

**Minutes (final draft) of
FPS 2014 Executive Committee Meeting (pp. 1-5)**
April 6 2014, 8 am to 9:30 followed by

FPS 2014 Business Meeting (p. 6)
9:30-10:00
Jasper Board Room, Savannah Convention Center

Attendees

(See <http://www.aps.org/units/fps/governance/officers/index.cfm> for positions)

In Person: Pushpa Bhat, Micah Lowenthal, Arian Pregonzer, Valerie Thomas, Michael Tuts, (Edward Gerjuoy, a past chair of FPS (briefly) and Pierce Corden, a past at-large member, were guests), Tina Kaarsberg (delayed/by phone at the start)

By phone: Joan Cartier, Ruth Howes, Beverly Hartline, Andrew P. Zwicker, and Phil Taylor.

Not attending: Lowell Brown, Lawrence Krauss, Douglas Wright, Usha Malik

Per the agenda, meeting began with the minutes of last FPS Executive Committee Meeting in Denver which were reviewed and amended to reflect that Arian Pregonzer had been in attendance. Valerie Thomas then explained that the Executive Committee meeting would last from 8 to 9:30, immediately followed by the Business Meeting from 9:30 to 10:30. She noted that historically we have had low attendance at the Business Meeting; having these two meetings together was our strategy for being able to provide both some refreshments for interested FPS members who may show up and access to the entire Executive Committee. She also said the Business Meeting need not last the entire hour if we do not have a large turn-out.

Valerie Thomas then gave the Chair's report which included

- Welcome to the newly elected members;
- Summary of the FPS-sponsored program and short courses of the past year
- Review of past election cycle and
- Review of committee memberships.

March and April Meeting FPS Panels

While the March panels went well, and excellent April panels were anticipated (Thanks to Micah Lowenthal), there were many suggested changes regarding invited sessions. Arian Pregonzer, incoming Program Chair, said she would like to broaden the program beyond the same old topics of nuclear (energy/weapons), climate change, and energy. Someone noted that the FPS topics were somewhat broader than her characterization including, for example, the session on secrecy and science that Arian herself organized. Arian said she was concerned that we're not

thinking of other topics that are important to society such as Cosmology, High Energy Particle and Astro- physics. How and why should we do Big Science? US Leadership in Science. Pushpa Bhat said she would be willing to work on a Big Science session. Arian, who noted that her professional career had been mostly on non-proliferation, said as the new program committee chair she was eager to do some topics such as additive manufacturing, artificial intelligence and robotics at the March meeting. Ruth Howes noted that there might be some branding issues with some of the suggestions. (i.e. between FPS and the Forum on Industrial and Applied Physics). Tina Kaarsberg suggested doing a session on technologies used by Survivalists (e.g. preppers) and said for example that the electric capacity of all those emergency generators could be significant and interesting.

Valerie Thomas said the meeting program's default approach is to scatter FPS sessions over the course of the entire meeting. She said we should push back and consolidate our sessions into one or two days. "This would make it more attractive to people like us; make it a professional day for people working in physics and society." Another suggestion was to hold a separate FPS non-April (or March) physics and society professional meeting.

Report from Event Committee

Pushpa Bhat, events committee chair, said there were two short courses this year: one on nuclear weapons and another on sustainable energy –both part of a series of such courses. Pushpa noted that this year's FPS courses were all spectacularly successful –making money due to high attendance--because of the great organizers--Pete Zimmerman, Pierce Corden, and Dave Hafemeister [agreed by all to be himself a source of sustainable energy]. For the nuclear weapons course, Pete Zimmerman partnered with the Elliott School at GWU. In addition, the Nuclear Weapons course led to an article in *Physics Today* on the issues (NPT and CTBT) and its proceedings are on track to be published. For the third Physics of Sustainable Energy course, Dave Hafemeister worked with Dan Kammen of UCB, Rob Knapp of Evergreen College and Barbara Levi. The Sustainable Energy course for the first time included a poster session. Both courses kept costs to a minimum with multiple in-kind contributions and numerous volunteers. In the end, neither needed the FPS funding--FPS funding acted as a kind of loan guarantee. Andrew Zwicker asked for suggestions on how to replicate and preserve Dave Hafemeister's techniques and knowledge on organizing a workshop. We agreed to ask Dave Hafemeister to mentor FPS members to do what he has done especially how he enlists others.

