



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING
September 5, 2008
Washington, DC

2008-2009 Executive Council Members Present:

Richard Kulka – President
Peter Miller – Vice-President/President Elect
Nancy Mathiowetz – Past President
Vince Price – Conference Chair
Michael Link – Associate Conference Chair
Kate Stewart – Secretary/Treasurer
John Boyle – Association Secretary/Treasurer
Mary Losch – Standards Chair
Stephen Blumberg – Associate Standards Chair
S. Mike Brick – Communications Chair
Mike Mokrzycki – Associate Communications Chair
Adam Safir – Membership and Chapter Relations Chair
Nancy Whelchel – Associate membership and Chapter Relations Chair
Scott Keeter – Councilor-at-Large
Paul Lavrakas – Councilor-at-Large

Staff Members Present:

Kristin Povilonis – Executive Coordinator
Monica Evans-Lombe – Association Manager
Melissa Whitaker – Meeting Manager (via phone)

Guests:

Linda Dimitropoulos – Conference Operations Committee Chair
Reg Baker – AAPOR Liaison (via phone)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Richard “Dick” Kulka, President, called the meeting to order at 8:38 AM (EST) Friday, September 5.

II. RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED

Members of the AAPOR Executive Council voted in favor of the following resolutions during the meeting:

1. **RESOLVED** to adopt the recommendations from the Secretary/Treasurer for an asset policy that would require AAPOR to maintain at least 6 months of operating expenses in AAPOR’s beginning net assets. This policy should be reviewed at least biannually. Nancy Mathiowetz moved; Mary Losch seconded; unanimously passed.
2. **RESOLVED** to approve the theme of the 2009 Conference – “Public Choices in Changing Times.” Mike Brick moved; Mike Mokrzycki seconded; unanimously passed.

3. **RESOLVED** that the general concepts represented in the conference expense matrix be reviewed by Executive Council every year. Mike Brick moved; Mike Link seconded; unanimously passed.
4. **RESOLVED** to establish a task force on opt-in online panels. Vince Price moved; Peter Miller seconded; unanimously passed.

The following motions were made and voted on by the Executive Council during its July and August conference calls. Kate Stewart, Secretary/Treasurer, asked that they be incorporated into the September minutes as follows:

5. **RESOLVED** to approve the start up of *Survey Practice* under the conditions of the *Survey Practice* business plan as amended to include references to evaluation, including the extent to which the publication draws new membership to AAPOR, as well as sharpening the language on what criteria and when evaluations take place. *Survey Practice* is to provide regular archives of articles to AAPOR to house on the AAPOR Web site. We understand *Survey Practice* will launch in late August. Peter Miller moved; Nancy Mathiowetz seconded; unanimously passed.
6. **RESOLVED** to recommend John Kennedy be appointed editor subject to terms of *Survey Practice* business plan. Peter Miller moved; Mike Brick seconded; unanimously passed.
7. **RESOLVED** to develop a post-conference list of conference attendees to be e-mailed out as pdf or as an embedded link that resides on AAPOR Web site. The list is to be developed annually after the Annual Meeting. Adam Safir moved; Kate Stewart seconded; unanimously passed.
8. **RESOLVED** to not publish a hardcopy of the membership directory in 2008; make available a pdf version. Paul Lavrakas moved; Mike Brick seconded; unanimously passed.
9. **RESOLVED** to adopt minutes from the May Executive Council meeting. Kate Stewart moved; Paul Lavrakas seconded; unanimously passed.

III. DECISIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. **Decision:** Endowment Committee to talk with the Strategic Marketing Committee to think about ways to grow the endowment as outlined in the Secretary/Treasurers' September memo to the Executive Council.
2. **Decision:** Membership will look into ways to attract chapter members to join AAPOR. Ideas suggested include continuing the \$50 off first year of AAPOR membership or trial subscription to POQ. Ideas to be discussed on the Executive Council call in October.
3. **Decision:** Align the opening of registration for May Annual Conference with the opening of registration for rooms at the hotel.
4. **Decision:** Conference Steering Committee to consider increasing the cost of food and beverages for the Annual Conference.

5. **Decision:** Defer discussion of offering a day rate for the Annual Conference until other registration issues are resolved. AMP may continue to provide a day rate to individuals who approach them at the conference and request one.
6. **Decision:** Continue with an informal relationship with ACE and decline request to sign on to press release. Reg Baker continues to be AAPOR liaison with ACE.
7. **Decision:** At the moment, AAPOR will not look for a replacement for Communications Director Pat Lewis and will wait for the Management Committee (Special Committee to Evaluate AAPOR's Association Management Needs) to make recommendations on how AAPOR should proceed.
8. **Announcement:** Conference chair putting into place a new conference committee organizational chart.

