AAPOR News: February 2012

Welcome to your February issue of AAPOR News offering timely and important association updates along with interesting news from the public opinion and survey research community.

This issue includes a letter from President Scott Keeter, 2012-2013 election information, an update on the 2012 Annual Conference and more.

Letter from the President

Good Financial News. AAPOR ended its fiscal year December 31 in very good financial shape, posting a surplus for the third year in a row. For 2011 (pre-audit), we were $101,851 in the black, on total budgeted revenue of $1,103,460 and budgeted expenses of $1,112,011. This happy outcome resulted from a combination of things: better than expected conference attendance and revenues, great efforts at membership recruitment and retention, increased activity in AAPOR’s career center job bank, conservative spending in general administrative areas, lower than expected expenses for conference, and strong revenue from the new webinar series that exceeded our initial expectations.

For the seventh straight year, we are happy to say that member dues will not increase. The surplus also makes it possible to fund some important initiatives going forward, including the Transparency Initiative, and to add to our reserve funds.

And They’rerrrrrrrrrr Off! This was the Council’s second year with the revised Executive Council nominations procedure proposed by Peter Miller and employed last year when he was the chair of the Nominations Committee. I hope that you are as pleased with the final slate of candidates as I am.

The committee made a very extensive effort to reach widely in search of good prospects, including interviews with every member of council and several people beyond the council. The Nominations Committee itself included several individuals who had served as chapter officers and thus could bring first-hand knowledge of talented and energetic chapter volunteers who might otherwise have escaped our notice. This was one way that we tried to make sure that the broadest possible range of members had a chance of being included on the slate.

One change from the old nominations procedure was having the nominations committee contact potential nominees and—if they were willing to throw their hat in the ring—asking them to provide a resume and short statement of relevant activity and experience. This process, carried forward from last year, helped both the nominations committee and the council make better-informed decisions about the slate of candidates. Visit the AAPOR website for complete candidate information.

A Spry 75 Year Old. By now you should have received your copy of the splendid 75th anniversary edition of Public Opinion Quarterly. The issue includes reflections on the evolution of the journal over the past 40 years by five former editors. This history illuminates the growing prominence of the journal and its centrality to the AAPOR mission, as well as how the content of the journal has changed. Beyond a
chronicle of the journal itself, the issue includes essays on the evolution of the field of survey research, including looks into the future by some of AAPOR's most prominent scholars. Kudos to Jamie Druckman and Nancy Mathiowetz for this great tour of the field and our journal's place in it.

**Lighting Round.** A few other items worth noting: As Paul Lavrakas describes below in this newsletter, the Transparency Initiative (TI) is currently conducting a pilot test among a small number of organizations who have served as an advisory committee to the TI. This pilot test will help the TI Steering Committee understand the feasibility of the rules and procedures and refine and enhance the effort so that it is meets our objectives. The pilot will conclude later this spring and will be discussed at a special session at the annual conference. The program for the **2012 AAPOR webinar series** is now final and registration is open. The 2011 series was a great success, serving a total audience of 421 subscribers across four webinars. The expanded 2012 series includes six planned sessions featuring experts in a wide range of topics of interest to our members. Finally, let me call your attention to the **2011 AAPOR Member and Nonmember Surveys**. The report on the survey contains a wealth of information about the views of current and former members and how they assess AAPOR's performance in serving the profession. For those of you who’d like to take your own look at the data, the raw deidentified data will soon be available for downloading.

**That’s a wrap!** Last but not least, by now most of you are undoubtedly deep into the process of making your entries for the first ever **AAPOR Video Contest**. If not, we hope you will help AAPOR bring survey research and polling alive to a wider audience by making an informative and fun video about some aspect of our profession. Visit the AAPOR website for complete details, along with a demo video. We are confident that AAPOR members will produce videos that are more informative and entertaining, not to mention in better taste. You could win $500 if your video is the winner, and you may see it at the conference (if it gets at least a PG-13 rating).

Scott Keeter
AAPOR President 2011-2012
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**AAPOR's 2012 Conference: New Frontiers...and Fun in Orlando**

By Dan Merkle, Conference Chair

Preparations are well underway for AAPOR’s 67th Annual Conference which will be held at the JW Marriott Orlando Grande Lakes in Orlando, Florida on May 17-20, 2012.

A record number of paper proposals were submitted in response to this year's call for papers, and over 500 of them have been accepted for inclusion in the program. Check out the [conference preliminary program](http://sherwood-aapor.informz.net/sherwood-aapor/archives/archive_2148015.html).

There will be a variety of paper sessions focusing on this year's conference theme: "**Evaluating New Frontiers in Public Opinion and Social Research**." These include sessions on using interactive and gaming techniques to improve surveys, advances in web surveys, innovations in the use of mobile devices in survey research, and using social media to measure public opinion and behavior. With the continued proliferation of new communication media and technologies, the conference provides an opportunity to evaluate these emerging methodologies and modes of data collection and explore the implications for our profession.

