

Panel on Public Affairs Meeting
October 7, 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 (*virtual*), M. Barnett, R. Cote, D. Dahlberg, P. Davis, R. Falcone (*virtual*),
D. Ginley, W. McCurdy (*virtual*), S. Pratt, A. Taylor, P. Taylor, J. Wells, E. Yablonovitch

Advisors/Staff present:

K. Cole, M. Elsesser, A. Flatten, L. Greene, R. Hannun, A. Hu, K. Kirby, M. Lubell (*virtual*), G. Mack,
H. Neal, J. Russo, F. Slakey

Call to Order

J. Phillips called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM.

Welcome, Approval of Minutes

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

MOTION: *To accept the June 2016 minutes, as presented.*
 (Ginley/Barletta)

ACTION: *The motion passed, unanimously.*

National Security Subcommittee Update

The Subcommittee Chair provided an update on the proposed statement on HEU reactor conversion; it was approved as a Statement of the APS Board of Directors in September. A proposal for a study on the scientific obstacles & challenges to elimination of HEU in civilian applications was presented and discussed. The objective of the study is to enumerate the scientific needs for neutrons emanating from civilian research reactors and to identify the scientific obstacles and challenges to meeting those needs without the use of highly enriched uranium. It was suggested that an economist be included in the study committee.

MOTION: *To undertake a POPA study on the Scientific Obstacles/Challenges to*
 Elimination of HEU in Civilian Applications. (Barletta/Marder)

ACTION: *The motion passed unanimously.*
 The Study Committee will begin planning for its first workshop, to be held in
 early 2017.

Amy Flatten, APS Director of International Affairs, addressed POPA regarding issues related to visa processing delays and the resources available through APS to facilitate help. It was suggested that the International Affairs website be advertised more heavily in order to make APS members aware of their resources. An update on CISA Roundtable activity was also provided. The main topic of the roundtable discussions has been how to effectively map across disciplines and coordinate communications regarding shared interests when establishing large-scale international facilities.

Physics & the Public Subcommittee Update

The Study Committee Chair presented the Education Study/Survey draft final report. Findings were discussed in detail and discussion ensued. Several suggestions were made on how to advance the recommendations, while tightening the logic and rationale for each. POPA suggested including information on both the actions professional societies actively engage in and those they might consider pursuing in an effort to drive qualified teachers toward high needs STEM fields.

MOTION: *To accept the draft report, with the understanding that suggested edits will be made in preparation for an electronic vote on the final report before the end of the year. (Ginley/Dahlberg)*

ACTION: *The motion passed unanimously.*

APS Staff provided an update on the APS Assessment of Open Data Policy. Staff laid out a list of six major concerns; an update will be provided at the February 2017 POPA meeting.

The Subcommittee redrafted APS Statement 91.5 – *Reaffirmation of Statement on Scientific Review of Research Facilities Funding* – at the request of POPA and presented their suggested modifications to the committee.

MOTION: *To adopt the modified version of Statement 91.5, with modest edits suggested by the Physics & the Public Subcommittee and other POPA members. (Houle/Marder)*

ACTION: *The motion passed, unanimously.*

The APS Director of Public Affairs provided an update on APS Board activities associated with the American Academy of Arts & Sciences report: *Public Research Universities: Recommitting to Lincoln's Vision – An Educational Compact for the 21st Century*, including a recently released APS Board Statement. They are considering examining the issues of excellence and access in public higher education much more broadly, engaging with other societies in the process.

Energy & Environment Subcommittee Update

APS Staff provided an update on activities surrounding the recently released POPA Helium Economics Report. There has been progress on each of the five recommendations presented in the report.

The Subcommittee presented a proposal for a new energy statement to replace APS Statements 96.2 and 00.3 (which references Statement 96.2). Discussion ensued. Suggested edits were made and a small group met over lunch to incorporate them into the statement. The revised statement was presented following the break.

MOTION: *To accept the proposed APS Energy Statement, as edited; the Statement will now be sent to the APS Board of Directors for consideration (Ginley/T. Taylor)*

ACTION: *The motion passed, unanimously. (1 abstention)*

The Subcommittee Chair and other POPA members suggested possible follow-on activities that could stem from a new APS Energy Statement.

The idea for a bio-capture/bio-sequestration workshop was raised. The concept is to gather an interdisciplinary, expert workshop of botanists, agriculturalists, chemists, physicists and engineers to explore the idea of using vegetation to extract CO₂ from the atmosphere and propose a multi-pronged research program to establish its viability. The Polish Minister of Environment, Jan Szyszko, is interested in hosting the workshop abroad.

ACTION: *W. Barletta should report back at the February 2017 meeting with additional details, as discussions continue.*

Carbon Inventory: Review of Scopes 1 & 2; Next Steps

The Inventory Committee Chair, along with APS Staff, provided an overview of the data collected in Scopes 1 & 2 of the inventory and the resultant report. He went on to explain next steps, including third party verification and reporting of Scopes 1 & 2 finding, as well as data collection for Scope 3, which covers indirect emissions resulting from organizational activities.

MOTION: *To recommend that the 2015 GHG report of Scope 1 & Scope 2 emissions (with the addition of co-located servers) be forwarded to APS CEO, Kate Kirby, and the APS Board of Directors and to advise that APS proceed with third party verification and reporting of the data. (W. McCurdy/D. Dahlberg)*

ACTION: *The motion passed, unanimously.*

MOTION: *To advise that the Scope 3 portion of the GHG inventory focus on three categories: employee commuting, travel to APS meetings, and APS investments. (W. Barletta/S. Pratt)*

ACTION: *The motion passed, unanimously.*

New Business

The POPA Past-Chair drove a discussion on the fundamental science capabilities of NNSA facilities and the chance POPA has to lead an examination of the opportunities to conduct fundamental science at these labs.

ACTION: *The POPA Chair suggested a few members conduct discussions with each of the lab directors; those conversations should guide whether a proposed study is in order.*

The Physics & the Public Subcommittee proposed developing a statement on guns in the classroom. Discussion ensued; it was agreed that a small group of members should draft a statement, considering the safety of APS members in the classroom and what impact the Society could achieve through a public statement.

Intersessional Minutes

- The report titled *Recruiting Teachers in High Needs STEM Fields: A Survey of Current Majors and Recent STEM Graduates* was unanimously approved by POPA via electronic vote.
- The APS Board of Directors approved the proposed APS Energy Statement; it was sent to the full APS Membership for comment in December.
- The APS Board of Directors approved all POPA-recommended actions related to APS Statements under review in 2016.

Next Meeting

The date for the next POPA meeting will be February 3, 2017.

Adjournment

The APS President provided his reflections on the past year and the impressive work of the committee.

The POPA Chair thanked the set of members rotating off the committee at the end of 2016 for their years of service.

ACTION: *J. Phillips adjourned the meeting 2:40 PM.*