

**AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH  
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING**

**November 18-19, 2004**

**Chicago, Illinois**

**Executive Council Present:**

**Nancy Belden** – President

**Cliff Zukin** – Vice President/President Elect

**Betsy Martin** – Past President

**Sandra H. Berry** – Secretary-Treasurer

**Jennifer Rothgeb** – Associate Secretary-Treasurer

**Tom W. Smith** – Conference Chair

**Mick P. Couper** – Standards Chair

**Nancy Mathiowetz** – Associate Standards Chair

**Mollyann Brodie** – Membership and Chapter Relations Chair

**Brad Edwards** – Associate Membership and Chapter Relations Chair

**Robert M. Groves** – Councillor-at-Large

**Susan Pinkus** – Councillor-at-Large

**AAPOR Executive Office Staff:**

**Michael P. Flanagan** – Executive Coordinator

**Council Members Missing:**

**Daniel M. Merkle** – Publications and Information Chair – Missed Thursday only

**David Moore** – Associate Conference Chair

**Shap Wolf** – Associate Publications and Information Chair – Joined by conference call on Friday, November 19, 2004.

**Guests:**

**Peter Miller** – Editor of POQ on Friday morning only.

Meeting called to order at 3:10 p.m.

The first afternoon of the AAPOR Executive Council meeting was devoted to discussion of the Standards Process. Nancy Belden said that there were three issues she wanted to cover:

- Is there a problem and, if so, what is the nature of the problem?
- What do we want to do about it, in general?
- What specific steps should we take to rectify the problem?

Nancy Belden also said that the Executive Council needs to decide what purpose the Standards process serves and what should AAPOR's goals and objectives be with respect to the enforcement of standards. Recently AAPOR has been receiving a considerable number of standards complaints, especially relating to push polls. While this could be interpreted positively as an indication that AAPOR does have a presence, we have to decide whether and for whom we want to be a watch dog organization and whether we have the mandate to do so, keeping in mind that education of the public should be AAPOR's main focus when it comes to standards.

What are some of the problems with the present procedures?

- Maintaining confidentiality during a long, cumbersome process
- Number of steps involved in handling a Standards complaint and deadlines that need to be met.
- Too many complaints, too little resources. No clear guidance on which complaints to turn into formal Standards cases.

The Executive Council brainstormed on what AAPOR **should** do and developed the following list of options:

- Carry on as before, with minor revisions to the procedures to make the process less cumbersome.
- Drop the enforcement of the Standards altogether, and view them as goals or ideals.
- Focus on educating members and the public about "best practices" and issue statements on push polling, message testing and other relevant topics
- Focus enforcement procedures only on complaints about AAPOR members, i.e., those who signed on to the code. Do not investigate or sanction those who are not members of AAPOR.
- Limit the way complaints can be brought, i.e., raise the bar for initiating a standards complaint or limit it to complaints brought by AAPOR members
- Empower AAPOR members to expose bad practices and publicize them through more immediate means, rather than subjecting them to the slow process of a full investigation

The question was asked: What do we want to achieve by the code and what would happen if we did not enforce it? Could we obtain the same benefits without enforcement? Is it possible to have just a Code of Ethics and Disclosure? The Council agreed that what is good about the Code is that it forces disclosure and protects from tyranny of clients. Council also agreed that the option of no enforcement is undesirable, as the code would have no teeth. Investigation of only complaints about code violations committed by AAPOR members could be a disincentive to join the organization.

After discussions, it was agreed that having a code and enforcing it is important. However, rather than focusing on the procedural details of code enforcement, Council

decided to focus on the broader goals of the organization with regard to standards. AAPOR's Standards Procedures should have two goals:

- Internal goal: self improvement of AAPOR members. Ensure a high level of professional knowledge and conduct from our members.
- External focus: public education. Make the broader community aware of good and bad practices.

Council discussed how the Code Procedures and the role of the Standards Chair can be changed to best meet these goals and agreed upon a two-pronged approach:

- Develop better procedures for handling complaints. Raise the threshold for instituting a complaint, and streamline the procedures for dealing with a complaint once raised. In other words, limit the number of formal complaints to the more egregious cases.
- Focus on improving educational materials about good and bad practices. The statement on push polling is a good example of this, but has had the unfortunate side-effect of generating many standards complaints. Develop materials on other common practices such as message testing surveys. Empower AAPOR members and others to use these materials to expose bad practices themselves without the necessity for a formal Standards complaint process.

