

**Annual Business Meeting Minutes****May 18, 2013****Seaport Boston Hotel****Boston, MA**

The annual AAPOR Membership and Business Meeting took place on Saturday, May 18, 2013, at the Seaport Boston Hotel in Boston, Massachusetts. President Paul J. Lavrakas called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. (EST).

**I. President's Report**

President Paul J. Lavrakas welcomed the attendees to the 68th Annual Conference.

**Motion: To accept the May 19, 2012, Annual Business meeting minutes. Peter Miller moved, seconded by Tom W. Smith. The motion passed unanimously.**

Paul J. Lavrakas asked for a moment of silence to honor AAPOR members who passed away during the past year.

Reflecting on the past year, he reviewed the areas of accomplishments he had hoped to achieve:

- Adequate due diligence-established Financial Oversight Committee
- Staffing-created a new 50% position administrative position (Sherwood Group), and pay a greater percentage of the total expense for staffing (not yet 100%)
- Created additional task forces
- AAPOR journals: POQ and JSSAM; Survey Practice

He stated that it had been an honor to serve AAPOR members as president, and he thanked the Executive Council and staff for their hard work.

**II. Past President Report**

Past President Scott Keeter thanked the members of the Nominations Committee for their service.

The 2013-2014 incoming Executive Council members were introduced:

Vice President/President-Elect, Michael Link  
Associate Conference Chair, Dawn V. Nelson  
Associate Secretary-Treasurer, Mary Losch

Associate Standards Chair, Frauke Kreuter  
Associate Communications Chair, Eleni Delimpaltadaki Janis  
Associate Membership and Chapter Relations Chair, Jennifer Hunter Childs  
Councilor-at-Large, Cliff Zukin

### **III. Executive Director Report**

Executive Director, Susan Tibbitts, welcomed everyone and introduced the staff team. She described her role as the advisor to the Executive Council on governance, management and budget. It is her job to oversee the day to day operation of the AAPOR headquarters staff who contributes to the design, marketing, promotion and delivery of high quality programs, products and services. She is accountable to the Executive Council for providing leadership to staff to continue to develop an organizational culture that embraces growth, accountability for results, operational efficiency, awareness of association best practices, transparency, integrity and understanding of the AAPOR mission and history.

Susan stated that contact information for all members of the AAPOR staff is clearly listed on the website. She encouraged members to contact her directly at any time.

### **IV. Secretary-Treasurer Report**

#### **2013 Financial Status**

Secretary-Treasurer, Rachel Caspar reported that the 2012 budget was projected to have a deficit of \$50,007. AAPOR ended the year 2012 at \$73,916 surplus, primarily due to successful Orlando conference and increased revenue from webinars and return on AAPOR's investment in the H2R conference. The 2012 audit was completed without issue. The audit included a management letter that noted that percentage ranges for investments were not being followed and stated further that the council is in the process of developing a new investment policy. AAPOR will be fully compliant with the requirements of the new policy that were approved in April 2013 once the account restructuring is completed.

#### **2013 Financial Status**

The 2013 operating budget included a projected surplus of \$6,812. Revenue sources included a 5% increase in over 2012 conference attendance and a 5% increase in membership dues over 2012. Webinars were increased from six to eight regular and 2 professional development per year.

Council approved the transfer of funds from the board-designated reserves for an additional 50% administrative staff person, for support of the Transparency Initiative and for the responsive website redesign.

As of March 31, 2013, revenues are running ahead of 2012 YTD by \$8,900. Membership dues have remained unchanged since 2006. The conference registration fees have remained unchanged since 2009.

### **Investments**

As of March 31, 2013, AAPOR has a cash balance of \$174,578; \$996,318 in board-designated funds and \$239,637 in temporarily restricted funds. The Investment Committee continues to monitor all investments. The committee has worked to update the Investment Policy to more accurately align with AAPOR's financial situation and business processes. Next step is to restructure the current investments accounts to match the new policy. AAPOR currently has 10.25 months of budgeted operating expenses.