The following decisions and announcements were made by the Executive Council during its July and August conference calls. Kate Stewart, Secretary/Treasurer, asked that they be incorporated into the September minutes as follows:

August Decisions and Announcements:

1. **Announcement:** The Management Committee (Special Committee to Evaluate AAPOR's Association Management Needs) met by phone twice. The Committee is looking at resources to use to put together an RFP and into possible staff help for the Committee.
2. **Announcement:** Dick has reconstituted the Strategic Marketing Committee. So far it includes Floyd Ciruli, Liz Hamel, Reg Baker, John Boyle, Geoff Feinberg, Patricia Moy, and Pat Lewis.
3. **Announcement:** Dick is moving forward with the help of Barbara O'Hare in creating a task force on looking into developing additional cell phone universe estimates by working with Census/ACS or other large national surveys such as FCC and HHS to add cell phone questions.
4. **Announcement:** The domain name for *Survey Practice* has been moved to AAPOR.
5. **Decision:** Paul will draft a proposal for an invited session at the 2009 Joint Statistical Meetings. The topic for the proposed session will be the November elections.
6. **Decision:** Not to move forward with a formal investigation of a standards complaint, but rather educate and voice concerns to individuals regarding their protocols.

July Decisions and Announcements:

1. **Announcement:** Formation of the Management Committee (Special Committee to Evaluate AAPOR's Association Management Needs). The Committee is chaired by Scott Keeter and includes Nancy Mathiowetz, Nancy Belden, Mark Schulman, Cliff Zukin, and Diane Colasanto. The Committee hopes to have a report by January.
2. **Announcement:** Dick to continue the work of looking into developing additional cell phone universe estimates by working with Census/ACS or other large national surveys to add cell phone questions.

3. **Announcement:** Dick developing a small group of AAPOR members to help inform the update of the dictionary of occupational titles for “survey researchers” for O*NET.
4. **Announcement:** Ad Hoc committee on presidential primaries poll hoping to have report in August.
5. **Announcement:** Decided on post-conference debriefing call in June to go back to a shorter annual conference for 2009.
6. **Decision:** To make sure in the future the Executive Council takes up a discussion of the various changes in hard copy products sent to membership, such as of the membership directory, newsletter, and conference program and whether some of these products should be sent out in hard copy and how they can be linked with other AAPOR outreach efforts, and how they affect members perception of benefits of AAPOR.

IV. DISCUSSION NOTES

A. PRESIDENT’S UPDATE

Dick Kulka, President, submitted a written report in advance of the meeting (see Appendix of Executive Council Reports). The following items were brought forth for more discussion.

1. The Strategic Marketing Committee has now been formed. The Committee consists of Floyd Ciruli (Chair), Geoff Feinberg, Patricia Moy, John Boyle, Reg Baker, and Liz Hamel. Various people on that Committee will serve as a liaison to another AAPOR committee, with the exception of the Communications Committee with the departure of Pat Lewis. Geoff will be the liaison to the Membership and Chapter Relations Committee; Reg to the Standards Committee; and John and Patricia to the Conference Development Subcommittee which John will also chair. The Strategic Marketing Committee will hold a monthly conference call. The agenda for the calls will be posted and other members of the EC who would like to be on the call can join.

B. SECRETARY/TREASURER REPORT

Kate Stewart, Secretary/Treasurer, and John Boyle, Associate Secretary/Treasurer, submitted a written report in advance of the meeting (see Appendix of Executive Council Reports). The following items were brought forth for more discussion.

