

**AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING
January 4-5, 2007
Washington, D.C.**

Executive Council Present:

Robert P. Daves – President
Nancy Mathiowetz – Vice President/President Elect
Cliff Zukin – Past President
Paul C. Beatty - Secretary-Treasurer
Dawn V. Nelson – Associate Secretary/Treasurer
Patricia Moy – Conference Chair
Frank M. Newport – Associate Conference Chair
Thomas Guterbock – Standards Chair
Charlotte G. Steeh – Associate Standards Chair
Katherine (Kat) Draughon – Membership and Chapter Relations Chair
Carl Ramirez – Associate Membership and Chapter Relations Chair
Steve Everett – Publications and Information Chair
Mark M. Blumenthal – Associate Publications and Information Chair
Robert Y. Shapiro – Councilor-at-Large

Council Members Absent:

Mark Schulman – Councilor-at-Large – **joined via phone at 11:30 a.m. on Jan 4th.**

AAPOR Executive Office Staff:

Michael P. Flanagan – Executive Coordinator

Guests:

Nancy L. Whelchel - Conference Operations Committee Chair
Patricia Lewis – Communications Director—**January 5th 12 noon – 1 p.m.**

President Rob Daves called the meeting called to order at 10:15 a.m. EST. Rob thanked Gallup and Frank Newport for hosting the Council meeting once again.

Rob asked if there were any changes, additions or deletions to the proposed meeting agenda. There were none and the agenda was adopted as presented.

Secretary's Report – Paul Beatty

Paul Beatty asked if there were any changes to be made to the minutes of the AAPOR Executive Council meeting on September 28-29, 2006. Dawn Nelson said that she had a few minor additions and corrections. Paul Beatty and Dawn Nelson will modify the

minutes off line.

RESOLVED to accept the September 28-29, 2006 minutes as edited by Paul Beatty and Dawn Nelson. Motion made by Dawn Nelson and seconded by Charlotte Steeh. Motion passed unanimously.

Paul reviewed the To Do list from the previous meeting and solicited updates from Council members.

The following three motions had been made and voted on electronically via CouncilNet between the September 2006 and January 2007 Council meetings. Each of these motions were formally ratified and entered into January minutes:

RESOLVED that AAPOR increase conference registrations by \$50 over the 2006 amounts for most attendees, rather than the \$25 previously agreed upon; and that AAPOR increase the amount for students by \$25, rather than zero as previously agreed upon. Honorary lifetime members would not see any increase. Motion made by Paul Beatty and seconded by Rob Daves. Electronic balloting began on October 31, 2006 and ended on November 2, 2006. 12 votes were in favor, 1 vote against, 1 abstention, and 1 did not vote. Motion passed.

RESOLVED that Council will instruct AMP to send the 2010 Conference RFP to Chicago, Philadelphia and Denver. Motion made by Kat Draughon and seconded by Rob Daves. 11 votes were in favor, 1 vote against, 1 abstention, and 2 did not vote. Motion passed.

RESOLVED that we approve the Chicago Marriott as the 2010 Conference site and authorize negotiation of a contract, as recommended by Nancy Whelchel.

Motion made by Nancy Mathiowetz and seconded by Rod Daves. 13 votes were in favor and 2 did not vote. Motion passed.

Executive Office Report – Michael Flanagan

Mike Flanagan said that the AAPOR Directory and the AAPOR/WAPOR Blue Book had been printed and were ready to mail out to all AAPOR members in good standing. We are waiting for the Standards booklet to be printed so that all three can be mailed together to minimize postage costs. The mailing will go out in January.

The AMP Accounting Department is working on closing out Fiscal Year 2006 and should have a final accounting by the end of January. AAPOR is on the cash basis of accounting. However, in the 12th month of each fiscal year AAPOR moves to the modified accrual basis of accounting. This allows revenues and expenses to be accounted for in the appropriate year. Mike asked Council members to submit any outstanding expenses from 2006 as soon as possible so they can be reflected in the appropriate year.

The AAPOR Executive Office staff has been working with Patricia Moy on the front matter for the AAPOR Annual Conference Preliminary Program. They have also been working on getting menu prices and finalizing other functions of the upcoming annual conference.

The Executive Office sent out RFPs for the 2010 annual conference, and negotiated contracts for both the 2009 and 2010 annual conferences prior to the end of 2006.

Mike Flanagan reported that conference sponsorships and exhibitors are at about the same level as they were this time last year.

Dawn Nelson asked if AAPOR, as a 501(c)3 organization, needed to keep track of volunteer time revenue for accounting purposes. Mike Flanagan said that he was unaware of any such requirements. Rob Daves asked Mike Flanagan to check with individuals at AMP as to whether we are doing all the things that we are required to do in order to comply with the tax laws for volunteer hours. Mike Flanagan should also ask the Accounting Department if member donations of time, mileage and other expenses could be considered tax deductible. If appropriate, Kat Draughon, Carl Ramirez and Mike Flanagan will work on the memorandum to the AAPOR membership.

