

Panel on Public Affairs Meeting
June 3, 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, R. Cote, D. Dahlberg, R. Falcone, V. Grassian, W. McCurdy,
A. Taylor (*virtual*), P. Taylor (*virtual*), J. Wells, E. Yablonovitch

Advisors/Staff present:

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

Guests:

Michael Hildreth, Talat Rahman, Barry Schneider

Call to Order

J. Phillips called the meeting to order at 8:05 AM.

Welcome, Approval of Minutes

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

MOTION: *To accept the February 2016 minutes, as presented.*
 (Barletta/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 in February. The Subcommittees provided recommendations on whether each statement should remain current, undergo full review, or be archived. POPA voted, as follows:

National Security Subcommittee

APS Statement 06.1 – The Use of Nuclear Weapons

The Subcommittee recommends the statement remain active, with modest edits.

MOTION: *To keep the statement active, with modest edits & minor grammar changes and with the proviso that explanatory text be added on the present posture of the United States. (Barletta/Marder)*

ACTION: *The motion passed, unanimously.*

APS Statement 01.1 – Security and Science at the Weapons Laboratories

The Subcommittee recommends the statement remain active, with modest edits.

MOTION: *To keep the statement active, with modest edits as presented. (Barletta/Bare)*

ACTION: *The motion passed, unanimously.*

Physics & the Public Subcommittee

APS Statement 06.3 – Career Options for Physicists

The Subcommittee recommends the statement remain active, as written.

MOTION: *To keep the statement active, as written. (Marder/Houle)*

ACTION: *The motion passed, unanimously.*

APS Statement 06.2 – Advocacy for Science Education

The Subcommittee recommends the statement remain active, as written.

MOTION: *To keep the statement active, as written. (Marder/Barletta)*

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

APS Statement 01.2 – Assessment and Science

The Subcommittee recommends the statement remain active, with modest edits.

MOTION: *To keep the statement active, with modest edits as discussed. (Marder/Bare)*

ACTION: *The motion passed, unanimously.*

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

The Subcommittee recommends archiving the statement.

After discussion, the committee reached consensus that the statement was important, but needed to be rewritten.

MOTION: *To return the statement to the Subcommittee for rewording. (Marder/Houle)*

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

Energy & Environment Subcommittee

APS Statement 96.2 – Energy: The Forgotten Crisis

The Subcommittee recommends the statement undergo full review.

The Subcommittee proposed a new APS Statement on Energy. See “Energy & Environment Subcommittee Update” section of minutes.

Conflict of Interest Guidelines

At the February POPA meeting, the Ethics, Policies & Procedures Subcommittee was tasked with reviewing the “4th Lesson Learned” in the process of creating the APS Statement on Earth’s Changing Climate. In so doing, a set of guidelines was drafted on how to ensure committee composition & balance and guard against conflicts of interest.

MOTION: *To accept the guidelines on POPA Committee Composition & Balance and Conflicts of Interest, as presented. (Barletta/Marder)*

Amendment: *To change the wording of Section I of the Potential Sources of Conflict of Interest form to indicate the inclusion of all relationships, including volunteer affiliations. (Houle/Barletta)*

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

National Security Subcommittee Update

The Subcommittee Chair provided background and introduced a proposed statement on HEU conversion, which was drafted by the Subcommittee with the goal of supporting both the need for research reactors and the elimination/reduction of highly enriched uranium. The committee considered the types of Society statements available to convey this need and gravitated towards a Board Statement as the most appropriate vehicle. Minor changes to the draft statement, at the request of committee members, were considered and incorporated.

MOTION: *To accept the amended draft as a suggested Statement of the APS Board of Directors. (Barletta/Dahlberg)*

ACTION: *The motion passed unanimously.
The statement will be provided to the Council Steering Committee as a suggested Board statement.*

Additional discussion regarding possible follow-on activities led to an idea for a study on the obstacles to elimination of HEU in civilian research reactors. The study should focus on the aspects of most concern to APS members. Volunteers for the study committee include Barletta, Wells, and Bare.

ACTION: *The Subcommittee should prepare to present a formal proposal for the study idea developed in discussion today at the October POPA meeting.*

Physics & the Public Subcommittee Update

The Study Committee Chair provided a status report on the Education Survey & Report. Preliminary findings were discussed in detail and a draft final report will be presented at the October POPA meeting.

The Subcommittee called on APS Staff to provide POPA with an overview of the advocacy activities the Office of Public Affairs is currently engaged in regarding science education.

Open Data Response & Discussion

APS Staff provided background on the Open Data issue and Mike Hildreth of Notre Dame (currently at CERN) joined the discussion. The directive issued by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) requiring all research agencies to take steps to ensure that research data be made public is very ambiguous. Determining how to interpret the mandate has proven difficult, given the enormity of the requirement. A cost/benefit analysis needs to be done. A short report on the APS Assessment of the Open Data Policy will be finalized by APS Staff and introduced to the APS Council at an upcoming meeting.

Energy & Environment Subcommittee Update

Energy Statement Redraft

The Subcommittee recommends APS Statement 96.2 undergo a substantial review and rewrite. APS Statement 00.3 references Statement 96.2; Subcommittee members took a look at both and crafted a unified draft statement. The intent is to archive Statements 00.3 & 96.2 when a new Energy Statement is approved. Discussion ensued and POPA suggested the call to action should be clearer and recommendations should be more specific. The complexity of the issue should be stated and sustainability should be addressed.

ACTION: *Statement Drafting Committee will meet and move forward with creating the next version of the draft statement to present to POPA in October.*

Chair of the Topical Group on Energy (GERA), Talat Rahman, joined the discussion. She welcomed the opportunity to provide GERA's perspective on the Subcommittee's efforts to draft a new Energy Statement and indicated willingness to participate in its promotion. She asked POPA to consider conducting a study in parallel with the statement.

Helium Economics Study Report

The Chair of the Study Committee provided an overview of the final draft of the report. All comments received at the February POPA meeting, and directly following, were considered and incorporated into the final draft. Three external experts reviewed the report and the partner societies have approved the final draft. Follow-on activities related to recommendations in the report are being developed.

MOTION: *To accept the draft report, as presented. (Barletta/Houle)*
ACTION: *The motion passed, unanimously. The report will now be presented to the APS Board of Directors for review and vote.*

Carbon Inventory Update

The Chair of the Carbon Inventory Study provided an interim update on progress following the initial workshop. Work continues and study findings will eventually be presented to the APS Board of Directors for consideration.

General Business

The POPA Chair provided a brief update on the status of whether POPA will be able to designate a seat on the committee to an industry member. The idea was presented at the April Council meeting and is now with the Committee on Committees; they are in the process of rewriting all committee descriptions. All involved are aware of the need for industrial representation on POPA.

Barry Schneider of the APS Division of Computational Physics presented a re-drafted statement on the need for high school and undergraduate curriculum to include courses in computation and computer skills. The statement was rewritten to incorporate comments received at February's meeting, as well as feedback from other experts on the topic. Discussion ensued on whether computation is a science or a tool; the committee questioned whether APS should make statements that prescribe courses in particular fields of physics. The general consensus was that the idea didn't rise to the level of an APS Statement. The APS Education Department has been looking into this issue and will be issuing a report about computation in curriculum, which may be available for review at the October POPA meeting.

Next Meeting

The date for the next POPA meeting will be October 7, 2016.

Adjournment

ACTION: *J. Phillips adjourned the meeting 2:52 PM*