

Panel on Public Affairs Meeting
February 7, 2014
APS Washington Office of Public Affairs
529 14th Street, NW, Suite 1050, Washington, DC

Members present:

R. Jaffe (Chair), S. Koonin (Chair Elect), W. Barletta (Vice Chair), R. Rosner (Past Chair), R. Cote, P. Coyle, A. Garcia, W. Goldstein, M. Goodman, S. Kemp, M. Marder, W. McCurdy, T. Meyer, H. Neal, J. Phillips (via phone), S. Pratt, M. Rosenthal, P. Taylor, T. Theis, M. Turner, J. Wells

Guests:

T. Hodapp, R. Behringer (via phone)

Advisors/Staff present:

S. Aronson, M. Beasley, K. Cole, M. Elsesser, K. Kirby, M. Lubell, J. Russo, F. Slakey

Members Absent:

E. Boyd

Call to Order

R. Rosner called the meeting to order at 8:13 AM.

Welcome, Introductions, & Approval of Minutes

R. Rosner welcomed everyone and asked them to introduce themselves. He asked for comments regarding the October 4, 2013 minutes. Hearing none, he requested a motion.

MOTION: *To approve the minutes of the October 4, 2013 POPA meeting.*
 (Barletta/Jaffe)

ACTION: *Passed unanimously.*

Update on the Status of APS Corporate Reform

An external review of our current corporate structure is being conducted in order to align the Society in a way that will allow for effective communication across all departments and divisions of APS. A website is being developed to provide updated information throughout the process.

Recap of POPA Boot Camp/POPA Strategic Plan

New members agreed that the event was valuable and provided essential preparatory material for membership on the committee.

- *Consider an end-of-year departure event designed to capture the sentiments of members rotating off of POPA, as suggested by Mark Goodman. (Slakey, Russo)*

Call for POPA Membership

Suggestions for candidates were requested. Five people will rotate off the committee at year's end. Those considered for the open seats should have expertise in the activities POPA is currently engaged in, as well as in areas left deficient by the annual transition of membership.

Candidates must be members of APS, or willing to become members. Diversity should also be considered.

Climate Change Statement Review

Background information and an overview of the progression of the review was provided. A “minimal statement” on climate science was presented. Discussion ensued on the science issues related to climate change. POPA was presented with the actions up for debate, including:

- (1) The format POPA should employ to keep membership updated on the review process;
- (2) Deciding on alternatives to the “minimal statement” on climate science.

It was decided that a webpage dedicated to the review process would be produced. APS Staff and the Review Subcommittee were tasked with reworking a webpage mock-up within the week, to be presented electronically to POPA for comment and a vote.

Four alternatives to the “minimal statement” were presented:

- (1) Retaining the existing statement;
- (2) Recommending the null statement;
- (3) Recommending a new (non-null) statement;
- (4) Writing a new statement that would accompany the current statement.

MOTION: *To strike the option of retaining the existing APS Climate Change Statement from the possible options of how to proceed.*

Other options that were discussed and are still available: “the null statement”, a new statement that replaces the current statement, a new statement that would accompany the current statement.

(Barletta/Rosner)

ACTION: *Motion carried (15 for, 4 against)*

MOTION: *To have the Climate Change Statement Review subcommittee revise the statement in light of the discussion at the February 7, 2014 POPA meeting.*
(Rosner)

Amendment: *To also have the subcommittee include recommendations on how they envision the process moving forward and the technical pieces that will be included. (Rosner accepted the amendment.)*

Amendment: *To request that the subcommittee consult with the steering committee and other experts from the climate science community, as well as interested POPA members, as they revise the statement. (Rosner accepted the amendment.)*

To have the Climate Change Statement Review subcommittee revise the statement in light of the discussion at the February 7, 2014 POPA meeting and to include recommendations on how they envision the process moving forward and the technical pieces that will be included. They should consult with the steering committee and other experts from the climate science community, as well as interested POPA members, during the revision process.

(Rosner/Barletta)

ACTION: *Passed unanimously*

Proposed Statements

Committee on the Status of Women in Physics

Last year POPA reviewed APS Statement 08.2, the Joint Diversity Statement, and the decision resulting from that discussion was that it was better to develop a separate statement specific to women in physics. The CSWP crafted the statement presented to POPA today. It was generally agreed that the proposed statement had issues with tone and should be redrafted to reflect positive strides that should be/have been taken, encouragement of a supportive work environment and awareness of biases – unintentional or otherwise.

- **The Physics & the Public Subcommittee will work with the Committee on the Status of Women in Physics on their proposed statement to incorporate the ideas and address the concerns raised at the POPA meeting. (Meyer)**

Committee on Careers and Professional Development

The Committee on Education, working with the CCPD, reviewed Statement 06.3 – Career Options for Physicists and made some suggestions to tighten up and improve the wording. Not much was changed, but what *was* improves the statement. The committee noted that the changes added value, but the statement should be more explicit in suggesting actions to be taken and how to facilitate pursuit of available opportunities.

- **The Physics & the Public Subcommittee will work with the Committee on Careers and Professional Development on their proposed statement to incorporate the ideas and address the concerns raised at the POPA meeting. (Meyer)**

Call for Updates

National Security Subcommittee

A report was provided on continued activity surrounding an international workshop on tactical nuclear weapons. A review of the 2009 APS Statement 09.1 – Control of the U.S. Nuclear Complex is underway.

