

Panel on Public Affairs Meeting
June 7, 2013
APS Washington Office of Public Affairs
529 14th Street, NW, Suite 1050, Washington, DC

Members present:

R. Rosner (Chair), R. Jaffe (Chair Elect), S. Koonin (Vice Chair, via phone), J. Dahlburg (Past Chair), S. Aronson, A. Bienenstock, P. Coyle, A. Garcia, W. Goldstein, M. Goodman, M. Gunner, S. Kemp, T. Meyer (via phone), J. Phillips (via phone), M. Rosenthal, R. Schwitters, P. Taylor, T. Theis, J. Trebes

Guests:

W. Collins (via phone), J. Davis (via phone), T. Hodapp

Advisors/Staff present:

M. Beasley, K. Cole, K. Kirby, J. Russo, F. Slakey, M. Turner

Members Absent:

A. Falk, S. Seestrom

Call to Order

R. Rosner called the meeting to order at 8:14 AM.

Welcome, Introductions, & Approval of Minutes
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R. Rosner welcomed everyone and asked them to introduce themselves. He asked for comments regarding the February 2013 minutes.

Commentary: P. Coyle asked for a slight change in wording at the bottom of page 3. M. Goodman asked that the commentary on page 4 – “no one wants to fund labs” – be changed to “no one wants to pay for infrastructure”. On page 7 he asked that the concept of consulting/coordinating be better characterized; he will provide the correct wording after the meeting.

Action: M. Turner moved to approve the minutes of the February 2013 POPA meeting, with minor changes as suggested; M. Gunner seconded the motion.

The motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.

National Security Subcommittee

DNDO Report - Discussion

R. Rosner framed the discussion. He indicated that today’s discussion was not another opportunity for POPA to vote on the report; the vote was already handled electronically (14 in favor, 4 against). There were a few abstentions. Today’s dialogue is meant to address the concerns aired when the electronic vote was taken, mainly about procedure and process. J.

Trebes confirmed that the current version of the report also addresses concerns raised in the email exchange regarding the report's contents (whether POPA should comment on funding, why the report doesn't speak considerably to test and evaluation.) Suggestions were made on how to alter the wording of the report further. J. Davis joined the discussion via phone. He described the review process. Six reviewers were chosen, including himself. The reviewers' comments, received back by J. Davis, were passed through J. Trebes to his Study Committee. IEEE conducted their review in parallel and their process produced the same comments received by APS. The Study Co-Chairs (J. Trebes, Tony Lavietes) adjudicated the edits and the whole process was carefully monitored.

Commentary: M. Turner suggested documenting the review process for a POPA report. He proposed that the review coordinator should be an independent judge – not one of the reviewers – and that the Study Chair should not be involved with the review in any way. J. Trebes and J. Davis agreed that it would be good to have the review process in writing. M. Beasley and R. Jaffe suggested we think about the types of activities POPA is going to be involved with in the future. M. Turner suggested the charge be appended to the report. F. Slakey suggested including the charge on the POPA Reports web page. It was agreed that it would be included in both places.

Action: J. Trebes and S. Kemp will work to modify paragraphs on pages 7 and 13 of the report. A re-vote will be taken electronically, early next week, and the Executive Board will include the finalized report on the agenda for their upcoming meeting.

Tactical Nuclear Reductions Report – Discussion & Vote

J. Trebes provided background. J. Davis introduced the idea while serving on POPA. He had suggested an interesting path forward: assume that the U.S. and Russia agreed on a treaty, then consider how it could be implemented by each country. The workshop was held in February. Two parallel sessions were conducted the first day, with one group receiving background information and one starting cold. The discussions were intense and ran all day long. Each group was presented with the same hypothetical scenario: A treaty had been ratified -- Russia would pull all of their tactical nuclear weapons east of the Urals and the United States would pull all of their nuclear weapons out of Europe. Both workshop groups attacked the scenario from the beginning. Representatives from Russia, Turkey, France, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and the U.S. attended. Did new ideas emerge on how to implement a treaty? Yes. The groups couldn't find a way to make the hypothetical scenario viable, however they developed two alternatives. A few of the European representatives would like to have a follow-on meeting to specifically focus on the science and the R&D and they've invited APS to participate.