President's Report – Rob Daves:

Rob Daves reported that AAPOR has made an offer to Patricia Lewis to be AAPOR's first Communications Director. Rob reported that all who went through the interviewing process were very positive about her potential contributions to AAPOR. Patricia has not yet formally accepted, but we have a tentative agreement with Patricia and have concluded negotiations regarding salary and benefits, which will be within budget for the position.

AMP is doing the background check on Patricia Lewis and they are looking over the employment letter. It is possible that we could have a final offer and agreement as early as next week, and that Patricia Lewis could start in mid to late January. Rob Daves added that we had a number of strong applications for the job, and two that were exceptional, but Patricia Lewis was the top choice. Cliff Zukin added that Patricia Lewis has an excellent understanding of Washington politics and polling, and that she will make a great contribution to AAPOR.

After Patricia Lewis formally accepts, Mike Flanagan will begin the process of notifying the candidates that were not selected.

Rob Daves reported that Cliff Zukin has agreed to Chair the Policy Impact Committee, and that Scott Keeter will chair the AAPOR Book Award Committee. Rob reported that he has received a number of nominations for the AAPOR Award.

Rob Daves reported that the E-zine Oversight Committee will include Mark Blumenthal (who will chair), Nora Cate Schaeffer, Mark Schulman, and Nancy Mathiowetz.

Rob Daves also reported that Betsy Martin plans to retire this year and has suggested that Stan Presser should replace her as AAPOR Representative on the COSSA Board. Stan has agreed to take on this role.

Jennifer Rothgeb, Chair of the Endowment Committee, has worked with AMP to come up with a letter thanking donors for their contributions, both for tax and recognition purposes. Rob Daves reported that any donors who make contributions of \$500 or more will receive a thank you note from the AAPOR President. There was discussion about recognizing donors on a web page. Rob Daves noted that we would want to make sure donors were willing before posting their names.

Rob Daves said that the AAPOR website includes a great deal of valuable information for journalists, but there has never been one group that takes charge of identifying position papers that AAPOR should have on the web site. Rob suggested that it is time to assemble a committee to formally review the position papers we have and what other position papers are needed. It is especially important to get this material organized in advance of the 2008 elections. Rob Daves will appoint this committee, and asked the Executive Council for candidates who can both identify topics and write the papers. He would like to propose committee membership at the March Council meeting. Rob expressed a goal of identifying key position papers and having them written and posted by the end of 2007.

Rob Daves said that there is a need to assemble information about poll performance. NCPP reports on the accuracy of polls in each election cycle, but it would be useful to make more detailed information available to the public through our web site. Nancy Mathiowetz and Mark Blumenthal agreed to compile information on which polls are doing well and which are not. Nancy Mathiowetz noted that Mark Blumenthal already has some of this information on his web site, but they would like to provide more methodological details. Some of Nancy's students are contributing to this effort.

Rob Daves said that during the July Council meeting there was an Executive Session about AAPOR's relationship with AMP. Rob Daves reported that since then he has had conversations with AMP staff that have centered on two key topics. One issue is the amount of time that AMP staff devotes to AAPOR. AMP is under contract to perform certain tasks that are assumed to take a particular amount of time. AAPOR is notified through quarterly reports how closely actual time spent lines up with projections; sometimes these reports indicate that AMP is performing more work than they agreed to do. AMP performs the contracted tasks, but we need to recognize that their resources do have limits. Some special tasks beyond the scope of the contract require additional agreements signed by the AAPOR president.

The second issue discussed with AMP involves the quality of their work. Council members have expressed some concerns with things such as accuracy of documents

prepared by AMP. Mike Flanagan, Cathy Berra and Dede Gish Panjada have come up with a number of recommendations. Everyone involved in these conversations has agreed that constant passing of documents back and forth creates much potential for confusion and error. To avoid that, we will explore the use of Share Point or a similar program to provide a home for master copies of documents. Rob also has decided that AAPOR Committee Chairs are to have responsibility for final sign-off for any documents related to their positions. Their final sign-off means that it is officially approved. If any Chair is to be out of contact for any significant length, he or she should delegate approval authority to the Associate Chair and inform AMP about the delegated authority.

We also plan to review the data that we ask AMP to collect. Some of these data may not be very useful and could potentially be dropped. Rob Daves will work with the Membership and Conference Committees to review what data are collected now and make suggestions for items to drop.

Rob Daves said that his discussions with AMP also addressed some personnel issues related to communication and meeting planning. He believes these issues have been resolved.

Rob also asked that if Council members need any administrative assistance, they should submit their requests to Mike Flanagan. That way, Mike can review and monitor the work and the workload of AMP staff. If it is simply a request for information, that can be cc:ed to Mike.