1. Kate reviewed the July 2008 financials and highlighted key information in the report. She stated that the financial status of AAPOR in July hasn’t changed much from the previous month. AAPOR has a surplus of \$140,000 and all the major bills for the Annual Conference have been paid. She stated that membership numbers were up and the revenues exceeded what was projected at this point in 2008. Kate described how the financial news will get darker until the end of the year, as AAPOR will have limited money coming in after September. In October, new member dues and renewals are deferred until 2009. Revenue from POQ is the only major revenue source after September and there are still general operating expenses, Executive Council meeting expenses, and any unexpected expenses that will need to be paid by the end of 2008. Kate stated that expenses from August to December will be about \$211,000. AAPOR will see about \$22,000 in savings under the Communications Director line item resulting from Pat Lewis’ departure in mid-

- September. This savings and revenues from POQ will bring AAPOR to a possible deficit of about \$17,000 in 2008.
2. John Boyle discussed how the Finance Committee had a call on August 29 with AAPOR's Financial Manager Dan Nowell of Morgan Keegan to discuss AAPOR's investments in Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Dan Nowell informed the committee that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are triple A rated bonds, which means they would be protected even if stock values plummet. AAPOR's other investments were also discussed and were deemed to be doing well. Kate disclosed that her husband works for Fannie Mae.
 3. Kate and John presented a formal policy for asset revenues to the Executive Council for approval (see Resolution #1 above; see Appendix of Executive Council Reports). Kate stated the organization should know how much it needs to keep in reserves so it stays financially viable. They contacted other non-profit organizations to see what policies were used for maintaining a minimum amount of assets and if there was an "industry standard." Uncovering no such standard, Kate and John reviewed worst-case scenarios for the organization involving non-deferrable expenses and revenue (conference cancellation and a decrease in revenue from POQ and membership dues). Based on this analysis, Kate and John recommended both short-term and long-term strategies for AAPOR. In the short term, they recommended that the Executive Council adopt a policy that calls for keeping at least 6 months of operating expenses (deferrable and non-deferrable) in assets. Based on 2008 budget numbers, about \$500,000-\$800,000 would need to be kept in assets. The Executive Council discussed other areas that should be considered when looking at worst-case scenarios, such as a significant drop in attendees at the Annual Conference and then decided to accept the policy. The long-term strategy that Kate and John proposed is that AAPOR work to grow its endowment to about \$4 million. It was decided that the Endowment Committee and the Strategic Marketing Committee should explore this idea further.
 4. The IRS released a draft of its newly redesigned Federal Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax. This is the tax return that AAPOR is required to file every year. The redesigned form will be required for the 2008 tax year (returns filed in 2009). Kate and John will work with the Executive Coordinator, Kristin Povilonis, on what is needed to comply with the new tax code.

C. AD HOC COMMITTEE ON 2008 PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY POLLING

Nancy Mathiowetz, Past President, updated the Executive Council on the Ad Hoc Committee that was put together to look at the presidential primary polling. A two-stage request was made of numerous pollsters: 1) information that is part of the AAPOR Standards of Minimal Disclosure; and 2) information or data that goes beyond the minimum disclosure requirements. Nancy reported that the response was very low and she requested guidance from the Executive Council on how to move forward with the project. During the discussion, many points were raised about sending another request, including the tone of the letter, what information would be requested, and any legal ramifications. It was decided to give the organizations another chance to provide the information. Vince Price, Conference Chair, made the point of making sure the information requested is what is needed for minimal disclosure so that organizations are not overburdened. A final letter will be sent to organizations that did not respond to the first letter asking them to comply with minimum disclosure. The letter will carry a firm deadline for providing that information. AAPOR Legal Counsel, Duane Berlin, will review the letter before it is sent out.

D. MEMBERSHIP AND CHAPTER RELATIONS REPORT

Adam Safir, Membership and Chapter Relations Chair, and Nancy Whelchel, Associate Membership and Chapter Relations Chair, submitted a written report in advance of the meeting (see Appendix of Executive Council Reports). The following items were brought forth for more discussion.

1. AAPOR membership as of July 31, 2008, was 2,065 compared to 1,791 at the same time last year. This represents a 15.3% year-over-year increase.
2. Results from the 2007 AAPOR Member and Former Member Surveys are now available on AAPOR's new Membership Research Web page. The Web page contains questionnaires from the 2007 membership surveys, as well as poster slides presented at this past year's Annual Conference. Also available are results from the 2005 President's Member E-mail Poll, and the 1996 Member Survey. The results from other previous membership research, including post-conference surveys, will be uploaded in the future. Council members were encouraged to send Adam any materials related to membership research done in the past.
3. After discussing possible ways to attract chapter members to join AAPOR, Adam and Nancy will look into continuing to offer a \$50 introductory discount to chapter members who have never been members of AAPOR national, as well as other strategies, such as a trial subscription to POQ.
4. The AAPOR membership brochure will be updated in the coming months.
5. The booth panels for the AAPOR exhibit will be updated in the coming months. Information on *Survey Practice* will be added to the panels. Council members were encouraged to send suggestions on the both the brochure and panels to Adam.
6. A weekly welcome e-mail will be sent to all new AAPOR members.
7. The Executive Council discussed the parameters of membership growth for the association. Dick Kulka asked that guidance be given to the membership committee on where the association wants to be in terms of membership numbers as well as make up of the membership in the future. Adam stated that an action plan is needed. Executive Council members felt that retaining first year members, and recruiting more students and chapter members were good strategies. Members representing the government sector are low; many of those belong to ASA. Paul Lavrakas, Councilor-at-Large, stated that the low number could be a result of those people not realizing how statistical AAPOR is as an organization and how it relates to their positions. Adam and Nancy will put together a report on what the current membership looks like, considerations for the future, and suggestions on goals to set for membership in terms of numbers and composition. The goal is to prepare this report and have it ready to present to membership at the May business meeting.
8. Adam and Nancy will work with AMP to look at retention and growth rates for membership so it can be tracked from year to year.