Commentary: R. Schwitters asked if any technical nuggets emerged from discussions held at the workshop. J. Trebes said they did not. The Russians have centralized their storage of tactical nuclear weapons and they feel that is good enough. M. Turner said he has issues with the process used to produce the summary. He asked if all participants were asked if they agreed with the notes taken. J. Trebes indicated that CSIS had staff taking minutes at the workshop. Those minutes, along with notes taken by both co-chairs were iterated until everyone was satisfied. M. Turner asked that information be included in the front of the document that describes the project, the steering committee makeup, etc. F. Slakey mentioned that the German Physical Society and the European Physical Society have proposed a follow on Workshop to examine the verification challenges

presented in this report. POPA needs to consider whether we want to be involved in an international workshop. R. Jaffe suggested changing the word “report” on the front cover of the final document to “summary.”

Action: J. Trebes and F. Slakey will work to make the changes M. Turner suggested regarding the front matter of the final product.

P. Coyle moved to approve the Tactical Nuclear Weapons Workshop Summary, with minor changes as suggested by the Panel; M. Rosenthal seconded the motion.

The motion to approve the summary passed unanimously.

S. Kemp moved to refer the matter of whether POPA should proceed with a joint workshop with international physics societies, as follow-on to the Tactical Nuclear Weapons Workshop, to the POPA National Security Subcommittee; A. Bienenstock seconded the motion.

The motion to refer the matter to the appropriate subcommittee passed unanimously.

POPA Report Guidelines & Review Process

R. Rosner said that as a result of discussions regarding report procedure, M. Turner asked T. Meyer to work on a draft outline formalizing the process. This was passed around for review. M. Turner provided some background. The concern for formalizing guidelines began when POPA began taking on different types of projects (Direct Air Capture, DNDO). It would be useful to have “rules of the road.” The Steering Committee reviewed a draft provide by F. Slakey. It then went to T. Meyer, who has experience with the NRC. He tried to lay out a well-defined process that includes roles & responsibilities, the process of reviewing a report, etc. The variety of activities POPA engages in all need a documented approval process.

Commentary: J. Dahlburg said the word “restricted,” in regards to what POPA reports cover, should be removed. R. Jaffe said the review process is what we should focus on. M. Turner said he thinks we need to reconsider what a POPA report is. R. Schwitters said the whole first page is far too prescriptive. This should be a short document that lists roles and responsibilities. J. Trebes asked what would happen if you get through the whole documented process and then POPA members suggest edits at the voting table. J. Dahlburg said if it’s a POPA report, POPA needs to agree on the wording. They have the right to change the wording and the group needs to decide as a whole. M. Turner said on-the-fly editing gets us into trouble. R. Jaffe said that it’s POPA’s role to approve the report, not to write it. If there are changes suggested at the POPA-level, those suggested changes must go back to the Study Chair and Review Coordinator before being implemented. J. Trebes said there should be a “one loop” process in making POPA changes. J. Dahlburg and others agreed with this. M. Gunner asked if POPA should see the reviews. Would that make it easier? Should reviews be circulated? It was generally agreed that an overview of the reviews, contentious issues, and the names of the reviewers should be provided to POPA. M. Turner also noted that the range of activities

that POPA handles should be described somewhere. (Workshops, assessments, reports, etc.) R. Schwitters said we should focus on roles and responsibilities. M. Gunner wondered if all activities require the same review process. This should be taken into consideration.

Action: J. Trebes moved to task J. Dahlburg and R. Schwitters with working with T. Meyer to refine the document presented on the POPA review process, for presentation at the October 2013 meeting. S. Aronson seconded the motion.

The motion was passed unanimously.