Rob Daves said that the discussions with AMP were quite stern and he is hopeful that they will lead to improved communication. If anyone wants to know further details, they should contact Rob directly.

Past Presidents Report – Cliff Zukin:

Cliff Zukin said that he did not have anything to report.

Vice President/President Elect's report – Nancy Mathiowetz:

Nancy Mathiowetz reported that Mollyann Brodie has finalized and circulated Short Course offerings for the 2007 Conference, as well as details regarding the professional development breakfast. Nancy said that it is a very strong slate, and also noted that courses will partially overlap with conference sessions.

Nancy Mathiowetz said that several Long Range Planning activities are happening. One involves outreach to journalists. Along those lines, a meeting is planned at the Poynter Institute to discuss interfacing with journalists regarding 2008 elections. Rob Daves noted that the Poynter Institute is a premier higher-education institution and key contact for journalists—our link with them may prove to be important and influential.

Another Long Range Planning initiative involves expanding our educational offerings to our members. Mollyann Brodie is exploring other means of getting Short Courses to our members, in addition to the possibility of sharing course offerings with other organizations. There are a number of other possibilities. The educational offerings provided by the American Psychological Association were mentioned as a possible model of what we could ultimately offer.

Charlotte Steeh asked how decisions were made about the Short Courses and their instructors, and expressed some concerns about whether the strongest instructors had been picked for one of the courses. Nancy Mathiowetz replied that a call for short course offerings was sent out, and a couple suggestions were submitted; then, the Education Committee reviewed post-conference surveys and past offerings, and brainstormed about new possibilities for both courses and instructors. Nancy said that she did not know how the particular instructors Charlotte referred to were recruited, but will relay the concern to the Education Committee.

Membership and Chapter Relations Committee Report – Kat Draughon:

Kat Draughon said that as of December 31, 2006, AAPOR has 2,047 members, which is an increase of 65 members from one year earlier. Kat Draughon said that most of the membership areas are maintaining consistent numbers, and that academics had increased by 80. Mike Flanagan noted that membership numbers will decline at the end of the month, when non-renewing members are dropped from the rosters.

Kat Draughon talked about Incorporation and insurance for the Regional Chapters. PAPOR, SAPOR, DC-AAPOR, and NY-AAPOR have incorporated and are pursuing the additional insurance. MAPOR is still considering incorporation. The only chapters to decline are the New England and New Jersey Chapters. On the whole, Kat indicated that the chapters have been very pleased by the offer and feel that the national organization is helping them get to a more secure and more legitimate status. Kat also reported that chapters have shown a renewed commitment to updating their information to the AAPOR Executive Office.

Kat reported that she represented the Membership and Chapter Relations Committee at the recent MAPOR Conference, and thought that the trip was very good for strengthening our relationship with the chapter. Generally our face-to-face interactions with chapters are limited to one lunch at the national organization's annual conference.

Kat Draughon reported that she has been working on an AAPOR member survey (which will actually be a census, as all members will be invited to participate). Dawn Nelson had identified the 1995 membership survey that will serve as a base, and some new items will be added. The main objective of the survey is to identify what members find valuable about their membership with AAPOR (e.g., what services do they find most useful and important, and what else could we be doing that is of interest, including what

news or information members would like AAPOR to provide). We are also interested in finding what members get out of the conference—is it education, renewal of friendships, or other factors; also, what do they think about the size, formality, and cost of the conference. For those who do not attend the conference, we want to know why not. We want to learn about their involvement in regional chapters and in other organizations. There will be questions about what members think about our means of transmitting information, including likes and dislikes about the website, and preferences for receiving publications such as the membership directory.

Kat plans to administer the survey through the web, and recommends that it should be repeated every five years. If anyone would like to propose additional questions for the survey, they should contact Kat within the next two weeks.

Steve Everett commented that a hard-copy version may also be necessary so we do not exclude the less web-literate members of our membership.

Cliff Zukin asked if the survey data could be linked to other information we have from members in existing databases. There was discussion about whether this could and should be done. Nancy Mathiowetz, Kat Draughon and Steve Everett will work together to explore confidentiality and disclosure issues before making any decisions along those lines.

There was discussion that the Membership Survey should also be sent to members who had not renewed during the past three years. This would be useful for understanding member retention, which was an element of the Long Range Plan.

Carl Ramirez reported on efforts at outreach to our sister organizations. We have been reaching out to two associations in particular and five sections within them. A number of other associations have overlapping interests and memberships, but these groups seemed to have very clear links to our mission and seemed like a useful starting point for recruiting new members.

Carl also reported that we received about 50 responses to a blast email about other associations that our members belong to. One group with particular overlap is the APSA's section on Elections, Public Opinion and Voting Behavior. As we identify groups with shared memberships, it becomes more feasible to discuss our shared interests with leadership of other associations and discuss issues regarding dual memberships.

