

AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition Council Meeting – DRAFT Minutes

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AAAS Headquarters, Abelson-Haskins

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Welcome and Meeting Objectives

Mark Frankel (AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program) welcomed the Council. **Jessica Wyndham** (AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program) outlined the agenda for the meeting, the objectives of which were to: review progress in engaging scientific and engineering associations in bringing human rights to their membership; identify next steps in promoting and furthering the Coalition’s work on Article 15; decide on whether to introduce annual contributions and, if so, the terms for doing so; agree on a data sharing policy; adopt a plan to mark the 5th anniversary of the launch of the Coalition; and introduce to the Council the work of the Coalition’s Student Delegates.

The Council adopted the July 2013 Meeting Report.

Progress Reports: Member Actions to Address Human Rights

Human Rights Activity Updates:

- **Protecting colleagues at risk:** the American Physical Society has focused its efforts principally on the case of Omid Kokabee, an Iranian physics student studying in Texas who has been imprisoned in Iran. The APS, together with the Committee of Concerned Scientists, Amnesty International USA and Coalition Affiliated Individual Ali Arab organized a forum on academic in freedom in Iran that was hosted at Georgetown University; the American Chemical Society has focused its efforts on the case of Kemal Guruz, a chemical engineer and education administrator, who was arrested and imprisoned in Turkey; the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues is working with its student delegate to organize an event on the George Washington University campus concerning scientific freedom; and the American Political Science Association has issued statements on behalf of several scholars and is particularly concerned with threats made against Egyptian scholars.
- **Connecting human rights with disciplinary practice:** the American Sociological Association supported the efforts of one of its representatives, Margaret Weigers Vitullo, to analyze the data collected through the Article 15 focus group process and report on these findings at a meeting of the UN in Geneva; the National

Center for Science and Civic Engagement hosted two sessions on human rights as part of its summer meeting for faculty development; the American Chemical Society held a webinar for its members focused on seeding labs; the Joint Statistical meeting, organized by the American Statistical Association, included a session dedicated to the issue of when official statistics conflict with data; the American Psychological Association will include at least two sessions on human rights issues as proposed by Coalition members.

- **Including human rights in their organizations' publications:** Sigma Xi plans to publish an article on human rights in *American Scientist* by one of its representatives, Jeff Toney; the American Physical Society continues to inform members about the Coalition and other human rights related news through a [quarterly APS newsletter column](#); the Council for Undergraduate Research's quarterly journal spring 2014 issue will address the theme of human rights; the National Center for Science and Civic Engagement published as part of its backgrounder series a human rights primer by Coalition Individual Affiliate Sam McFarland.
- **Awarding a human rights prize:** the American Physical Society awarded the Andrei Sakharov Prize for outstanding leadership in upholding human rights to Omid Kokabee and Boris Altshuler, for his work in support of democracy in Russia and his advocacy on the rights of neglected children.
- **Issuing public statements on human rights:** the Council of the American Educational Research Association adopted a public [statement](#) on human rights.

In addition, some Member Organization representatives reported on human rights activities that they individually have carried out: **Gabriel Twose** (Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues) is co-editing a special issue on psychology and human rights for *The Journal of Peace Psychology* that will be published by fall 2014.

Benchmarks

Susan Hinkins (American Statistical Association) introduced the discussion of benchmarks with several general comments about the value of the data being collected. The greatest shortfall of the data is that only a very small proportion of member and affiliated organizations respond to the benchmark questionnaire. As a result, the data related to the human rights activities of members are basically meaningless. The data regarding Coalition resources available to STEM organizations, on the other hand, are measured according to total numbers and website hits. These are very useful. Members agreed that it is very useful to be able to learn from the activities and experiences of others, but suggested alternative methods for collecting the data, for example, by interview. **David Burns** (National Center for Science and Civic Engagement) suggested adding an evaluative question such as, "What has membership in the Coalition allowed you to achieve?" Susan Hinkins encouraged members who did not have anything to report to respond to the benchmarks questionnaire accordingly. **Theresa Harris** (AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program) agreed to resend the questionnaire following the meeting.

Progress Reports: Areas of Work

Welfare of Scientists: **Juan Gallardo** (American Physical Society) reported that the working group has developed a fact sheet on the case of imprisoned physics student Omid Kokabee, which highlights the actions taken by scientific societies on his behalf. Gallardo then explained the group's current focus on scientific freedom online. To better understand this issue and identify potential actions for members, the group heard from speakers from the Union of Concerned Scientists and the Electronic Privacy Information Center at its meeting. The working group will continue to pursue this issue.

