

## May 2011 Student Representative Profile

**Paul Conway**, Graduate Student Representative



*Program:*

Ph.D. student working with Dr. Jim Olson in the Social Area of the Department of Psychology at The University of Western Ontario

*Research or Clinical Interests:*

My interests center on justice and morality: how people develop and maintain systems of cooperation and how they view others who uphold or violate those systems. More specifically, my work examines the cognitive and affective systems underlying decisions in moral dilemmas, how perceptions of others' moral worth influences willingness to aid them, motivated moral reasoning about fairness in political elections, and the role of justice in environmental action. In my dissertation, I am testing a dual-process model of how people make moral judgments when harm occurs to ingroup as opposed to outgroup members.

*Future Plans:*

Many grad students us obsess (unhealthily) over career prospects instead of knuckling down and working on the things (e.g., dissertations, therapy training, stats training) that will ultimately get us those jobs. It's the old story about outcome focus versus process focus. I try to worry more about the process than the outcome. That said, when the time is right in a year or two I hope to get a post-doc or basic academic position. That would be nice. In my view, all the talk you hear about a tough market and lack of jobs means, as a candidate, I will have to apply broadly and be willing to move somewhere I didn't anticipate living. Fair enough. But, if so, then I am likely to land a reasonable position. I think the same is true for most grad students.

*How long have you been a campus representative?*

2 years so far

*What motivated you to become a campus representative?*

To be honest, my officemate was the previous rep and decided to give it up for other projects. So she turned to me and asked if I'd care to do it instead, and I thought, what the heck? It is a fairly low-intensity position that fits naturally with my interests as a Canadian psychology graduate student, and has put me in touch with some fascinating people. Well worth it, I'd say.

*What you have accomplished as a campus representative?*

One thing I am really focused on is getting undergrads out to the CPA conference to see what it is like. I have managed to convince several so far, including my honors student and research assistant.

*Any useful tips?*

Sometimes a personal touch is more effective than an impersonal information session. Most campus reps have incidental contact with colleagues and students all the time in the hallways and classrooms of academia—these can be natural opportunities to ask if people plan to attend the conference, or if they are aware of (relevant) opportunities CPA provides. In terms of persuasion, sometimes a light touch is more effective than a heavy hand—unless the target is your honors student or research assistant!