

**American Association for Public Opinion Research  
Executive Council Teleconference Minutes  
November 18, 2010**

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	Present
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
<b>Staff</b>		
John Waxman	Managing Partner	Present
Susan Tibbitts	Executive Director	Present
Jill Hronek	Communication Director	Present
Jacky Schweinzger	Conference Director	Present

**I. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

Frank Newport called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m. CDT.

**II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The draft minutes of the September 16, 2010 Executive Council meeting in Chicago were reviewed. Roger Tourangeau moved, seconded by Peter Miller, that the minutes be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

**III. CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

**A. Conference Update**

Conference Committee Chair, Rob Santos reported progress is being made on all key elements of the conference; invitations have been extended for plenary session speakers; to date, three submissions have been received for the Seymour Sudman Student Paper competition and plans

for the book exhibit and “meet the author” sessions are underway. Melissa Herrmann and the education committee are working on the short course curriculum. They plan to conduct a call for instructors in the near term.

#### **B. Abstract Submissions**

To date there are 206 abstract submissions, slightly behind last year’s numbers at this time. Rob Santos reported he has a number of panel sessions proposed as well. He will also issue a special call for papers on November 22 calling for papers related to the conference theme, *Public Perception and Societal Conflict*. He plans to have 1-2 themed panels for each day of the conference.

In reference to the relationship between submitted abstracts and conference attendance, Rob is still projecting a 10% decrease in attendance for 2011.

#### **C. Development Committee**

There are currently 12 sponsors for the 2011 conference with \$79,750 in total commitments to date. This represents more than 50% of our budgeted goal of \$140K. Two new sponsorship opportunities have been added, Star Gazing and the Post-Banquet Party. Joe Lenski, development subcommittee chair, reported he has a strategy in place to personally contact those sponsors from the previous two years who have not yet signed up to sponsor the 2011 conference. His goal is to secure sponsorship for each of the mandatory underwriting opportunities that are conducted at a substantial cost to AAPOR. He also has a strategy to engage SPSS and SAS in a successful sponsorship discussion.

#### **D. Future Site Selection**

Jacky Schweinzger, AAPOR staff meeting manager and Dave DesRoches, Social and Volunteer Committee Chair visited several properties that responded to the RFP for the 2013 and 2014 conferences. They recommended the Boston Seaport Hotel and Renaissance Hotel for the 2013 conference, May 16 – 19. AAPOR would also have space in the adjacent World Trade Center for this meeting which will allow an opportunity for growth in attendance. The hotel room rate of \$249 presents a unique opportunity for AAPOR to hold its conference in Boston at a lower price point than has recently been available.

They recommended the Anaheim Marriott for the 2014 conference, May 15-18. The meeting space is ample and all on one level. It has an attractive location near Disneyland and several restaurants.

**Motion:** Peter Miller moved, seconded by Barbara O’Hare to accept the recommendations for the 2013 and 2014 conference locations. The motion passed unanimously.

### **IV. SECRETARY-TREASURER REPORT**

Secretary-Treasurer, Barbara O’Hare reported the October financial report is expected to be available for review by November 20. AAPOR operating revenue continues to be well above the operating expenses. Operating funds over the \$250K insured level continue to be monitored and moved to an account with Morgan Keegan to insure all funds are covered by FDIC insurance.

State and federal tax filings for 2009 have been completed and mailed. Preparation for the 2010 audit will begin in the near term. The cost of the 2009 audit and tax preparation was \$8K, which did not cover services for the full year. The proposed cost for 2010 audit and tax preparation reflects an increase of \$1,500. Executive Director, Susan Tibbitts will negotiate a lower rate if possible.

**A. 2011 Budget**

Work on the 2011 budget is in progress with revenue assumptions for 2011 remaining the same as discussed at the September Council meeting. A revised draft of the budget will be available for the Secretary-Treasurer review by next week. The Executive Council will receive a revised draft to review prior to the December 16 teleconference when the budget is expected to be voted on and approved.

