

**AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition
Council Meeting – DRAFT Minutes
January 16, 2015
AAAS Headquarters, Abelson-Haskins
Washington, DC**

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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 Coalition areas of activity; adopt the Plan of Action 2015-2017; and determine next steps in engaging students in the Coalition’s activities.

Coalition Member Activities

Human Rights Activities Aimed at an Organization’s Members or Discipline

- Several human rights sessions were held during the [American Psychological Association’s \(APA\) Convention](#) on Aug. 7-10. Art Kendall (Capital Area Social Psychological Association) organized a session on the integration of human rights in the education of psychologists, with individual affiliate Sam McFarland, Theresa Harris and Jessica Wyndham (AAAS) as presenters; another session addressed Article 15 in the context of psychology, with Clinton Anderson (American Psychological Association), Margaret Vitullo (American Sociological Association) and Jessica Wyndham. Art Kendall also organized an introductory session for individual members of the APA on partnering with experts from other disciplines on human rights projects.
- SENCER (Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities), a program of the National Center for Science and Civic Engagement, hosted several presentations concerned with human rights and STEM education at their [Summer Institute](#) as well as their [Washington Symposium](#), which were held in August and September respectively. An [article](#) on the topic was published on the SENCER website.
- The American Political Science Association Human Rights Section gave its 2014 Best Book Award to Jo Becker of Human Rights Watch for [Campaigning for Justice: Human Rights Advocacy in Practice](#).
- Margaret Weigers Vitullo (American Sociological Association), Bruce Friesen (Sociologists without Borders/ASA) and Jessica Wyndham (AAAS) hosted a [webinar](#) explaining the

connections between human rights and sociology. This is the first in a series of webinars exploring the connections between human rights and specific disciplines represented among Coalition members. The Ecological Society of America hosted the second webinar in the series. The archived webinar is available [here](#). The next webinar will be hosted by the Linguistic Society of America on March 20, 2015.

- The American Anthropological Association's 2014 Annual Meeting featured many [sessions](#) at the intersection of anthropology and human rights.
- Sociologists Without Borders issued a Call for Manuscripts for its peer reviewed journal, [Societies Without Borders: Human Rights and the Social Sciences](#).
- The American Psychological Association issued several [statements](#) emphatically supporting the international prohibition against torture and appointed outside counsel to conduct an independent review of its policies.
- The [American Psychological Association published an article about the work of psychologists with human rights groups](#) through the AAAS On-call Scientists initiative. In the first month after the article was published, sixteen APA members registered for On-call Scientists.
- Mark Frezzo (former representative of Sociologists Without Borders), Bruce Friesen (American Sociological Association representative) and Brian Gran (Sociologists Without Borders representative) have each published a book on the sociology of human rights.
- The Association of American Geographers is working on a project aimed at outlining ethical guidelines for big data, particularly for geospatial data.
- Gabe Twose (Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues) edited a journal special issue on the psychology of human rights, which will soon be published.
- AAAS and the American Anthropological Association held a joint workshop in December 2014 on advocacy in science, specifically the risks and opportunities arising from research collaborations. A workshop report is forthcoming.

Coalition Member Activities to Mark International Human Rights Day, December 10

- The American Chemical Society (ACS) posted a [video](#) featuring board member and ACS Coalition representative Dr. Dorothy J. Phillips who highlighted the society's activities promoting human rights. The ACS also published an article in C&E News about the association's human rights activities.
- Sigma Xi posted a [sampling of articles](#) related to science and human rights from its publication, the "American Scientist."

Human Rights Activities Aimed at Policy Makers, Authorities, or the General Public

- [AAAS and ten other Coalition member organizations](#) sent a [joint letter](#) to Sen. Harry Reid (D-NV) and Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ) urging the Senate to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In addition, the APA Council adopted a [statement](#) in support of the Convention. At the end of the 2014 session, the Senate failed to vote on the treaty. Five Coalition member organizations endorsed the AAAS [statement](#) on the Convention.
- The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI), held the last [seminar](#) in its 2014 series, *Psychological Insights into Legislative Issues*, on October 8. The event featured a presentation by Coalition affiliated individual, Sam MacFarland.
- Coalition member and Sigma Xi representative Jeffrey Toney was a guest on the popular ["Talk Nerdy" podcast](#). He discussed the connections between science and human rights and

highlighted the work of the Coalition. He also [published an article](#) on the connection between science and human rights in Sigma Xi's journal, the American Scientist.

- The American Political Science Association [released a statement](#) on research integrity, sparked by a controversial political science study in Montana that raised ethical concerns.