Ethics and Human Rights: **Mark Frankel** (AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program) described the working group's project on the social responsibility of scientists and engineers, which has centered around a questionnaire aimed at eliciting the views of scientists and engineers regarding their responsibilities beyond their professional role as scientists and engineers to society more broadly. The aim of this collaboration between the AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program and the working group is to gather data about how scientists and engineers view their responsibilities, which will inform decisions on whether to undertake a more rigorous study, and if so, to help narrow the research questions. About 2,600 responses to the questionnaire were

received. AAAS staff and interns are now analyzing the results. Frankel noted that the project will also include case studies that would pull together both parts of this research, which should be complete before the July meeting.

Doug Richardson (Association of American Geographers) recommended that geospatial location and privacy be considered as a potential case study.

Service to the STEM Community: Margaret Weigers Vitullo (American Sociological Association) explained that the working group has decided to reform its three subgroups into two. One subgroup will continue to work on developing a template webinar for Coalition member organizations, describing the connections between science and engineering with human rights. The other subgroup is reviewing and evaluating the Starter Kit, as well as identifying effective means for dissemination.

Service to the Human Rights Community: Susan Hinkins (American Statistical Association) described a completed project, “Guidelines for Human Rights Projects,” for which the working group will develop a dissemination plan. A subgroup focused on reaching out to the human rights community has circulated a questionnaire to gain insights about what types of trainings in science and technology human rights practitioners see as most relevant to their work, and what formats for these trainings would be most effective. The results will inform future workshops and other resources the working group would like to develop. The subgroup working on developing indicators is compiling potential datasets and reviewing their quality.

This led to a broader discussion about disseminating resources the Coalition has developed. The Coalition has never developed a strategic marketing/publications plan. **Alyson Reed** (Linguistic Society of America) asked if the Secretariat could convene experts from member associations and seek their advice. **Toni Carbo** (Association for Information Science and Technology) suggested sharing Coalition publications with the American Library Association and similar groups. Several members, including the Association of American Geographers and the American Chemical Society, offered to provide a booth at their annual meetings to share resources and other information about the Coalition.

Education and Information Resources: Sheryl Luzzadder-Beach (Association of American Geographers) thanked all of the Coalition members who have contributed to the working group’s goal to update and expand the annotated bibliographies that were compiled in 2009. The new edition is now available on the Coalition’s website. They have designated a curator to edit the annotations for each discipline. She highlighted some new sections – public health and human rights, information technology and human rights – while noting that some disciplines still are not represented. A next step in strengthening the bibliography is to find ways to make online versions of the resources publicly available. One possibility, for example, is to recruit a library to provide links for all of the articles that are now behind paywalls. At a minimum, the group plans to ask Coalition members if they can make the bibliography resources from their own journals available. Another potential expansion is to include other formats, such as video. Luzzadder-Beach also noted that working group co-chair Sam McFarland’s primer on human rights has been published by SENCER. She also described a project underway to develop more teaching modules, including one for high schools.

Outreach and Communications Committee: Theresa Harris (AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program) explained that the Committee’s focus has been to launch the Student Poster Competition. **Brian Gran** (Sociologists Without Borders) summarized the successes, and also noted that the Committee has identified some ways to improve both the outreach and the overall process. The Committee intends to continue the competition, incorporating these improvements.

Progress Report: Student Delegates

The student delegates present at the Council meeting were **Tiffany Carey** (Ecological Society of America), **Katie Picchione** (National Center for Science and Civic Engagement), **Anna Markowitz** (Society for Research in Child Development), and **Vikram Singh Prasher** (American Physical Society).

Carey is working on a pollen and public health research project in Detroit. Picchione has attended the SENCER meetings and wrote a piece for the website after the last Coalition meeting. Prasher is working on a basic survey to assess what people know about human rights, with a specific focus on physics and human rights. He sent out the survey in December to 5,000 of the 12,000 APS student members and post docs. He received approximately 500 responses, and is now planning to evaluate the responses and develop future programs.

The students posed a number of questions that they would like clarified by the Council:

- How should student delegates be selected in the future?
- What qualities or expertise are you looking for in the student delegates (e.g., class level, area of study)?
- Clarification of expectations: what should student delegates be expected to produce? Should their efforts be focused on campus activities or within their professional societies?
- Need to have more support from the sponsoring organizations. What is the chain of command? Clarify what they should expect to be gaining from their roles.

