

**American Association For Public Opinion Research  
Annual Business Meeting  
May 15, 2010**

**Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile  
Chicago, Illinois  
Minutes**

The AAPOR annual membership and business meeting took place on Saturday, May 15, 2010 at the Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile, Chicago, Illinois. President Peter Miller called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

**I. President's Report**

President Peter Miller noted that 2010 has been a busy year for the association. He stated it has been an honor to work with the members of the Executive Council and the committees and thanked them for their service to AAPOR. He asked attendees to observe a moment of silence to honor members who have died during the past year including James R. Beniger, Alec M. Gallup, Dale Kulp, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann and Mary Utne O'Brien. It was brought to the attention of the attendees that AAPOR member Robie Sangster also passed away this year.

**II. Past Presidents Report**

Past President Dick Kulka thanked the Nomination Committee for their work to develop the slate of candidates for the 2010-2011 Council. Nominations Committee members included: Don Dillman, Linda Dimitropoulos, Deborah Jay, Courtney Kennedy and Gary Langer.

The 2010-2011 incoming Executive Council members were introduced:

Vice President – President Elect, Scott Keeter  
Associate Conference Chair, Dan Merkle  
Associate Secretary-Treasurer, Joe Lenski  
Associate Standards Chair, Tim Johnson  
Associate Communication Chair, Rich Morin  
Associate Membership & Chapter Relations Chair, Joe Murphy  
Councilor-at-Large, Linda Piekarski

Dick thanked all those who participated in the election process and those members who voted. He thanked the association for allowing him to serve the organization.

**III. Secretary-Treasurer Report**

Secretary-Treasurer John Boyle reviewed the minutes of the May 16, 2009 Annual Business meeting.

**RESOLVED** to accept the May, 16, 2009 Annual Business meeting minutes. Motion made by Michael Mitrano; seconded by Alan McCutcheon and passed by the membership.

John Boyle gave an update on the financial status of AAPOR and the work that he and Barbara O'Hare, Associate Secretary-Treasurer, have done in the past year. John reported that AAPOR had originally projected a 2009 budget surplus of approximately \$19,000, and had ended with a surplus of approximately \$63,000. He noted the concern expressed by the Secretary-Treasurer at the 2009 business meeting, that AAPOR might incur a deficit for 2009 due to unbudgeted transition costs associated with changing management organizations, and the possible effects of the recession on membership and conference attendance. Although actual revenue for 2009 was slightly below budget for membership dues and conference, and expenses for general administration significantly exceeded budget, he stated that action taken by the Council to reduce budgeted expenses for council meetings, council committees, and membership and chapter relations; along with a substantial savings in conference expenses; resulted in a net gain in revenue. He added that the transition to a new management company, which began following the conference, made it difficult to project the surplus until the end of the year.

#### AAPOR 2010 Budget

In the 2010 budget, AAPOR approved a balanced budget and projected a very small surplus of approximately \$3,000. The annual management fee of \$275,000 which is allocated between general administration, leadership and conference, reflects an increase of \$85,000 over 2009. The increase was offset by a projected increase in membership dues, conference sponsorships and underwriting, continued austerity in council and committee expenses, and a reduction in projected conference expenses (other than management fee allocation) compared to the 2009 budget. At the end of April 2010, revenue from membership dues was higher than at this time last year, sponsorship and underwriting goals for the conference were achieved, and registrations had already exceeded budget for the conference. Barring unforeseen expenses, John stated that we anticipate a budget surplus this year. He noted that the Council will review the financials following the conference to determine if budgetary adjustments should be made.

#### AAPOR Audit

Two audits were conducted of AAPOR's financial position during the past 12 months. The first audit covered January through August 2009, while AAPOR was managed by AMP. The second audit covered September through December 2009, when AAPOR moved to management by the Sherwood Group. The latter audit found that the financial statement as of December 31, 2009 presented fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of AAPOR. That financial statement reported total net assets of \$1,211,888 for AAPOR. However, those assets include a multi-year restricted pledge for Public Opinion Quarterly. The total unrestricted net assets of AAPOR at the end of 2009 were approximately \$800,000.

