

Panel on Public Affairs
June 11, 2021 - Meeting Minutes
Virtual Meeting

POPA Members Present:

C. Collins (Chair), E. Mazur (Vice-Chair), D. Dahlberg (Past Chair)
S. Demers, E. Gawiser, S. Fetter, L. Grego, N. Holtkamp, B. Klein, D. Louca, T. Mason,
E. Mazur, C. Nitta, R. Orbach, B. Rosner, D. Stamper-Kurn, W. Taylor, M. White, J. Wurtele
Due to scheduling conflicts, some members joined for only limited portions of the meeting

Advisors & APS Staff Present:

J. Bagger, M. Elsesser, J. Gates, F. Hellman, J. Hernandez Charpak, J. Oliver, F. Slakey

Call to Order:

Collins opened the meeting with a brief welcome and introductions and a motion was made to approve the minutes.

Action: Collins called the meeting to order at 11:01 AM

Motion: To approve the Feb meeting minutes

(Dan, Mazur)

Action: the motion passed unanimously

National Security Subcommittee

Guest, Fred Lamb, Missile Defense Study Chair updated the committee on the POPA Missile Defense study. Lamb shared the findings of the subgroups that are now under review by the full study group. The MD study group plans to have its first in-person meeting to finalize the report and its findings. Lamb shared the updated target schedule for the full draft report: the chair-line is aiming to have a draft completed by September to share with external reviewers and available for POPA members to review and vote at the October meeting.

Grego, Chair of the National Security Subcommittee, updated the committee with the status of where the subcommittee is on statement 06.1 The Use of Nuclear Weapons. Steve Fetter drafted a revised version that will the National Security Subcommittee will meet to discuss. The statement will be presented to POPA for a vote at the October meeting.

GA Advocacy Update

Elsesser, Director of Government Affairs provided an update on the recent activities of APS Government Affairs (GA). APS GA sent the International Applicants Survey to department chairs of US physics Ph.D. programs that reported graduating 10 or more students per year to gather data concerning the number of international applications. A total of 74 department chairs were contacted and 49 responded to the inquiry. 41% of all physics graduate students enrolled in the U.S. were at one of the 49 respondent departments, along with 40% of the international physics graduate students enrolled in the U.S. GA partnered with Senator Durbin office to help develop S.1744: "Keep Stem Talent Act of 2019". GA continued with surveys expanding them to include more institutions and collecting data from applications and enrollments from international and domestic students. With data from the department chairs survey GA develop report on Building Americas Stem Workforce focusing on the issues related to diversifying the domestic workforce and focusing attracting the best and brightest scholars from around the world.

Physics & the Public Subcommittee

Collins, Chair of POPA presented the following statements considering comments and modifications from the Physics & the Public Subcommittee and POPA Committee.

00.4 Protection Against Discrimination

Several changes were recommended:

- (1) Replace: “on” with “on issues such as, but not limited to.
- (2) Add: “sex”, “identity”, “national and”.
- (3) Replace: “or” with “,”
- (4) Add: “and or other protected characteristics”

The Council of the American Physical Society affirms the commitment of the Society to the protection of the rights of all people, including freedom from discrimination based **on issues such as, but not limited to, race, sex, gender identity, national and** ethnic origin, religion, ~~or~~ sexual orientation and ~~or~~ **other protected characteristics**. This principle will guide the Society in the conduct of its affairs, including the selection of sites of meetings of the APS.

Motion: to accept edits and approve the statement
(Gawiser, Klein)

Action: the motion passed unanimously

81.1 Creationism

Suggested edit:

- (1) Replace: “Scientific inquiry and religious beliefs are two distinct elements of the human experience. Attempts to present them in the same context can only lead to misunderstandings of both.” with
“Scientific inquiry and religious beliefs are two distinct elements of the human experience. Attempts to present them in the same context can lead to harmful contradictions and misunderstandings of both.”

Motion: to accept edits and approve the statement
(Hellman, Mazur)

Action: the motion passed unanimously

Career Options for Physicists

Several changes were recommended:

Degrees in physics have proved to be, and will continue to be, an excellent platform for success across a wide range of career options in the private sector, government, academia, and K-12 education. Physics departments are urged to ~~examine~~ **update the** design of their programs in ~~the~~ light of the **many career paths their graduates may wish to pursue** ~~scientific opportunities, societal challenges and broadly available careers. Preparation should include~~ **Undergraduate physics majors should have opportunities for** educational experiences beyond ~~those~~ traditionally considered **coursework**, including independent research in the undergraduate setting, **technical courses outside of the major**, verbal and written communication skills, teamwork, ethics, **teaching, public service**, and exposure to **career paths and** mentors from outside the academic setting. **Given the increasing fraction of transfer students, departments at four-year colleges and universities should explore all reasonable approaches so that transfer students to their programs have the full opportunity to pursue physics majors that include training for a wide range of subsequent careers. Physics departments should similarly adapt their graduate programs to the opportunities being pursued by their graduates.**

Motion: Accept the edited edits and approve the statement
(Dahlberg, White)

Action: the motion passed unanimously

89.2 Statement on the International Nature of Science and International Scientific Cooperation

Suggested edit:

- (1) Add: #6 Scientists engaged in international scientific collaborations must respect the relevant research protocols of those countries involved in the collaboration, along with the general principles of research integrity, such as objectivity, honesty, openness, accountability, fairness, disclosure, and stewardship.
Scientists engaged in international scientific collaborations must respect laws and norms of countries involved in the collaboration, consistent with universally recognized ethical standards.

Motion: to accept changes from P&P and approve Board statement

(Dahlberg, Mazur)

Action: the motion unanimously

APS Statement on Graduate Admissions

Motion: to accept the revision and approve the Board statement

(Mazur, Gates)

Action: the motion passed (18 in favor, 1 abstained)

Energy & Environment Subcommittee

Orbach, Chair of Energy & Environment Subcommittee and Collins, Chair of POPA provided the committee with a summary of progress to date on the POPA report: Methane fugitive Emissions and Flaring in Oil and Gas Operations. Collins discussed the detailed outline of the report sections. The report is expected to address the importance of monitoring methane, current measurement capabilities (with input from satellite experts) and the nature of the methane and flaring sources. The report team is advancing in parallel to complete the report by the October POPA meeting.

Adjournment

Action: Collins adjourned the meeting at 2:42 PM

Next Meeting Date: October 8, 2021