This requires revision to the Schedule of Procedures for dealing with alleged violation of the AAPOR Code and a change in the job description of the Standards chair to reflect a de-emphasis on the enforcement role and a corresponding increased emphasis on education and empowerment around the issue of standards and best practices.

**RESOLVED that the Standards Chair set up a subcommittee to revise the AAPOR Standards Procedures.** Motion made by Bob Groves and seconded by Susan Pinkus. Eleven for and one abstention (Sandra Berry).

**RESOLVED that the Job Descriptions for the Chair and Associate Chair of the Standards Committee be changed to reflect focus on educating members and the public about best practices and exposing bad practices.** Motion made by Nancy Mathiowetz and seconded by Betsy Martin. Motion passed unanimously.

The Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

**Friday, November 19, 2005:**

President Nancy Belden called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Two additions were made to the Agenda:

XVI. Other/New Business: List Serv Anniversary and Jim Beniger

## XVI. Public Opinion Pros

The Agenda was adopted.

### **Executive Office Report – Mike Flanagan**

Mike Flanagan advised the Council that the Executive Office had mailed out membership renewal forms on November 1<sup>st</sup> and that the forms were being returned at a rapid pace. The Executive Office had also just mailed out the Call for Nominations and the various Award announcements. The abstract process with All Academic was going smoothly at this point in time and there were few, if any, problems although major tests of the system were still ahead

The Conference Operations Committee has started to hold its monthly conference calls and everyone on the committee is in full swing on pre-conference activities. Mike is working with Brad Edwards to review the Endowment brochure.

### **Secretary-Treasurer's Report – Sandra Berry**

The Council members made several edits to the minutes of the September 18-19, 2004 Executive Council Meeting.

**RESOLVED to accept the Minutes of the September 18-19, 2004 Executive Council meeting as revised.** Motion made by Betsy Martin and seconded by Tom W. Smith. Motion passed unanimously.

Sandra Berry then reviewed the To Do List from the September 18-19 Executive Council meeting. The majority of the items have been completed and the remainder were carried over to the new To Do List.

Sandra Berry reviewed the October 31, 2004, Financial Statements with the Council. Sandy stated that AAPOR was in a good financial position and reviewed a cash flow analysis that she had prepared. AAPOR normally meets only a portion of its operating expenses from general revenues and should plan to use revenues from POQ for the rest of operating expenses. This assumes that the income from Endowment funds are intended to be used for purposes related to the Endowment and are not expected to be used to fund general AAPOR activities unless there is an emergency. Since the Conference and POQ are significant sources of revenue enhancements to them are sensible investments assuming they are undertaken in relation to available funds.

AAPOR currently has sufficient reserves and she recommends that we invest some of the funds so that we get a better rate of return. Sandy said that AAPOR is at the upper end of the reserve spectrum and ideally would want to have a 35% to 40% of a two-year average of expenses in cash. This still is a conservative approach and leaves AAPOR with good liquidity. Some organizations have a two-year average of expenses with a 60% reserve fund. Additionally, AAPOR should strive to spend money that adds value to our

members. Sandy reported that she has had a conversation with a representative from Morgan Keegan about investing part of AAPOR's surplus reserve funds into a laddered Bond portfolio so they mature at various times and can be reinvested should we so desire. This is a very low risk investment strategy that would give us about a 5% rate of return on our investment. She recommends that we invest \$100,000 from the Endowment Fund and \$100,000 from the reserves. That will still leave AAPOR with a ready reserve of approximately \$200,000.

The Council discussed what AAPOR's investment strategy should be and the need to have an Investment or Finance Committee with the power to recommend.

**RESOLVED that AAPOR establish a Finance Committee consisting of two AAPOR members, one who is a ten-year member and one who is a five-year member; the AAPOR Secretary-Treasurer and Associate Secretary-Treasurer; AAPOR Executive Coordinator; and two at-large members with staggered terms (3 and 5 years). The Finance Committee would be chaired by the Secretary-Treasurer.** Motion made by Bob Groves and seconded by Cliff Zukin. Motion passed unanimously.

**RESOLVED to invest \$100,000 from AAPOR Endowment Fund and \$100,000 from AAPOR's general reserves into Laddered Bond Portfolio A and B.** Motion made by Cliff Zukin and seconded by Nancy Mathiowetz. 13 for and 1 abstention (Susan Pinkus).

Sandy said that AAPOR needs to pass the 2004-2005 budget at this meeting and asked the Council to look at the existing draft budget and make additions or deletions. It was stated that POQ is generating revenue and that Peter Miller will have a proposal to Council asking for an additional \$15,000 for a special edition of POQ. The amount paid to the Managing Editor has already been increased when the contract was renegotiated.