Activities Aimed at Protecting the Human Rights of Scientists, Engineers, and Health Professionals

- The Association of American Geographers issued a statement regarding the arrest of a political science student in [Tajikistan](#).
- The American Physical Society wrote a [letter](#) to the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran calling for medical aid to imprisoned physicist Omid Kokabee after learning that Kokabee is suffering from several serious medical conditions.
- The Linguistic Society of America advocated for the release of an imprisoned linguist in China, who was ultimately released.
- The American Statistical Association continued its work supporting persecuted Argentinian statisticians.

Benchmarks Update

Theresa Harris (AAAS) reviewed the benchmarks for the preceding three years, since the adoption of the current Plan of Action. The data were derived from information provided by members, meeting records, newsletters, member association websites, and other available resources. Percentages were adjusted to reflect current membership.

Providing a summary overview of what the data reveal, Harris noted that attendance at Coalition meeting is good, but working group participation could be higher; websites are gaining higher view counts; and there has been a significant increase in human rights statements, actions and structures by Coalition members (14 member associations have increased their human rights activities over the past three years, while five have stayed the same and five have decreased). Harris noted that the Coalition could improve upon its human rights educational programs, codes of ethics, advocacy for the human rights of scientists and human rights research. She recommended that the Coalition support the involvement of new members, strengthen engagement within member associations, increase connections with the human rights community and seize/create opportunities for Coalition members to publicly support human rights policies and practices.

Council Business

Jessica Wyndham (AAAS) reminded members that the Council voted to introduce annual contributions beginning March 2014. Since then, one organization (the Acoustical Society of America) moved from being an Affiliated to a full Member Organization and several have left. She reported that, during the morning Executive Directors' Circle, participants discussed potential possibilities for targets of outreach.

She thanked the many Council members who had contributed to the Science and Human Rights Coalition's 5th anniversary celebration and pointed out the [article](#) that had been published about the event. She also announced the creation of the [AAAS-Andrew M. Sessler Fund](#) for Science, Education, and Human Rights to support the science and human rights activities of AAAS, including student engagement.

Council adopted the draft report of the July 2014 Council Meeting.

Progress Reports: Areas of Work

Welfare of Scientists: Melvyn Nathanson (American Mathematical Society) outlined the group's three projects: (1) sharing information about advocacy on behalf of scientists, engineers, and health professionals whose human rights have been violated and bringing these to the attention of human rights organizations and other professional societies ; (2) mapping violations of scientific freedom in countries throughout the world; and (3) planning an event in connection with the interpretation of Article 15 to be held in 2016 at the United Nations in Geneva.

Ethics and Human Rights: Mark Frankel (AAAS) noted that Maya Sabatello is the current working group chair, but that they are in the process of recruiting a co-chair. He outlined an ongoing project and three potential projects. For the ongoing project, he described a questionnaire sent in 2013 to scientists, engineers, and health professionals about their social responsibilities. A report of the findings is nearly complete, leading to the next stage in this project which will be the development of a methodologically robust and more international survey. Options for potential projects include: (1) the role of ethics and human rights in storing and analyzing big data; and (2) assisting scientific organizations in integrating human rights into their mission or ethics statements (in the interim, the group discussed the possibility of creating a brief statement to raise the visibility of the issue of integrating human rights into ethics statements.); and (3) pursue a series of activities focused on how scientific, engineering, and health organizations address issues of mental health, in the context of education and research practices, in professional, community, and personal situations.

Oliver Moles (Capital Area Social Psychological Association) inquired about the research methods of the questionnaire to scientists, engineers, and health professionals. Mark Frankel reported that the project was publicized through professional organizations' newsletters and listservs, in addition to those of international organizations' networks. He stated that the over 2,000 responses they received were especially helpful, with considerable diversity by discipline, though skewed with greater input from North American countries. Betsy Super (American Political Science Association) suggested conducting an expert survey using professionals experienced in speaking internationally with different disciplines. Beth Ambos (Council on Undergraduate Research) asked where the results would be published. Mark Frankel answered that the results would be posted on the AAAS website.

When asked, several organizations indicated that they do not have their own code of ethics, though they may follow that of another organization in a similar discipline. The organizations without a code of ethics are: the Capital Area Social Psychological Association, the Council on Undergraduate Research, the Consortium of Social Science Associations; the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues and AAAS.

The following organizations indicated they are in the process or soon to embark on the process of revising their code: American Political Science Association, American Sociological Association, American Statistical Association, and the Association for Information Science and Technology.

