

Panel on Public Affairs Meeting
June 7, 2019
APS Washington Office of Public Affairs
529 14th Street, NW, Suite 1050, Washington, DC

Members present (19):

J. Wells (Chair), D. Dahlberg (Chair Elect), W. Collins (Vice Chair), M. Marder (Past Chair), J. Adams, B. Clark, B. Cruz, B. DeMarco, D. Ernst, R. Falcone, L. Grego, C. Gutierrez, M., M. Hockaday (virtual), B. Klein, J. Jasinski, T. Mason, C. Nitta, R. Orbach

Advisors/Staff present:

P. Bucksbaum, M. Elsesser, D. Gross (*virtual*), K. Kirby, J. Oliver, J. Russo, F. Slakey

Call to Order

J. Wells called the meeting to order at 8:15 AM.

Welcome, Approval of Minutes

A call for edits to the February 2019 minutes was made. Hearing none, a motion was introduced.

***Motion:** To accept the February 2019 minutes as presented.
(Collins/Dahlberg)*

***Action:** The motion passed, unanimously*

Advocacy Update

APS Office of Government Affairs (OGA) staff provided an overview of advocacy activities, including: Federal agency budgets, helium conservation/recycling, open access, scientific mobility, sexual harassment in the sciences, and visas/immigration. In particular, an OGA survey of physics department chairs indicated a 12% decline in international applications, and that stimulated advocacy on visa and immigration. The OGA worked with Senator Durbin of Illinois to develop the STEM Talent Act of 2019 that authorizes dual intent for international students pursuing advanced STEM degrees and provides a path to a green card.

Action: OGA will provide POPA with Congressional Visit Day one-pager on Sexual Harassment as well as the advocacy letters to House and Senate offices.

Energy & Environment Subcommittee

OGA staff provided an update of APS efforts that followed from the APS Statement on Earth's Changing Climate. In recent surveys of APS members, climate change ranked as their #1 concern. APS initiated a greenhouse gas inventory that was completed in 2017 and was posted on the Climate Registry, with APS becoming the first science society in the US to broadly assess and publicly post its emissions. Then, APS developed a model to determine the travel footprint for any APS meeting location and is using that model in evaluating future meeting locations. Also, meeting attendees are notified of their average carbon footprint and offered the opportunity to donate, based on carbon cost, to the Clean Energy Trust. POPA Lastly, the RFP to meeting locations now asks what steps are being taken -- by hotels, conference centers, etc. -- to mitigate carbon and that response now informs the selection of future meeting locations. POPA discussed these various activities, then questions arose regarding climate change and the APS investment portfolio.

Action: APS will contact its investment advisors to evaluate how climate change is assessed as a risk in the APS investment portfolio.

Orbach then provided an overview of flaring at natural gas wells. He was encouraged by POPA members to bring a proposal for a study to the next POPA meeting, with a focus on methane detection. In support,

Action: OGA will arrange a conf call with Michael, Mike, Bill, Ray, Dan, Laura, Slake, Mark to discuss a potential study related to flaring or methane detection technology.

Action: OGA will meet with reps from EDF and AGI to determine what is already being done on the flaring and methane issues.

National Security Subcommittee

Hockaday, Chair of the National Security Subcommittee, indicated that they are exploring the possibility of developing a statement that supports the science that enables arms control agreements. The goal is to highlight the important role “treaty science” plays in establishing confidence in and technical assurances for future verifiable and effective arms control agreements.

Action: Consensus approval for the National Security Subcommittee to bring a draft statement to the October POPA meeting, with the primary audience for the statement being the physics community.

Hockaday then led a discussion that reviewed Statement 09.1 - Control of the U.S. Nuclear Complex. Two changes were recommended: (1) move up section 4 to the second paragraph and, (2) change "complementary" to "synergistic".

Motion: To approve the two changes (Klein/Marder)

Action: Approved unanimously

Ethics Subcommittee

Marder provided an update on the status of the standing APS Ethics Committee. He also identified several things the Committee is currently working on:

- Response to the Consortium document: reviewing the document carefully to formulate APS own document that will also include harassment.
- Considering the establishment of an ombudsperson for APS.
- Outreach to Membership: Conducting a new survey; informing the physics community of the actions taken to date in an APS News article; creating sessions for upcoming March & April meetings with CSWP and COM; and researching graduate student unions.
- Ethics Committee Website and Resources: develop an accessible site for members that offers a growing collection of resources.

Marder then led a discussion that reviewed Statement 94.3 - Policy on Equal Professional Opportunity.

Motion: Archive Statement 94.3 (Marder/Collins)

Action: Approved unanimously

Physics & the Public Subcommittee

DeMarco introduced Laurie McNeil and she discussed the draft statement on the PGRE. The discussion addressed two primary issues: any correlation between scores on the PGRE and success in graduate school, and the GREs ability to predict student success.

Proposed PGRE Statement

Motion: to approve that the statement be sent to the Board for consideration (Marder/Demarco)

Action: *The motion failed. OGA will inform the Committee on Education of the result. Nevertheless, the Physics and Public Subcommittee will use the previous COE draft statement as input to consider more broadly a future possible statement regarding aligning graduate student admissions policies with diversity and inclusion goals.*

DeMarco introduced Jim Kakalios to a draft statement on Support of Public Outreach. Kakalios clarified that the statement was initially developed in 2016 in response to a lack of departmental support for faculty engagement in outreach activities. A statement would provide encouragement for those who participate in outreach activities or are considering participating. Kakalios concluded his comments by indicating that he is open to changes of the statement.

Action: *The Physics and Public Subcommittee will rewrite the draft statement based on the POPA discussion and bring an updated version to the October POPA meeting.*

DeMarco then led a discussion that reviewed Statement 14.1 Undergraduate Research Statement. Several minor edits were proposed that did not change the substance of the statement but provide clarity: to replace “future” with “careers in”, add “or” in the appropriate place, and delete “other careers”.

Motion: Approve the edited statement (Collins/Klein)

Action: *Approved unanimously*

DeMarco then led a discussion that reviewed Statement 89.2 The International Nature of Physics and International Cooperation.

Action: *Refer the statement to Amy Flatten, APS Director of International Affairs, for edits; she will send it back to POPA for the October meeting.*

DeMarco then led a discussion that reviewed Statement 99.1 - AIP Member Society Statement on the Education of Future Teachers. Several minor edits were proposed: add reference to pre-service and in-service training; change the title to “Statement on the Education of Science Teachers”.

Motion: Approve the edited statement (Marder/Grego)

Action: *Approved unanimously*

DeMarco then led a discussion that reviewed Statement 99.2 - Research in Physics Education

Action: *Refer the statement to Monica Plisch, APS Director of Education, for edits; she will send it back to POPA for the October meeting.*

DeMarco then led a discussion that reviewed Statement 99.5 - Kansas State Board of Education Decision.

Motion: to archive the statement (Marder/Clark)

Action: *Approved unanimously*

DeMarco then led a discussion that reviewed Statement 94.5 Statements by APS Units and Statement 89.0 APS/AIP Relationship. Kate Kirby recommended that 94.5 should be archived since it has been incorporated into the APS governing documents. She commented the 89.0 is no longer necessary and should be archived.

***Motion:** archive the two statements: (Collins/Bucksbaum)*

***Action:** Approved unanimously*

Next Meeting

The date for the next POPA meeting will be October 4, 2019

Adjournment

***ACTION:** J. Wells adjourned the meeting 2:30 PM*