

Panel on Public Affairs Meeting
October 3, 2014
APS Washington Office of Public Affairs
529 14th Street, NW, Suite 1050, Washington, DC

Members present:

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

Guests:

P. Carroll (virtual), T. Hodapp, M. Plisch

Advisors/Staff present:

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

Call to Order

R. Jaffe called the meeting to order at 8:10 AM.

Welcome, Approval of Minutes, Chair Elect Position

With the resignation of the 2014 Chair Elect, a special election will now be held to fill the currently vacant Vice Chair position. The position will be filled by a current member of POPA. Panel members were instructed to approach the Chair or APS Staff for consideration if interested in serving on the Chair Line. The POPA Steering Committee will provide a list of names to the APS Nominating Committee for consideration. The APS Council will hold the special election at their next meeting.

MOTION: *To accept the February 2014 minutes, as presented.*
(Barletta/Phillips)

ACTION: *The motion passed, unanimously.*

MOTION: *To accept the June 2014 minutes, as presented.*
(Goodman/Phillips)

ACTION: *The motion passed, unanimously.*

APS Statement on Earth's Changing Climate
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The POPA Energy and Environment Subcommittee reported on the work that has occurred since June. There was a presentation including a timeline of activities & tasks completed since the last meeting. The Subcommittee presented a proposed draft Statement on Earth's Changing Climate. Each member of POPA was allowed to speak briefly, and to give their perspective on the process and status of the draft statement.

MOTION: *To adopt as a framework the statement submitted by the Energy & Environment Subcommittee, subject to a set of amendments that will be presented today.*
(Barletta/Phillips)

ACTION: *The motion passed. (15 in favor, 2 opposed, 2 abstentions)*

Consideration of four amendment blocks, along with individual member-suggested amendments, were reviewed and voted on by the Panel and a consensus version of the proposed Statement was developed.

MOTION: *To amend by substitution, replacing the earlier proposed Statement on Earth's Changing Climate with the revision including all changes and edits resulting from today's review, discussion and votes.*
(Kemp/Phillips)

ACTION: *The motion passed. (14 in favor, 1 opposed, 3 abstentions)*

Proposed Study on Non-Weapons Science at LLNL

A representative from the Ploughshares Fund, a public foundation that works on a variety of nuclear proliferation/non-proliferation weapons programs and policy issues, presented an idea for a future POPA study on the non-weapons science being conducted at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. A new Congressional Commission has been established to review a variety of issues on the national lab infrastructure (CRENEL: Commission to Review the Effectiveness of the National Energy Labs). Several Ploughshares board members thought that CRENEL provided a good opportunity to consider what types of missions LLNL could be involved with in the future. POPA members asked several questions: Why just LLNL and not Sandia and LANL? What's Ploughshares reason for doing this? Numerous reports have addressed this issue already, so are they looking for a different answer? Why now? They'd like to partner with pure scientists, outside of the NGO world, to consider these questions.

ACTION: *To refer this idea for a study to the National Security Subcommittee for further consideration.*

Proposed Education Study/Survey

An idea for a study on the shortages of qualified physics teachers at the high-school level was presented at the June meeting. Since then, representatives of the APS Committee on Education (COE) have worked with the Physics & the Public Subcommittee to develop possible activities associated with a study on the obstacles of recruiting teachers in chemistry, math, physics, and computer science – the first activity being a detailed survey. The survey would uncover pathways to overcome the obstacles.

MOTION: *Contingent upon a reworking and refinement of the current draft of the survey (to the satisfaction of the APS Committee on Education and the Physics & the Public Subcommittee), to conditionally approve authorizing this project and a commitment of \$25K for activities as listed in the study proposal.*
(Meyer/Barletta)

ACTION: *The motion passed. (13 in favor, none opposed, 1 abstention)*

Corporate Reform

An update was provided by APS Leadership, reviewing the timeline and process by which the Society has undertaken a critical look at its constitution and bylaws. A member voting period on APS governance changes begins on October 6th, 2014.

<http://www.aps.org/about/reform/index.cfm>

Update on Energy Critical Elements

An update was provided by APS Staff. Legislative efforts led by the APS Office of Public Affairs (OPA), and others, will keep the Federal Helium Reserve open through 2022; the OPA is now developing a helium brokerage for academic users, aimed at keeping prices of liquid helium stable and ensuring reliable delivery for the next several years. To address longer-term issues, a study was proposed to examine ways to transition principle investigators from the periodic purchase of helium to making a capital investment in the purchase of a helium recycler. The study would explore the economics of such a business model, determining what the outcomes would be and whether a change, as such, is beneficial.

ACTION: *To refer this idea for a study to the Energy & Environment Subcommittee for further consideration.*

Report from Physics & the Public Subcommittee

The Subcommittee provided updates on three statements currently in development. The revised APS Statement on Civic Engagement is in the queue for discussion and vote at the APS Executive Board's next meeting. The proposed Statement on the Status of Women in Physics was sent to the APS Council for review; their comments resulted in a proposed edit – to change "...full participation by both women & men..." to "...full participation by everyone, regardless of gender..."

MOTION: *To accept this edit and approve forwarding the statement to the APS Executive Board for review and vote.*
(Meyer/Barletta)

ACTION: *The motion passed unanimously. (16 in favor, none opposed, no abstentions)*

The proposed Statement on Careers and Professional Development (a revision of APS Statement 06.3 – Career Options for Physicists, spearheaded by the APS Committee on Careers and Professional Development - CCPD) has undergone several iterations between the Subcommittee and the CCPD. The latest revision provides more clarity on the distinction between the value of a physics degree for undertaking physics and ways to add value to connect with other career options. The Subcommittee asked the Panel whether (1) they still see sufficient content in the latest revision of the statement that we should move forward with sending it to Council for commentary and (2) the sense of what's important has been captured.

MOTION: *That the statement be referred back to the Committee on Careers and Professional Development with the understanding that the Physics & the Public Subcommittee will continue to oversee deliberations with the authoring group.*
(Barletta/Wells)

ACTION: *The motion passed. (15 in favor, none opposed, 1 abstention)*

Report from National Security Subcommittee

The Subcommittee has been considering an international workshop in partnership with European organizations, on tactical nuclear weapons reductions. It has decided that, given event in Ukraine and elsewhere, the timing is disadvantageous for such an endeavor. The question on whether to proceed with the project will be re-examined prior to the February 2015 POPA meeting.

In reviewing APS Statement 09.1 – Control of the U.S. Nuclear Complex, the Subcommittee has come to the decision that the statement is still relevant, but in need of updating. A draft revision was circulated and POPA members were asked to contribute suggested edits prior to a larger discussion to be held at the next scheduled meeting.

New Business

The Forum on Physics in Society (FPS) contacted POPA regarding an issue worthy of consideration. They've requested that the Panel consider a response to Jim Doyle's dismissal from Los Alamos National Laboratory.

ACTION: POPA will communicate to FPS that they should pull all details regarding this situation together to be presented to the APS Presidential Line with a recommendation that a Letter from the APS President be sent to the appropriate parties.

Intersessional Minutes

- Work on the Helium Brokerage Activity has continued.
- Work on activities associated with E-cycling has continued.
- POPA Subcommittees have convened, via teleconference, multiple times.

Next Meeting

The date for the next POPA meeting will be February 6, 2015.

Adjournment

ACTION: *R. Jaffe adjourned the meeting 3:06 PM*