Service to the STEM Community: Margaret Weigers Vitullo (American Sociological Association) stated that the primary goal of the working group was to extend Coalition reach to individuals, professional societies, and disciplines through effective communication and resources. One of the working group's

committees organized a workshop on communicating within STEM associations about the Coalition. Eighteen people attended the workshop. Vitullo reported that newer members of the working group said that the information shared in the workshop was helpful in clarifying what members could do in their own organizations.

Outreach activities pursued by the working group have focused on the developing and hosting of webinars, with two held so far (American Sociological Association and Ecological Society of America). Vitullo reported that several hundred people have accessed the American Sociological Association's webinars, which highlights a great success.

She also stated that she and Jessica Wyndham are writing a proposal that aims to internationalize the Article 15 focus group process, with a plan to hold focus groups at international interdisciplinary meetings leading to the development of a global survey. Statistics Without Borders would be a partner in designing and analyzing the survey and data. Jessica Wyndham also suggested crowdsourcing as a method of funding this initiative on the basis that implementation would assist in allowing everyone the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and applications and would be of great value to the scientific community.

Service to the Human Rights Community: Oliver Moles (Capital Area Social Psychological Association) reported that the group is working in a variety of areas including (1) the development of indicators of the implementation of Article 15; and (2) workshops and initiatives directed towards the human rights community. He noted that several human rights groups are interested in obtaining information from scientists, especially case studies on what can happen with information from scientists, engineers, and health professionals and how it can be used by these organizations. Brian Gran (Sociologists Without Borders) described the first project as aiming to develop datasets of indicators – one set of indicators is complete, and the group is working on developing the second. Over the next few years, he stated that their goal is to develop four distinct sets of indicators and explore with human rights organizations how these may be used.

Oliver Moles also reported that the group is trying to identify, through text mining of science-related terms in human rights organization reports, which organizations are using scientific methods in their work and what they might find helpful by way of support, especially through the use of On-Call Scientists. He stated that future plans would include workshops for human rights organizations, with one in Washington, DC and one in New York material. In a questionnaire to representatives of these organizations, he reported receiving several responses of what may be helpful, including indicators, quantitative data, and other information. Moles also noted that they recently conducted a noontime seminar on science and human rights at American University, Washington College of Law and will create a similar program at the University of the District of Columbia Law School.

Melvyn Nathanson suggested exploring National Science Foundation data as a potential source of information for the indicators project, and Sheryl Luzzadder-Beach added that the Population Reference Bureau may be an additional source.

Outreach and Communication: Ali Arab (American Statistical Association) reported that due to a lower-than-expected number of submissions, the deadline for the student poster and essay competition would be extended to July 2015; this low turnout appeared to be due to poor timing and potential concurrence with final exams. He reported that, during the first student poster competition in January 2014, there were a reasonable number of submissions, mostly from local students with connections to committee

members. Last year's inaugural essay competition was especially successful, with 50 entries from 11 countries and winners coming to AAAS to receive their awards. Arab also noted the potential role of the AAAS-Andrew M. Sessler Fund in Science, Education, and Human Rights in assisting with monetary prizes and student outreach. He suggested that groups with similar goals join forces and asked that those interested talk to him and Jeff Toney (Sigma Xi) about ideas for outreach. Arab also stated that the group will be spending more time developing a standardized, collaborative approach to member outreach, with potential focus on health and medicine to economics.

Dorothy Phillips (American Chemical Society) asked whether the Coalition has any form of programming within the AAAS annual meeting. Jessica Wyndham reported that previously held special sessions and receptions had been discontinued due to the low number of participants. However, the Secretariat does distribute information about human rights at its booth. To that end, she pointed out the new Coalition outreach materials (two flyers, a brochure and banner) and asked for feedback. She also offered to provide to Coalition members copies if they wanted any to distribute at meetings of their own organizations. Arthur Kendall (Capital Area Social Psychological Association) suggested wearing badges with 'Ask Me About Human Rights' at these conferences for more direct recruitment.

Education and Information Resources: Sheryl Luzzadder-Beach (Association of American Geographers) reported that, since the last Coalition meeting, the group has been active in outreach. She and co-chair Bruce Friesen (American Sociological Association) were both involved in conducting interviews to create advertorials about the Coalition for *Science* magazine, creating recruitment materials, and participating in the 5th anniversary celebration. She also reported that, at the July 2014 working group meeting, two documents were approved for distribution: (1) a Human Rights 101 paper that appears on the AAG and AAAS websites and (2) a template to send solicitations to members within organizations to contribute to an annotated bibliography of a variety of subjects.