#### Improvements to AAPOR Financials

AAPOR management staff recommended several changes that have been made in the structure of the budget and financial statements. As noted earlier, the management fee is now allocated between general administrative, leadership and conferences, whereas it appeared only under general administrative in the past. Pass-through costs for chapter dues, other revenue and expenses from chapters, and subscriptions to JOS and Survey Methodology- which are identical in revenue and expense- have been removed from the budget and financial statements on the basis of good accounting standards. Subscription fees to POQ which are paid with AAPOR dues are now included

with dues and eliminated under POQ revenues. A full review of the general ledger accounts is being conducted to identify other potential efficiencies in cost reporting for the accounting system, some of which may affect line items in the financial reports.

#### AAPOR Finance and Endowment Committees

John highlighted two committees that work with the Secretary-Treasurer: the Finance Committee (chaired by Dan Merkle) and the Endowment Committee (chaired by Dawn Nelson). The Finance Committee has continued to monitor AAPOR's investments with the assistance of its financial advisor at Morgan Keegan. John thanked Dan Merkle and his committee members for their work during the past year on the Finance Committee.

John thanked Dawn Nelson and her committee members for their work on the Endowment Committee. As part of its work, the Endowment Committee reviewed 16 Roper award applicants, and 7 were selected to receive funding for the conference. He also thanked Diane O'Rourke for leading the special fundraising effort in recognition of the tenth anniversary of Seymour Sudman's passing, and Blanche Sudman for her generous financial contribution to the Sudman fund.

John noted that the Executive Council "highlights" which were sent out in lieu of minutes for Executive Council teleconferences are being replaced by formal meeting minutes. The Executive Council minutes for meetings and teleconferences will continue to be posted on the AAPOR website in the members-only area.

Finally, John thanked the Associate Secretary-Treasurer, Barbara O'Hare for all of her work in the past year.

#### **IV. Conference Chair Report**

Conference Steering Committee Chair Michael Link announced this year will be the largest AAPOR Annual Conference in the association's history with nearly 1,100 in attendance. The transition to a new management firm has gone well and AAPOR has been successful in a tough economic year. Michael thanked Rob Santos, Associate Conference Chair for his support during the year. He reminded everyone to complete the post-conference survey that will be conducted by SSRI in the coming weeks.

Michael apologized to Peter Miller for a communications snafu that resulted in the Presidential Address being delivered during the meal and competing for attention with attendees who were intent on networking. He stated that the Council had encouraged Peter to give a slightly shortened version of his presentation a second time at the banquet, and Peter has agreed to do so.

#### **V. Conference Operations Report**

Conference Operations Chair Dave DesRoches reported that conference social activities have gone well. Fourteen golfers persevered despite the weather. The fun run had 27 participants and the pub crawl was a success as well. Speed networking continues to be a popular event and went well this year. Dave thanked Craig Hill for his efforts in making the golf outing a success and Debbie Rexrode for her efforts as the Associate Conference Operations Chair. The Docent program continues to grow. There were more than 200 first-time attendees at the conference this year. This growth will require more docent leaders to keep the size of the groups manageable. Dave encouraged members to

volunteer in the future as a docent leader. He added that AAPOR member Jon Krosnik would perform with his jazz band at the banquet for everyone's enjoyment.

**VI. Education Committee Chair Report**

Education Committee Chair Melissa Herrmann reported the short courses have been a big success at this year's conference. To date, 265 attendees have enrolled in a short course, averaging 44 per class. Evaluations collected to date have been positive. The Education Committee continues to work on updating the Journalism education content and adding curriculum as needed. She noted that AAPOR has been working collaboratively with the American Statistical Association (ASA) on a Webinar series and that AAPOR members can register at the ASA member rate. AAPOR is working on a business plan to conduct Webinars independently in the future. The committee is also discussing a program for professional development for AAPOR members.

**VII. Standards Committee Chair Report**

Standards Committee Chair Stephen Blumberg reported the Standards Committee has had a busy year. He thanked the members of the committee for their hard work. Committee members include, Reg Baker, Allyson Holbrook, Diane Burkom, Jill Darling, Jim Wolf, John Loft, Ron Langley and Trevor Tompson. He added that an ad hoc committee, chaired by Mary Losch, reviewed and made recommendations for revisions to the Code of Professional Ethics and Practices. The revised Code was accepted by the Executive Council. The balloting process for the code revision ended on Friday, May 14. Twenty six percent of the members cast votes, with 97% approving the revisions. AAPOR now has a revised and updated Code.