Climate Change Statement Steering Committee

R. Jaffe led the discussion. He introduced the procedure drafted for the review of the climate change statement and the individuals who helped write it (Koonin, Beasley, Slakey, and Jaffe.) The draft document was sent to the Executive Board and they provided very useful edits. The intention is to convene a subcommittee of POPA that will manage the review, which will be informed in part by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 5th Assessment Report, due out later this year. A closed workshop will also be held to obtain the perspective of various experts in the field. S. Koonin agreed to chair the subcommittee. He said that POPA should allow the subcommittee to go about conducting the review as they see fit. R. Jaffe said that the Climate Change Statement Steering Committee will still guide the process. M. Beasley agreed that the Steering Committee is agile enough to handle any emergency situations that may arise.

Commentary: R. Rosner said he didn't think videotaping the workshop was a wise decision. S. Kemp said that it's easier to revisit a transcript than it is to watch the proceedings. M. Gunner and A. Bienenstock asked how the subcommittee would go about choosing the panel of experts for the workshop and how best to obtain a diversity of perspectives & input. M. Rosenthal wondered what the benefits of videotaping the workshop would be. M. Turner indicated it was for transparency. Debate ensued about whether a video or a transcript would best inform the subcommittee, membership, etc. It was agreed that a transcript of the proceedings would serve everyone best.

Bill Collins joined the group via phone to provide an overview of the IPCC's role in the debate, the timeline for the 5th Assessment roll out, etc.

Action: A. Bienenstock moved to accept the Climate Change Statement Review procedural document with the following changes:

- 1) Eliminate the sentence, "The subcommittee would be expected to use workshop participants as consultants during the process." – 4th bullet, last sentence
- 2) Change "if necessary" to "as necessary" – 4th bullet, first sentence
- 3) Change "video" to "transcript" throughout the document
- 4) Change the word "decide" to "recommend" – 4th bullet, first sentence

R. Jaffe seconded the motion.

The motion was passed unanimously. (M. Rosenthal abstained)

New Business

Proposal for new POPA Study on Large-facility life-cycle management

T. Meyer joined via phone to review the proposal for a study on large facility lifecycle management. He indicated that he worked with past POPA member, Pat Looney, on the concept. The basic idea is to shift the conversation away from “how to manage a facility” and rather provide a policy-relevant framework and vocabulary so that citizens and scientists alike can talk to Congress and government agencies in a common language about the value of large facilities. We could identify general lifecycle stages of a large-scale facility, the risks, players, etc. T. Meyer asked whether POPA thought the idea for such a study was feasible and relevant.

Commentary: S. Aronson said he thinks it is a relevant topic but, from the feasibility standpoint, it has the potential for a large amount of scope-creep. W. Goldstein said he is unclear on how this fits in here at POPA. Is this a public affairs issue? This may not be a broad enough public interest issue to fall within our scope. A. Bienenstock said he is not sure he wants the lifecycle codified. T. Meyer said if it were done right, it would be helpful to many different societies. M. Goodman suggested we conduct a few case studies, investigating these and the different management issues that come into play at different facilities. We could shed light on the different issues faced at multi-user facilities vs. narrowly focused facilities, the different agency cultures, etc. We could put together a set of questions to explore within a few case studies. M. Beasley also added that we could incorporate the issues involved in international collaborations (treaty organizations). T. Meyer said there are a few ways to revise the proposal: going the case study route; considering the international aspect. R. Rosner said this may be more of an issue for PPC than for POPA. A. Bienenstock said the issue of how the U.S. participates in large-scale international projects is one that either POPA or PPC should take on and, at the least, discuss alternative frameworks for U.S. participation in international projects. T. Meyer said it would be important to get the right group together. We could actually synthesize/summarize/characterize options for U.S. involvement in a short report and that could have a lot of impact. M. Beasley mentioned projects that are facing issues – ALMA, ITER, ILC, NASA projects. R. Jaffe read the definition PPC’s responsibilities. A. Bienenstock said he would accept the international collaboration project and bring it to PPC. P. Coyle said the idea for this study is legitimate; our reputations are being affected by what happens at these large projects. If a report could be written, it could be quite helpful. The difficulty is how a group would engage all the differences between the different facilities. S. Aronson mentioned a RAND Corporation study on mega projects that would be worth reviewing.

