

APA Council of Representatives meetings August 2-4, 2022

AP-LS Representatives: Jason A. Cantone and Margaret Bull Kovera

The Council meeting began with a series of updates from APA and APA Council leadership. Of note, APA Council selected its first Council Ombuds. She attended this meeting in an observer role and will begin as Ombuds at the February 2023 Council meeting. Dr. Evans reminded that APA is committed to issues regarding climate, women's health, and prior APA-enacted policies, as well as equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts.

Throughout the meeting, APA Council members highlighted the need for additional work in areas of women's rights and reproductive health. There was a request to add a new item to the Council agenda that addressed psychologists' duties of confidentiality in states with mandatory reporting of issues related to abortion. After brief discussion, the item was not added, but is expected to be submitted for the next Council meeting. The Women's Caucus requested that APA create a group to address women's rights.

Awards

- Dr. Jason Cantone received the APA Presidential Citation for his work on Ban the Box, the criminal legal system, and bringing clarity to the byzantine APA policymaking process.
- Dr. Rosie Phillips Davis received the Raymond D. Fowler Award.
- APA Council approved the list of new APA Fellows on the consent agenda. We congratulate Dr. Matthew Huss as the newest AP-LS/APA Fellow.

Substantive Items

Police Use of Excessive Force. 98% of APA Council voted to adopt the *Resolution on Psychology's Role in Addressing the Impact of, and Change Required with Police Use of Excessive Force Against People of Color and Other Marginalized Communities in the United States*. The item was presented by the chair of the APA Board for the Advancement of Psychology in the Public Interest. The chair discussed how some groups, particularly individuals of color, are disproportionately likely to be affected by police use of excessive force. The item requested advocacy, policies, research, and training in collaboration with police and communities, particularly communities of color. The item also addresses the intersection of race, poverty, and police use of excessive force.

Psychology Week. 98% of APA Council voted to declare the third week of April as Psychology Week in conjunction with the United Nations' Annual Psychology Day.

Grad Student Representation. 82% of Council voted to approve forwarding to APA members Bylaws amendments to add a Graduate Student seat on select APA Boards and Committees. A Bylaws change is required. APA members will vote on this on an upcoming ballot. While some Council members expressed strong support for the item (e.g., promoting inclusion of graduate

students, giving voice to the next generation of psychologists), others expressed concerns (e.g., power differentials between graduate students and others; questions of who would benefit).

APA Council then voted to include a pro/con statement on the ballot regarding the proposed bylaws change. There is always active discussion regarding the use of pro/con statements. If you are interested in more about this, please contact Margaret or Jason.

Then, APA Council voted to add graduate student members to boards and committees with membership criterion in the Association Rules (vs. in the Bylaws, which requires an APA membership vote). This change is effective immediately.

Late Adolescent Death Penalty. 95% of Council voted to adopt as APA policy the *Resolution on the Imposition of Death as a Penalty for Persons Aged 18 Through 20, Also Known as the Late Adolescent Class*. The resolution summarized a 2021 APA Task Force's conclusion that psychological science supports the adoption of a policy that would increase the age of eligibility for death as a penalty from 18 to 21 years old. Adoption could reinforce APA's advocacy following such decisions as *Roper v. Simmons*. There were questions as to LGBTQ+ populations and the science behind the resolution, especially as related to age and concerns about inconsistencies in public policy regarding adolescents. There was also concern that the resolution does not specify APA's broader 2001 resolution on the death penalty. An amendment was proposed to remove specific lines, including passages regarding the science of disparities on the basis of race, gender, and LGBTQ+ status. The amendment failed: 31% voted to accept the amendment (66% no; 3% abstain).

Graduate Student Equitable and Respectful Treatment. 52% of APA Council voted to postpone discussion of the *Guidelines for Equitable and Respectful Treatment of Graduate Students in Psychology Training Programs*. There was concern that the guidelines are not written using aspirational rather than prescriptive language and, despite a new legal disclaimer, could lead to new mandates on programs and other concerns. This item is now expected at the next Council meeting (February 2023).

APA Presidential Work Group on Reconciliation with First Peoples. Members of the task force provided an update on their work, including an ongoing dialogue and listening engagements with Indigenous psychologists and the Society for Indian Psychologists.

Racial Equity Action Plan. 94% of Council voted to receive the *Advancing Racial Equity Action Plan* and charge the APA CEO with implementation of the priority actions outlined in the report. The report, based on a series of open discussions and an internal racial equity audit, is intended to prioritize, operationalize, and ensure accountability for achieving the goals in the three resolutions passed by APA Council in October 2021:

- Apology to People of Color for APA's Role in Promoting, Perpetuating, and Failing to Challenge Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Human Hierarchy in U.S.
- Role of Psychology and APA in Dismantling Systemic Racism Against People of Color in U.S.
- Advancing Health Equity in Psychology.

In discussion, one member noted that the priorities are adult-centered and do not take the opportunity to address the science associated with children and adolescents.

Another member asked about unspecified financial implications and what gets removed from the APA budget if this is added. The APA Treasurer responded but did not provide any specific information regarding what gets removed. The overall racial equity plan is expected to cost more than \$1 million.

Day 2

Day 2 began with an update from the American Psychological Foundation. They give out more than \$1 million each year in awards and grants. Open funding opportunities are available here: <https://www.apa.org/apf/>.

Health Equity. 99% of Council voted to accept the report of the Health Equity Presidential Task Force. The purpose of the report is to discuss the limitations of current structures of psychology training, science, and service in addressing health inequities, and to offer recommendations to help move the field of psychology forward.

Council Effectiveness Working Group (CEWG). In 2021, APA established CEWG to, among other goals, improve the APA policymaking process and improve representation. Jason Cantone was one of the original members. This effort led to a second group (which included Jason Cantone and Margaret Bull Kovera) and, in a third step, the creation of two new groups. After updates, some discussion, and a vote, reports from those new groups are now due at the August 2023 Council meeting.

Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Women with Serious Mental Illness (SMI). 96% of Council voted to adopt the guidelines as APA policy. These guidelines are designed to guide professional behaviors and decisions of psychologists who work with women with SMI, and provide a “culturally responsive, trauma-informed approach to clinical engagement” with a focus on offering equity of access and outcomes. The guidelines also seek to be informed by recovery-oriented care models. Council members provided comments, including adding a reference to Autism Spectrum Disorder (which was accepted by the movers), a question about the interaction of guidelines and ethical practice, and a question regarding how seclusion and restraint is presented in the Guidelines.

APA Elections. 96% of APA Council voted to change the timing of the President-elect nomination and election process. The original schedule was Nominations: February 1 – March 15, then Elections: September 15 – November 1. The new schedule is Nominations: March 1 – April 15, then Elections: August 1 – September 15. The goal is to shorten the process and reduce the burdens on nominees, especially given it has been difficult to find nominees for APA President-Elect. In addition, there was a change to remove the requirement that the Secretary and Treasurer elections are conducted by an independent audit firm and clarification that only APA members can run for Secretary and Treasurer.

Attorney Mental Health. At the conclusion of the meeting, Jason Cantone and Margaret Bull Kovera submitted new legislation asking APA to oppose the use of mental health questions on bar exam character and fitness examinations. These questions, which in some states require disclosure of diagnoses and treatment history, are part of the process to become licensed to practice law. A recent law student survey found that 42% felt they needed mental health intervention, but almost half did not seek help because they believed doing so would threaten their ability to be admitted to the bar. This legislation now enters the APA review process.