Cliff Zukin commented that we could tailor our POQ ad to the journals of some of these related associations.

Carl Ramirez said that there are some other things we could do, such as sharing conference exhibit space, making room for membership booths, and trading membership lists. We have already done some of these things with MRA. We could also create educational exchange opportunities, letting members of other associations have member rates on short courses.

Carl Ramirez said that there has been some interest in AAPOR offering professional liability insurance. Mike Flanagan said that he has checked with AAPOR's Insurance Brokerage firm, and they said AAPOR is not large enough at present for this to be feasible.

Senior Councilor-at-Large Report – Bob Shapiro:

Bob Shapiro said that Dick Kulka's term on the POQ Advisory Board is over. Peter Miller has proposed adding Christopher Wlezien from Temple University.

RESOLVED that we appoint Christopher Wlezien as a member of the POQ Advisory Board. Motion made by Bob Shapiro and seconded by Patricia Moy. Motion passed unanimously.

Bob Shapiro said that there are some new members on the Innovators Award committee, and several nominations have already been received. Bob Shapiro noted that no award was given in 2006, making it important to make an award this year. The award can recognize individuals for innovations made in the past ten years, or innovations whose impact has been primarily felt in that timeframe.

Junior Councilor-at-Large Report - Mark Schulman.

Mark Schulman reported that Rob Daves asked him to serve AAPOR's representative on the CMOR Board. The first meeting will be on Tuesday, January 9. Mark discussed the value in strengthening our relationships with CMOR and CASRO. Mark briefly described the history of the two organizations and our relationship with both. Both organizations have government affairs offices that pay close attention to government regulation and legislation issues, and we could do a better job coordinating with them and disseminating information from them to our members.

CMOR has recently completed a survey on respondent cooperation, which has been tracking attitudes toward polling and related issues. The data should be available in 3-4 weeks, and Mark will make sure the results are disseminated to AAPOR members when they become available.

Rob Daves noted that Mark Schulman has extensive knowledge about these two organizations, and thanked him for his willingness to serve as AAPOR's representative. Rob also noted that CASRO seems to be positioning itself as the group most heavily involved in ISO Certification in the U.S. Mark Schulman will work toward keeping communications open with them as this process develops.

Dawn Nelson asked whether there is a master list of organizations such as COSSA and COPAFS that we have formal alliances with, along with pertinent details such as who our

representatives are, what their terms of office are, how they were appointed, and so on. Rob said he would compile such a list.

Rob Daves made one additional announcement: Claudia Deane will co-chair the Heritage Interview Committee. Council then broke for lunch.

Nominations for Elections – Cliff Zukin

Upon returning from lunch, Council went into executive session to discuss nominees for the 2007 Council elections. The Executive Council returned to regular session at 4:35 p.m.

Standard Committee Report – Tom Guterbock:

Tom Guterbock reported that there are no new or pending Standards cases.

The Council went into executive session at 4:37 to discuss matters related to earlier AAPOR Standards cases. Council returned to regular session at 4:47 PM.

Tom Guterbock said that a Disclosure FAQ document has been created as a result of some recent standards cases. This will eventually be posted on our web site. One issue related to this that has come up is whether it is necessary to disclose the existence of questions on a survey if responses to those particular questions were never released. Such questions could still be relevant if they led to context effects on the questions that were released. Concerns were raised about creating a blanket statement suggesting that researchers have no responsibility to discuss such questions, as such a statement could be abused to hide important information. Some related concerns were raised about disclosure of survey introductions and means for defining “likely voters” that can lead to radically different survey results, but the details are sometimes seen as proprietary. There was additional discussion about nondisclosure of data as opposed to nondisclosure of questions.

Tom Guterbock said that he would rework some of the language in the FAQ and resubmit it to Council. Council emphasized that on the whole the FAQ was a very useful step forward and thanked Tom for his efforts.

The AAPOR Executive Council adjourned at 5:10 p.m. EST.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING
January 5, 2007
Washington, D.C.

President Rob Daves called the Executive Council to order at 8:36 a.m. EST.

The Executive Council continued the Standards Committee discussions of the previous day. Discussion focused on several key issues:

Solicitations to make money as a survey respondent

Charlotte Steeh received a complaint from an individual who responded to a solicitation to be paid for survey responses, if s/he paid a sign-up fee of \$35. Since signing up, the individual has received nothing. Charlotte signed on to the site and determined that it is a scam. Investigating further, Charlotte discovered that there are hundreds of these sites on the web, and also a number of sites that evaluate which of the solicitations are legitimate. The evaluation sites are not always in agreement in this regard.