Action: A. Bienenstock, along with T. Meyer, will present a proposal for a study regarding collaboration on international projects to PPC at their next meeting.

Energy & Environment Subcommittee

Pathways Report – Discussion & Vote

R. Schwitters, Chair of the Study Committee, provided a power point overview including the study charge, the list of study committee members and report reviewers, the participants of the workshop, the committee’s major finding, and the three recommendations proposed.

Commentary: W. Goldstein said he didn’t know what to make of the second recommendation of the report (An Enhanced Research Pathway). What is the impact of not funding increased R&D? R. Schwitters said they didn’t do an economic study so the Study Committee felt it wasn’t their place to speak to the specific economics of an increase of R&D. But not doing it would have effects on the workforce, etc. R. Jaffe said the Energy & Environment Subcommittee was generally supportive of the report (6-1). P. Taylor spoke to why he did not agree with the rest of the subcommittee. He doesn’t think it’s a technical report and its recommendations fall outside the charge. He didn’t think reasons against extension were fleshed out and those of safety were very rarely mentioned. There is no indication of whether certain models of reactors are better candidates for extension than others. The report doesn’t speak to the effect of life-extension on the advancement of renewable energy sources. S. Kemp said the third recommendation concerned him (An Enhanced Leadership Pathway). R. Schwitters said the Study Committee didn’t want to pick a winner among the different models. Extension buys time to introduce the newer models more economically. M. Turner referenced a lack of “front matter” – the disclaimer, appendices including workshop information, agenda, committee member bios, charge, etc. There should be a page of context. R. Rosner suggested a straw poll today of who would be in favor of the report with suggested edits discussed today. The majority agreed they would vote in the affirmative.

Action: R. Schwitters and F. Slakey will make suggested edits to the Pathways Report, in preparation for an electronic vote by POPA.

Physics & the Public Subcommittee

2008 APS Statement Review

F. Slakey indicated that the 2008 APS Statements on (1) Civic Engagement of Scientists and (2) Joint Diversity need to undergo the review required by POPA every 5 years. R. Rosner tasked the Physics & the Public Subcommittee with handling the review and they should be prepared present their recommendations at the October POPA meeting.

Proposed Undergraduate Research Statement

T. Hodapp addressed POPA. He said the APS Committee on Education passed a statement of its own on undergraduate research and they felt it was of enough importance to bring forward as a possible APS Statement. He said the word “access” is important – this statement doesn’t *demand* that undergraduate research opportunities be offered, it suggests that it’s important to provide access to these experiences. The statement would provide a platform for small universities to ask for resources for these types of opportunities for their students.

Commentary: M. Gunner asked if APS has a good website on continuing education. T. Hodapp said it's not as good as it could be. We could work on developing it. Several members suggested ways to catalog Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REUs). T. Hodapp mentioned the increase in undergraduates attending the APS meetings.

Action: A. Bienenstock moved to accept the proposed statement presented by the APS Committee on Education regarding undergraduate research. The statement will now move to the Council for comment and the Executive Board for review & vote. P. Coyle seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Brief Update: Proposed K-12 Physics Education Statement

K. Cole provided a brief update. The K-12 Education Statement was approved by the Executive Board and has now been presented to the APS membership for comment. The commentary period will end on June 30th. An article will come out in the next edition of APS News which should drive more members to the web to comment. T. Hodapp said the comments that have come in so far are generally in favor of the statement.

Intersessional Minutes

- A draft charge to the Climate Change Statement Review Subcommittee was circulated to POPA electronically for review and a vote on June 27th, 2013. POPA voted to accept the document.
- As of September 5th, the Executive Board had voted (electronically) to approve the public release of the APS POPA/IEEE DNDO Report. The report is available on the APS website and hard copies are in production.
- At the September 21st Executive Board meeting, the proposed K-12 Education Statement met with opposition. It will be returned to POPA for another look.

Next Meeting

The date for the next POPA meeting will be February 7th, 2014.

Adjournment

Action: *R. Rosner adjourned the meeting at 2:30 PM.*