E. CONFERENCE PROGRAM AND CONFERENCE OPERATIONS REPORT

Vince Price, Conference Chair, updated the Executive Council on the Conference Chair's activities:

1. A 2008 conference debriefing call was held in June.
2. The 2009 conference planning meeting was held in July at the Westin Diplomat in Hollywood, FL. The Westin Diplomat will be the 2009 host hotel.
3. The new Conference Committee organization chart was discussed. Vince described how the new flow chart will heighten all programmatic activities and help to plan activities more collaboratively with the Executive Council over the next year. There will be a Steering Committee that contains chairs from various other committees. The chairs will meet on a regular basis and report back to the Steering Committee on

- their work. The Steering Committee will oversee the whole conference and the four subcommittees that will work on conference tasks.
4. The 2009 conference theme “Public Choices in Changing Times” was approved by the Executive Council (see Resolution #2 above).
 5. The Executive Council reviewed the artwork for the 2009 Annual Conference program book. Changes will be made to the artwork and resubmitted for approval.
 6. Ideas for the 2009 plenary session were discussed. Vince stated that there were suggestions from the conference post-evaluation for media figures to be part of the plenary session. Other ideas discussed included inviting writers from the Onion; inviting party figures (campaign types) to do retrospective of the campaigns; inviting media corporate leaders to discuss how newspapers are going under and online news is gaining popularity; or inviting academic and political leaders to do a panel discussion on topics such as race and politics, gender and politics, or the Hispanic vote. Vince will pursue one of the above ideas keeping in mind that the plenary topic may change once the election is decided in November.
 7. The Executive Council reviewed the Call for Conference Participation. A new addition to this year’s submission proposal is a “Demonstration” format for presentations. These mini presentations would be given on new data-gathering tools, research techniques, or other developments of practice or methodological value to the field. One other new proposal is to publish some methodological briefs in *Survey Practice*. Executive Council members suggested stronger clarifications between posters and methodological briefs, shorter page lengths on submissions, and an alphabetical order to the listings so the information does not convey any hierarchy. The Executive Council also discussed the role of the discussant and providing PowerPoint guidelines to presenters. Vince will take into consideration the points raised during the discussion as he plans the 2009 Annual Conference.
 8. Vince described how a best poster award may be given in 2009. Attendees or a panel of judges would vote on their favorite posters, making the poster session more interactive.
 9. Vince discussed coordinating hotel and conference registrations so that only people registered for the conference could make hotel registrations. The hope is to address the issue of AAPOR missing its room block goal with the hotel and incurring penalties. Executive Council members preferred to align the two by opening both conference and hotel registration at the same time.
 10. The Executive Council discussed the idea of increasing conference registration fees in 2009. The rates have not been raised in the past six years. Melissa Whitaker, Meeting Manager, said there is a 5-7% increase in food and beverages costs at hotels per year. She is struggling to plan the core meals with the current fee of \$200. The Steering Committee will review an increase in registration fees.
 11. A day rate was discussed for the 2009 Annual Conference. No day rate will be proposed for next year.
 12. The expense matrix and hotel concessions were reviewed. Dick Kulka said a process on what is given as part of the expense matrix or as hotel concessions should be validated. The Steering Committee will decide the guidelines used for hotel concessions and the logic behind the matrix. The Executive Council will review the expense matrix yearly (see Resolution #3 above).