Long term goals include continuing to work on discipline-specific bibliographies and modules; making these materials available on the website for students and educators; identifying teachers willing to test, use, and assess these materials in the 2015-16 school year; encouraging members to distribute these materials in member organizations; and working to improve these materials. Friesen then reported several additions to the group's goals: creating materials directed towards college students; facilitating easy access to already-developed high school-directed materials on the AAAS website; and publicizing these materials through professional organizations' newsletters. He also asked for ideas on distributing information on human rights and science, with a focus on formal education, through cell phone apps, massive open online courses (MOOC's), etc.

Toni Carbo (ASIS&T) reported that the Librarians Without Borders website has several card games, tools, and video games designed as learning opportunities – for example, a game where players have to track people, demonstrating the international nature of human trafficking. Oliver Moles stated that there is an American Friends Service Committee in Washington, DC that works with high school students on human rights issues that could be contacted for collaboration. Jessica Wyndham reported that she is working with Karen Oates in the Center for Civic Engagement in presenting a proposal to the National Science Foundation for a conference on the integration of human rights into STEM education.

Evaluation and Planning Process: Plan of Action 2015-2017

Jessica Wyndham reminded Council members of the various review stages that led to the development of the draft before them. She noted that the Steering Committee had received comments from Council

and reviewed a draft integrating Council concerns. That amended draft was now before Council for its consideration. Toni Carbo noted the need for consistent terminology to demonstrate inclusiveness of all the sciences, engineering and health. Wyndham pointed out that the Plan indicates “STEM,” not just science. ***The Council agreed to amend the language to reflect the terminology of the founding documents of the Coalition.***

Wyndham introduced the suggestion of the Steering Committee for the creation of an ad hoc Benchmarks committee to take responsibility for gathering the information necessary to measure progress towards meeting the Coalition’s goals, as set out in the Plan. Bruce Friesen offered to co-chair and Lonnie Sherrod offered to serve on the Committee.

Council adopted the Plan of Action.

Looking forward to the goals of the Coalition over the next three years, as articulated in the Plan of Action, Theresa Harris noted that with regard to outreach, the Coalition needs to diversify membership, increase student involvement and build a shared messaging strategy. She added that the Coalition should build greater mentoring opportunities, particularly for young professionals and students. She asked the Council to let the group know of any additional organizations that might be interested in joining. Dorothy Phillips said that the Coalition should invite minority science groups. Alyson Reed noted that Rush Holt could invite groups to the Coalition. Beth Ambos said that in order to attract more groups, the Coalition needs to appeal to their self-interest.

With regard to the pilot grants program outlined in the Plan, Wyndham highlighted the need for the Coalition to increase its visibility by creating a compelling narrative, demonstrating impact and the value of a human rights approach to research and development.

To those ends, Wyndham, along with Juli Staiano of the AAAS Development Office, outlined the developing plan to establish a grants program competition that would provide seed funding for ideas and innovations that promote human rights. She noted that AAAS had just been approached by a large pharmaceutical company interested in partnering with AAAS to administer a similar project. The Council discussed some of the pros and cons of this potential partnership. Sheryl Beach, as well as Bruce Friesen, noted that there are human rights issues at stake, particularly that pharmaceutical companies are known for pharma-pollution. Perhaps there would be opportunities to address it. Betsy Super noted that there are models for working with such businesses while maintaining compatibility with human rights. Mark Frankel noted that AAAS would ensure the integrity of the competition. Ali Arab noted the need for clarity on goals and values of the project. Overall, many Council members expressed excitement about the potential collaboration.

Student Engagement

Jessica Wyndham presented the Council with an update on the AAAS-Andrew M. Sessler Fund for Science, Education, and Human Rights and the plan to use some of these funds in support of Coalition activities, specifically student engagement. She explained that, at the last Council meeting, student delegates and organization representatives identified the primary challenge to involvement of student delegates as lack of funding to bring students to Coalition meetings, in addition to the challenge of lack of clarity of what students are supposed to do, and who their mentor is intended to be. She concluded that these challenges led to the decision of reinvigorating and redeveloping the student delegate program, and that a substantial amount of the money from the AAAS-Andrew M. Sessler Fund for

Science, Education, and Human Rights would be dedicated towards this goal. Additionally, some funds from the AAAS-Andrew M. Sessler Fund for Science, Education, and Human Rights will be used to provide prize funds and travel support to student winners of the competition.

Wyndham proposed that each Coalition member identify a student delegate to serve in the Coalition by April 2015. Students would work with a faculty mentor as well as the sponsoring organization to develop a project proposal for the Coalition to fund seven to ten of these projects. Travel and implementation plans would be supported by the available funds. The projects would proceed from July 2015 to June 2016.

