American Association For Public Opinion Research
Executive Council Meeting
February 19, 2010
Minutes

ROLL CALL/CALL TO ORDER.

Peter Miller	President	Present
Frank Newport	Vice President	Present
Richard Kulka	Past President	Present
John Boyle	Secretary-Treasurer	Present
Barbara O'Hare	Associate Secretary-Treasurer	Absent
Stephen Blumberg	Standards Chair	Present
Reg Baker	Associate Standards Chair	Present
Michael Link	Conference Chair	Present
Rob Santos	Associate Conference Chair	Present
Nancy Whelchel	Membership & Chapter Relations Chair	Present
Kelly Foster	Associate Membership & Chapter Relations Chair	Absent
Michael Mokrzycki	Communications Chair	Present
Jon Cohen	Associate Communications Chair	Present
Paul Lavrakas	Councilor-at-Large	Absent
Roger Tourangeau	Councilor-at-Large	Present
John Waxman	Interim Executive Director	Present
Barbara Gunderson	Staff	Present

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 a.m. CST by Peter Miller.

AAPOR Minutes
The minutes of the January 14-15, 2010 Executive Council meeting were reviewed and minor corrections were made. Roger Tourangeau moved, seconded by Nancy Whelchel, that the revised minutes be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

A more succinct method of recording minutes was reviewed and discussed by the Council.

Discussion: It was noted that the Bylaws require an explanation of why decisions were made. The explanation does not need to be part of the minutes, but detailed minutes can be helpful since Council members change each year. Committee reports can be referenced by the minutes, but do not need to be part of the minutes. It is vital to capture the discussion and the basic logic for decisions made by the Council. Minutes often provide the rationale for decisions made and provide insight to future members of the Council. Recording the legislative history of Council decisions remains important. It is also important for Council decisions to be transparent to the membership.

Decision: The Council agreed the minutes will continue to reflect the rational for decisions made. Details of each discussion will be condensed and comments will no longer be attributed to individual Council members unless requested by the member. The minutes will continue to reflect whether the decision was agreed upon by the majority of Council members. Standards Committee records will be archived and will be available for future reference. Guidelines for minutes will also be developed to standardize the format for the future.

Treasurers Report

The 2009 Year End Report was reviewed by Council. This report has not yet been audited. The report shows total net assets of $804,406 as compared to $741,515 in 2008, this is an increase of more than $62K over 2008. Total net revenue over expenses is just under $63K as compared to $32K in 2008, resulting in a surplus added to our reserves. The final approved 2010 budget will be available on SharePoint soon.

Conference Report

The Preliminary Program is now available online. A "Register Now" post card will be mailed next week. Testing of the online registration is complete and set to open on Monday, February 22. Hotel registration is already open and 575 rooms have been booked to date. Our minimum requirement is 1500 rooms. Sponsorship is currently at $93K, the goal for 2010 budget is $110K. Exhibits have $11K with a budget of $12K. Advertising is currently at $5,675, exceeding the budgeted amount of $3,500. Total revenue is currently $109,675 against a budgeted amount of $125,500. The development committee will continue to try to secure several more sponsorships from previous contributors.

All presenters have received their abstract status letters. Deadline for speakers to confirm participation has passed and the program schedule is being finalized. We will begin work on the final program.

The Executive Council meeting held during the annual conference will most likely be on Wednesday afternoon. This is to be determined.

Twenty one student papers have been received for the Seymour Sudman Award. They are currently being scored and a decision is expected by mid-March. SSRS has been selected to conduct the Post Conference survey. In March work will begin on developing the draft questionnaire which will be reviewed by the Council.

Standards Report

The Online Task Force Report was distributed to Council prior to the teleconference. The Council complimented the Task Force on their efforts. Roger Tourangeau moved to have the Council endorse the document, seconded by Michael Link.

Discussion: It may not be appropriate for the Council to endorse the document at this point as the report is missing an executive summary. A number of revisions have been made based on comments previously submitted, but have not yet been incorporated into the report. The section on disclosure standards will be incorporated into the revisions made to the Standards Code. The two documents should be in sync, although the Task Force could recommend something that was not necessarily in the code. The report requires an executive summary and one more draft to reflect necessary changes. Names of the Task Force Members will be added to the report. The Council will review the more complete document at the next meeting.

Standards Code Review

In response to comments from the last Executive Council meeting, the Standards Committee and the Code Review Committee met and produced a consensus document on the revised code. Two major issues were raised concerning the reporting of sampling error and a two-tiered disclosure mechanism. On the issue of margin of error, the committees strongly recommended some prohibition of margin of sampling errors for non probability samples. There were some strong convictions that this is a pervasive problem and it warrants the specific language stated in the revised code. Alternative wording has been proposed by Council. The committee will respect the decision of the Council on the language used in the code.