G. STANDARDS REPORT

Mary Losch, Standards Chair, updated the Executive Council on the Standards Chair's activities:

1. The Executive Council went into executive session at 1:47 PM to review an investigation report from the Evaluation Committee on a recent standards complaint. The executive session ended at 2:14 PM. Mike Mokrzycki recused himself from the discussion.
2. Reg Baker joined the Executive Council meeting by phone to discuss the organization of a Task Force on Opt-in Online Panels (see Appendix of Executive Council Reports). Mary and Associate Standards Chair Stephen Blumberg presented a proposal to the Executive Council that a Task Force would be charged with reviewing the current empirical findings related to opt-in online panels used for data collection and developing recommendations. These recommendations would not be viewed as best practices but would be modeled after the cell phone task force report. A Task Force will be organized and a list of priority issues related to opt-in online panels will be compiled and vetted by the Executive Council (see Resolution #4 above). It was also suggested to have a dedicated session on the topic at the Annual Conference to discuss the issue.
3. The Executive Council discussed AAPOR's involvement with the Association Collaborative Effort (ACE), which is an informal alliance of research organizations with the mission to create a stronger public awareness of research data quality initiatives. The Executive Council reviewed a draft press release announcing the formation of ACE and its work to develop guidelines on panel research. After discussing the issue, the Executive Council decided AAPOR will continue its informal involvement with ACE and will not add its name to the press release.

H. COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Mike Brick, Communications Chair, updated the Executive Council on the Communications Chair's activities:

1. Peter Miller, President Elect, reported that *Survey Practice* is currently online.
2. Dick discussed the resignation of the Communications Director. He emphasized that the duties of the Communications Director need to be reviewed and we need to determine who can take on those duties. After discussing the issue, the Executive Council decided not to replace Pat immediately but to wait for the recommendations of the Management Committee.
3. Monica Evans-Lombe, Association Manager, demonstrated an online conference registration Web page. Monica will get estimates on the cost of creating a new online conference registration web page for AAPOR.
4. Mike Mokrzycki, Associate Communications Chair, informed the Executive Council that AAPOR.net will need to be moved from ASU to a new location soon. Discussion centered around what type of list serve AAPOR wanted: web-based or list serve. Mike indicated that he would like to retain e-mail functionality but have a web interface. Monica will see if NetForum would work for AAPOR. She will also check to see if the HostMySite.com has list serve capabilities.

I. COUNCILOR-AT-LARGE REPORT

Scott Keeter and Paul Lavrakas, Councilors-at-Large, updated the Executive Council on their activities:

1. Paul described how AAPOR was invited to participate in a competition for an invited session for the 2009 Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM) in Washington, DC, to be held August

2-6, 2009. He informed the group that he will submit AAPOR's proposal over the weekend to the American Statistical Association. The proposal will be about 2008 election polling. If selected, Scott will be a presenter; Jay Levee from Survey USA will report on his company's performance; Doug Rivers will report on the performance of what his group has done (online perspective); and Gary Langer will address what major news organizations have done. Paul will be the moderator of the panel.

2. Scott discussed the progress of the Management Committee (Special Committee to Evaluate AAPOR's Management Needs). The committee is composed of former AAPOR presidents. Scott said the committee is still in a fact-finding mode and trying to determine what the best model is for AAPOR. He said AAPOR currently works with a hybrid model, with paid staff and volunteers running the association.

J. NEW BUSINESS

1. Diane Colasanto from the Roper Center contacted Dick regarding fundraising efforts. However, the Executive Council had made a previous decision that it would not make contributions to fundraising efforts. Dick asked if AAPOR should be a contributor to the Roper Center or continue as individuals to contribute. The Roper Center is going to have a dinner November 13 in Washington, DC, the same time AAPOR will meet for its November meeting.
2. Kristin informed the group that it would be meeting at the Bureau of Labor Statistics on Friday, November 14.
3. Mollyann Brodie, Education Committee Chair, sent the three presidents a report on the joint Poynter's News University/AAPOR September 18 webinar. A press release was issued on September 9 to promote that webinar.

K. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 4:06 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kate Stewart
Secretary

As prepared by Kristin Povilonis

Appendix



Executive Council Report Form

Please submit your report using this form. The Chair should post this report to SharePoint no later than the Friday before the Executive Council meeting.

Position: President

Date: August 28, 2008

For the Record: Decisions and Motions from July and August Conference Calls

Motion: Move for Council to approve the start up of *Survey Practice* under the conditions of the *Survey Practice* business plan as amended to include references to evaluation. Peter Miller moved; Nancy M seconded; unanimously approved.