Charlotte Steeh contacted CMOR to see if they have done anything about such solicitations, and found that they had written a position paper on this in the late 1990's. There was also talk about creating a web site where people could talk about their experiences and evaluate how legitimate they were, but there were some questions about the effort required to do this, as well as liability concerns. Nancy Mathiowetz asked if this was a consumer fraud issue that should be addressed by state attorney generals. Charlotte indicated that in such cases, there needs to be proof of injury—the process is long, and not always that successful.

There was discussion about paying the start up fee of \$35 for several people and doing case studies. Results could be posted on our web site, or we could ultimately issue a press release—this is a good example of something our Communications Director will be able to help with. Tom Guterbock noted that not all of these solicitations are scams; also, we cannot legitimately claim that it is impossible to make money through them. We just want to warn people that they should be wary and should investigate these companies' claims before giving them money. There were also concerns that tracking and reporting on all of these solicitations is more than we could realistically take on. Still, discussions on this topic are taking place with our without us, and we should be involved in some capacity. Ultimately it was concluded that:

1. The Standards Committee should do some case studies with the goal of leading toward a press release.
2. In the longer term, we might consider collaborating with CMOR and/or CASRO on a web site that evaluates these solicitations.

Message Testing Polls

Tom Guterbock recently had a conference call with some representatives of some major political polling firms to talk about issues related to political message testing polls. Tom circulated some thoughts related to these discussions to the Executive Council. Generally, the representatives Tom talked with did not see this as a serious problem. Message testing does occur, and the phrasing of the questions varies. However, all of the representatives were sensitive to their activities being labeled as push polling. They condemn push polling and are frustrated that there is no clear way to distinguish what they do from push polls. Rob Daves commented that message testing is an accepted practice in general, but some variants of the practice are not legitimate and not acceptable. Differentiating the good and the bad is a challenge.

Tom Guterbock suggested to the political pollsters he talked with that the use of deception poses some ethical concerns. They replied that message testing does not use anything that cannot be backed up as fact. Tom suggested to Council that the whole discussion might be rephrased as an informed consent issue, i.e., it might be useful to tell respondents that the survey will be testing their reactions to particular messages. It is difficult for respondents to make sense of politically charged statements when they are presented without such a context. It would be useful if we had evidence that respondents cannot distinguish push polls from message testing, or that respondents are disturbed by the messages that are being tested. Data may be there, but no one has identified and assembled systematic evidence along these lines.

Tom Guterbock reported that we are contacted perhaps 10-12 times in each campaign season with concerns that message testing polls may be push polls, and there are numerous news stories on the subject as well. There was agreement that this is an important issue, but there was no clear consensus on next steps. Rob Daves asked Tom Guterbock to continue to study the issue and return with a more specific plan for Council to consider. One thing that might be valuable is to come up with a proposal for Best Practices in this area. Rob suggested that Mark Blumenthal might be able to help with this.

ISO

Tom Guterbock said that the International Standards Organization (ISO) has approved and adopted standards for survey enterprises. Reg Baker, AAPOR's liaison, attended the discussions in New York in November that led to the adoption of the standards. These standards now have to be implemented. There will be procedures through which researchers can become certified as compliant with the procedures.

Tom clarified that ISO does not do the certification—they just set the standards. It is still to be decided how this is to be done and who will do it. There has been considerable interest in following the British model in this regard. Once people get certified, they pay fees that support the costs of perpetuating the process.

We need to consider what AAPOR's role should be with regard to standards and certification. One option is to let CASRO handle it, but doing so could mean that

procedures that are established might reflect market research norms more than our usual work. Rob Daves noted that if we do nothing, CASRO will likely remain the dominant presence in this process. Another possibility is to establish a certifying organization that includes representatives of AAPOR, CASRO, CMOR, and MRA. Tom Smith, Reg Baker and Tom Guterbock think this idea has merits, but it would cost AAPOR money. Dawn Nelson noted that AStatA has been following this situation as well and it might be useful to coordinate with them.

Bob Shapiro asked why U.S. organizations would need to pay attention to ISO. Tom Guterbock responded that RFP's may specify that ISO certification is a plus, especially for international work. But Tom also noted that we have little information about how much attention U.S. firms are paying to these developments. Tom Guterbock will continue to monitor developments and will report on this again at the March Executive Council meeting.

Other issues

There was discussion following up on the standards case that was discussed at the September Executive Council meeting. Current procedures would call for us to notify the complainant if AAPOR decides on private censure. Tom Guterbock suggested modifying this procedure to make private censure truly private—that is, the complainant would be simply notified that AAPOR does not plan to take public action at this time. Tom will put out a memo to this effect and ask Council if this is worth considering further. There was discussion as to whether standards cases should have a primarily educational role, leading more to a illustrating key issues rather than publicly “naming names” of violators. This discussion will continue.

Charlotte Steeh advised the Executive Council that the revised Standards Booklet has been completed. It is currently being printed and will be mailed by the end of January. The first pages were passed around to the Executive Council, along with the Blue Book and Member Directory.