Jennifer Rothgeb said that AAPOR should be getting about \$20,000 from the QDET jointly collaborated conference. We should also be getting royalties from ASA for the publication of books from the various conferences. The comment was made that if these conferences are such revenue producers, perhaps AAPOR should put on an every other year conference and link them to the AAPOR Regional Chapters.

Sandy Berry said that AAPOR's Financial Records have been reviewed by an independent auditor and that it was a clean audit. The next audit will be in three years on the records of 2006-2007.

#### **Associate Secretary-Treasurer's Report – Jennifer Rothgeb**

Jennifer advised Council that she has a committee in place to begin the negotiations of the contract between AAPOR and AMP. Jennifer is the Chair and the Committee and members consist of Nancy Belden, Cliff Zukin, Sandy Berry, Rob Daves and Diane O'Rourke. The timeline is to have the draft contract ready by the March Council meeting and have it approved at the May Council meeting. Mike Flanagan said that individuals from AMP would be available to attend a Council meeting should they be needed. Sandy

Berry said that if we need funds for members of the Council to travel to Kansas City, they would be available.

Jennifer Rothgeb passed out a revised copy of the AAPOR Organization Chart that she is working on. It was decided that the AAPORNet and Technical Advisory Committees should be deleted. Jennifer should add the Finance Committee and the Standards Committee to the Organization Chart.

#### **Endowment Committee – Brad Edwards**

Brad Edwards reviewed with Council the new Mission Statement for the Endowment Committee which was drafted by the members of the Endowment Committee.

**RESOLVED that the Executive Council accept the following mission statement: AAPOR’s Endowment Committee has two purposes: to increase AAPOR’s endowment, and to recommend ways to use it that strengthen AAPOR. In general, the committee may recommend or Council may initiate or Council may approve programs that spend interest but conserve principal, although in extraordinary circumstances the committee may recommend programs that would spend principal for activities that cannot be supported by operating income or endowment interest.** Motion made by Mick Couper and seconded by MollyAnn Brodie. Motion passed unanimously.

**RESOLVED that the Executive Council accept the nominations of Ed Blair, Mario Callegaro and Harry O’Neill to the Endowment Committee to serve for three year terms.** Motion made by MollyAnn Brodie and seconded by Nancy Mathiowetz. Motion passed unanimously.

Brad Edwards said that the Endowment Committee has produced a draft of the AAPOR website info and flyer text announcing the Roper Scholarship fund to be called the Burns “Bud” Roper AAPOR Fund.

**RESOLVED that the Executive Council accept the revised Roper Scholarship Announcement as revised.** Motion made by MollyAnn Brodie and seconded by Mick Couper. Motion passed unanimously.

Brad Edwards said that he is working with Mike Flanagan on revisions to the Endowment Flyer. When completed, the flyer will be mailed out to the AAPOR membership as well as published in the Conference Program and on the website.

Brad discussed a list of ideas for reaching out to the newer members and said that the list would be expanded. It was suggested that the Student Paper Award winners have some designation that they have received the award. We would probably want to do ribbons for the winner(s).

## **Communications Plan Proposal – Nancy Belden and Cliff Zukin**

Nancy Belden presented a detailed plan and budget for a start up phase of the AAPOR Communication Campaign as requested by Council in the September meeting. She reported we have secured promises from the Dean of Annenberg School of Communication for \$20,000 and Andy Kohut and Rutgers University each for \$5,000.

Belden said AAPOR needs to hire staff to help us move ahead in three areas. This individual would report to the President and:

1. Document the existing research on what people already know and what message we want to articulate to show the value of public opinion research and conduct more as needed.
2. Begin media outreach. Develop workshops and conduct them and get the curriculum together.
3. Start looking for long term funding. A preliminary list of foundations has already been developed.

Belden said AAPOR has a distinct voice that needs to be heard and that we should think of the campaign as a long term program. Cliff Zukin pointed out that this effort should reach far beyond this initial proposal and take advantage of the many existing opportunities to speak out. This includes enabling Council and AAPOR members to be equipped to represent us to the public. He also stressed that we need to work with organizations that have an interest and that like to be intelligently interpreted by the press. The initial phase would get this project going and allow AAPOR to look for additional funding. To get moving, the Project will need paid assistant-level staff, to work under the direction of Belden who will have oversight for the Communication Campaign along with Zukin.