Committee memberships.

Valerie Thomas noted that a new Nominating Committee chair is needed as Tony Fainberg's term has expired. It was suggested that Tony's term be extended. But Valerie noted that his term already had been extended once, and she doubted that they would be able to do it again or that he would want to continue. Tina Kaarsberg suggested that Tony and other past nominating committee chairs help recruit and mentor new people for the nominating committee and as candidates.

Chair Transition

The transfer from outgoing chair Valerie Thomas to incoming chair Micah Lowenthal took place quickly and with little ceremony. Both expressed a desire in their new roles to start earlier on elections, fellowship, prizes, organizing sessions and generally get ahead of the schedule. Rather than issue a lengthy in-coming chair's statement, Micah Lowenthal, returned to the discussion of nominations.

Fellowship Nominations

Micah Lowenthal raised the issue of FPS Fellowship nominations which last for 2-years. Micah noted that FPS had not used its full allocation in recent years and should try harder to fill all of its five slots. Tina Kaarsberg noted that while the Executive Committee technically elects the FPS and other unit's Fellows, that they rarely fail to approve full nominations. Micah asked whether the Forum had ever had candidates rejected. Several replied no. Arian Prenzeger noted the problem is to develop full nominations with good reference letters. There was some discussion and agreement to disagree between Tina and Arian about on whether FPS usually honors work that that physicists do outside of their day jobs and whether that makes it harder to prepare FPS nominations fellowships, awards, elected positions.

Election Report

Tina Kaarsberg, the 2014 FPS election coordinator, reported on the election which had 41 paper ballots and 911 electronic ballots. Given that the Forum has 5,714 members, this is a "turnout rate" of 16.6% (This may seem low, but it actually is the highest rate since 1995 when the first electronic ballot was instituted and the response rate was nearly 18%). Winners were

- Ruth Howes (for Vice-Chair) and
- Usha Malik and Joan Cartier for Members at Large.

The votes were close enough that Tina waited an extra week for the post snow storm paper ballots to arrive. Tina also opposed getting rid of paper ballots saying it wasn't a big deal to count them so why disenfranchise physicists who would rather find a stamp than remember (yet another) username password.

Treasurer's Report.

Tina Kaarsberg, Secretary/Treasurer, said that calendar year 2013 ended with the optimal amount of money, just below the \$50k threshold where the APS holds back its annual allotment. Estimated March spending is \$16k, April \$20k. Tina said we have money to spend and should spend it but in response several others expressed a desire to always maintain a strong balance, at least \$40k. Tina noted that if we take a loan guarantee approach as we did with the two short courses, we can really leverage the money. She also noted that APS has offered to help with fundraising for prizes and said we should take them up on it and professionalize our fundraising (er...development) for both prizes and other great things. UPDATE (FPS balance as of 3/31/14 was ~\$64k and as of 4/30/14 it was ~\$59k confirming estimates.)

FPS Szilard and Burton/Forum Awards:

Tina Kaarsberg noted that the Szilard money that comes with the award is intended to support or at least defray the costs of the awardee giving several lectures on his or her work to nearby educational institutions. Due to inflation and lack of guidance to award winners, it has not always been used for that purpose. Pushpa Bhat said that they had been intending to add money to the Szilard lectureship. [UPDATE: She later confirmed they had increased the stipend for the Leo Szilard to \$3000 and this has been updated in the media places]. Tina said we should consider how to lower costs—especially for the lectures. For example, we should look into creating a YouTube of a highly produced version of the awardees lecture and make it available on the webpage. It could be made partially interactive by having specified times for a webcast with questions over the web. Someone on the phone noted that APS Media does Web Casts and Tina will follow-up with APS Media. As for potential Szilard and Burton/Forum nominees, Andrew Zwicker noted that retiring Member of Congress and physicist Rush Holt is a fellow of FPS and suggested that after his term ends FPS should do something to recognize his service. Andrew admitted to a conflict as he is Rep. Holt's constituent in the 12th district of New Jersey. Micah suggested we consider Rep. Holt for the Burton or Szilard award. Tina notes that physicist Rep. Vernon Ehlers had recently retired and if he and Rep. Holt were jointly nominated, it would be bipartisan. Bill Foster also just retired and it was noted that physicist/retired elected officials represent an important pool of candidates for FPS awards.

