



**American Association for Public Opinion Research  
Executive Council Teleconference Minutes  
March 24, 2011**

**ROLL CALL/CALL TO ORDER.**

Frank Newport	President	Present
Scott Keeter	Vice President	Present
Peter Miller	Past President	Present
Barbara O'Hare	Secretary-Treasurer	Present
Joseph Lenski	Associate Secretary-Treasurer	Present
Reg Baker	Standards Chair	Present
Timothy Johnson	Associate Standards Chair	Absent
Rob Santos	Conference Chair	Present
Dan Merkle	Associate Conference Chair	Present
Kelly Foster	Membership & Chapter Relations Chair	Present
Joe Murphy	Associate Membership & Chapter Relations Chair	Present
Jon Cohen	Communications Chair	Present
Rich Morin	Associate Communications Chair	Present
Roger Tourangeau	Councilor-at-Large	Present
Linda Piekarski	Councilor-at-Large	Present

**Staff**

John Waxman	Managing Partner	Present
Susan Tibbitts	Executive Director	Present
Barbara Gunderson	Administrative Director	Present

**Guests**

Mark Schulman	Co-Chair Governance Task Force	Present
Patricia Moy	Co-Chair Governance Task Force	Present
Nancy Mathiowetz	POQ Editor	Present via phone

**I. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

Frank Newport called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. EST.

**II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The draft minutes of the January 20, 2011 Executive Council teleconference were reviewed. Roger Tourangeau moved, seconded by Peter Miller, that the minutes be approved with minor edits. The motion was unanimously approved.

## **I. SECRETARY-TREASURER REPORT**

Secretary-Treasurer, Barbara O'Hare reported AAPOR ended the year \$137,000 in the black, largely due to successful conference revenues. The current year to date operating revenue is at \$292,000, with operating expenses of \$105,000. Currently conference and membership revenues exceed 2010 YTD figures suggesting a positive outlook for the 2011 budget.

The Secretary-Treasurers continue to work with the investment committee to monitor and move monies out of operating funds when appropriate and into certificates of deposit to generate interest.

## **II. GOVERNANCE REVIEW TASK FORCE**

Mark Schulman and Patricia Moy, co-chairs of the Governance Review Task Force, attended the Council meeting to report on task force progress. Task Force members Scott Keeter, Peter Miller, Barb O'Hare, Nancy Belden, Linda Piekarski and Don Dillman are examining key issues involving the AAPOR governance structure. The subcommittee plans to have a progress report for Council discussion at the May meeting.

### Areas of Focus for the Task Force

Mark Schulman reported the task force is taking a broad overview of association and organization governance principles and considering such models as at-large boards where the board focuses on strategy and the detailed work of the organization is done at the committee level. They are considering the appropriate size of the Council and the functions of each Council position. There is currently no education committee representative on the Council and as education is a critical function of the association the task force is considering whether to recommend that this office be added to the Council. Other areas of consideration include the balance between volunteers and professional staff, the recruitment, development and training of new leaders, and the strength of the committee structure. Current terms of office are being examined as one means to improve institutional memory, for example the subcommittee may recommend lengthening the terms of the Secretary-Treasurer from a 2-year cycle to a 3-year cycle allowing the association to benefit from this officer's training and institutional knowledge over a longer period of time. When the 3-year Council officer cycle is completed, the task force may recommend that the former Secretary-Treasurer chair the Investment Committee, completing the multi-year commitment.

### Value of the Commercial and Non-Commercial Requirements

Patricia Moy reported the task force has considered the current bylaws which require a blending of commercial and non-commercial composition of the Council and will

recommend continuing this practice as currently stated in the bylaws i.e. for the offices of Vice President/President-Elect, Councilor-at-Large and Conference chairs. For these offices in particular there is a benefit to alternating the membership sectors which gives the association the benefit of varied opinions and viewpoints. It allows each sector to learn from the other and it enhances AAPOR's efforts to continue to grow the commercial sector of our membership. The conference program is also enriched by this diversity.

Current Council members will be asked to provide a description of their job duties and additional information will be solicited from past Council members to identify where functions overlap.