Belden listed products she believes we should expect and/or need from the first phase that will serve as measurable outcomes:

- Draft report on message development
- List of the journalist conferences
- Fund raising efforts and potential donors
- Draft workshop packet of materials

Council members expressed approval of the approach and support for financing it at least partially with AAPOR funding, assuming that the other promised funding is obtained. Council members asked for a list of products and timelines, and suggested beginning with just a few workshops as a testing phase, keeping the early deliverables and criteria for success simple – warning against being overly ambitious in the start up period.

**RESOLVED that AAPOR approve in principal the Communication Campaign proposal as submitted by Nancy Belden and Cliff Zukin and that the proposed budget include a line item of \$25,000 to be used to initiate the beginning phase of the project.** Motion made by Betsy Martin and seconded by Susan Pinkus. Motion passed unanimously.

### **POQ Update - Peter Miller**

Peter Miller discussed with Council the possibility of publishing a special issue of the POQ. The money would come from the profits that POQ is bringing into the association and would cost about \$11,000 for an issue. It could be given to members as a benefit or AAPOR could charge a small amount. Oxford University Press could sell to non-members for courses and make more money.

Oxford University Press would like to contribute to the conference. Karl Feld will talk to Trish Thomas at OUP about the sponsorship opportunities.

Peter Miller said that the new arrangements with Oxford University Press are working well and members have more easy access to the POQ. However, if you want to review the archives through JSTOR, it is still very slow. The manuscript process has been a difficult transition as there were user interface problems. On January 1, 2005, there will be a new Manuscript Central submission process that will allow individuals to submit on-line.

Peter Miller said that Oxford University Press is getting the issues of POQ out early. The Fall issue was three weeks early.

Peter talked about a special edition of POQ and said that we would only want to do this occasionally because if we do it on a regular basis, it no longer becomes special. Peter was asked if the Editorial Office was sufficiently remunerated. He said that he would research this question and get back to Council.

Peter was asked why AAPOR doesn't do a POQ Abstract issue. Currently ASA publishes the abstracts that are provided to them by the authors.

**RESOLVED that AAPOR appropriate \$15,000 for a special edition of POQ and that AAPOR appropriate \$25,000 for the Media Communication Proposal with the expectation that additional funds will be raised for this purpose and with the inclusion of these two items that the Council approves the 2004-2005 Budget.** Motion made by Bob Groves and seconded by MollyAnn Brodie. 13 for and one abstention (Dan Merkle). Motion passed.

Council talked about moving the March 4, 2005, Council Meeting, but decided to keep that date. The Meeting January 7 and 8, 2005, will be held at Sandy Berry's offices in Santa Monica, California. The meeting on Friday will begin at 2:00 p.m. and go until



6:00 p.m. The meeting on Saturday will go from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with a working lunch at the office and a Board dinner on Saturday evening.

### **Standards Committee – Mick Couper**

Mick Couper reported that the vote from the Council regarding the revisions to the AAPOR Code of Ethics was unanimous. There was a minor revision to the Code made by Betsy Martin and Mick will make that change. The Revised Code of Ethics will be mailed to all AAPOR Members with the Election Ballot mailing in March for approval with a note that the Council has unanimously approved the revised code. The Executive Council thanked Harry O’Neill for his work on making the revisions to this Code.

Tom Smith reported on behalf of the Standards Definitions Committee and briefed the Council on the internet section of the Standards Definitions. The Standards Definitions have been sent to 15 journals to adopt for their journals. The Committee is working with a European group about formalizing Standard Definitions internationally.

Nancy Belden reported on the Venezuela matter. Nancy sent a letter to Jimmy Carter and received a call from his office. AAPOR is waiting for WAPOR to provide them with an update of the polling that had been done. WAPOR has a five member committee of which Tom Smith is a member. They have a letter ready to go out to the exit poll preparers before the end of November. There were a total of four or five groups that may have done exit polls and they will be approached regarding their methodologies. Nancy said that it is still an open case and that AAPOR will continue monitoring the situation. The Carter Center is following a variety of exit polls currently.

### **Membership and Chapter Relations – MollyAnn Brodie**

Molly Brodie said that she has been working to set up a small group at the Annual Conference on the Newer Member and the Study of Racial Attitudes Initiative.

Molly Brodie has had calls with all the chapters and said that they appreciated Council’s interest in their activities. Molly encouraged Council members to assist the chapters when they are in their areas. Molly recommended that once or twice a year the Membership Committee should have a conference call with the chapter leaderships to share information.

New York AAPOR is doing better and membership is staying stable, but not growing. The Membership Committee will help the chapter to reach out to big companies and encourage their employees to be members of the regional chapters.

### **Publications and Information – Dan Merkle**

Dan Merkle reviewed the website updates with the Council. He said that there was some support and some objections to the message on quoting that was put up.