The committee will continue to evaluate ISO 20252 on Market, Opinion and Social Research – Vocabulary and Service Requirements, and will make recommendations on how the ISO Standards are applied in the U.S. The Online Panel Task Force issued a report in March, 2010 and the Cell Phone Surveying Task Force will issue an update of their previous report by the end of June.

The Document Retention and Destruction Policy is now in force. The policy calls for the permanent retention of investigative reports and Standards complaints and review of repeat allegations. There is a 50-year restriction on access to archived Standards records.

AAPOR has been an observer at the Association Collaborative Initiative meetings. The terms and definitions being set forth by the group are not in line with AAPOR standards.

During the course of the year two formal complaints of Code violations were received. In one, no public action was taken by AAPOR. The investigation of Strategic Vision LLC has been closed. There are no open investigations at this time.

**VIII. Communications Chair Report**

Mike Mokrzycki reported that a Job Bank will be launched on the AAPOR Web site in the next few weeks and AAPOR members will be able to post resumes free of charge. Companies will post job openings for a fee, generating revenue for the organization. The AAPOR website is in need of a redesign and this expense has been budgeted for 2010. The Survey Practice site is in need of a redesign as well. It is in its 16<sup>th</sup> edition and has averaged 3,500 visits per month. Social networking efforts have expanded and have resulted in 580 Facebook members, 589 on LinkedIn and 318

followers of Twitter. He noted that social media raise the awareness of AAPOR and can be used as a recruitment tool. AAPORnet remains the favorite mode of communication for members although there has been a decline in the number of posts in the past year. Shap Wolf, who manages AAPORnet at the host site of Arizona State University (ASU), has requested that AAPOR identify other locations where the site can be hosted in the future. A subcommittee has been formed to determine possible alternatives.

Mike thanked Tom Smith for his efforts to bring Dick Baxter and Anne Zanes to the conference as honored guests. Dick and Anne attended the original meeting of survey professionals held in Central City, Colorado in 1946. Mike also recognized Helen Crosley, who is in attendance at the 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference and is an early leader of the organization.

**IX. Membership and Chapter Relations Chair Report**

Nancy Whelchel reported that as of April 20, 2010 there are 2,020 members, including 93 Honorary members. There have been 382 new members to date. The renewal rate is at 76%. Thirty five percent of the membership is from the academic sector and 42% are employee paid. The committee has worked on collecting more accurate membership data over the course of the year. A significant improvement has been the addition of Chapter membership information to the member data base, and Chapter leaders have been given access to more data.

An events calendar- a new member benefit- is planned for the Web site and set to be launched in the coming weeks. A membership committee has been developed and has met during the conference. A membership survey is planned for the coming year. Goals for the future include a new membership brochure and exhibit booth, a revitalized mentor program and a closer connection to the membership and the chapters.

**X. Councilor-at-Large Report**

Paul Lavrakas reported the Cell Phone Task Force will issue a report by the end of June and the Survey-Based Legal Evidence Task Force is finalizing its mission statement to present to the Executive Council.

**XI. POQ Editor's Report**

Public Opinion Quarterly Editor, Nancy Mathiowetz, reported on POQ activities for 2009. Two hundred thirty fully submitted manuscripts were received, and of those 199 were rejected and 18 accepted. The acceptance rate for 2009, based on new submissions with final decisions was 8.3%. The acceptance rate for all manuscripts with final decisions in 2009 was 11.8%. Review times have improved in 2009 with 53-68 days of review to initial decision and 65-84 days for complete life cycle to a decision. The number of manuscripts taking longer than three months to a final decision was 9.6%. Manuscripts were submitted from authors representing 27 different countries. Nearly 64% of manuscripts came from U.S. based authors. Of the 1,241 invitations sent for review in 2009, 736 (60%) agreed to review and of those 659 (90%) were completed. Nancy thanked her editorial team including, James Druckman, Patricia Moy, Daniel Merkle, Phyllis Silverstein, Mark Schulman, Chris Wlezien, Greg Shaw, Kristen Olson, Adam Berinsky, as well as the Editorial Board and AAPOR Advisory committee, authors and reviewers and Oxford University Press.

