sessions. Plenary sessions also gave a positive opportunity for conference attendees to meet each other and to exchange comments and remarks on the other attended sessions.

*Poster Sessions:* Poster sessions consisted of single presentations made during scheduled coffee-breaks. Even if the estimated time for the poster sessions was 30 minutes, the presenters had the fruitful possibility of prolonging the meeting occasions after the scheduled end.

*Roundtables:* Roundtables were a particularly successful form of presentation. They consisted of one-hour long sessions following breakfast with 1 or 2 presenters, a moderator and 6-10 participants. This format was revealed to be one of the most successful, often stimulating a dialogue between persons deeply involved in each specific issue; they enabled participants to get caught up in the discussion in a small group and allowed the presenters to receive stimulating ideas and suggestions for their work. The success of this form was confirmed and testified by the opportunity that many people had for participating in some extemporary and self-organized round tables, following particular intriguing and stimulating discussions at some paper session.

Finally, it is worth mentioning, why not,

two further forms: "coffee-breaks sessions" and "breakfast sessions" that revealed to be great occasions of meeting, presentation and discussions around conference topics as well. The spirit that can unify the different forms of presentation is "meeting chance", indeed!

The success of each form of presentation may be attributable to all – the attendees, the presenters, the Program Planning & Scientific Committee, the Abstract Oversight Committee, the Local Arrangements Committee, the Conference Secretariat, the organizers of posters and roundtables sessions. However let me take this opportunity to express a special thanks to the chair of the conference and to the Student Volunteers whose silent and precious work was one of the successful keys of the Sixth Conference of ISQOLS in Philadelphia.



## Summary Observations on the Philadelphia Conference

By Dong-Jin Lee

First of all, I must say that it was my great pleasure to meet many people at the conference. I truly enjoyed the conference.

Due to the jet lag, I ended up waking up very early in the morning, and was able to attend the early morning sessions. On Thursday, I have attended the plenary session on 'international challenges to advancing QOL'. The plenary session provided audiences with quite useful information about the current status of QOL in various regions in the world. On that morning, I have chaired the 'QOL in Asia' session. While the topic is interesting, I thought that the session could have been better organized if we have concentrated on a specific QOL topic within Asia. It was difficult to find the common theme across the three papers presented in this session.

On Friday, I have attended an 8:00 am round table session on 'materialism and QOL'. The presentation was about the effects of materialism on one's quality of life based on the multiple discrepancy theory. It was quite good with a sound theory and statistical method. I liked the round table session and we had a quite good discussion about the topic.

The 'education and QOL' session on Friday was also quite informative. It provides me with an understanding of what are some factors affecting the QOL of students. This session has focused on this specific topic with data collected from various countries. I thought that organizing a session based on common theme is a better option than organizing a session based on a specific region.

As an outgoing VicePresident-Publications, I have participated the board of directors meeting and ISQOLS encyclopedia project meeting. During the conference, we signed a contract with Springer for the encyclopedia project. It was good to see the encyclopedia project taking off under the leadership of Professor Ken Land.

Personally, it was a very long flight and also it is quite a challenge for me to set a week's time aside in the middle of the semester. Thinking back, however, I think that this is the time well spent. I really enjoyed the conference. It was well prepared and organized. I appreciate the time and effort of the conference organizing committee. My deep appreciation goes to Professor Estes who made great effort for the Herculean task.

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The International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies (ISQOLS) was formed in the mid-1990s. The objectives of ISQOLS are: 1) to stimulate interdisciplinary research in quality-of-life (QOL) studies within the managerial (policy), behavioral, social, medical, and environmental sciences; 2) to provide an organization which all academic, business, nonprofit, and government researchers who are interested in QOL studies can coordinate their efforts to advance the knowledge base and to create positive social change; and 3) to encourage closer cooperation among scholars engaged in QOL research to develop better theory, methods, measures, and intervention programs. The year 2004 membership fees are US\$50 for regular members and \$25 for students or retired persons. Prof. M. JOSEPH SIRGY (Virginia Tech and State University) is Executive Director of ISQOLS. Anyone interested in knowing more about ISQOLS should contact Prof. Sirgy at the central office: International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies, Dept. of Marketing, Pamplin College of Business, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0236; tel.: 540-231-5110; fax: 540-231-3076; e-mail: sirgy@vt.edu. The Society's homepage on the Internet also can be accessed at <http://www.cob.vt.edu/market/isqols/>.

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Happy Holidays. Joe Sirgy, ISQOLS Executive Director

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