Motion: John Kennedy appointed editor subject to terms of *Survey Practice* business plan. Peter moved; Mike B seconded; unanimously approved.

Motion: Develop a post conference list of conference attendees to be emailed out as pdf or as an embedded link that resides on AAPOR website. The list is to be developed annually after the Annual Meeting. Adam moved; Kate seconded; unanimously approved.

Motion: Do not publish a hardcopy of the membership directory in 2008; make available a pdf version. Paul moved; Mike B. seconded; unanimously approved.

Decision: Special Committee formed to Evaluate AAPOR's association management needs. Committee chaired by Scott Keeter and includes Nancy Mathiowetz, Nancy Belden, Mark Schulman, Cliff Zukin, Diane Colasanto.

Decision: After post conference debriefing call in June decided to go back to a shorter annual conference for 2009.

Decision: To make sure in the future the EC takes up a discussion of the various changes in hard copy products sent to membership, such as of the membership directory, newsletter, and conference program and whether some of these products should be sent out in hard copy and how they can be linked with other AAPOR outreach efforts, and how they affect members perception of benefits of AAPOR.

Decision: Paul to draft a proposal for an invited session at the 2009 Joint Statistical Meetings. The topic for the proposed session will be the November elections.

Decision: Will not move forward with a formal investigation of a standards complaint, but rather educate and voice concerns to individuals regarding their protocols.

Summary of Activities:

1. Recruitment for Strategic Marketing Committee completed: Floyd Ciruli (chair), Liz Hamel (on leave), Reg Baker, John Boyle, Geoff Feinberg, Patricia Moy and Pat Lewis. Organizational mission, structure and roles nearing completion and regular monthly meetings to begin in September.
3. Continued work on development of new AAPOR conference committee structure, membership and identification of roles.
4. Consulted with colleagues at recent Joint Statistical Meetings on potential AAPOR strategy to develop additional cell phone universe estimates.
5. Continuing work with the O*NET project to identify AAPOR members who are “experts” in the survey research field to help inform the update of the dictionary of occupational titles for “survey researchers.”



Executive Council Report Form

Position: Secretary / Treasurer

Date: September 5

Summary of Activities:

Investment & Endowment Committee Activities

On August 29, the Committee held a short conference call to check in on AAPOR's investments with Dan Nowell at Morgan Keegan. Members of the Committee had expressed some concern with our investment in Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac vehicles. Dan pointed out that the Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac investments are triple A rated bonds, rather than the common stock or preferred stock that has fallen sharply in recent months. Moreover, the Treasury has stated publicly that it will not let either of these entities fail. This means that the bonds would be protected, even if the stock value fell to zero. After discussing the situation with Dan, the Committee is comfortable with our level of investment in these bonds. We also discussed briefly AAPOR's other investments which considering the current state of the economy are doing well.

AAPOR Financial Status

July Financials are up on Sharept. Some highlights:

- 1) At the moment we have a surplus of about \$140,000. This reflects paying almost all the big expenses for conference. We also have in most of our revenue from the conference.
- 2) Good news that membership has exceeded expectations this year and continues to – We had budgeted dues to bring in about \$177,000 and we are now over \$200,000.

Looking forward, from this point on the news will unfortunately get darker until the end of the year. The reason is that after September we do not have much money that comes into AAPOR. Almost all conference revenue will be in at that point and starting in October any new members/renewals go toward 2009. Our only major revenue source after September is POQ. But we still have expenses -- general operating and EC mtgs, etc and anything else that may popup given this is an election year.

If we project forward, we will have about \$211,000 in expenses from August to December. If we calculate what we should receive from POQ royalties for this period it is about \$50K. That leaves us looking at a possible deficit of \$17 to \$20. (\$144K (revenue to date) – \$211K (expected expenses august thru dec) + \$50K (POQ royalties) = (\$17K). Much better place than we thought we would be when we past the budget but still in the red.

Presentation and Discussion of adopting a formal asset policy

Please see memo and excel spreadsheet which we will discuss at the meeting.