Charlotte Steeh said that there was one complaint about the inappropriate use of AAPOR's name. Charlotte talked with the relevant party and the matter was promptly resolved.

Charlotte Steeh also discussed a situation with an organization that she thought should be disclosing more information about their methods. She asked whether she could initiate an investigation herself, without receiving a complaint. It was concluded that this was acceptable.

Tom Guterbock talked about issue raised by Jim Wolf about plagiarism of responses to RFPs. Although such proposals are protected by copyright, Jim Wolf provided a copyright notice that could be added. This could be a useful precautionary measure, and could be posted on our web site.

Treasurer's Report – Paul Beatty:

Paul Beatty said that AAPOR has just started Fiscal Year 2007, the first full year since we changed the beginning of the fiscal year to January.

Although the 2006 half-year has been completed, Paul does not have final statements from the year and will report on them during the March Executive Council meeting. However, it does appear that that we are in better financial shape than we expected to be at this point. Some major expenditures have not started yet (e.g., the e-zine and Communications Director) and some revenues have been higher than we expected. So while the budget is still in deficit, we are starting 2007 from a very strong position.

Paul reported that as of November 30, our net assets are \$681,656. Our total assets, including some funds that will only be counted in 2007, are \$787,231.

Paul Beatty said that the major task that we had taken on since the last Executive Council meeting was to assemble a subcommittee to re-evaluate the conference budget and increase its profitability. The subcommittee has discussed the budget through a conference call and emails. In terms of expenses, there are not many obvious reductions, although some items of questionable value have been cut (e.g., the conference poster and the Banquet program book). Some longer-term possibilities include doing more competitive bidding for services such as printing. With various budget cuts and modifications, the final revision of the conference budget projects a profit of \$71,179. This estimate is probably conservative, reflecting attendance of 800 people and assuming “worst case” on some expenses. Overall, changes to the Conference Budget point to a deficit in the 2007 AAPOR Operating Budget of \$54,533.

One conclusion of the subcommittee was that we might want to re-think our approach to sponsorships. An alternative model would be to solicit general sponsorships at various support levels rather than sponsorships that pay for a specific event or service. Missy Johnson has said that this is how most organizations do it. The overall conference budget could be arranged such that actual expenses and revenues (minus sponsorships) were about equal, and sponsorships would be our profit.

The subcommittee will continue to monitor possibilities for competitive bidding, trimming of A/V, and boosting sponsorships. The comment was made that the current financial information that AAPOR receives makes it difficult to analyze costs in depth. Mike Flanagan said that AMP is willing to provide whatever information AAPOR asks for, but it still must take into account the limitations of the hotel bill itself, which lacks specificity in some areas.

Rob Daves asked the subcommittee to continue its analysis and meet again prior to the March Executive Council meeting.

Paul Beatty discussed the budget line item for the special edition of POQ. The Executive Council agreed to drop the special issue from the 2007 Budget at its September meeting, but several Council members asked to revisit the issue. Paul Beatty commented that our current financial status is strong, but we do need to be concerned about the longer-term effects of deficit spending.

RESOLVED to fund the 2007 Special Edition of POQ for a cost between \$12,000 and \$15,000. Motion made by Cliff Zukin and seconded by and Nancy Mathiowetz. Motion passed with one vote opposed, one abstention, and the rest in favor.

Nancy Mathiowetz reminded Council that we need to make a decision this quarter as to whether we plan to solicit alternative bids to our POQ contract with Oxford University Press. The contract expires at the end of 2008, but if we plan to seek other bids Oxford must be notified by the end of this year. Cliff Zukin said that he would ask the POQ Advisory Committee for their recommendation regarding how to proceed.

Annual Conference Report – Patricia Moy:

Patricia Moy said that AAPOR has received 457 paper proposal submissions. This was a surprisingly high number—in fact, higher than last year, which was a WAPOR year. Patricia has recruited 137 reviewers, each of whom needed to review about 10 abstracts. Of the total, 43 submissions were rejected. Patricia said that no more than two papers by the same first author were accepted, and no panels of single-institution authors were accepted. She and Frank have been working to establish some general thematic tracks. A new feature this year will be “Methodological Briefs,” which serve as a means to disseminate results of small studies and single findings.

Discussions with potential plenary speakers have been complicated. Patricia approached David Gergen, but his agent responded that his \$34,000 fee was non-negotiable, and this is clearly outside our range. Bill McInturff was initially enthusiastic, so Patricia started to look for a Democrat to balance the panel. Geoff Garin agreed, but then McInturff had to back out for personal reasons. Dave Sackett from the Tarrance Group signed on to represent the Republican side, and then Garin had to back out. Then, Mark Mellman accepted on the Democratic side. Both Mellman and Sackett have agreed to participate for no honorarium other than actual expenses. The Plenary is usually after dinner, but since there is no group meal on Thursday evening, it will take the place of the last breakout on that day.