The Council discussed the need for a white paper on Exit Polls to be put on the website. It could link to other areas such as the Stanford Conference. There could be Frequently Asked Questions about Exit Polls. What we need on the website is something that explains how Exit Polls are done. Council will revisit this matter in the coming months.

Dan Merkle said that AMP had prepared several variations of the logo design that was submitted to them. Dan checked with Warren Mitofsky and Warren has no objection to AAPOR using the check mark on its logo.

Shap Wolf reported that he can no longer be officially associated with the list serv and that we need to find another individual involved in Public Opinion Research to sign the papers. They will not really be involved, but just be a figurehead and would have no control or power over the list serv. That function will remain with the Executive Office and the Publications and Information Committee.

The Council discussed the Tenth Anniversary of the List Serv and the contribution that Jim Beniger has made to the Association and his work on the first List Serv. They would like to honor him for this work. We could do this at either the Annual conference in May or when the Council meets in Santa Monica in January.

**RESOLVED that AAPOR honor Jim Beniger with an appropriate plaque for his establishing the List Serv and for his service to AAPOR.** Motion made by Betsy Martin and seconded by Susan Pinkus. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **Conference Chair** – Tom W. Smith

Tom Smith provided an update on the 2005 Annual Conference. He noted that the Council had stated that if something relevant came out of the 2004 elections that we might want to have a session on it at the conference. Tom said that the big issue appeared to be Exit Polls and he plans to track that topic throughout the conference. He is also considering having some invited sessions on this topic.

Currently Geraldine Mooney has five short courses in place that include a new mix of topics.

The Council discussed the possibility of having the Education Committee expand the short courses so that they are not just a subset of the conference. Could possibly have it be a mid-year conference. We have to be careful that we don't deter from the Annual Conference attendance.

#### **Conference Operations** – Kat Draughon

Kat, Nancy Whelchel and Tom Smith did a site visit to Miami in October and everything seems to be on target. Tom will do another quick trip in March to make sure that some of the remodeling has been completed. One of the potential problem areas are that the lights

in the exhibit hall are dim and we will need to bring in some additional lighting which could be expensive.

The core meal package, (Thursday evening dinner; Friday and Saturday Lunches and Saturday dinner) will be the same as last year -- \$200. Registration will remain at \$175. There will be no breakfast offered this year, but the hotel will have places available. There will be a reception on Thursday evening for new and newer members and we will promote the chapters at this reception.

Kat has also completed the drafting of the Job Descriptions for all Conference Operations Committee members and they will be sent out in December. Kat is also working with Karl Feld on new sponsorship opportunities for the conference. Steve Everett will be the Banquet photographer as well as work on an enhanced audio/visual program for the awards portion of the banquet.

The site for the 2008 AAPOR Annual Conference will probably be New Orleans. Kat and Nancy Whelchel will visit three hotels in the area and report to the Council at the March meeting.

The 2005 Annual Conference will be Kat Draughon's last conference as Chair and Nancy Whelchel will take over. The Council needs to approve a new Associate Conference Operations Chair.

**RESOLVED to approve Linda Dimitropoulos as the Associate Conference Operations Chair at the conclusion of the 2004 Annual Conference.** Motion made by Susan Pinkus and seconded by Cliff Zukin. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **Awards Program:**

Kat Draughon said that the annual banquet would have a program this year as well as an enhanced audio/visual presentation for the awards program. All of the award winners will be announced ahead of time except for the winner of the AAPOR Award. It has not yet been determined the best manner to present the program to the banquet attendees.

As far as an Awards Coordinator, either Tom Smith or David Moore will be the point person with technical support from Steve Everett and Carl Ramirez.

#### **Liaison, support for other Organizations:**

The Council discussed the various organizations that AAPOR is involved in, including CMOR, CASRO, COSSA, COPAFS and WAPOR. Tom Smith is participating in the ANSI/ISO meetings. Currently AAPOR, along with CASRO and Stats, are participating in the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) advising ANSI on behalf of the U.S. The next meeting is in July 2005 in Berlin.

**Public Opinion Pros:**

Lisa Parmelee is doing an on-line magazine that is picking up where *Public Perspective* left off. The on-line publication will be on a subscription basis and part of the dues includes access to the old issues of *Public Perspective*. The question was asked whether AAPOR wants to offer this to their membership at a reduced rate. After discussion, it was decided to look at the site and discuss at the January meeting. Because it is a commercial venture, we have to be careful.

There being no further business, the Council adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra H. Berry  
Secretary-Treasurer