



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

January 17, 2006

Neil Altman, PhD
425 Riverside Drive, Apt. 2F
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Dear Dr. Altman,

I have had an opportunity to review your letter to the Ethics Committee, received on January 5 (letter dated December 25). The exchanges between you and the Committee have clarified a number of important issues. From my conversations with APA members over the past two years, I know that many colleagues across our entire Association share concerns that are central to you and that motivate you so strongly to continue your work.

Having reviewed and reflected on your letter at length, and having watched sponsors of the 2006 Resolution Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading Treatment or Punishment create a model of collaboration in bringing a Resolution forward that was strongly supported by the entire Council, I believe that now is the time to begin such a collaborative process in earnest on this Resolution. You and the Committee have crystallized the issues and I am confident that, as we did with the 2006 Resolution, we can work together as a community to find language that will receive strong and wide support and that Council will adopt. Sponsors of the 2006 Resolution appear very willing to contribute in working with you on the resolution you have drafted.

That Council has spent considerable time discussing this issue at its past three meetings, and that the Board is supporting extensive programming at the 2007 Convention on ethics and interrogations, indicates the importance of this issue to the leadership of APA. I recognize that bringing a resolution before Council on such a complex issue that evokes deep passions is an enormous undertaking. I want to convey to you clearly my willingness and that of the APA Ethics Office to assist you and your colleagues in this very important endeavor.

Warmly,

Olivia Moorehead-Slaughter, PhD



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April 4, 2007

Neil Altman, PhD
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Dear Neil,

I was very pleased that you were able to come to the Consolidated meetings in Washington to meet with representatives of the boards and committees who are reviewing your moratorium resolution. The lively discussion, which could have easily continued for a considerably longer time had our schedules allowed, provided an excellent opportunity to receive feedback and get a sense of how boards and committees are thinking about the resolution. I think it was both helpful and important that you, as resolution sponsor, were available to lead the discussion, and I hope you found the meeting beneficial and productive.

Based on the many questions and comments, I believe that we will receive substantive and extensive feedback on the resolution. Our goal, as I outlined in my January letter to you and in my remarks to Council in February, when I discussed your moratorium resolution as one of two ongoing APA initiatives on this subject, is to achieve consensus through a collaborative process. In order to achieve consensus, it will be essential that the draft of the resolution presented to Council reflects the governance groups' feedback, as well as feedback from other groups with a strong interest in this issue, such as Division 19.

I am encouraging groups to provide their written feedback at their earliest convenience, since the Board item will be due in late April. At that point we will assess the degree of consensus among groups that have reviewed the resolution. (Division 19 has provided feedback on the current draft of the resolution, and I understand the Division is eager to see your next draft.) Our next steps will depend on the degree of consensus among groups. While the item does not necessarily have to be presented to the Board prior to review by Council (the 2006 *Resolution Against Torture* for example, was not), if the resolution is not presented to the Board at its June meeting, Council will then have to suspend its rules to review the resolution in August. I would recommend that course of action only if we had not yet reached consensus but believed we could do so before Council meets.

I look forward to being in close touch over these next several weeks.

Warmly,

Olivia Moorehead-Slaughter



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April 26, 2007

Neil Altman, PhD
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Dear Neil,

I write to provide you an update about the status of the moratorium resolution in the governance process. Late last fall, you asked the Ethics Office and Committee to become more actively involved in reaching out to governance groups to seek consensus on the resolution's language. Division 19, with whom you had been in contact, has reviewed drafts of the resolution and provided you feedback. In addition, the resolution was provided to all groups at the Consolidated meetings this spring, where you led an open meeting to hear from governance group representatives. We were fortunate to receive specific and extensive feedback on the resolution at the open meeting.

We have now received written feedback on the draft resolution from several governance groups representing a broad range of issues and areas of expertise. It is clear that this issue has generated significant interest and attention from our members and from governance. The nature and extent of the written comments reflect that interest. I interpret such activity to be the sign of a flourishing association.