#### Role and Structure of Committees, Subcommittee and Task Forces

The task force will review the structure of committees, subcommittees and task forces and analyze how committees are formed, how members are recruited, how committees are monitored and supported by Council and staff, and how they are disbanded. It is the current sense of the task force that it will be necessary to strengthen the committee structure if Council is to move to an at-large model of governance where Council would be approving the recommendations of their committees and focusing their attention on the strategic direction of the organization.

#### Council-Staff Balance; Focus on Strategy

Sherwood Managing Partner John Waxman concurred that effective boards decide and direct while committees perform the directives. The presence of professional management staff need not take away from the strong volunteerism of the organization, but should permit the volunteer activities to focus on duties that are strategy and content driven and that advance the field; rather than administrative tasks. Waxman recommended that Council members continue to serve as liaisons to the committees to assure effective communication, even if the Council structure is changed and committee chairs are no longer directly elected to the Council. He emphasized that committee chairs are appropriately tasked with developing and strengthening the committees to enable Council to focus on strategic issues.

#### Expanded Role for Nomination Committee Considered

The Governance Task Force may recommend that the Nomination Committee expand its responsibilities to include activities to develop talent and succession planning to identify members who can move up through the committee structure into a leadership role. Future Nominations Committee membership could require that at least one early career professional, such as a graduate student, be appointed.

### Creation of AAPOR Sections

Council members recommended the Governance Task force consider a process for determining when the organization has reached the tipping point for considering the option of “sections” which will allow the association another means to reach out to all areas of the field. Sections have the potential to give the organization the specialization needed to develop additional, specialized journals as well as diversity in the conference program with tracks for specialties.

It was noted that many of the changes under consideration will require amending current bylaws. This discussion will continue at the May Council meeting.

## **III. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **A. Conference Committee**

Conference Chair, Rob Santos reported the conference program has been finalized with more than 400 papers slotted into 90 sessions, 117 posters presentations and 12 demonstrations. All discussants and session chairs have been assigned. The plenary session has also been finalized with the addition of Gary Langer as the moderator.

#### **1. Registration, Housing and Support**

To date there are 349 attendees registered for the annual conference, this represents an increase over registrations at this date for 2010. The contractual obligation for the room block at the resort has also been met. Both statistics are a positive predictor of overall outcome for the conference. The committee is cautiously optimistic regarding conference attendance.

The 2011 budget includes for \$140,000 in overall exhibit and support revenue. Exhibit and support revenue currently exceed budget by \$9,250, and we continue to pursue additional sponsorship and advertising opportunities. It was noted that several underwriting opportunities are still available and sponsorship revenue helps to defray those costs to the association. Past sponsors have been contacted and encouraged to participate.

#### **2. Student Paper Competition**

Twenty five papers were submitted to the competition this year compared with 21 in 2010. The winner of the competition is Andrew Therriault of New York University. Two honorable mentions were also awarded, one to Joseph Sakshaug, University of Michigan and another to Susanna Dilliplane, University of Pennsylvania. The winner will receive expenses paid to attend the conference and the honorable mentions will receive \$100 each.

### **3. Post-Conference Survey**

Temple University was awarded the contract for the post-conference survey and will be given a Platinum Sponsorship for their work. The committee is working on finalizing the questions for the survey which is scheduled to go out June 1.

### **Social/Volunteer Committee**

Plans for the post-banquet party are underway and include a mariachi band. Dave DesRoches and Debbie Rexrode are coordinating the docent volunteers and conference volunteers needed during the program, as well as the speed networking event. Mandy Sha is working on securing book exhibit sponsors and the 'Meet the Author' sessions which will be held in the exhibit hall. Mark Blumenthal is expected to conduct video blogging interviews during the conference as in past years.

## **B. Communication Committee**

### **1. Website Redesign**

Jon Cohen reported that the newly redesigned website would launch April 4. A link to the test site will be provided to Council next week for review and comment. Jon thanked AAPOR staff, Lindsay Arends, Jill Hronek, Pam Reid and Michael Patti for their work on the redesign of the website.