**B. Endowment Committee**

The Endowment Committee, under the leadership of Dawn Nelson is preparing a proposal for a long-term giving campaign. The campaign will target past AAPOR leadership to support significant endeavors of the organization such as the Transparency Initiative. The proposed plan would solicit a \$1,000 commitment each year over a 5 year period. The committee is preparing the proposal, the list of donors to approach and a recommendation for the initiative to target. They will be seeking input from the Executive Council before the end of the year. Council members recommended the proposal address several of the worthwhile initiatives of AAPOR (Council-designated) rather than a single effort for a broader campaign appeal and further encourage that an appeal go out by year-end 2010.

**V. STANDARDS COMMITTEE REPORT**

**A. Standards Complaint**

Standards Committee Chair, Reg Baker reported a standards complaint had been lodged in October. The complaint alleged failure to disclose and question order that could lead to bias. The Standards Committee in consultation with the Council Executive Committee determined it was not AAPOR's role to form a judgment on the methodology issue, but would consider if proper disclosure was provided. The subject of the complaint was contacted. It was determined they had met all initial disclosure standards and when additional information was requested by the complainant, the information was provided within three hours. The Standards Committee recommended the complaint be dismissed. The subject and the complainant were notified. No response has been received to date from either party.

**B. Task Force: Process and Procedure**

A proposal for the formation and oversight of AAPOR Task Forces will be presented to the Council for final discussion and approval at the next meeting.

**C. ISO 20252**

The Executive Council reviewed the Standards Committee recommendation to endorse the International Standards Organization (ISO) requirements for service standards within the research and public opinion industry. The stated disclosure requirements are compatible with AAPOR's

efforts in the Transparency Initiative as well as the goals of the strategic plan in terms of playing a larger role within the industry.

**Motion:** Roger Tourangeau moved, seconded by Rich Morin to accept the recommendation to endorse ISO 20252. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **D. ICC/ESOMAR Code**

The Standards Committee has recommended AAPOR support the ICC International Code as the underlying principles are in line with the AAPOR code. The AAPOR Code will remain the governing document on ethics and practices for all AAPOR members.

**Motion:** Barbara O'Hare moved to adopt the proposed statement to endorse the ESOMAR Code with minor edits. The motion was seconded by Peter Miller. The motion passed unanimously.

### **VI. TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE**

Vice President and TI Steering Committee Chair, Scott Keeter reported the two subcommittees of the Standards Committee continue to work to develop the criteria for material to be disclosed and how information will be archived. The committee members have recommended the AAPOR Code be used as a reference for the type of material to be disclosed. A subset of the organizations who have stepped forward to participate in the TI will be asked to join an Advisory Committee to discuss these recommendations.

Members of the Steering Committee met with the Odum Institute to review archiving options for collected materials. The committee was encouraged by how this process could work for the Transparency Initiative. The process appears simple for participants, is adaptable and carries a low cost.

The Standards Subcommittees will make their recommendations to the TI Steering Committee in the coming weeks and a recommendation will be presented to the Executive Council for review in January 2011.

### **VII. COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

#### **A. Website Redesign**

Communication Committee Chair, Jon Cohen reported he and Associate Chair Rich Morin have been working with AAPOR staff on the website redesign. The next draft of the wire frame will be ready early next week for review by the sub-committee. Social networking options are also being reviewed as part of the process. A soft launch of the site is expected by mid-March with the official unveiling taking place at the annual conference.

#### **B. Blue Book**

The new online version of the Blue Book currently has 54 subscribers, many whom have elected to purchase the enhanced listing that includes a company logo. Companies who have not yet renewed their listing for 2011 will be contacted directly by Jon Cohen and Rich Morin. With successful direct follow-up it is expected the Blue Book will meet its 2010 revenue budget of

\$17K. The expenses of the online version of the Blue Book are considerably less with no printing or postage costs.

**C. Cell Phone Task Force Report**

The Task Force report was released and publicized in late October. Discussion is underway regarding a webinar presentation of the Task Force findings.