At the present moment, we need to examine the feedback carefully. It is important to note that, while one group has indicated that the content matter of the resolution lies outside its area of expertise, other groups have raised substantial issues to address. We now have three possible avenues of moving forward. As we discuss which of the three is best, I believe it will be helpful to consider our options in light of our ethics and interrogation program at Convention.

First, we could proceed with the normal governance process of having the Ethics Committee, as the lead governance group, review the current main motion and make a recommendation to the Board of Directors for its June meeting. This path would require the Ethics Committee to review the resolution and decide upon a recommendation within the next several days. I would strongly recommend against this course of action. Given the number and complexity of the issues that other groups have raised, the Ethics Committee will almost certainly not support the resolution in its current form. It would be highly inadvisable for the resolution to be put forward at Council without the support of the Ethics Committee.

Second, you could assess the likelihood of reaching consensus on the resolution before Council meets, with the intent of having Council review the resolution in August without the Board's June review. Following this path will require a request on the floor of Council that Council suspend its rules. The Ethics Office and Committee will commit considerable resources for a collaborative effort to seek consensus on the resolution following this second path. At the same time, given that Convention is three and one-half months away, it is important that we recognize the effort this course of action will entail. The authors of the 2006 resolution put in hundreds of hours in the several months leading up to Convention in New Orleans and I anticipate that an equal or even greater effort would be required in this collaborative effort, given the nature and extent of the feedback we have received. It is also important to remember that, even with a high degree of consensus going into the meeting, the 2006 resolution generated significant discussion on the floor of Council. I would therefore recommend this second course of action only if you are able to devote considerable time and energy to a collaborative effort before Council meets; following this path and having the resolution defeated on the floor of Council, or having the request that Council vote to suspend its rules fail, would be highly undesirable outcomes for us. Either would likely end Council's consideration of this issue for a long time to come.

Third and finally, the resolution could go through another round of Consolidated meetings this fall. In many respects, this may be the preferable course of action, insofar as it will allow groups to review the issues and your resolution in a more deliberative and considered manner, and meet with you to discuss their concerns and hear your responses. Given the complexity of the issues and intensity of the passions involved, I believe it is very important that governance groups have enough time to become familiar with the resolution's reasoning and conclusions, and feel comfortable that their feedback has been taken into consideration and incorporated into the resolution's text. Feedback from governance groups thus far makes clear that work in this regard remains to be done.

Given how the resolution has been framed, it will be especially important to be engaged with the practice, forensic and military communities as the resolution moves forward. The stated purpose of the resolution is to protect military psychologists in a particular area of practice, and you have described the necessity of this protection as arising from an ambiguous legal framework. The resolution's stated goal and rationale therefore highlight the value of feedback from Practice governance groups, Division 19 and the Committee on Legal Issues. I am confident that reaching consensus with these groups will establish an excellent foundation for the resolution to receive wide support at Council. I would encourage us to view the Convention program as an opportunity to gather with representatives from these groups. A small group meeting, perhaps over dinner following the Town Hall meeting on Sunday evening, would be a good venue.

I am copying Paul Donnelly, in case you have any questions about the process. I look forward to hearing your thoughts, and again want to emphasize the willingness of the Ethics Committee and Office to expend considerable resources in working toward a consensus resolution that Council will adopt.

Warmly,

Olivia



May 3, 2007

Neil Altman, PhD
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Dear Neil,

Thank you for taking the time to speak on the weekend regarding next steps in your resolution moving forward through the APA governance process. I write to confirm that, of the three possibilities described in my April 27 letter, you have decided that the first is preferable. As that possibility is described in my letter to you:

First, we could proceed with the normal governance process of having the Ethics Committee, as the lead governance group, review the current main motion and make a recommendation to the Board of Directors for its June meeting. This path would require the Ethics Committee to review the resolution and decide upon a recommendation within the next several days.

As indicated, the Ethics Committee will now review the resolution and make a recommendation to the Board of Directors. Accompanying the materials that the Committee will provide the Board for review will be complete feedback from other governance groups, which is attached.

The Board will review the Committee's recommendation and accompanying materials, and the item will be placed on Council's August agenda.

I look forward to seeing you in San Francisco,

Olivia