APA Council of Representatives Meeting

APA’s Council of Representatives met February 28 – March 1, 2020, with Jason Cantone (year 3) and Margaret Bull Kovera (year 1) representing AP-LS/Division 41. Much of the meeting was focused on organizational change, inclusivity, and enhancing Council’s effectiveness as a policy-making body.

Transparency. Council first voted as to whether Council members’ votes would be transparent and published on the APA web site. Only 46% of Council members voted in support. Two-thirds is needed. (This is the lowest percentage since Council started voting on this.) Both AP-LS representatives support transparency and voted in favor.

LGBTQ+ Discrimination. Council approved three resolutions opposing discrimination against LGBTQ+ persons: the (1) Resolution on Opposing Discriminatory Laws, Policies, and Practices Aimed at LGBTQ+ Persons, (2) the Resolution on Supporting Sexual/Gender Diverse Children and Adolescents in Schools, and (3) the Resolution on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity (SOGI), Parents and their Children.

Climate Change. Dr. Janet Swim gave a presentation (via live audio) entitled “Climate Change and Psychology: Past, Present, and a Better Future.” Following this, 99% of Council voted to approve a policy statement that reaffirms APA’s 2011 policy resolution on climate change, commits APA to collaborating on climate change with other organizations in the United States and internationally, and establishes a task force to advise on future climate change activity.

Diversity Impact. As of two years ago, all new business items (NBIs) must include a “diversity impact statement.” The Council Diversity Working Group asked Policy & Procedures committee member Jason Cantone to analyze those statements and present his results.


APA Policies and Procedures. Council was asked to approve amending the Association Rules to institutionalize a trial delegation of authority to the Board of Directors, particularly regarding financial decisions, the process for selecting the Chief Staff Officer, and determining dues amounts. The trial delegation expires this month. As anticipated, this led to a long, contested series of discussions and an intense number of proposed motions and amendments, with many resulting votes. Put simply, the delegation of decisions to the Board of Directors regarding the budget and selection of a chief staff officer will generally be continued through March 31, 2023, to be then reviewed every three years. The dues item was more complicated. In one change, recommendations for dues increases will now be submitted to Council for approval but decreases do not need Council approval. Again, delegation will be reviewed in three years.
Violent Video Games. After years of debate, in 2018, Council established a task force to evaluate if the 2015 Resolution on Violent Video Games and resulting Technical Report should be amended. The task force proposed adding a caveat. Council members revised it and approved adding the following:

“The following resolution should not be misinterpreted or misused by attributing violence, such as mass shootings, to violent video games use. Violence is a complex social problem that likely stems from many factors that warrant attention from researchers, policy makers, and the public. Attributing violence to violent video gaming is not scientifically sound and draws attention away from other factors.”

Council also approved adding a revised part of the report summary into the preamble to better allow journalists and the general public to convey the report’s findings.

Future Business. At the meeting, the two AP-LS representatives (Jason Cantone and Margaret Bull Kovera) joined Michael E. Lamb (representing APA Division 7) as co-movers on a new legislative item to improve the financial decision making process. It would require APA/APASI to develop and keep consolidated risk registers that should be presented and discussed at Council at least annually. Registers are used to 1) identify specific risks, 2) estimate the magnitude of the possible impact should the risk materialize, and 3) estimate the likelihood of the risky event occurring, and 4) rank risks in terms of the probability and magnitude of the adverse impact.