Toni Carbo (Association for Information Science and Technology) asked the students what benefits they feel they have gained by attending the Coalition meeting. Both Carey and Picchione agreed that the meeting is a good networking opportunity and place to gain exposure to the various connections between the social and hard sciences. **Mark Frankel** (AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program) commented that we need to make it easier for students to attend the Coalition meetings in person.

Jessica Wyndham (AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program) clarified that each society has taken a different approach to recruitment. So far the focus has been on what is going to be of the most value to the organization and to the student delegate. However, the Coalition is open to include more overarching guidelines. The students commented that it would be helpful to have more direction and know the chain of command. Each student has different levels of expertise and influence within their schools. Some things like starting a club are more easily done at the undergraduate level, rather than the graduate level. However, within professional societies there are far more graduate students.

Progress Report: Joint Initiative

Jessica Wyndham (AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program) thanked the Council for their input on the final report, which is now available on the AAAS website and which she and **Margaret Weigers Vitullo** (American Sociological Association) presented at a conference at the United Nations in October 2013. Wyndham reminded members that a primary aim of the Coalition's process is to encourage the relevant UN Committee to adopt a formal statement on the meaning of the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress, called a General Comment. Wyndham invited suggestions for further disseminating the report and, now that the report is complete, ideas for next steps the Coalition could take in this effort.

Suggestions included:

- Translate the report into other languages;
- Identify and hold focus groups (or other appropriate research methods) with communities who would be the beneficiaries of the 'right to science';
- Address the right from the perspective of an individual person, as opposed to the scientific community;
- Promote the report at annual meetings of science and engineering societies;
- Develop materials showing people benefiting/not benefiting from scientific advancement, e.g., a video or other easy to access media.

Annual Contributions

Mark Frankel (AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program) noted that he would like to have a vote from the Council on whether or not the current proposal for annual contributions is something that the

Coalition should pursue. **Jessica Wyndham** (AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program) has written to every organization that is either a member or affiliated organization of the Coalition about the proposal. She has heard back from 22, 19 of which are full members. Of the 22, 12 have said that they would be willing to pay annual contributions. Of those 12, almost all said they would be willing to pay at the proposed contribution levels. Four organizations said that they would not be willing to pay annual contributions, and five have said maybe. The organizations who said 'no' cited a variety of reasons. One organization does not consider themselves a STEM organization, another does not clearly see the connections between their discipline and human rights, and one said that the Coalition is not doing what it had hoped it would do.

Doug Richardson (Association of American Geographers) commented that after five years the Coalition has matured and shown progress across the board. It is now time to think about the Coalition as an ongoing long-term operation. We can see strong results from implementing our current programs in a systematic way. He commented that the annual contributions proposed are perhaps even at the low end, but that they need to start the contributions at a level that will not alienate and turn away organizations.

Clifford Duke (Ecological Society of America) asked if AAAS had thought through the consequences if a large number of organizations are unwilling to pay dues. Wyndham responded that she is confident that the majority of organizations will be willing to pay dues. **Betsy Super** (American Political Science Association) noted that there are some questions remaining, but generally feels like APSA would be willing to move forward. **Michele Irwin** (American Physical Society) added that even if there are insufficient votes to introduce annual contributions, there will have to be a conversation about funding because the current system is not sustainable.

Frankel clarified that AAAS is committed to the Coalition both philosophically and mission-wise and will continue to support the Coalition regardless of what happens with the membership contributions. **David Burns** (National Center for Science and Civic Engagement) explained that it is important to use the term 'contribution', rather than 'dues'. He added that some consideration should be given to total contributions from organizations, for example, sponsoring a student delegate to attend the meeting. **Lori Hill** (American Educational Research Association) asked whether in-kind or pro bono contributions are included. Frankel clarified that the current proposal does not take in-kind contributions into account. Richardson suggested including an interim contribution step between those organizations with revenue of \$5,000 and \$20,000.

Toni Carbo (Association for Information Science and Technology) requested that AAAS put together some talking points outlining the key benefits of joining the Coalition. **Art Kendall** (Capital Area Social Psychological Association) suggested putting together documentation about the amount of in-kind time that is spent planning the meetings, etc. **Constance Thompson** (American Society of Civil Engineers) mentioned that the value proposition is not there for ASCE and that it would have to come from her budget. She asked for alternative ways to sponsor the Coalition. She explained that the money is not the issue; rather, it is the strategic value and the engagement. For example: how do you relate human rights to physical infrastructure? How has the work of the Coalition led to understanding ethics in business?