Newsletter (*Physics in Society*)

Andrew Zwicker said award announcements should be done in coordination with and with support of newsletter. Speaking of which, Andrew noted that articles on March and April meeting FPS panels are always appreciated. He requested that Panel Chairs and Panel members especially consider providing write ups of our sessions for publication. Tina Kaarsberg noted that some of the presentations will be posted on the web and that links to them should also be included. Andrew emphasized the importance of such summaries for FPS members unable to attend the March or April meetings in general or unable to attend that session. He also reminded us that he wanted much more than just the title and the speaker. Andrew requested our ideas on HOW to encourage how to get FPS member involved. He spoke of topic categories other than session summaries for the newsletter such as short essays, incoming/outgoing chair messages, book reviews, or *even* the Treasurers report! He also noted it could serve as a discussion forum.

Tina noted that when the newsletter and elections got out of synch, it had the unintended effect of eliminating the online repository of information on the candidates including bios and statements. She said she had several requests for them already and suggested we either needed to add them back to the newsletter or establish some other online repository. Andrew has brought in an Intern Princeton undergrad Matthew Parks (see January issue) to work on *Physics in Society*. Matthew also is helping to connect student groups to the newsletter and the Forum. Valerie Thomas asked whether there should be a peer reviewed section of the newsletter. Adrian Prenzenger said there is an editorial board, which is almost like

peer review. Mike Tuts suggested that peer review might be difficult to implement. Andrew noted that ever since that climate change article kerfuffle, 1) APS required that the FPS newsletter include a disclaimer and 2) all articles were reviewed by the newsletter's Editorial Board. But apparently, the editorial board review has now lapsed.

Reports/Studies & Statements

Ruth Howes brought up the topic of studies noting that 40 years ago FPS did studies by volunteer groups and that these studies pulled people into the Forum. Micah Lowenthal responded that the EB could consider this if members show initiative to do it. He also noted that APS created POPA to do studies and that POPA is the only APS entity that can put the APS logo on their reports so this needs further consideration if we want to do it. Tina notes that the Reports section of the FPS web page <http://www.aps.org/units/fps/governance/reports/index.cfm> has not been updated since 2001.

POPA Report

Phil Taylor, FPS's POPA represented reported on its recent activities especially those related to updating (or not) the APS statement on Climate Change. This issue is being examined by a subgroup led by Steve Koonin. If approved, it goes to the steering committee and then the energy and environment subcommittee and then to POPA vote and then to APS council. The choices are to modify statement, retain statement, retain statement and modify commentary ore archive. POPA sponsored a climate workshop—now on POPAs website-- featuring 6 climate experts (3 of whom were “skeptics”). Phil suggested that the EB look at it and give feedback. Phil got very little response to his notice in the FPS newsletter asking for input. Next POPA meeting is June 4th and intention is to vote on the climate statement then. [UPDATE?]

Other Business:

Andrew Zwicker just filed his petition to run for retiring Rep. Rush Holt's seat. He notes that running is a fascinating process. Primary is June 3. Either way he will write something for the news. [UPDATE?] A suggested campaign slogan was “don't send another lawyer to Washington”

9:30 Adjourn

Minutes of APS FPS Business Meeting—open to all FPS Members

Despite food and the presence of the most of the FPS EB, attendance was low. After the Treasurer's report there was discussion of FPS sponsored panels. Arian said she was concerned that we're not thinking of other topics that are important to society such as Cosmology, the origin of the universe and the meaning of life. Tina Kaarsberg suggested a panel with a link to the Simpsons (supposedly Matt Groening was a physics student) or the Big Bang Theory TV shows.

The Business meeting was then adjourned.