### **2. Job Bank**

AAPOR's Job Bank has received 980 job views, 61 resume reviews and has earned \$2,100 in revenue for AAPOR. Council members recommended clearer messaging on the benefits to an employer to post a position on Job Bank as opposed to posting only on AAPORnet. Testimonials and statistics may be helpful to illustrate the benefits of the site to prospective employers. With the launch of the redesigned site, the Job Bank will become part of the newly named Career Center.

### **3. AAPOR News**

The AAPOR News was sent out to 1,700+ members in March resulting in 1,000 opens by 480 members. The next newsletter is in production and will be delivered around the annual conference in May.

## **C. MEMBERSHIP AND CHAPTER RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

Membership Chair, Kelly Foster reported there are 1,766 AAPOR members as of the end of February. The renewal process has been steady and consistent with past years. Traditionally, nearly 400 additional members join or renew between March and the

annual conference and it is expected that this trend will hold true for 2011.

### **1. Passport Program and New Member Orientation Webcast**

The committee plans to initiate a 'passport program' at the annual conference to engage new members and first-time attendees, who may feel disconnected at the conference. Discussion of the program details followed.

The committee also plans to pilot an orientation for new members and first-time attendees using a webcast format, featuring Rob Santos. The webcast is scheduled to take place a few days before the meeting. If feedback is positive, the committee is considering hosting quarterly webcasts for new members.

### **2. Survey Pretest Results**

Associate Chair, Joe Murphy reported on the results of the qualitative pretest of AAPOR members administered to determine the perceptions regarding values and benefits of membership prior to finalizing the annual member survey content, as was recommended by Council at the January meeting. Of the 50 members selected for the survey, 15 responses were received. One of the primary concerns for members was the cost of the conference and membership dues. The committee recommends exploring how membership and conference rates compare to other similar organizations, including fee structures and conference meal plans. A second theme emerged around social media and networking, with respondents indicating a strong interest in avenues to interact with other members. AAPORnet was cited as a key benefit of membership. The final major theme discussed centered on AAPOR's role in educating the public, decision makers and journalists in regard to survey standards and ethics. Members expect AAPOR to champion these values in the field. The committee recommends these key themes be explored more fully in the member survey. An updated draft of the member survey will be sent to Council for review and comment.

### **3. New England Chapter**

Kelly Foster reported that in 2007 AAPOR entered into an agreement with the New England Chapter to hold chapter dues in escrow until such time as officers were elected and the chapter was in compliance with the AAPOR bylaws. AAPOR member and NEAPPOR member Chase Harrison was tasked with the reorganization, but he is not actively pursuing a solution. Chapter dues have continued to be collected for the New England chapter on behalf of AAPOR members and currently there is \$14,000 in escrow. Council recommended using the chapter dues to hold a local event, potentially leading up to the New Hampshire primary, in an effort to revitalize the chapter and attract members

willing to hold an office.

**D. Nomination Committee**

Nomination Committee Chair, Peter Miller reported the election process is running smoothly. To date there have been 419 ballots cast representing 26% of the membership. A final reminder will be sent out to those who have not voted next week and balloting will conclude on April 4.

**E. Standards Committee**

Standards Chair, Reg Baker reported there are currently no standards complaints pending. The majority of committee time has been focused on work related to the Transparency Initiative.

**1. Standard Definitions**

Based on the recommendation of Chair Reg Baker, ESOMAR is considering adopting the AAPOR Standard Definitions as WAPOR has done recently. The Standards Committee may consider approaching additional organizations to also adopt the AAPOR Standard Definitions in an effort to have consistent terms and definitions across the field.

**2. Push Poll Statement**

The committee continues to consider a revision to the Push Poll statement to more clearly define the concept for those visiting the website as a resource on the issue. Wikipedia is also a source of information on this issue; it may be advisable for AAPOR to contribute to the content in this area to ensure the survey related terms are correctly represented. Committee members are also interested in crafting a document that would address 'refusal conversion' and provide direction to practitioners and the general public on this issue.

**VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Council met in executive session to discuss Sherwood management performance for 2010 and the 2011 management contract.

**VII. 2011 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

On behalf of the Online Education Subcommittee, Scott Keeter reported on the committee's progress in initiating the pilot program for an AAPOR webinar series. Based on the direction and advice of the Council, the committee has selected six possible webinar topics for the four planned webinars. Potential instructors will be contacted to determine their interest in teaching a webinar and their availability. The first webinar is

scheduled for June or July with three more to follow by December. Each webinar will be followed with an evaluation to assist in determining future core topics. Council suggested the first webinar be conducted by Paul Lavrakas on the Cell Phone Task Force Report.

