

Panel on Public Affairs Meeting
February 5, 2016
APS Washington Office of Public Affairs
529 14th Street, NW, Suite 1050, Washington, DC

Members present:

J. Phillips (Chair), F. Houle (Chair Elect), M. Marder (Vice Chair), W. Barletta (Past Chair)
S. Aronson (*virtual*), S. Bare, M. Barnett, S. Case, R. Cote, D. Dahlberg, P. Davis, R. Falcone (*virtual*), E. Gates, D. Ginley, W. McCurdy, S. Pratt, A. Taylor (*virtual*), P. Taylor, J. Wells, E. Yablonovitch

Advisors/Staff present:

M. Elsesser, K. Kirby, M. Lubell, H. Neal (*virtual*), J. Russo, F. Slakey

Guests:

Lexi Shultz, Barry Schneider, Jennifer Heimberg

Call to Order

W. Barletta called the meeting to order at 8:02 AM.

Welcome, Approval of Minutes

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

MOTION: *To accept the October 2015 minutes, as presented.*
(Phillips/Bare)

ACTION: *The motion passed, unanimously.*

Statements up for Review in 2016

Active APS statements up for review in 2016 were distributed to the appropriate POPA Subcommittees. The Subcommittees will provide recommendations on whether each statement should remain current, undergo full review, or be archived for the future at the June 2016 meeting.

National Security Subcommittee

APS Statement 06.1 – The Use of Nuclear Weapons

APS Statement 01.1 – Security and Science at the Weapons Laboratories

Energy & Environment Subcommittee

APS Statement 96.2 – Energy: The Forgotten Crisis

Physics & the Public Subcommittee

APS Statement 06.3 – Career Options for Physicists

APS Statement 06.2 – Advocacy for Science Education

APS Statement 01.2 – Assessment and Science

APS Statement 91.5 – Reaffirmation of Statement on Scientific Review of Research Facilities Funding

Discussion of Industry Representation on POPA

Members discussed various courses of action to ensure industry representation on POPA. In developing its strategic, 5-year plan, APS recognized that 50-75% of physics PhDs find employment outside of academia. The committee agreed that there should be a seat at the table representing that portion of the membership.

MOTION: *To recommend the addition of a member on POPA, from industry, elected from the Forum on Industrial & Applied Physics (FIAP); recommendation will be sent to the Governance Committee for consideration. (Phillips/Houle)*

ACTION: *The motion carried; 1 opposed, 1 abstention.*

Physics & the Public Subcommittee Update

DCOMP Statement

Barry Schneider of the APS Division on Computational Physics (DCOMP) presented POPA with a proposal for an APS Statement on the intrinsic value of computation and data enabled (C&DE) physics. The motivation for the statement is to accelerate the progress of developing programs at the university-level for C&DE physics. POPA agreed that the statement, in its current form, lacked the substance required for consideration as an APS Statement.

ACTION: *DCOMP will redraft that statement based on POPA feedback and possibly bring to the next POPA meeting.*

Proposed Study on Women in Physics

Subcommittee Chair provided an update on continued discussion with the APS Committee on the Status of Women in Physics (CSWP). CSWP provided a list of the programs they are currently engaged in. The Subcommittee continues to try to find ways to frame a study on women in physics in a way that would enhance CSWPs ongoing efforts.

Education Study Survey Update

Study Committee Chair provided a status report; preliminary data was shared and a more complete report will be provided at the June 2016 POPA meeting.

National Security Subcommittee Update

The National Academies recently released a study on the current status of and progress toward eliminating highly enriched uranium (HEU) use as fuel for civilian research and test reactors. Subcommittee Chair provided POPA with an overview of the study's findings and recommendations. Discussion ensued as to whether there was an opportunity for POPA to weigh in on the technical and non-technical barriers in converting and retrofitting HEU fueled reactors to LEU fuel. Jennifer Heimberg, Senior Program Office of the NAS Nuclear & Radiation Studies Board provided additional comments. A comparison study on conversion vs. new reactor builds could be considered. A suggestion for making a statement, in support of the NAS study, was also suggested.