- **The National Security Subcommittee will continue working with EU counterparts to determine whether we should move forward with an international workshop on tactical nuclear weapons. (Phillips)**

Energy & Environment Subcommittee

An advocacy update on work related to the energy critical elements (ECE) report (recycling legislation) was provided. The APS Office of Public Affairs is taking a two-pronged approach in its efforts, approaching the issue at both the Federal and State levels. The ultimate goal is to increase the number of ECE-containing electronics recycled in the U.S.

PPC

An overview of topics covered at the December 6, 2013 meeting was provided. These topics included problems associated with the funding of physics, ITER, and science visas.

Physics & the Public Subcommittee

Proposed Undergraduate Research Statement

The edited version of the statement, as presented to POPA, was prepared by the APS Committee on Education, approved by POPA, and has been reviewed and commented upon by APS membership. Minor edits were incorporated to address the membership commentary.

Commentary: POPA members requested a few minimal changes in punctuation; it was noted that “or” should be changed to “and” in the STEM acronym. The changes were made, at the table.

MOTION: *To approve the proposed Undergraduate Research Statement, as revised.*
(Jaffe/Koonin)

ACTION: *Passed unanimously.*

Call for Subcommittee Volunteers

R. Rosner asked for volunteers to serve on the different POPA Subcommittees. The Committee Administrator made note of members’ selections.

Transfer of Gavel

R. Rosner made parting remarks; R. Jaffe accepted the gavel and adjourned the group for lunch.

Proposed Studies

New members suggested new studies and activities for POPA. These included the future of physics in the U.S.; conservation and collection of resources from recycle electronics; quantum information security; hyperfast computing; the fight against nuclear proliferation; research experiments for undergraduates; geoengineering; grid storage capabilities; joint PhDs; and the credibility of science in a peer reviewed world

- **F. Slakey will assist M. Marder in crafting a proposal for a study; they will send to T. Meyer and the Physics & the Public Subcommittee for review. (Slakey, Marder, Meyer)**

New Business

2014 Review of Past Statements (2009)

- **The National Security Subcommittee will review APS Statement 09.1 – Control of the U.S. Nuclear Complex, to determine if it should remain active or be archived. (Phillips)**

Oppenheimer Security Clearance

A group, trying to restore the security clearance of Robert Oppenheimer, has approached POPA for assistance. The individual heading the J. Robert Oppenheimer Memorial Committee (JROMC) suggested POPA might be interested in getting involved in their endeavor. It was generally agreed that a POPA Subcommittee should probe the JROMC to determine what has been accomplished and whether/how POPA might participate.

- **The Physics & the Public Subcommittee will review the Oppenheimer Security Clearance issue brought to the attention of POPA; the Subcommittee should advise POPA on a course of action at the June 2014 meeting. (Meyer)**

Civic Engagement of Scientists - APS Statement 08.1

A draft revision has been written and the Physics & the Public Subcommittee must review and approve it before distributing it electronically to POPA for comments. If edits are necessary, the P&P Subcommittee will incorporate the changes and then it will be sent to POPA for an electronic vote.

- The Physics & the Public Subcommittee will review the redraft of the APS Civic Engagement Statement, as presented by M. Rosenthal and M. Goodman. Once approved by the Subcommittee, it will be sent to POPA for comment and electronic vote. (*Meyer, Russo*)

Intersessional Minutes

- The proposed Undergraduate Research Statement was approved by the APS Executive Board in February 2014, and subsequently adopted at the APS Council meeting (April 4, 2014) and approved for public release. It is now posted on the APS website as an official statement of the American Physical Society (Statement 14.1 – Undergraduate Research Statement).
- An electronic vote on the revised APS Civic Engagement Statement was conducted February 25th – March 3rd, 2014. POPA approved the revised statement and it was sent to the APS Council for comment. The comment period ended on May 19th, 2014. The proposed statement is in the queue for presentation to the APS Executive Board at its September 2014 meeting.
- Continuing Business:
 - 2/21 – Teleconference with CSWP representatives
 - 2/24 – P&P Subcommittee teleconference; discussion with Oppenheimer Committee representative
 - 3/24 – Teleconference with CCPD representatives
 - 4/10 – Climate Change Steering Committee meeting in Brooklyn, NY
 - 4/14 – Meeting with Gotz Neuneck to discuss international workshop
 - 4/28 – E&E Subcommittee teleconference
 - 4/30 – Meeting with Julia Phillips to discuss National Security Subcommittee objectives
 - 5/12 – Meeting of E&E Subcommittee in Cambridge, MA
 - 5/19 – POPA Steering Committee teleconference
 - 5/22 – National Security Subcommittee teleconference
 - 5/23 – P&P Subcommittee teleconference
 - 5/28 – E&E Subcommittee teleconference
 - 6/3 – Climate Change Steering Committee teleconference
- Next scheduled APS Executive Board Meetings: 6/11– 6/13 , 9/12 – 9/13, 11/20 – 11/21
- Next scheduled APS Council Meetings: 6/13 (Special Session), 11/21 – 11/22

Next Meeting

The date for the next POPA meeting will be June 6, 2014.

Adjournment

MOTION: *To adjourn the meeting. (Barletta/Committee)*

ACTION: *The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM. (Jaffe)*