MEMO

To: AAPOR Executive Council

From: Kate Stewart and John Boyle

Date: September 2008

Re: Formal policy on asset reserves

Since the adoption of the Long Range Plan, AAPOR has committed itself to a number of new programs and outreach efforts. Most of these new undertakings require financial investment, including the hiring of a communications person and *Survey Practice*, among others. While AAPOR marches forward with these new endeavors, efforts at identifying new sources of revenue have not kept pace. Therefore, for the last couple of years, AAPOR has passed deficit budgets. Because of some luck as well as through some belt-tightening efforts, we have been able to end each year in the black. However, it appears very likely that in 2008 we will be in the red by about \$20,000 to \$30,000. This is not necessarily a terrible situation because AAPOR has net assets of about \$700,000. However, repeated deficit budgets will deplete association reserves and unexpected costs or reduced revenues could put AAPOR in a serious financial situation.

One question we need to ask is what level of reserves should AAPOR maintain to ensure the financial stability of the organization. This topic came up during the annual business meeting in New Orleans this year, and as the Secretary-Treasurers, we feel that AAPOR should adopt a formal policy on the minimum amount of assets the organization should have at all times. The reasons for adopting a formal policy include:

- 1) Providing EC a clearer direction on budget issues;
- 2) Enabling the EC to make better-informed decisions about new investments;
- 3) Help in explaining expenditures and potential deficits to the membership; and
- 4) Ensuring the financial viability of the organization by ensuring AAPOR always has enough reserves to cover expenses.

To assist the EC in setting a policy, the Secretary-Treasurers have investigated the policies of other like organizations to see if there is an "industry standard." Unfortunately, there is no industry standard, but rather a wide range of practices that individual organizations adopt depending on a number of factors: 1) cash flow; 2) mission; 3) size and expenditures; and 4) philosophy about financial security. Some organizations, such as MRA, have their policy as part of their by-laws, while many other groups have no formal policy at all but rather follow a general practice.

Some organizations on the more conservative end keep a year to two years worth of operating funds in assets. Some organizations keep 30% of their annual operating budget. Others do it by having a certain number of months in reserve to cover expenses, such as six months reserves. One key issue in the amount of reserves required by an organization is the amount of its fixed expenses, compared to variable or deferrable expenses. Fixed expenses are higher in organizations with their own offices (lease, furniture, equipment, heating and electric, cleaning, etc.) and their own staff. Organizations with their own offices, staff and other fixed expenses need reserves to cover fixed costs during the period that revenues are down compared to budget. At the present time, AAPOR has relatively limited fixed costs, so the necessary amount of reserves depends more on the relationship between risk of funding losses and amount of deferrable expenses.

When we think about looking at AAPOR's financials, the amount of reserves at some level depends on the source of funding and the risk associated with that source. The major sources of AAPOR funding are the annual conference, membership dues, and POQ. Therefore, we have put together a number of different worst case scenarios – drop in membership, drop in POQ royalties, or a canceled conference – to make sure that we have reserves to cover our operating costs.

Revenue Loss:

Cancellation of the Annual Meeting: If AAPOR had to cancel the Annual Meeting that would be a loss in revenue of about \$580,000 (given the last two year's conferences).

25% drop in membership: In a year, if AAPOR has a 25% drop in membership that would be a revenue loss of about \$45,000.

25% drop in POQ royalties: In a year, if AAPOR has a 25% drop in POQ that would be a revenue loss of about \$25,000.

This would put us at about \$400,000 in revenue for a year in which the conference was canceled and we saw a drop in POQ royalties and membership.

Expenses:

To be very conservative, we took a look at what AAPOR's expenses would look like if all three occurred in a given year. We also looked at the 2008 budget expenses to see which expenses are deferrable – things we can cut if we have to – and what the necessary expenses are to keep AAPOR running. In defining non-deferrable expenses, we also took a conservative approach. For example, when considering AMP services and the communications director's salary we assumed that a serious revenue loss from membership or annual meeting cancellation would be recognized by March in a given year and then given 90 days notice before termination. AAPOR would also incur some expenses for having to cancel the conference. However, there are many factors that go into the Annual Conference – hotel, food, vendors, etc. – therefore estimating the expenses we would have in canceling a conference is somewhat difficult. After discussing the issue with Melissa, we concluded that a reasonable estimate would be about \$100,000 to cover the worst-case scenario. Therefore, we would have \$100,000 in conference related expenses in a year the conference was canceled.

Attached is a 2008 budget indicating deferrable expenses. When we look at non-deferrable expenses we are at about \$605,000 in expenses.

Analysis:

Therefore, in a worst-case scenario year, non-deferrable expenses are about \$605,000 and revenue only about \$400,000 then we would have a deficit of approximately \$205,000. So, given a year where we canceled the conference and revenue dropped 25% from both POQ and membership dues we would have to dip into reserves by over \$200,000.