## **XII. New Business**

President Peter Miller opened the floor to new business. Members offered opinions and asked questions covering a number of issues.

### Conference Program Content

The issue of diversity within the content of the annual conference program was raised, with a member observing that the content is highly methodological in nature. He would like to see more traditional public opinion topics presented and encouraged the Council to be proactive in pursuing diverse topics for future conferences. Rob Santos, 2011 Conference Chair responded to the comment, explaining some of the challenges involved in planning the conference, including working with the abstracts submitted versus recruiting papers for specific topics. The committee is also mindful that many members cannot attend the conference unless they are presenting.

### Transparency Initiative

Noting the importance of the Transparency Initiative to AAPOR, a member commented that many people were not able to hear Peter Miller's Presidential Address, and applauded the Council's decision to repeat the address during the award banquet.

### Impact of a Budget Surplus on Program Planning

Referring to the likelihood of a budget surplus discussed in the Secretary-Treasurer Report, a member inquired about the current surplus in the budget and asked if there was a plan to reinstate some of the cuts made to committee programs. Another member commented that budget reserves should be used to protect the organization in down years. Member services should not be cut to achieve a balanced budget; reserves should be used to fill the gaps.

John Boyle responded that AAPOR has a narrow resource base, generating revenue from dues, the POQ and the conference, all of which are unstable sources of revenue. He observed that AAPOR currently has a reserve fund of a reasonable size, adding that the Council will consider a six month review of the budget to evaluate if expenses can be reallocated or if additional cuts need to be made. He stated that the Council has a fiduciary responsibility to the membership to protect the reserves for those things which are beyond our control, adding that AAPOR should continue to operate with an appropriate reserve adequate to deal with unforeseen challenges in a difficult economy. He noted that Council leadership needs to focus on raising funds and seeking new sources of funding, and must continue to live within the budget.

### 2011 Annual Conference

Several members expressed concern over the 2011 annual meeting site selection, recommending that Arizona not be chosen as a conference location in the future. Rob Santos acknowledged comments of members made at the meeting and on AAPORnet concerning the controversy of the recent immigration decision. He referred to his recent letter to members that is accessible from the AAPOR home page. He noted the impossibility of having perfect information in the planning process, adding that the current situation in Arizona may change significantly by the time registration opens for the 2011 meeting. He pointed to the significant improvement in meeting planning capability that is now available with AAPOR's new management company, noting that professional meeting planning staff routinely consider a number of factors in recommending locations and venues, some of which can mitigate risk in the event of unforeseen circumstances. He encouraged everyone to attend the 2011

meeting, and to work with him and members of the Conference Steering Committee to assure the best possible conference program.

#### AAPOR Crisis Fund

Fritz Scheuren noted that several AAPOR members had volunteered their time and public opinion research expertise in Haiti, recommending that AAPOR consider allowing the use of funding for public opinion research work related to emergency events such as Haiti and other world crises.

Dawn Nelson encouraged the membership to send suggestions to the Endowment Committee on how the funds collected should best be used.

### **XIII. Transfer of the Gavel**

Peter Miller passed the gavel to incoming AAPOR President Frank Newport.

Frank commented on the growth of AAPOR under Peter's watch. There is record membership and conference attendance. The financials are in great shape. The Transparency Initiative has been launched. AAPOR transitioned to a new management firm and welcomed Executive Director Susan Tibbitts. And the Code of Professional Ethics and Practices has been revised.

Going forward, the Council intends to continue work on the strategic plan. The draft plan includes a focus on internal issues such as governance and process improvements, membership initiatives, and organizational visibility. The plan also focuses on services to the membership. He added that the Council may consider offering a certificate program or other benefits to the members. External relations will also be a top consideration in the process such as promoting the revised Code and the Transparency Initiative.

Other initiatives planned for the coming year include surveying our members and non-members to determine satisfaction with the association and the conference. We will continue to focus on the financial health of the organization.

**Motion:** To adjourn the business meeting.

Rob Daves moved; seconded by Keith Newman. The motion was approved by the membership. The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m. Central Time.