### **Development Committee**

The market value of the general board designated fund was \$287,926 as of March 31, 2013. The market values of the temporarily restricted Roper, Sudman and Heritage funds totaled \$151,711.

## **V. Conference Steering Committee Report**

Conference Chair, Paul Beatty reported record high submissions to the 2013 conference. Seven hundred and fifty (750) abstract proposals were initially submitted which represented a 21% increase over 2012, which was also a record. The rejection rate was 25% and only 54% of papers received slots on the program. The final program contained 65 paper sessions, 16 panel sessions and 7 methodological briefs sessions. Registration outpaced all previous years with 1,017 persons registered as of two weeks prior to the conference. Hotel room pick-up totaled 2,653 room nights. Paul thanked Associate Chair, Susan Pinkus and the members of the Conference Steering, Program Committee, Support Committee and AAPOR Staff for their help during the year. He also acknowledged the proposal contributors who were patient and gracious under challenging circumstances.

## **VI. Membership and Chapter Relations Committee Report**

Membership and Chapter Relations Chair, Liz Hamel reported that AAPOR membership reached a record-high 2,439 at the end of 2012. A study of the AAPOR membership showed that the majority of members were accounted for by the academic (39%) and commercial (32%) affiliations, while 33% had been members of AAPOR for 10 years or more, and 23% were new members. Liz pointed to expanding outreach to students, increasing outreach to members eligible for Honorary Lifetime Membership status and the expansion of the Membership and Chapter Relations (MCR) subcommittees. Chapter highlights included the transition of NJAAPOR to PANJAAPOR, an increase in the committee's role in supporting chapters, and a new spotlight on chapters in the

newsletter. She thanked the outgoing 2012 MCR committee members and the incoming 2013 MCR committee.

## **VII. Standards Committee Report**

Standards Committee Chair, David Cantor thanked the Standards Committee members for their work during the past year and reported on the considerable accomplishments of the committee. These included co-coordinating on pending incentive legislation, leadership of the Refusal Conversions Task Force with Standards Committee members David Dutwin and John Loft acting as co-chairs, initiation of the updates of response rate standards document with Tom Smith taking the lead, monitoring the Transparency Initiative activities, four complaints received through the AAPOR website and resolution of informal queries on possible violations.

Updates to the response rate document included dual frame surveys, ABS samples for non-specifically named persons and response rates for establishment surveys.

## **VIII. Communication Committee Report**

Communications Committee Chair, Marjorie Connelly reported on the accomplishments of the committee during the past year, among them finalizing the transition of *Survey Practice* to the AAPOR website, upgrading the website search engine, engaging a monitoring service to track AAPOR's presence in the media, organizing the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual video contest, publishing six issues of *AAPOR News*, extending the advertising agreement with the *Journal of Consumer Research*, placing AAPOR membership recruitment advertising in the newsletter and on the website of the American Sociological Association. The ad hoc Committee on Member-Council Communications has been discussing improvements to communication between Council and the membership, starting with the Town Hall meeting.

Participation on AAPOR social media sites continued to grow with Facebook 'likes' increasing from 990 to 1,277, Twitter followers growing from 1,092 to 1,578, LinkedIn group members expanded from 1,750 to 2,427 and aapor.com unique visitors increasing from 73,102 to 88,628.

## **IX. Councilor-at-Large Report**

Councilor-at-Large, Patricia Moy commented on the efforts to strengthen AAPOR's mission by codifying the "secretary-of-state" role and implementing the process by which requests for AAPOR advocacy support are considered. She also spoke about the efforts to understand the implications of emerging technologies for public opinion research. She stated that a task force had been appointed, co-chaired by Michael Link and Joe Murphy.

