

# Policy and Planning Board Annual Report to the Membership for 2023

Every year it is the responsibility of the Policy and Planning Board to report to the membership regarding their activities during that year and their observations regarding how the APA as an organizational entity has been functioning. From its inception in 1946 through 2015 this report was published in the American Psychologist. It is now is posted on the Association's website. Below you will find a general description of our work for the year and at the end a comment to members.

## Meetings and Membership

The Policy and Planning Board (P&P) met virtually every month, and during Spring Consolidated Meetings for two days in March of 2023 and at a virtual Fall Consolidated Meeting during September 2023 for two days. In addition, the P&P Executive Committee comprised of the Chair-Elect, Chair, and Past Chairs met monthly.

The members of P&P for 2023 were: Peter Sheras, PhD, ABPP, LCP (Chair), Eric Russ, PhD (Chair-Elect), Georgia Chao, PhD, Tammy Hughes, PhD, Deirdre Knapp, PhD, Blanka Angyal, PhD, Barry Chung, PhD, Alette Cobble Temple, PsyD, Antonio Puente, PhD.

## Policy and Planning Work during 2023

### Five Year Policy Review

Per APA Rule 30-9.2 Regarding the Council Policy Manual, P&P is tasked with notifying responsible groups for their obligation to review all policies within the Council Policy Manual every 5 years. All policies will remain active, unless the reviewing group recommends proposed revisions, or decides to archive the policy. The last time P&P completed this review was in 2018.

In January 2023, all responsible boards and committees were sent a list of the policies they are responsible for within the Council Policy Manual. Each board and committee had until September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 to review and decide if policies would be maintained, edited, or archived. Members of P&P met with boards and committees during the Spring Consolidated Meetings to provide an overview of the process and to be a resource for the groups should they need help. Throughout the rest of the year, members of P&P checked in periodically with members of each board and committee to ensure progress was made towards the September deadline.

Through the process 293 policies were reviewed. 191 policies were maintained, 40 policies had light housekeeping edits submitted, and 30 policies were archived. In addition, 17 policies were found to not belong in the Council Policy Manual and were not part of the process. This was

because these documents were not policies but rather guidelines or standards which have their own separate review and archiving process.

At the virtual Fall Consolidated Meeting in September, members of P&P reviewed the policies that had light edits applied or were set to be archived. P&P had a robust discussion of many of the policies and their edits before voting on the status of each. Four policies with light edits applied were sent back to the responsible group or committee, with questions or suggested edits; All P&P suggestions were accepted by the responsible group, except for one policy. Rather than making interim edits, that policy will be brought forward to Council as a substantial edit when the committee completes their work to revise it. Recommendations on the remaining policies will be sent to Council for approval in February 2024.

### **Self-Study Work**

In 2019, and in 2021-2022, P&P provided boards and committees with a self-study exercise to provide an opportunity for reflection on their work and processes as a group. In 2019, P&P provided the self-study process to boards, and in 2021 P&P sent the self-study to committees to complete. P&P studied the results of these self-studies and looked for trends across the groups. The 2019 self-study results informed the 2020 P&P annual report which was its mandated 5-year review of governance. The 2021 P&P annual report focused on liaison relationships, which was also prompted by information gathered in the initial round of self-studies. .

In 2023, P&P reviewed their work on self-studies and discussed how to move forward with this process. We prepared a report regarding the self-studies, including the process and results for the 2021-2022 self-studies conducted by APA committees. We also reviewed the specific boards and committees and the types of surveys that would be helpful for them to evaluate their work. For example, some committees complete the same work year after year- like an awards committee. Committees such as these would need a different type of survey than a board or committee whose work changes from year to year. Moving forward into 2024, P&P will continue to work on recommendations for institutionalizing periodic self-studies across governance, including a timeline for completion of future self-studies and refinements to the process.

### **Organizational Change**

Our 2022 Annual Report detailed the process P&P went through to open a discussion about organizational change. This process, started in 2019, highlighted the challenge in changing the structure of APA governance, particularly the Council of Representatives. Apparently prompted by this work, a bylaws change was proposed in Council in the August 2023 APA Council meeting which would remove the currently available option for the Policy and Planning Board to go directly to the membership with proposed bylaws changes. It is our understanding that P&P has proposed bylaws changes directly to the membership only one time. P&P's 1960 annual report to membership explained proposed bylaws amendments that had been coordinated across governance groups, including Council. Given its discussion with governance regarding its 2019 organizational change proposal, P&P chose not to go to the membership with this proposal or

any variation of it. In its deliberations about the proposal to change the bylaws, the proposal was changed to require that P&P consult with Council prior to proposing any bylaws changes to membership. As of this writing, that proposal is being voted on by membership. (That bylaws amendment has since been accepted by the membership.)

### **Comment to the Membership**

In its role as an entity responsible for periodically reflecting on governance structure and function, P&P's recommendations will not always be popular. We are committed, however, to conducting our work collaboratively and collegially, serving as welcomed organizational consultants to entities within APA governance. We also recognize that there may be deep divisions and associated trust issues that complicate efforts to evolve over time. We are committed to being a positive force behind honest self-reflection and healing where that is necessary to work together to make changes that will most effectively promote the mission and goals of our Association.

Throughout the year, P&P has engaged in examining, observing, and monitoring APA policies, Board and Committee activities and the quality of interactions between elected members of APA Governance, Staff, volunteers working on Task Forces and projects and the APA Boards and Committees. While there is often spirited discussion and occasional controversial actions, the Association has had a productive year and continues to drive toward its impact driven strategic plan. While we are pleased with membership growth, the Association also should attend to member engagement, particularly in governance. P&P encourages all members to participate in APA activities and leadership moving forward as we all face the challenges of a world in need of Psychology and Psychologists. Upcoming opportunities for continued growth include updates to the APA strategic plan, ongoing participation in work to streamline how openly and efficiently the Council of Representatives functions, and continuing to develop, review and update policies.