Moving forward we would like to discuss AAPOR adopting a formal policy on how much to keep in assets. One option that is conservative and would allow AAPOR to weather two bad years in a row and still be running is to keep at least six months of operating expenses (including both deferrable and non-deferrable costs) for a year in assets. Based on the 2008 budget, the minimum amount kept in assets would be around

\$500,000 to \$600,000. At the moment, we have approximately \$700,000 in net assets. Therefore, we believe that our current net assets are sufficient to meet the minimum needs for a reserve fund. However, additional deficit budgets will erode this safety net.

As noted earlier, the amount of necessary reserves for an organization depends on its fixed costs. If AAPOR should increase its fixed costs by hiring staff, acquiring its own office, or adding other non-deferrable financial obligations, then this level of reserves would need to be reevaluated. Even if there is no basic change in the nature of fixed costs, AAPOR should reevaluate its needed reserves periodically on the basis of current revenue sources, risks, and deferrable expenses.

Executive Council Report Form

Position: Membership & Chapter Relations
Date: September 5, 2008

Membership Update

As of July 31, 2008, AAPOR had 2,065 members, compared to 1,791 at the same time last year. This represents a 15.3 percent year-over-year increase.

Discussion Items

1. Special Offer to Chapter Members. We would like to continue last year's approved membership promotion of offering a \$50 introductory discount to chapter members who have never been members of National. This offer would be valid through December 31, 2008.
2. Membership Brochure. The membership brochure will be updated this Council year. We are soliciting feedback on any special considerations or information to be presented in the brochure. A copy of the current membership brochure is available on SharePoint.
3. Booth Panels. The booth panels will be updated this Council year. We are soliciting feedback on any special considerations or information to be presented on the booth panels. Examples of the current booth panels are available on SharePoint.

Summary of Current & Planned Activities

ID	Initiative	Notes	Status	Target Date
1	Membership Research Webpage	Upload analysis from 2001, add navigation link from main webpage to membership research page, announce to membership	In progress	Aug
2	Conference Attendee List	Produce PDF, upload to website, and announce to membership	In progress	Sep
3	Weekly New Member Welcome E-mail	Develop DB query and initiate mailings	In progress	Sep
4	Brochure	Update brochure	Not started	Sep
5	Membership Survey Report	Edit and finalize report, upload to website, announce to membership	Not started	Oct
6	Special Offer to Chapter Members	Continue last year's approved membership promotion of offering a \$50 introductory discount to chapter members who have never been members of National	Not started	Oct
7	Booth Panels	Update booth panel text and artwork	Not started	Oct
8	Membership Survey Findings	Present survey results at SAPOR, MAPOR, and PAPOR	Not started	Oct-Dec
9	Chapter Membership Updates & New Online Directory Fields	Develop process to provide chapters with updated membership information on a monthly basis	Not started	Nov
10	Membership Directory	Produce PDF (including front matter), upload to website, and distribute to membership	Not started	Dec
11	Just for Students Webpage & Student Liaison	Update existing webpage, upload completed report, coordinate plans for conference with Matt Jans	Not started	Dec
12	Mentor Program	Develop preliminary action plan	Not started	Jan
13	Online Membership Directory Improvements	Update display format to return results in tabular non-nested format, add requested fields (membership ID and dues paid date), enable one-click querying on chapter membership	Not started	Feb
14	Incorporation Documentation	Compile incorporation information from all chapters, including EINs and tax exemption certificates	Not started	Mar

Opt-In Online Panel Task Force Proposal

The Standards Chair and Associate Chair propose that AAPOR charge a task force with reviewing the current empirical findings related to opt-in online panels utilized for data collection and developing recommendations for AAPOR members. These would not be viewed as best practices but instead, would follow the model of the cell phone task force report and provide key information and recommendations about whether and when opt-in panels might be best utilized and how best to judge their quality.

Although not an exhaustive list, we recommend that the task force address the following substantive dimensions related to opt-in online panels:

- 1) issues related to representativeness -- through recruiting, sampling, and/or weighting
- 2) issues related to evaluation of representativeness and whether representativeness can be appropriately claimed – e.g., via response rates or other "metrics"
- 3) measurement quality relative to other modes or samples, and
- 4) legal issues or ethical standards

Reg Baker has agreed to assist and serve on the task force. We would suggest that the other task force members be identified and chosen quickly and the group be charged to begin their work in September. We suggest that a report be submitted to Council for feedback no later than March 31, 2009.