The focus will be on smartphones as data-collection vehicles and social media as platform and informational sources

## **X. Education Committee Report**

Education Committee Chair, Chuck Shuttles reported the progress of the committee in 2012-2013, noting that it was a great year for outreach and innovation, educational opportunities and diversity of the educational opportunities. The committee wants to continue to sustain that success with outreach including four more invited presentations at journalist conferences in 2013 and at ASA-JSM; pursuing additional opportunities at chapter annual conferences and by forming closer partnerships with regional chapters.

The Journalist Education Subcommittee held three presentations with journalist groups on how to evaluate and report polls. They clarified strategy to promote self-directed courses and seek speaking opportunities with journalist groups and promoted poll reporting tips via AAPOR and Poynter's social media outlets.

The Professional Development Subcommittee completed a successful pilot mentoring program. The next step is to plan for a roll out of a full program in 2013-2014. This year's Professional Development panel topic was on Women's Leadership. The subcommittee also recorded and offered at no charge, the conference presentation panel on changing professional sectors, sponsored by Nielsen and the NORC. The subcommittee is currently planning to offer an upcoming webinar on "How to Do a Great Webinar".

The Online Education Subcommittee increased the number of webinars from six (6) in 2012 to eight (8) webinars in 2013. The subcommittee identified potential topics and instructors, furthered collaboration with the Survey Research Methods Section (SRMS) of the American Statistical Association (ASA) and developed a policy to allow institutional pricing. Working with staff, the subcommittee continues to explore advancements in technology (e.g., video conferencing abilities).

The Short Course Subcommittee had 253 participants enroll in short courses through pre-registration for the 2013 conference, surpassing 40 per course. The combination of new topics, new instructors and balanced topics proved successful. They are still gauging the interest level of students in discounts offered.

## **XI. Transparency Initiative Coordinating Committee**

Transparency Initiative Coordinating Committee Chair, Timothy Johnson, reported that the committee met every three weeks and updated the TI page on the AAPOR website monthly. The committee completed revisions to the proposed TI procedures and developed informational materials for upcoming pilot test. They also compiled examples

of TI compliant methodological reports for review. The plan for the second half of 2013 is to prepare for a second TI pilot test in June 2013 and report on those findings in late 2013, before undertaking a third pilot test or planning full implementation of the Transparency Initiative during the winter of 2014.

## **XII. Public Opinion Quarterly Report**

Patricia Moy, Editor of the POQ, reported there were 260 submissions in 2012, of those, 30 were accepted and 13 remain active. Total submissions increased from 236 in 2011. Review times were 52-70 days for initial decision. The percentage of manuscripts taking longer than three months to a final decision decreased slightly from 15.7% in 2011 to 14.2% in 2012.

Acceptance rates based on new 2012 submissions were 7.7% of all new 2012 submissions, compared to 4.2% for 2011; and 10.5% of new 2012 submissions with 2012 final decision dates, compared to 5.2% for 2011. Acceptance rates based on 2012 final decisions were 12.7% of all manuscripts processed in 2012, compared to 12.8% for 2011; and 16.1% of all manuscripts with 2012 final decision dates, compared to 15.5% for 2011.

Invitations to review were sent to 1,418 persons in 2012 and 838 (59.1%) agreed to review.

## **XIII. Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology Report**

Rodger Tourangeau, Co-Editor of the Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology Oversight Committee, reported that the first issue coming out in July 2013, will have four articles and a statement from the editors. The Editorial Board is divided into two groups; methodology and statistics. He reported that there have been 37 submissions to date in 2013, of those zero were accepted and 29 remain active. Total submissions increased from 21 in 2012, of those 5 were accepted and 6 remain active. Review times were roughly 48.2 days to initial decision.

## **XIV. Survey Practice Report**

Kirby Goidel, Co-Editor of Survey Practice, reported that he and Co-Editor Kumar Rao are working on a more compelling visual format including transforming Survey Practice from a WordPress blog platform to a professional open-access online journal and archiving old issues for easier search. Since October, 2012, 6,817 people have visited the site, of that 5,283 were unique visitors or, 77.5% of the total visitors were new visits. The top two articles of interest measured by page views were, "The Mode of Invitation for Web Surveys" with 2,040 views and "Encouraging Survey Response via Smartphones" with 1,946 views.

