

**Minutes of April 2019 Meeting of the Executive Committee of the
Forum on Physics and Society (FPS)
Sheraton Downtown Hotel, Denver, CO
April 14, 2019, 9 am to 10:15 am**

Present: Joel Primack (Chair), Bev Hartline (Past Chair), Bill Colglazier (Chair-Elect), Stewart Prager (Vice Chair), Tony Fainberg (Secretary-Treasurer), Pushpalatha (Pushpa) Bhatt (Councilor), James Dickerson, Juliette Mammei, Savannah Thais (3 Members-at-Large)

Secretary Treasurer's report: FPS is solvent for the current year, but barely. Most current expenses are for travel for speakers and organizers at sessions, plus members of the Executive Committee for this meeting. There are an additional \$2500 in expenses for the video recording of FPS sessions. We have an estimated surplus for the current year of about \$3000, but this depends on the details of final travel expenses for this meeting.

A brief discussion ensued on the possibility of asking for more funding from APS, and the recent history of asking for such an increase. The response was generally that if there were specific reasons or projects that would require more funding, then FPS should present this information to APS. Otherwise, the implication from APS was that it was unlikely there would be an increase in funding from them. Climate change, renewable energy, cyberthreats, science policy are all topics in which FPS could play a role. We could, for example, ask for extra funding for short courses, as we have held in the past.

It was noted that there is a new Innovation Fund sponsored by APS that may allocate up to \$1 million, for specific proposed projects. FPS is listed as part of several pre-proposals which have been submitted, including one led by Stewart.

Joel continued the meeting by noting that are some deadlines to keep in mind. The first is on June 3, the requirement for names for Awards and Fellowship nominees from FPS membership to be sent to the FPS Awards and Fellowships Committees respectively. [Note: we requested and APS agreed to change this deadline to June 24.] Following this, the Fellowships and Awards Committees must select Fellows and winners from the proposed nominees for the Burton and Szilard Awards and submit them to APS by the end of July. The next is for elections for officers of the Executive Committee (with candidates chosen by the Nominating Committee) and for the FPS Councilor (with candidates chosen by the Executive Committee), which should be determined by early fall for an election before the end of the year.

Bev suggested that candidates for elective office should be in place in August with a view to holding elections in September. Last year we had two elections, one early in the year and one at the end, since FPS, through its Bylaw changes, switched the beginning of the year from April to January. We then had to rush to get elections finished by January so that new officers could be determined by the beginning of the calendar year, in accord with the Bylaw changes.

Pushpa then reported on the APS Council. Meeting, which was focused on the development and dissemination of the Strategic Plan. The coming year will be focused on its implementation. Outreach to

students and early career physicists will be emphasized. Only a relatively small fraction of student members retain membership after graduation. Diversity and inclusion are other topics that will be emphasized in the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Ethics guidelines have been worked on for over a year. These were approved at the last meeting.

On the topic of the annual meetings: discussions are ongoing as to whether current formats for the meetings are optimal. The March meeting has become quite large. This year, there were 70 parallel sessions and 12,000 participants. Some other professional society meetings are larger, but even AAAS had fewer parallel sessions than the March meeting. By contrast, the April meeting has only 1600 participants.

On the new Innovation Fund: about 100 pre-proposals have been submitted. APS staff is trying to reduce these to a small number (~15) to be developed into full proposals which will be due in a few months.

- Other areas of discussion at the Council meeting included advancing international activities. The Council would like inputs from the units on the Strategic Plan in general.
- Units are encouraged to nominate candidates for the APS Medal.
- There is some interest in developing a new, third annual APS meeting in the DC area. Given the Unit Convocation and Congress Visiting Day, APS is considering adding another day to this January-February get-together, for a broader meeting and seeing whether this would work. There is also some discussion of moving the April meeting around. DPF has its own biennial meeting apart from the April meeting, which is better attended from their division. Other divisions are also considering their own separate meetings, so the eventual future of the April meeting is uncertain.

On the topic of publications: the question has been posed as to whether APS should start other open access journals, as this seems to be the future. PRX was recently started, and PR Research has been launched recently. The latter will start accepting submissions in May. There will be a workshop on the future of scientific research dissemination, probably later this year. The five-year governance review is going to take place this year.

A motion was made (by FGS and FEC and approved) to the effect that each Unit's Executive Committee should have a member who is either a graduate student or an early career physicist.

Dual-intent visas for foreign students are being advocated by APS in Congress: the student would then have the possibility of staying in the US after receiving their degrees.

On scientific mobility: foreign scientists are having trouble getting visas to come to conferences in the US. This makes the US a less desirable location for international physics conferences, especially for Russian and Chinese scientists. As an example, the IGFA meeting is being moved from the US to the UK this year for this reason.

POPA: Laura Grego had nothing new to report since the March meeting. One topic that has come up is a possible new APS study on missile defense, which Frank von Hippel and others have been advocating. [Note that Laura Grego and David Wright have a critical article on missile defense in the June 2019 issue of *Scientific American*.]

Joel talked about the missile defense topic, reviewing former APS studies on various aspects of missile defense. One was on directed energy technologies in the late 1980's and another, about 15 years ago, was performed on boost-phase defense. Some members of APS leadership may be favorable to a new study. Tony mentioned that one impetus for this, besides recent Trump administration decisions regarding a renewal of directed energy technologies for missile defense, is the suggestion by Dick Garwin and Ted Postol to consider high-acceleration boost-phase anti-missiles on drones in the air near North Korea. (This was discussed by Postol in an FPS-sponsored session at the April 2018 APS meeting, and by Garwin in an FPS-sponsored session at the March 2019 APS meeting.)