There was discussion of offering the speakers an advance or honorarium of \$500 to secure their involvement. Mike Flanagan will work with Patricia to explore options for this.

Patricia Moy said that acceptance and rejection letters will be sent via email on Monday. The preliminary program will go out in February.

Conference Operations Report – Nancy Whelchel:

Nancy Whelchel thanked the Council for providing speedy approval of the 2010 recommendation for Chicago. We now have a signed contract with the Chicago Marriott.

Nancy Whelchel commented that it is in AAPOR's best interests to negotiate contracts at the end of calendar years. This means that we might want to routinely decide on which sites are worth exploring during our September meeting.

Nancy said that it is limiting to send conference RFPs to only three cities, as stipulated in the AMP contract, and she suggested that it would be useful to renegotiate this with AMP. She also suggested that contract language specifying that site selection should only be conducted 2-3 years in advance of the conference date is not realistic and should be changed. Rob Daves said that he will talk with Cathy Berra about the mechanisms for making some changes along these lines.

Nancy Whelchel said that the preliminary program is on schedule and that the editorial process for the program has been streamlined. There are many schedule changes due to the earlier start date of the conference. There will be short courses on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. A poster session has been added, and there will be fewer posters per session. The Presidential luncheon will be on Friday.

There will also be a number of special meetings; Nancy Whelchel will draft some language regarding how to request space for meetings or other special events.

Nancy Whelchel said that there will be no core evening meals, except for the Saturday Awards Banquet. On Wednesday evening there will be a dessert reception and cash bar. There will be an all-Chapter reception on another evening, and Chapter presidents will be contacted about the logistics.

Nancy said that a number of Conference Operations decisions have eased strains on the budget. The Pre-Con site visit and Conference Planning Meeting can be combined as they were last year. The 2010 site visits did not require any travel expenses. Trimming pages in the conference program will also save money. Monitoring meal expenses will be easier than last year in Montreal, now that exchange rates will not be an issue. Conference Operations is trying to be frugal with refreshment breaks, but Nancy noted that with beverages being the most expensive part, there is not much potential for saving by reducing food. Nancy said that our A/V contract is providing us with a very good deal. One additional expense is that the hotel in Anaheim will charge us for bartenders and cashiers; these fees have usually been waived given a certain level of sales.

Nancy said that a number of big ticket sponsorships have been sold thus far, including Wi-Fi access and a Cybercafe. In all we have \$62,000 of sponsorships, which is somewhat less than we had this time last year. However, there is still much potential for

additional sales. We also have 32 exhibit booths, 17 of which have been filled so far. Of the 15 remaining, 8 are to be filled with sponsors and the other 7 by non-sponsors.

Regarding social events: the Golf Outing will be on Wednesday afternoon. The Pub Crawl will be held on Thursday night, and there will be a baseball outing on Friday. As for a post-Banquet party, a Hollywood theme arranged through convention services proved to be prohibitively expensive. Nancy said that she has been exploring a beach theme with an arcade. There was some discussion about the value of making the party as interactive as possible, involving group activities.

Nancy encouraged Council members to serve as docents—there will be an opportunity to sign up on the registration form. This year, first-time attendees will also have the chance to opt out of receiving a docent if they prefer.

Finally, any Council member who has ideas about who would be a good candidate for working on sponsorship issues should contact Patricia Moy.

Patricia Lewis, AAPOR Communications Director-designate

Patricia Lewis, who has been offered the position of AAPOR Communications Director, joined the Executive Council for lunch and had some discussions with Council members. A brief question and answer period followed. The Communications Director will report directly to the AAPOR President.

Publications and Information Committee Chair's Report – Steve Everett:

Following up on discussions about communications, Steve Everett suggested that it might be useful to have email addresses ending with “AAPOR.org” for Patricia Lewis, Council members, and others relevant parties with a role in AAPOR. This would be easy to accomplish.

Mark Blumenthal discussed the usability study regarding our web site that was conducted by Westat on a pro bono basis. The project report was well done and very thorough, and Mark recommended that AAPOR should send a formal thank-you note to the president of Westat. The usability study consisted of two parts: first, a card sort was used to evaluate the site's organizational structure. Second, participants were given a series of tasks related to the web site and were observed while they tried to carry these out.

Adding a search box to the site would be one easy improvement to make. The study also suggested some tweaks that might make the overall organization more sensible to users. A feature to help find research firms by keywords or specialties would be useful. It would also be useful to create a mechanism to allow users to report problems they have with tasks such as membership renewal. This could entail building a quick link that goes to the webmaster. It might be useful to rethink how news updates and member

communications are presented. Some important communications are not included on the web site at this time, such as blast emails. Council expressed agreement with the recommendations presented by Steve and Mark, and asked them to proceed with changes.