Plans for the remainder of the year are to better utilize the Editorial Board, reduce time from submission to publication, create a format to move articles to the website as soon as they are ready, archive old articles, track data of issue visits and create a special issue from the Hard to Reach Conference in New Orleans.

## **XV. Transfer of the Gavel**

Paul J. Lavrakas passed the gavel to incoming AAPOR President, Rob Santos.

Rob thanked Paul, staff and the outgoing Executive Councilors for their service and welcomed the new Councilors. He expressed his belief that survey research is in the midst of a renaissance that is posing some challenges and opportunities for AAPOR. He noted that the Executive Council will conduct a one day strategic planning session in June to develop future initiatives on issues such as big data, the next steps on the non-probability issue and AAPOR membership, specifically students and early career members. He stated the importance of increasing the value of AAPOR membership and his plan to work with the Education Committee on this initiative. In conclusion he observed that there are some challenges that are best accomplished by AAPOR working with other organizations, and noted that AAPOR will be inviting external organizations to join in discussion regarding future challenges and opportunities for our field.

## **XVI. New Business**

President Rob Santos opened the floor for new business and encouraged questions from students and early career members.

### **Conference Site Selection**

Concern was expressed that AAPOR should continue to consider students as conference site searches are conducted, noting that some conference sites are better for students because they offer a selection of less expensive hotels that are located relatively near the conference site, along with low cost transportation. Rob Santos acknowledged the comments and added that the council is working with the Development Committee to increase funding for student travel awards to support attendance at the AAPOR conference for students and early career members. He also noted the significantly reduced conference registration rate established for students.

### **Conference Government Rates Availability**

Concern was expressed that more effort should be made to obtain government room rates for the conference hotel.

### **Webinar Program**

The AAPOR webinar program was praised by several members.

### **Focus on Substantive Survey Research**

Concern was expressed that AAPOR needed involve more substantive survey researchers who study public opinion both as members and as presenters within the conference program. Rob Santos stated that a great strength of AAPOR is our diversity of focus with substantive and methodology researchers represented. He stated his intent to talk to Conference Chair Susan Pinkus about the representation of substantive public opinion presentations in the upcoming conference.

### **Concern About Financial Support (Budget) for the Editors of the AAPOR Journals**

Concern was expressed about the continued decline in financial support offered to journal editors by their universities. The AAPOR Council was encouraged to take editorial support into consideration in the annual budget process and to consider appointing a committee to reach out to editors and universities for guidance.

### **Scaling Conference Presentations**

There as discussion about the current process AAPOR uses for conference abstract review, with the member noting that the current system does not scaling the abstract submission. We are increasing the number of submissions allowed but, rejection rate is higher. The question was raised of how best to manage the abstract submissions. One suggestion was to accept the “great” (highly rated) papers, and hold a random drawing among the “good” papers. The current system is just not scaling.

### **Diversity in AAPOR Membership**

Concern was expressed about diversity within AAPOR membership and plans to address the issue. Rob Santos confirmed that the Executive Council agrees that diversity is an issue that extends beyond AAPOR and into the survey research community. He emphasized the importance of diversity, particularly related to survey methods and the importance of a diverse community. He noted that efforts need to start early, in middle school or earlier to interest and attract students to fields that support survey research and methodology. He stated that AAPOR will be working on this issue.

### **Legitimatize Good Research Companies**

The comment was made that we need to offer a “Good Housing Keeping Seal of Approval” to good research companies. Rob Santos stated that determining appropriate recognition is challenging and added that there are other ways of communicating the value of organizations and the rigor they provide. The effort underway to launch the AAPOR Transparency Initiative was noted.

## **XVII. Adjournment**

Ron Santos thanked members for their participation and their commitment to AAPOR. He encouraged everyone to enjoy the reception.

**The meeting was adjourned at 6:03 p.m.**