**D. Newsletter**

The Communications Committee intends to release a newsletter before year-end. Council members were encouraged to submit their reports to Jon Cohen by December 3. Also included will be a picture of the 12 AAPOR presidents who were in attendance at the Roper Center Mitofsky Award dinner held recently in New York.

**E. Conference Communications**

The Communications Committee is preparing a generic response statement in preparation for negative reactions to the 2011 conference location. It is anticipated that the opening of online registration may attract criticism of the site. The Committee will work with the conference chair to craft messaging that will promote the excellent programming intended to be responsive to the larger issues.

**VIII. MEMBERSHIP AND CHAPTER RELATIONS REPORT**

MCR Chair, Kelly Foster reported AAPOR membership has reached an all-time high at 2,367 members. Currently, there are 119 more members than at the end of 2009. This number is expected to increase before the end of 2010. Membership renewal began in October, with 16% of the membership renewing as of October 31.

**A. Membership Recruitment**

Committee members exhibited at the SAPOR conference on October 9 in Raleigh, NC; and the MAPOR conference in Chicago, IL, on November 19. Plans are underway to exhibit at the PAPOR conference in San Francisco, CA, December 9-10. The committee chairs have been working with AAPOR staff on developing a strategy for presentations at sister organization conferences in 2011 to recruit new members. The new membership brochure and the redesigned AAPOR booth will be instrumental in these efforts.

**B. Member and Non-Member Surveys**

Associate Membership/Chapter Relations Chair, Joe Murphy continues to work with a subcommittee to develop the member and non-member surveys recommended by the strategic plan. They are currently drafting survey questions. The membership chairs will refine the survey and present a draft for Executive Council review in the coming months. The member survey is expected to be conducted in the spring of 2011, with the non-member survey following in the fall of 2011 so as not to conflict with the timing of the conference survey. Joe Murphy will work collaboratively with the conference committee on an RFP process for all three surveys to secure a survey research company to field the survey.

## **IX. TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE**

The Council was reminded that the Strategic Plan is a living document that needs to be revisited consistently to ensure progress is being made on the recommended objectives. Now that the work of the Strategic Planning Task Force is complete, the Council with the assistance of the Executive Director will ensure that implementation of the initiatives moves forward, and the plan is kept in the forefront of the planning process. Chair Roger Tourangeau reported the Strategic Planning Task Force held a final meeting to develop a set of recommendations for setting the priority items in motion. The committee highlighted four initiatives of primary concern for the organization in 2011-13: governance issues, member/non-member surveys, expanded education programming and task force white papers.

### **A. Governance Task Force**

The Task Force recommended that the task force consist of past council members, to be chaired by one or two past presidents. Suggested members included Mark Schulman, Peter Miller and Nancy Belden. The Task Force will have no more than 10 members, who would be charged with developing a set of recommendations within 6 months. The task force will also examine the issue of leadership, both training for existing and up and coming leaders as well as the role the Nominations Committee or some other group might play in identifying a pool of potential leaders. Frank Newport will appoint a chair or co-chairs for the task force who will then work to develop the committee.

### **B. Membership Survey**

The Membership Committee is already working to develop a member and non-member survey.

### **C. Education Committee**

The Strategic Plan identifies the expansion of continuing education as a priority for AAPOR. The Task Force recommended that the Executive Council should task the Education Committee to develop a core curriculum, and should charge the Governance Task force with evaluating the impact of expanding the Executive Council to 16 members to include the Education Committee Chair.

## **X. COUNCILOR-AT-LARGE REPORT**

Linda Piekarski reported no progress has been made on the Legal Evidence Task Force report. She will follow up with Paul Lavrakas and report on the committee's progress at the next meeting.