On a related note, Mark Blumenthal asked whether it would be better to spend our resources keeping the web site up-to-date than to put together the newsletter that comes out twice a year. The web site and forthcoming E-Zine might prove to be more important means of conveying useful information.

Charlotte Steeh asked whether it would be possible for the Members Only section to include articles that had been accepted into POQ but that were not yet in print. Charlotte noted that some articles become obsolete during the time it takes to get them into print. Bob Shapiro will raise this query with the POQ Advisory Committee.

Steve Everett reported that AAPOR has moved the web site from ANSI On-Line to Knowledge Folks. There were some minor problems in the transition, such as links that did not work, but Knowledge Folks are working on these.

Knowledge Folks originally said that they could host the AAPORNet listserv as part of their offering, but because of extra server requirements it would actually cost an additional \$100 per month. Steve Everett has spoken with Shap Wolf, who said that the need to leave ASU is not as urgent as it initially appeared to be.

Steve Everett reported that there is a package built on L-Soft architecture that appears to be feasible for our purposes. However, this would require a \$1,300 set up fee and \$400 a year server hosting fees. The new system sets up a virtual community which could also be tied into our membership database. It could be tested on CouncilNet rather than full AAPORNet as a first step, but any test of the system would require the initial investment of \$1,300. Cliff Zukin expressed reservations about investing in this without a performance contract, in case it did not live up to expectations. Steve Everett and Mike Flanagan will propose such a contract to the Three Presidents before going further. There is also the possibility of using a free system at Rutgers as an alternative.

Steve Everett reported that the situation with Public Opinion Pros has changed since our last meeting. Lisa Parmalee now plans to make the publication free to everyone. There was some discussion as to whether this publication will conflict with our own E-Zine. It was also not clear what Lisa Parmalee would like us to do. Steve Everett will ask Lisa if she has a specific proposal for the Executive Council to consider.

Steve Everett said that he has not completed the Blue Book effectiveness assessment that he agreed to take on, but this is the next task that he plans to work on. Steve noted that it costs approximately \$8,600 to print and ship the Blue Book each year.

Mark Blumenthal said that a brief conference call had been held with the E-Zine oversight committee. Although the Executive Council raised some concerns about the name *Survey Practice*, the E-Zine Oversight Committee would like to stick with that

name, without a subtitle. Mark Blumenthal reported that some preliminary research was done about the name—no one seems to have been confused by it or found it inappropriate.

RESOLVED that the name of the new E-Zine newsletter be called *Survey Practice*. Motion made by Mark Blumenthal and seconded by Cliff Zukin. Motion passed with one abstention.

Mark Blumenthal said that John Kennedy, Editor of *Survey Practice*, was asked if there was anything he needed from AAPOR in order to move forward. John did not have any requests. The Executive Council is eager to see the first products of this endeavor, as it was approved seven months ago. There was also discussion that the E-Zine will be evaluated after the beginning of an introductory period.

Rob Daves noted that one recommendation of the Long Range Plan was to change the Publications and Information Committee into the Communications Committee. The By-Laws will need to be changed to accomplish this, which will require a certain percentage of the membership to vote. This can be done electronically, and will probably be linked to the election of the next Executive Council.

New Business:

Last May, Brad Edwards said that he would ask the AAPOR Executive Council for seed money to help put together a conference on international and multi-cultural survey methods to be held in Berlin in 2008. Rob Daves has now received the formal request, which asks for \$10,000. It was not immediately clear what AAPOR would receive in return for its initial investment. It was also not completely clear whether a lesser amount would be acceptable. Tom Guterbock proposed a motion that allowing for Rob Daves to negotiate up to \$7,500 with the stipulation that AAPOR should receive a portion of the profits and royalties, and receive exhibit space at the conference. After discussion, the motion was tabled pending additional information from Brad Edwards.

Rob Daves said that Patricia Lewis' background check has been completed and came out fine. A formal offer of employment is now in the works. It was decided that Patricia Lewis would actually be an AAPOR employee, rather than working for AMP, another employer, or as an independent contractor. Her salary and benefits will be within the budget for the position. The contract will call for a two-week notice for either party to terminate the contract. It is possible that future salary increases may be contingent upon successful fund raising.

Dawn Nelson mentioned that the web site currently posts AAPOR Executive Council minutes in a public area, and raised the question as to whether it would be more appropriate to post them in a "Members Only" section. After some discussion, it was decided to table this discussion until later.

Rob Daves raised the issue of whether our next Council meeting should be held in Washington DC or New York City. It was decided that DC would be more cost-effective. The meeting will begin with lunch on March 15th and continue all day on March 16th.

RESOLVED to adjourn the Executive Council meeting. Motion made by Nancy Mathiowetz and seconded by Bob Shapiro. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m. EST.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul C. Beatty
Secretary-Treasurer