Discussion: There was some agreement among Council members that adopting the original language makes the code too restrictive for the real world. It was suggested to take out the word "non-probability" and use only the term "online panels" or to use the wording in the conclusions from the Task Force: "*There currently is no generally accepted theoretical basis from which to claim that survey results using samples from non-probability online panels are projectable to the general population. Thus, claims of "representativeness" should be avoided when using these sample sources*".

The Council recommended using general language in the code and more specific language in the best practices document and the Task Force report. The danger of taking a strong stand in the code could result in an increase of standards complaints against anyone that claims a margin of error.

The majority of Council members were in favor of the proposed alternative language: *"When we use samples to make statements about populations, we shall only make claims of precision (such as margin of sampling error) that are warranted by the sampling frames and methods employed".*

In regard to standards for disclosure, a multi-tiered structure was recommended by the committees, although not by a unanimous decision. One concern of committee members was that the 30-day time frame was too long for disclosure to take place. Also, the two-tier approach may imply that some items are less important than others. The committee pointed out that all but two items should be available at the time the information is released. If these two items were dropped, 1) *the sampling frame's estimate coverage of the target population* and 2) *Details about the sample design*, there could be a one-tier method of disclosure.

The proposed two-tier structure was reviewed by Council and discussed. Most Council members agreed that all items listed are essential, and would concede that some elements do take longer to produce, but most things could be produced quickly if prepared to do so. There were some comments to the contrary from Council members who acknowledged that some items may take longer to produce. It was acknowledged that many of the answers to the items requested will be estimates and not complete detailed reports. These answers should be readily available in the first 30 days.

Decision: Council members were in favor of the two-tiered approach to standards disclosure. Council members were asked to review the revisions and consider which items are critical to evaluate the validity of the survey for the first tier requests and items such as complex sample weighting which could be produced during the second tier time frame. Comments should be provided to Stephen Blumberg before the next Council teleconference. The revised code will go to the membership for consideration after the Council has approved the revisions.

This item will be on the agenda at the next teleconference.

Communications Report
In the interest of time, the report on AAPOR archives was postponed until the next meeting of the Council. Newsletter assignments will be made next week following the Communication Committee meeting.

Presidents Report
AAPOR has been contacted by the Kuwaiti Consulate in regard to an educational opportunity for a delegation from that country who will be in the US in March. They are interested in learning about best practices and hope to set up a survey center in Kuwait. AAPOR would provide an overview of survey research, help in the development of an RFP, and provide US connections to AAPOR members who may be interested in the possibility of working with the Kuwaitis. AAPOR is interested in teaching best practices to all those who are interested. Peter Miller will negotiate the terms of the agreement which will

include payment for AAPOR services. The Council agreed to move forward if the Kuwaitis are receptive to the plan Peter sets forth. Instances of this type will be considered on a case-by-case basis, no precedent is being set for working with foreign governments.

Election Update
The 2010 Election slate was announced to the membership on February 16. During the 14-day time period, members have the opportunity to submit additional candidates, provided they are put forth in a petition from a minimum of 25 members. If this should occur, the Council will need to review the additional submissions for consideration.

Membership Report
AAPOR ended 2009 with a record number of members, 2,248. As of January 31, 67% of eligible members have already renewed membership. A last renewal reminder was sent on February 10. We expect to see the membership numbers increase with conference registrations.

Strategic Planning Task Force Report
The Strategic Planning Task Force met in Washington DC on February 18. The draft mission statement they developed was shared with Council members. Any additional comments from Council members regarding the mission statement should be sent to Roger Tourangeau before April 1. The Executive Council will meet in Washington DC on April 1 for a strategic planning session. Prior to the April 1 meeting, the Task Force will provide an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) facing AAPOR. They will also provide a rough draft outline for the strategic plan.

Cell Phone Task Force Report
The Cell Phone Task Force is continuing to work on its objectives. Paul Lavrakas will have a draft of their findings to present at a future meeting of the Council.

New Business
The search for an executive director for AAPOR continues. Peter Miller interviewed one candidate on February 18. The process will continue over the next several weeks.

Next Meeting
March 12, 2010	Executive Council Teleconference	11a.m. – 1 p.m. CST
April 1, 2010	Executive Council Strategic Planning Session	10 a.m. – 5 p.m. EST (DC)
April 16, 2010	Executive Council Teleconference	11 a.m. – 1 p.m. CST

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m. CST.