Bill brought up hypersonic weapons as another potential topic for a session next year. Tony endorsed this as an important current issue in military technology.

There followed a discussion of the incoming FPS Committees. Bev reported that the Fellowship Committee must consist of fellows, per APS rules. The Program Committee consists of 4 plus the Chair-Elect. Bill would be the Chair, Anna Quider and Richard Wiener would be holdovers from last year. Joel thought that the Bylaws talk of three members. Bev read out the Bylaws, indicating that the Chair will appoint four, of which two are repeaters (Anna and Richard). Savannah and Juliette volunteered to be members of the Program Committee. Unlike divisions, APS forums can have sessions at both March and April meetings, so it is good to have a balance (Richard is usually at the March meeting, but many FPS members are April people). Juliette and Savannah will both be on Program Committee, selected by Joel. Andrew Zwicker would also be a good choice, but he is also occupied in running for re-election in the NJ legislature, which might be a problem for him. The Awards Committee is set at present. Joel suggested Rush Holt and if not, then Frank von Hippel, would be appropriate as an additional member of the Awards Committee. Pushpa noted that the previous year's awardee should be asked to be on the Awards Committee as well. Neil Johnson is a previous awardee and is already on the committee. Members of the Awards Committee cannot submit nominations of their own (as is the case for the Fellowship Committee). Detailed discussions followed regarding several individuals and all of the Committees. One member of the Nomination committee must be appointed by APS Executive Director Kate Kirby from among three candidates suggested by the FPS Executive Committee. [Note that the 2019 FPS committee memberships are now posted on the FPS website.]

In the last election, 11 % of our membership voted. After the first week, only 6% had voted. Bev then sent out a message after a week, citing this statistic and reminding the membership to vote, which elicited an increased voting response. Bev does not think it is necessary to have the election run longer than two weeks, unless there is some overriding requirement from APS. Some discussion ensued on the best length of time for the election.

Joel noted that FPS Fellows should have contributed significantly in the area of physics and society, and not simply be a good physicist in his/her own area of specialties.

James Dickerson (Jay) asked what the Forum should do in terms of nominating fellows whose activities emphasize the field of physics and society. As a partial response, Juliette said it would be good in general if brilliant physicists in the usual physics areas of expertise were, in addition, to devote a part of their efforts to science and society issues. Joel remarked that when he worked to organize FPS, it was intended to cover the array of such issues. He gave a brief history of the early days of FPS (in the 1970s) and the first sets of summer studies. He explained that he had promoted FPS, the APS studies on public policy issues, and the Congressional Fellowship Program, partly in order to broaden possible career choices for physicists -- and they have indeed had that effect.

Returning to the subject of Fellowship Nominations, FPS can nominate up to 7 individuals each year. In the past FPS has nominated only 2-4. Each person can nominate up to 2 fellows. The crucial point is that the nominations have to be filed through the APS portal by June 3 [now June 24]. Up to four supporting letters may be submitted. Bev remarked that the minimum requirements were one letter for a fellowship and two for an award (Burton and Szilard).

Bill Colglazier, who chairs the Program Committee, asked for suggestions for session topics for the March and April meetings. A new algorithm allocating sessions among APS units has been adopted by APS, and we (FPS) may be disadvantaged by this. It was noted that, as in the past, we can arrange more sessions by partnering with other units.

Stewart brought up the point that we should have an international member on our Executive Committee in response to the recommendation of the new APS Strategic Plan.

Joel asked how we should publicize the videos of talks our FPS sessions that are now posted on YouTube? Pushpa suggested putting a notice in APS News. Others had other suggestions for APS and AAPT to publicize the videos. Some other suggestions were the Society of Physics Students (SPS), and the American Institute of Physics (AIP). How should we contact them to this end? Tony and Joel should work this. There followed a discussion of session slots for the March meeting. Bev mentioned that in the past we have been given slots mostly at end of the meeting, which is disadvantageous; we should push for a better allocations (the starting point is the previous year's schedule, and when she was chair, due to a conflict involving a different unit, she traded an early slot for a later slot—but the allocation has subsequently remained.). The schedule is finalized in December or January for the April meeting and around October for the March one. Bill will be on the meeting telcon that will be setting slots.

There are some relatively minor proposed Bylaw changes that have been developed by Bev and Joel. Bev suggests putting them on the same ballot as this year's elections for the Executive Committee for FPS membership approval. The first change would have the previous Secretary-Treasurer remain on the Executive Committee for a year to be a mentor for the new Secretary-Treasurer. A second proposed change concerned the number of signatures for a Councilor nominee: this would be modified to 50 rather than a specific fraction of the FPS membership. The Executive Committee would then choose two

candidates. Tony will send out the proposed Bylaw changes, first to be approved by the Executive Committee, then by Council, and then by FPS membership.

Stewart asked how corporate memory works for FPS, given rotations on and off the Executive Committee. Unlike in academic environments, we are our own “assistants” who maintain currency and continuity of knowledge. Also, the Newsletter helps. The 4-year progressive roles for the “chair line” also helps in this regard, as would having a year of overlap for a new Sec/Treas.

Near future deadlines: June 3 [now changed to June 24] for nominations from the general FPS membership into the FluidReview portal for review by the FPS selection Committees for Fellows and Awardees, then to APS from FPS selection Committees in late July. For candidates for the Executive Committee, the deadline will be August, with a view to holding elections quickly thereafter. For determining session slots at March and April meeting: October for March, January for April. Note that we should try to get more nominees for Fellows and Awardees.