ACTION: *The National Security Subcommittee should consider the proposed study and come back to POPA with a recommendation on how to proceed at the June 2016 meeting.*

Energy & Environment Subcommittee Update

Helium Brokerage

APS Staff provided an update on the expansion of the APS-ACS Liquid Helium Program. There were seven (7) institutional users enrolled in the program during its initial year. Following the recent brokerage application process for year two of the program, that number will grow to nineteen (19) institutional users. All seven institutions from year one have renewed their participation.

E-Cycling Initiatives/Internship

Considerable thought has been given to scaling the e-cycling initiative. Extending the internship over two semesters is one possibility, since a one-semester internship could put too much burden on APS staff. Having an engaged faculty member is crucial, as it provides an on-site mentor for students and shifts routine responsibilities to the university campus and out of the APS Office of Public Affairs (OPA). Having joint student participation from both the physics and political science departments at universities is useful. Employing the joint-department approach has supplemented students overall understanding of the intersection between science & policy.

MOTION: *To have POPA & the Office of Public Affairs (OPA) expand the state-based e-cycling initiative, paying particular attention to how the program can become self-sustaining. OPA should report back to POPA in February 2017. (Phillips/Dahlberg)*

ACTION: *The motion passed, unanimously.*

Helium Economics Study Report

The Chair of the Study Committee provided an overview of the draft report, eliciting feedback on content & approach. Each recommendation was discussed and all comments will be brought back to the Study Committee for consideration. A final product will be presented at the June POPA meeting.

Climate Change Activities

The APS will embark on a carbon inventory, beginning with a workshop in early May. Anthesis, a consulting firm specializing in sustainability strategy and based on the West coast, was chosen to assist APS with the audit and guide Society leadership through the process.

Lexi Shultz of the American Geophysical Union (AGU) addressed POPA and discussed the types of climate change activities AGU has recently been involved in, including raising awareness of climate science in the debate on Capitol Hill. AGU has worked with other scientific societies on projects, including joint climate science Congressional Visits Days (CVDs), and would welcome the added value APS would bring to future projects.

MOTION: *POPA agrees the APS should engage on climate change policy and directs the APS Office of Public Affairs (OPA) to do so, beginning with cooperating with AGU. This should then be brought to the Physics Policy Committee for further consideration. (Phillips/Wells)*

ACTION: *The motion passed, unanimously.*

Lessons learned from the APS Statement on Earth's Changing Climate were discussed and appropriate actions associated with each were considered.

MOTION: *To adopt lessons 1-3, as written. (McCurdy/Cote)*

Amendment: To change “would be comprised” to “composed” in the Action Item portion of Lesson 1. *(P. Taylor/Barletta)*

Amendment: To change the word “Engage” to “Include” in the Action Item portion of Lesson 2. *(Barletta/Ginley)*

ACTION: Amendments to motion accepted, unanimously.

ACTION: *The motion to adopt lesson 1-3, as amended, passed unanimously.*

MOTION: *To table the discussion on Lesson 4 to the June meeting, referring it to the Ethics, Policies, and Procedures Subcommittee for consideration until that time. (Phillips/Bare)*

ACTION: *The motion passed, unanimously.*

General Business

Suggestions of candidates for 2017 POPA membership were collected.
Subcommittee volunteers for 2017 POPA activities were recorded.

Intersessional Minutes

- The APS Governance Committee was presented with a proposal to consider adding a standing seat on POPA to be filled by the Forum on Industrial & Applied Physics (FIAP).
- The Helium report was circulated to all POPA members for additional comments.
- All pending advocacy issues recommended by POPA were presented and approved at the PPC meeting.
- All POPA Subcommittees held ongoing business teleconferences between February 5th & June 2nd on projects underway.

Next Meeting

The date for the next POPA meeting will be June 3rd, 2016.

Adjournment

ACTION: *J. Phillips adjourned the meeting 3:00 PM*