## **XI. 2011 COUNCIL ELECTIONS**

Past President, Peter Miller informed the Council members of the progress the Nominations Committee has made over the past few weeks. The committee has received a number of favorable responses from members interested in running for Council, and has developed a list of more than 200 members to be considered for the seven available positions. Each member nominated has been contacted by email to confirm their interest. Committee members will also be contacting current Council members for their advice and input on the nomination process and their recommendations for nominees.

The committee plans to present the Council with a ranked short-list of nominees for each position to review and approve at the January 20, 2011 meeting. Prospective nominees included on the slate will have agreed to run for office and will have submitted a personal biography in advance of the Council review. Background information on the prospective nominees will be shared with Council prior to the meeting to ensure an informed discussion.

## **XII. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **A. Bipartisan Pollsters Letter**

A letter expressing concern about the proliferation of dubious polls and their ‘sometimes uncritical’ coverage by the media, and referencing the AAPOR code was released by a self-defined group of bipartisan pollsters in early November. Frank Newport raised a question about AAPOR’s role/ability to help consumers judge the quality of polls – in particular how transparency and disclosure affect journalists and their evaluation of polls. AAPOR will need to consider what the association’s role may be in educating the media on this topic. It was also recommended that the signatories to the letter be encouraged to join AAPOR.

### **B. Education Committee**

Frank Newport reported he has met with Education Committee Chair Melissa Herrmann. He recommended that Melissa continue on as committee chair and pledged to work more closely with the committee to reach the goals set forth by the Council. He suggested the Council revisit committee leadership in May, 2011 to evaluate progress on AAPOR education goals.

### **C. AAPOR/WAPOR Collaboration**

Tom Smith will begin his term as WAPOR President on January 1, 2011. He will work with the AAPOR president on the important issues that face both organizations to determine the best course of action to strengthen the overall mission of AAPOR and WAPOR.

### **D. Updating ‘A Meeting Place’**

Tom Smith has recommended an update to ‘A Meeting Place,’ chronicling AAPOR’s history. The book is current through 1990 and can be updated through 2010. Council will consider forming a task force for this purpose and may also consider establishing an official role for an AAPOR historian, who would produce regular updates.

**E. Follow-up on *POQ* Issues**

**1. *Survey Practice***

Frank Newport met with the co-editors of *POQ*, Jamie Druckman and Nancy Mathiowetz and *Survey Practice* editor, John Kennedy in regard to the current peer review process of *Survey Practice* which conflicts with *POQ* policy. John Kennedy has agreed to follow the guidelines of *POQ* and will work to restructure the *Survey Practice* review process. This change in procedure will allow *POQ* to continue publishing papers that have previously appeared in *Survey Practice*.

**2. New Journal Proposal Task Force**

Peter Miller and Roger Tourangeau reported they have been in contact with Ron Wasserstein of ASA to discuss the possibility working collaboratively to form a new journal for survey methodology content. Mr. Wasserstein has formed a committee within ASA to consider this opportunity. A meeting of the two committees will take place in the near term. Roger and Peter will keep the Council informed of their progress.

**3. *POQ*: Alternative to ‘In Memoriam’**

Executive Director, Susan Tibbitts reported she has researched alternative methods of communicating ‘In Memoriam’ within other associations. She will discuss an online option with the Communication Committee Chairs, Jon Cohen and Rich Morin and will report to the Council at the next meeting.

**F. *Survey Practice* Status**

This discussion was deferred to the December teleconference.

**G. Public Opinion and Leadership Task Force**

A proposal for the Public Opinion and Leadership Task Force was provided to Council for review and comments were forwarded to Frank Newport prior to this teleconference.

**Motion:** Roger Tourangeau moved, seconded by Reg Baker to accept the proposal to form the Public Opinion and Leadership Task Force, chaired by Frank Newport and Robert Shapiro. The motion was unanimously accepted.

**H. AAPOR Council Meeting Schedule**

The next scheduled Council meetings are as follows:

December 16, 2010 teleconference at Noon Eastern.

January 20, 2011, the Council will meet in Washington, D.C. for an all day meeting at Gallup Headquarters; time to be determined.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

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