

Panel on Public Affairs Meeting
October 2, 2015
APS Washington Office of Public Affairs
529 14th Street, NW, Suite 1050, Washington, DC

Members present:

W. Barletta (Chair), J. Phillips (Chair Elect), F. Houle (Vice Chair), R. Jaffe (Past Chair), S. Bare, M. Beasley, R. Cote, P. Coyle, A. Garcia, E. Gates, M. Linak, M. Marder, W. McCurdy (*virtual*), S. Pratt, M. Rosenthal, P. Taylor, J. Wells

Advisors/Staff present:

S. Aronson (*virtual*), K. Cole, M. Elssesser, T. Hodapp, K. Kirby, M. Lubell, H. Neal (*virtual*), J. Russo, F. Slakey

Guests:

Rachel Ivie

Call to Order

W. Barletta called the meeting to order at 8:03 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 2015 minutes, as presented.*
 (Phillips/Bare)

ACTION: *The motion passed, unanimously.*

Statements up for Review in 2015

Active APS statements up for review in 2015 were considered by the appropriate POPA Subcommittees. The Subcommittees provided their recommendations on whether each statement should remain current, undergo full review, or be archived for the future.

Ethics Subcommittee

APS Statement 95.1 – Policy Regarding Growth of Physical Review

MOTION: *To keep the statement active, as currently written. (Beasley/Phillips)*

ACTION: *The motion passed, unanimously.*

APS Statement 04.1 – Protection against Discrimination

MOTION: *To keep the statement active, as currently written. (Beasley/Phillips)*

ACTION: *The motion passed, unanimously.*

Energy & Environment Subcommittee

APS Statement 00.3 – Energy Policy for the Twenty-First Century

MOTION: *To archive the statement, with a post-script reading, “For a current perspective on some of the issues addressed in this statement, see APS Statement 15.1 - Earth's Changing Climate.” (Wells/Phillips)*

ACTION: *The motion carried. (9 for, 5 against, 2 abstentions)*

New Business

A discussion regarding possible future activities ensued. The committee demonstrated interest in considering a study on energy – either a large, APS study or a POPA Report on an aspect of the energy portfolio, more limited in scope.

ACTION: *Several members volunteered to consider a future energy study and develop a proposal, to share at the February 2016 POPA meeting. Volunteers included: J. Phillips, S. Pratt, J. Wells, W. Barletta, R. Cote, P. Coyle, and R. Jaffe.*

Energy & Environment Subcommittee Update

APS Staff provided an update on expansion efforts underway for the helium brokerage (APS-ACS Liquid Helium Program) founded in partnership with the American Chemical Society. There has been considerable activity following recent advertisement of the brokerage application process. The program's site has received over 1,300 visits and APS Staff has received upwards of 100 e-mails demonstrating interest. The U.S. Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) estimates being able to add approximately 70 new universities to the program. The pilot program was designed as a one-year membership; applications for the expansion are for a two-year enrollment.

The Helium Economics Study is underway. Several teleconferences have taken place and a diverse committee has been established. A study workshop is planned for late November.

The E-cycling Internship is being presented to students at Northern Illinois University as an opportunity for the 2016 Winter Semester. Two students, one physics major and one political science major, as well as a mentor from each department will work together at the interface of science and policy to pursue legislative change at the State level for electronics recycling. Students in this paid & credited internship will be selected by the end of November. POPA members suggested creating a template for interested faculty mentors, as well as a session dedicated to the program at an upcoming APS Meeting.

The proposed APS Statement on Earth's Changing Climate will be presented to the APS Council in November for final action. The Subcommittee has been considering, and asked POPA members to weigh in on, lessons learned during the statement process.

Update on Greenhouse Gas Inventory Project

POPA heard from two organizations (World Resources Institute; World Bank) that have undertaken inventories of their GhG output. Both representatives were asked to provide an overview of the initial & ongoing work entailed, the results of their studies, changes initiated as a result of inventory results, and general accounts of their experiences conducting an inventory.

WRI is a large environmental think-tank employing over 450 experts and staff, globally. They have conducted a GhG inventory since 1999. The World Bank works as a cooperative to provide financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world. They employ over 15,000 people full-time, globally and at their extensive headquarters in downtown DC. They began their inventory in 2002 as a response to investor's concerns about sustainability.