Wyndham noted that there are two options going forward. One is a question of whether or not Council agrees to the introduction of annual contributions, full stop, or whether it would rather implement some type of buildup process. The other approach is to say that we are not ready to vote on the question of annual contributions. **Susan Hinkins** (American Statistical Association) asked if it would be possible to vote that 'yes, we are willing to move forward', but with editorial caveats for the current proposal. Thompson, Vitullo, and Richardson agreed that the proposal should be voted on. Vitullo mentioned that it may help with external funders to see that there are organizations that will pay dues to be a part of the Coalition. Frankel mentioned that AAAS would like to see the contributions initiated in 2014.

Doug Richardson (Association of American Geographers) *put the motion that the Coalition adopt the contribution schedule as outlined by the Secretariat, leaving to the staff to adjust the scale based on the concerns raised, effective March 1, 2014, and that the contributions be pro-rated accordingly the first year, directing the staff to work with any organization that would like more information about the value added. The motion was seconded*

by Toni Carbo (Association for Information Science and Technology) **and passed with 13 votes in favor, none opposed and three abstentions.**

Data Sharing

Jessica Wyndham (AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program) suggested postponing the topic due to time constraints. She will contact Council to seek feedback by email. The Council agreed unanimously to proceed in this way. **Clifford Duke** (Ecological Society of America) offered his assistance on this topic; he has experience in this area and would like to provide the Secretariat with detailed feedback.

5th Anniversary – AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition

Jessica Wyndham (AAAS Scientific Responsibility Human Rights and Law Program) explained that the Secretariat plans to mark the Coalition's fifth anniversary at the July meeting with a series of events and commemorations. She pointed out the ideas in the agenda book and invited additional ideas.

Doug Richardson (Association of American Geographers) recommended focusing efforts on two or three projects that are substantive and advance the Coalition's mission. These could be used as resources by all members for several years. He also suggested reaching out to local news outlets, such as the Kojo Njambi radio show.

Constance Thompson (American Society of Civil Engineers) suggested a time capsule, possibly as a student project. She also recommended using the anniversary to start an endowment to support the Coalition. **Susan Hinkins** (American Statistical Association) suggested a fundraiser, which might include a silent auction.

Wyndham mentioned an idea to develop a three-part video engaging several members of the Coalition (why one should get involved; how different organizations are involved; how to get involved). **Michele Irwin** (American Physical Society) recommended combining several smaller projects into larger events, e.g., launching a video at an event that also includes a silent auction and an award.

Other Business and Public Comment

Jessica Wyndham (AAAS Scientific Responsibility Human Rights and Law Program) explained that to recognize the anniversary, it seemed timely to focus the July meeting on the working group's projects. This generated a lively discussion, during which several members strongly urged the Secretariat not to organize exclusively working meetings, but to also include informative plenary sessions with the types of high profile speakers the meetings have attracted in the past. With that in mind, most agreed that the idea of focusing on past, present and future collaborations was appealing and could offer opportunities to invite potential new members to learn about the Coalition's work. Other suggestions included organizing a student session and possibly combining some of the working groups for better synergy. **Theresa Harris** (AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program) informed the Council that a draft agenda would be circulated to the Steering Committee for input. The next Coalition meeting will be held on July 14-15.

Meeting Attendees

Jerry Baker	Sigma Xi
David Burns	National Center for Science and Civic Engagement
Chris Cameron	Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences
Toni Carbo	Association for Information Science and Technology
Clifford Duke	Ecological Society of America
Bruce Friesen	Sociologists Without Borders
Juan Gallardo	American Physical Society
Brian Gran	American Sociological Association
Lori Hill	American Educational Research Association
Susan Hinkins	American Statistical Association
Michele Irwin	American Physical Society
Art Kendall	Capitol Area Social Psychological Association
Anju Khubchandani	American Psychological Association
Sheryl Luzzadder-Beach	Association of American Geographers
Jenna McGwin	American Psychological Association
Brad Miller	American Chemical Society
Alyson Reed	Linguistic Society of America
Doug Richardson	Association of American Geographers
Paula Skedsvold	Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences
Janet Stocks	Council on Undergraduate Research
Betsy Super	American Political Science Association
Constance Thompson	American Society of Civil Engineers
Gabe Twose	Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues
Margaret Weigers Vitullo	American Sociological Association
AAAS Staff:	
Rebecca Carlson	AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program
Mark Frankel	AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program
Theresa Harris	AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program
Jessica Wyndham (Coalition Coordinator)	AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program
Student Delegates:	
Tiffany Carey	Ecological Society of America
Anna Markowitz	Society for Research in Child Development
Katie Picchione	National Center for Science and Civic Engagement
Vikram Singh Prasher	American Physical Society