New frontiers will also be explored in demonstration sessions where innovative data
collection technologies and tools will be shown and discussed, including the use of wearable sensors to measure behavior, social media monitoring and assessment techniques, mobile video data collection, a multi-platform mobile survey application, conducting intercept surveys on cell-enabled iPads® and more.

The conference will also include panel sessions on many other topics of interest to our profession including substantive studies of public opinion on social, economic and political issues, political polling and elections, cross-national and comparative research, the impact of the media, and methodological research on cell phones, address-based sampling, questionnaire design, nonresponse, sampling, weighting, web surveys, mixed-mode data collection and other methodological issues.

A highlight of the conference will be the plenary session, “Examining the Value of Non-Probability Sampling in Social Research.” On the first evening of the conference, Thursday, May 17, a distinguished panel of experts will explore the value of non-probability sampling to our profession and discuss the circumstances under which non-probability sampling can and cannot be used effectively and with confidence. The two panelists who will present the case for the value of non-probability sampling are Douglas Rivers, professor of political science at Stanford University and chief innovations officer at YouGov, and George Terhanian, Toluna’s North American president and group chief strategy officer.

The two discussants who will evaluate the panelists’ arguments are Robert Groves, director of the U.S. Census Bureau and Elizabeth Stasny, professor and vice chair for graduate studies in statistics and biostatistics in the Department of Statistics at The Ohio State University. The session will be moderated by Nancy Mathiowetz, professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Beyond the strong conference program, there will also be plenty of opportunities for socializing, networking and fun! Orlando is home to many wonderful attractions, so consider bringing the family. For tickets to such attractions as Walt Disney World®, Universal Studios® and SeaWorld®, visit the Attraction Tickets and Activities page on the AAPOR website.

Tickets to local attractions will also be sold on site at the conference. The conference hotel is about 10 miles from Walt Disney World and Universal Studios and two miles from SeaWorld.

The JW Marriott Orlando Grande Lakes is a beautiful hotel, set on over 500 tropical acres, with fun for the entire family. Amenities include lighted tennis courts, a sand volleyball court, jogging trails, bocce ball courts, a life-size chess board and outdoor heated pools and whirlpools including a lazy river pool. Check out the JW Marriott Orlando Grande Lakes website for more information.

Hope to see you in Orlando!

AAPOR Establishes 2012 Election Polling Rapid Response Team

By Paul J. Lavrakas, President Elect

The Executive Council of AAPOR has established a team of election polling experts, including four AAPOR former presidents, to be on hand to help the current AAPOR leadership during the 2012 election campaign.

Diane Colasanto (Princeton Survey Research Associates), Rob Daves (Daves &
Associates Research), Quin Monson (Brigham Young University), Mike Traugott (University of Michigan) and Cliff Zukin (Rutgers University), have joined AAPOR’s past, present and incoming presidents (Frank Newport, Scott Keeter and Paul J. Lavrakas) to form an ad hoc committee that will vet polling-related issues that may arise during the 2012 election campaign and determine what, if any, response should be forthcoming on behalf of AAPOR.

Furthermore, in the event all three of AAPOR’s current presidents—each of whom are involved in 2012 election polling (Keeter with Pew, Newport with Gallup and Lavrakas with The Associated Press)—would have a conflict of interest speaking on AAPOR’s behalf about an election polling matter, this team of experts would become the “voice of AAPOR” on that matter.

AAPOR Membership Committee Using Survey Results to Guide Outreach in 2012

By Joe Murphy, Membership & Chapter Relations Chair

AAPOR ended 2011 in strong shape, with more than 2,300 members. Over a tenth of our members were brand new to the organization in 2011. To those of you in this piece of the pie, we would like to say welcome! The year ahead promises to be a busy one for the Membership and Chapter Relations Committee and we will need the contributions of new and not-so-new members alike to achieve our goals.

One of these goals is continue to build membership by reaching out and connecting with members of affiliated organizations. In 2011, the AAPOR booth traveled to the meetings of the MAPOR, PAPOR and SAPOR chapters, as well as to the conference of the American Public Health Association (APHA) to promote AAPOR and its benefits to researchers attending. We will be looking for options to promote AAPOR at other conferences in the coming year.

The figure below, from the 2011 Membership Survey, shows other organizations with which AAPOR members are most often affiliated—organizations on which to focus further recruitment efforts. We welcome input from those of you who belong to these other organizations on the best ways to promote AAPOR’s mission and benefits to your colleagues.

AAPOR Members: Membership in other associations
We also aim to continue and improve our efforts to welcome new members, students and first time conference attendees to the organization. Before the 2012 conference in May, we hope you will join us for New Member Orientation webcast. We will repeat the “Passport Program” for new members and first time attendees that was such a hit at the conference last year. Along with the Education Committee, we are rolling out a pilot of the AAPOR Mentoring Program to match mentors with mentees. This program will help orient members to the organization and survey research, provide professional development opportunities and help develop future leaders for AAPOR.