Both organizations indicated their top drivers of emissions to be purchased electricity, business travel, and purchased goods & services. Data collection, upfront at registration, is key if an organization plans to gather information regarding travel to/from meetings. It is advisable to pair with a consultant, initially, to guide the organization through the initial stages of an inventory. Both organizations said the GhG inventory activity does not create an undue burden on staff.

National Security Subcommittee Update

The National Academy has been conducting a study on the current status of and progress toward eliminating highly enriched uranium (HEU) use as fuel for civilian research and test reactors. A report of the study's findings will be released in the next few months. The Subcommittee may want to consider (1) an assessment of the technical and non-technical barriers in converting HEU fueled reactors to LEU fuel or (2) a study of neutron strategy for the U.S. in the face of aging reactors that have to convert to LEU fuel around the time they are to be shut down.

ACTION: *Several members volunteered to review the NAS report when it is released later this year and to share their findings at the February 2016 POPA meeting. Volunteers included: J. Phillips, J. Wells, and W. Barletta.*

Physics Policy Committee Update

The Chair of PPC provided an update on projects under consideration, including: the America COMPETES Act reauthorization, Open Access and pending FASTR legislation, problems (and possible ways forward) with large international collaborations and facilities, and the *American Research Investment Fund*. The *Fund* is a vehicle, capitalized with repatriated corporate tax dollars, which could help America strengthen its global scientific leadership role.

Physics & the Public Subcommittee Update

The Subcommittee Chair presented two statements, both of which were reviewed and commented upon by APS membership in September and are now up for final consideration by POPA.

- Statement on Civic Engagement
There was universal support for this proposed statement from APS membership. An edit to the statement, in response to membership commentary, was suggested and accepted – changing “within their area of expertise” to “drawing on their experience.”

MOTION: *To accept the statement, as edited, and to forward it to the APS Board of Directors for final consideration. (Gates/Coyle)*

ACTION: *The motion passed, unanimously.*

- Statement on the Status of Women in Physics
The response from APS membership on this proposed statement was generally supportive, but also reflected certain biases that persist in the physics community.

MOTION: *To accept the statement, as presented, and to forward it to the APS Board of Directors for final consideration. (Gates/Beasley)*

ACTION: *The motion passed, unanimously.*

The Subcommittee Chair and APS Staff provided an overview of the issues women face in obtaining a degree in physics. It is a complex issue with many influencing factors. Discussion ensued on where the problems lie and at what point in the pipeline attrition occurs. It was agreed that we need to understand what the problems are before solutions can be considered.

ACTION: *A committee comprised of E. Gates, F. Houle, M. Linak, S. Pratt, M. Marder, R. Cote, APS Staff and representatives from the APS Committee on the Status of Women in Physics (CSWP) will gather to produce a proposal for a study, to be presented to POPA at its February 2016 meeting.*

A brief status report was provided regarding the Education Survey underway. Everything is moving forward, as planned; preliminary data should be available to present at the February 2016 POPA meeting.

Intersessional Minutes

- The APS Board of Directors voted to accept the modified Statement on Civic Engagement of Scientists at their October 2015 meeting. It will be sent to the APS Council for final action in November.
- The APS Board of Directors voted to accept the proposed Statement on the Status of Women in Physics at their October 2015 meeting. It will be sent to the APS Council for final action in November.
- The APS Council voted to approve the proposed Statement on Earth's Changing Climate at its November 2015 meeting. APS Statement 15.1 – Earth's Changing Climate is now posted on the APS Statement website.
- The APS Council voted to approve the modified Statement on Civic Engagement of Scientists at its November 2015 meeting. APS Statement 15.2 – Civic Engagement of Scientists is now posted on the APS Statement website.
- The APS Council voted to approve the proposed Statement on the Status of Women in Physics at its November 2015 meeting. APS Statement 15.3 – Status of Women in Physics is now posted on the APS Statement website.
- POPA ad hoc committees conducted teleconferences between October 3rd & February 4th on projects under consideration, and in progress, within the Subcommittees.

Next Meeting

The date for the next POPA meeting will be February 5th, 2016.

Adjournment

ACTION: *W. Barletta adjourned the meeting 2:55 PM*