## **VIII. 2010 STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES**

### **A. Fundraising**

The Endowment Committee proposed to organize its fundraising efforts in support of three key initiatives:

- Increasing funding for graduate student participation in the annual conference
- Promoting professional leadership and education, with a focus on funding the promotion and dissemination of information about the Transparency Initiative, AAPOR Standards, best practices and other topics
- Preserving AAPOR's legacy including continued support of the Heritage Committee and archiving project

The committee recommended that donors to the general (board-directed) fund be informed that their gifts will be used for these three key initiatives. The initiatives are currently described on the Gifts to AAPOR section of the website and on the gift form. Donors may continue to contribute to the temporarily restricted funds. The committee's next steps are to identify appropriate fundraising mechanisms and to set fundraising targets. The Endowment Committee will develop recommended messaging for the fundraising campaign for Council review at a later date.

### **B. Transparency Initiative Steering Committee**

Chair Scott Keeter reported on the work of the Transparency Initiative (TI) Steering Committee in shaping the program. He reaffirmed that the disclosure standards required for an organization to be compliant with the TI will be consistent with those in the AAPOR Code. Additional elements have recently been added to the document and include the following:

#### **1. Administrative Structure**

The TI will be administered by an ad-hoc committee, reporting to the Standards Committee. The designated chair will serve a term of 2-3 years and a committee of up to 12 will be appointed by the AAPOR president and the Standards chair. This coordinating committee will be responsible for general oversight of the TI information on the AAPOR website, and working with the Communication and Membership/Chapter Relations committees on outreach and education efforts. The coordinating committee will also have responsibility for monitoring and compliance reviews. The permanent structure of this committee may include a

member of Council and may best be served by the office of vice president/president-elect.

**1. Qualification Process**

The committee has outlined the application process and the criteria required for participants to be compliant with the initiative. The TI will employ a modified Safe Harbor model for participants to demonstrate that they have complied with the requirements.

**2. Monitoring Process**

The challenge of the monitoring process requires AAPOR to take a more proactive role to determine if the member is in compliance, while not becoming burdensome to the volunteers.

**3. Violations**

The TI is fundamentally an education function of the organization rather than a policing function. If a participant is found to be noncompliant during the monitoring process, AAPOR will provide feedback and recommendations on what is needed to comply and will assist the organization in gaining compliance. If within a determined time period the organization is still not in compliance, they will be decertified and asked to take the TI logo from their website and their name will be removed from the TI list for a period of one year after which time the organization can apply for reinstatement.

**4. Archiving**

The committee is working with the Odum Institute to establish a system of archiving the disclosure materials. Archiving is an essential element in monitoring organization compliance. The committee is working with the advisory committee to determine a process of archiving that the organizations believe they can comply with. Once the technical challenges and cost factors can be resolved the committee will make a recommendation to the Council in regard to archiving.

**IX. 2010 NOMINATION PROCESS**

Nominating Committee Chair, Peter Miller opened discussion on the 2011-2012 nomination process. Many changes were made to the process including the process for review and approval by the Executive Council. Council members were enthusiastic about greater outreach to members by the committee; the effort made by committee and staff to share information with prospective candidates about the duties and responsibilities of AAPOR councilors; and the information on qualifications and interest submitted by the prospective candidates and made available to the Council for the committee-recommended slate of candidates.

Council members offered suggestions for further improving Council review of the 2012-13 recommended slate, among them providing Council with four recommendations for each office in rank order, rather than two, and prior to Council review, inviting the incumbent councilor to review the qualifications of the four recommended candidates for the same office in light of his/her knowledge of the specific duties and responsibilities of the office. The committee was encouraged to continue to consider gender and type of organization represented, geographic diversity and number of years in the field.