If you have ideas for additional ways to promote AAPOR membership and its benefits, or would like to volunteer to help with these activities, please don’t hesitate to contact me!

2012-2013 AAPOR Executive Council Election: Vote Begins March 12

Voting for the 2011 Executive Council will begin on March 12 and end on April 5. For complete information on all 14 candidates for the seven open Council positions, visit the [AAPOR website](http://sherwood-aapor.informz.net/sherwood-aapor/archives/archive_2148015.html).

AAPOR Launches Transparency Initiative Pilot Test

By Paul J. Lavrakas, President Elect

The AAPOR Transparency Initiative (TI) is entering into a pilot test phase, starting in early February and lasting into April.

The pilot test is intended to help the TI Steering Committee and AAPOR Council learn more about the ease/difficulty of (a) applying for certification, (b) reviewing the applications, (c) monitoring compliance of the organizations that are certified and (d) the costs of implementing TI. During this pilot test approximately 10 survey/polling organizations that have been serving on the TI Advisory Council and that release publicly at least some of their survey results will participate by submitting their application for TI pilot test certification via a Web portal.

The materials and information that the pilot test organizations submit will be reviewed by the members of the TI Steering Committee before "provisional" certification is granted for the pilot test. The participating organizations will provide feedback throughout the pilot test.

The lessons learned will be used by the Steering Committee and AAPOR Council to make final plans for implementing the TI, which is anticipated to occur in summer of 2012. There will be a panel discussion of the TI pilot test findings and future plans for TI at the Orlando 2012 AAPOR conference on Friday, May 18, from 4:15 p.m.–5:45 p.m. EDT. Please plan to join us to learn more.

2012 AAPOR Webinars

Mark your calendar for a year of must-attend webinars!

**Visualizing the News**

*Presented by Matt Ericson, The New York Times*

March 14, 2012

Improving Surveys with Paradata: Making Use of Process Information  
*Presented by Frauke Kreuter, University of Maryland*  
April 12, 2012

**Single and Multi-Mode Surveys Using Address-Based Sampling**  
*Presented by Colm O’Muircheartaigh, Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago*  
June 7, 2012

**Population-Based Survey Experiments: How to do Them and What They’re Good For**  
*Presented by Diana Mutz, University of Pennsylvania*  
August 30, 2012

**Weighting Approaches for Dual Frame RDD Surveys**  
*Presented by Courtney Kennedy, Abt SRBI*  
October 11, 2012

**Leveraging New Technologies: What We Know So Far**  
*Presented by Michael Link, The Nielsen Company*  
December 5, 2012

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**AAPOR Video Contest - Submit Your Video Today!**

The AAPOR community was shocked and awed this month by the premiere of the video “A World Without Polls” starring AAPOR President Scott Keeter and featuring cameo performances by the Three Stooges, Census Director Robert Groves, children in distress, zombies and a flock of angry birds.

The video was designed to inspire and encourage entrants to the first (and perhaps last) AAPOR Video Contest, which was officially launched a few weeks earlier with an email to members. Keeter outlined the rules for entry and offered practical tips to aspiring video makers. "Don’t be afraid to be serious,” he said. "Don’t be afraid to have fun. But mainly, don’t be afraid to enter.”

The contest is open to all AAPOR members. Team entries are allowed as long as the team includes one AAPOR member. Potential entrants were advised to produce “short, clever videos on some aspect of survey research. Films should inform, enlighten and entertain.” The videos should appeal to an audience beyond just AAPOR members and should be two to four minutes in length. Visit the AAPOR website for complete rules and submission instructions.

Deadline for entries is April 1.

The first prize winner will receive a cash prize of $500 while the runner-up will collect $300 and the third place finisher receives $100. That assumes, however, that the judges believe there are one or more videos worthy of a cash award. Members of the Communications Committee and AAPOR members with film-judging experience will serve as judges.

A big thank you to Marjorie Connelly and Claudia Deane, co-chairs of the video subcommittee, for their work setting up the contest.

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AAPOR Member News

If you have news you would like shared in the Member News column of the newsletter, please send information to Lindsay Arends.

Dr. Nancy A. Potok has been appointed associate director for Demographic Programs, the unit of the U.S. Census Bureau implementing design, management and analysis of much of demographic survey data collected by the Bureau. Dr. Potok will take the lead on implementing the reorganization of the management for reimbursable survey. This will include the appointment of survey directors, who will report to her and be responsible for client services for demographic surveys of the Bureau of Justice Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Center for Education Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics at NSF and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, among others.

Cognitive psychologist Frederick Conrad has been appointed director of the University of Michigan (U-M) Program in Survey Methodology, based at the U-M Institute for Social Research (ISR). The program is one of only three in the U.S. to provide graduate-level training in how to conduct scientifically sound polls and surveys. Conrad will also serve as director of the Joint Program in Survey Methodology, a long-standing collaboration between U-M, Westat and the University of Maryland.

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