Alyson Reed (Linguistic Society of America) asked about the role of Coalition members in assisting students who may have some interest in the project and for student delegates who submit an unsuccessful proposal. Wyndham clarified that this initiative was for all students interested in human rights. Student delegates whose proposals are not accepted will still be allowed to come to Coalition meetings, with funds identified for their travel. The aim of the project would be for students to develop confidence in human rights and its applications to their own disciplines. Betsy Super (APSA) suggested that the Council consider leveraging the investment with matching funds from partner organizations. Dorothy Phillips (American Chemical Society) inquired about the timing and length of this project. Wyndham clarified that, during this time, the student delegate could come to the biannual Coalition meetings and be developing a project, without fixed monthly commitments. Gabe Twose (Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues) cautioned that funding alone does not mean a successful investment and proposed creating a set structure in addition to providing funding. Wyndham responded that the reason for the proposal project was for students and their faculty mentors to develop and maintain this relationship and for faculty mentors to have a role in the proposal, serve as an immediate point of contact, and relieve the burden on the member organization.

Harris further explained the initiatives for outreach to students and encouraged members to further raise and develop answers to questions of the connections between science and human rights, potential mentors for students, and how more people, especially students, can get involved. She highlighted Ali Arab's work with students at Georgetown, and workshops the Service to the Human Rights Community working group has organized at American University and the University of the District of Columbia. She noted that these programs also serve as a resource for human rights students early in their careers and to spark their thinking about how science and technology could be relevant to their work. The Service to the STEM Community working group plans to develop an electronic bulletin board for students, including those outside of Washington, DC, to connect with the Coalition's activities. An additional proposal and plan of action, she noted, for the AAAS-Andrew M. Sessler Fund for Science, Education, and Human Rights is to organize events and develop materials at campuses outside of DC to show students how they can get involved.

It was suggested that societies that hold separate events for graduate students could host these types of events to introduce their students to the Coalition. Toni Carbo (ASIS&T) suggested that students work through the AAAS sections to start getting involved. Alyson Reed (Linguistic Society of America) proposed engaging international students, especially those from countries with high incidence of human rights issues, to create a cadre of international participants independent of a particular association.

Other Business

Alyson Reed reiterated her excitement about the partnerships to support the grants program, noting that it is a great opportunity for dialogue on human rights and corporate responsibility. Jessica Wyndham reminded the Council that the next Coalition meeting is July 16-17, 2015, with the theme of business and human rights.

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Meeting Attendees

Representative

Member Organization

Rob Albro	American Anthropological Association
Beth Ambos	Council on Undergraduate Research
Ali Arab	American Statistical Association
Toni Carbo	Association for Information Science and Technology
Bruce Friesen	American Sociological Association
Juan Gallardo	American Physical Society
Brian Gran	Sociologists Without Borders
Art Kendall	Capital Area Social Psychological Association
Anju Khubchandani	American Psychological Association
Sheryl Luzzader-Beach	Association of American Geographers
Bradley Miller	American Chemical Society
Julia Milton	Council of Social Science Associations
Oliver Moles	Capital Area Social Psychological Association
Wendy Naus	Council of Social Science Associations
Melvyn Nathanson	American Mathematical Society
Dorothy Phillips	American Chemical Society
Alyson Reed	Linguistic Society of America
Doug Richardson	Association of American Geographers
Lonnie Sherrod	Society for Research in Child Development
Paula Skedsvold	Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences
Janet Stocks	Council on Undergraduate Research
Betsy Super	American Political Science Association
Jeff Toney	Sigma Xi
Judith Torney-Purta	American Educational Research Association
Ed Walsh	Acoustical Society of America
Margaret Wieggers Vitullo	American Sociological Association

Observers:

Lori Brown	American Chemical Society
Christy Talbot	American Educational Research Association

AAAS Staff:

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Mark Frankel	AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program
Theresa Harris	AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program
Priyanka Patel	AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program
Jessica Wyndham	AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program

(Coalition Coordinator)

Representative	Member Organization
Beth Ambos	Council on Undergraduate Research
Ali Arab	American Statistical Association
Toni Carbo	Association for Information Science and Technology
Bruce Friesen	American Sociological Association
Juan Gallardo	American Physical Society
Brian Gran	Sociologists Without Borders
Art Kendall	Capital Area Social Psychological Association
Anju Khubchandani	American Psychological Association
Sheryl Luzzadder-Beach	Association of American Geographers
Brad Miller	American Chemical Society
Julia Milton	Council of Social Science Associations
Oliver Moles	Capital Area Social Psychological Association
Wendy Naus	Council of Social Science Associations
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