## **X. AAPOR JOURNAL REVIEW TASK FORCE UPDATE**

Peter Miller reported the Journal Review Task Force, including Rod Little, Jean Opsomer, Roger Tourangeau, Robert Shapiro, Nancy Mathiowetz and Fritz Scheuren has begun meeting to discuss the development of a new journal, *Survey Statistics and Methodology*. A draft mission statement was provided for Council review. The new journal will feature methodological research directed at surveys on topics other than public opinion, including ongoing governmental surveys, complementing *Public Opinion Quarterly* rather than competing with it. A joint board of editors from AAPOR and ASA will be formed to determine which manuscripts will be considered by each journal.

### **1. Publishing**

ASA will partner with AAPOR to create the new, substantive journal, but was described as not interested in the business aspect of the journal. Peter Miller has contacted Oxford University Press to discuss the potential of publishing the new journal. Oxford has recommended a marketing model that would bundle the journals together when sold to libraries at a slightly higher cost allowing the new journal to benefit from the reputation of POQ. Other bids for publishing the new journal will also be reviewed.

There was discussion about offering AAPOR members the option to choose one of the two journals as part of their membership dues or both journals at an additional cost.

The Task Force is expected to have additional information to share at the May Executive Council meeting.

## **XI. TASK FORCE AND WHITE PAPER TOPICS**

Frank Newport led a discussion on identifying key areas where AAPOR should develop task forces and white papers most relevant to the profession. The following key areas were identified:

- Emerging methods to assess public opinion that do not rely on verbal or written self-reports e.g. listening research or content analysis: This topic would include

data mining of administrative records, sentiment analysis of online discussions and research of Google, Twitter, Facebook and other social media. A task force would report on the issues and examine how to engage in using these methods.

- Nonprobability sampling for measuring public opinion: A task force would report on how to evaluate nonprobability research to enhance our current methods, role of outcomes basis for assessing value of the research, how nonprobability can be complementary to traditional methodology, the effect of “robo” polls, how nonprobability research will affect AAPOR standards and give guidelines for the intelligent use of this method.
- Changes in communication styles: Increasing use of telephone and electronic communications that has implications for traditional means of data collection.
- Mode effects: Implications of using mixed modes on survey results and estimates, increase in multi-mode surveys
- Response rates: Implications of declining response rates and value of investing in maintaining high response rates
- Address-Based Sampling: Implications of moving to ABS from Random Digit Dial sampling and the emerging methods associated with ABS.

**Motion:** To form a task force to examine the issues of nonprobability research. Roger Tourangeau moved, seconded by Peter Miller. The motion passed unanimously.

## **XII. MIGRATION OF AAPORNET**

Communication Committee Chair, Jon Cohen reported on work underway to replace the current AAPORnet operating system, due in part to the retirement of AAPOR member and list master Shap Wolf from Arizona State University at the end of June, 2010. ASU has hosted the listserv for more than a dozen years. After reviewing several systems, the committee recommended moving to E-Forums which will provide all the same functionality AAPOR members currently have with AAPORnet at a price that is within budget. The contract is set to be signed next week and is planned to launch in May.

**Motion:** To approve the migration of AAPORnet to E-Forums. Roger Tourangeau moved, seconded by Peter Miller. The motion passed unanimously.

## **XIII. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **A. Shap Wolf Recognition**

Rob Santos recommended Council acknowledge Shap Wolf at the annual conference for all his work on behalf of AAPOR and AAPORnet over the years.

**Motion:** To recognize Shap Wolf at the 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference for his work on AAPORnet. Peter Miller moved, seconded by Roger Tourangeau. The motion passed

unanimously.

**B. Public Opinion and Leadership Task Force Update**

Frank Newport reported the work of the task force is underway and going well.

**C. WAPOR Update**

Frank Newport reported there is no progress on this to date.

**D. Survey Practice Review Task Force**

Frank Newport reported that the task force has not begun meeting yet.

**E. Heritage Interview Committee Update**

Adam Safir has resigned as the committee chair. Frank Newport will report on his replacement at the May council meeting.

**F. Executive Council Meeting – Annual Conference**

The next Council meeting will take place at the annual conference in Phoenix on Wednesday, May 11 from Noon to 5:00 p.m.

**XIV. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion:** To adjourn the meeting. Roger Tourangeau moved, seconded by Peter Miller. The motion passed unanimously.