

Report of APA Council of Representatives: August 2007

Norine G. Johnson, Ph.D. and John C. Norcross, Ph.D.

The APA Council of Representatives met on two days surrounding the annual APA convention in San Francisco. Following are several of the more important matters of interest to the Division of Psychotherapy membership.

Psychologist participation at US Detention Centers was the agenda item of major concern. Intense efforts to find common ground were conducted for three days, culminating in a Council vote on Sunday with by-standers on the side and back cheering and booing the discussion. The national press was also present as select Council members worked extremely hard and, for the most part, collegially on a resolution that reflected outrage over acts of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. The final resolution passed by a significant majority and can be viewed on APA's web page. (www.apa.org). We strongly encourage you to read the entire resolution and not just base your judgment on what you might hear or read in newspapers or on listservs.

The final language is strong and unequivocal: psychologists do not participate, condone, or consult in torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The disagreement was whether or not APA should specify sites, such as detention centers where torture is used, as places of employment where psychologists should not work. The counter-argument was made that the presence of psychologists saves lives and improves the health of detainees. The issue is extremely complex and clearly will continue to be debated.

The Council of Representatives voted to send out to the membership for approval **an APA Bylaw change to increase the size of the Council of Representatives** to include representation of the Asian American Psychological Association, the Association of Black Psychologists, the National Latina/o Psychological Association, and the Society of Indian Psychologists. All the Associations but the ABP were present at Council and were pleased at the passage of this important expansion of governance. ABP declines the invitation at the current time.

A new Council item was passed in reaction to the forced resignations of Israeli scholars from the editorial boards of British scholarly publications to strengthen APA's position against anti-Semitism. The item condemns academic boycotts as a violation of academic freedom and a disruption of the exchange of scientific and scholarly ideas.

The item proposed by your Division 29 Representatives and supported strongly by the Division 29 Board passed to strongly encourage the use of the terms "psychology," "psychological" and "psychologists" when referring specifically to the activities of psychologists.

Council passed a resolution to **Enhance Ethnic Minority Recruitment, Retention, and Training in Psychology** by continuing the work of the CEMRRAT2 Task Force. Council also passed an increase in reimbursement for ethnic minority members of Council.

During his **CEO report, Dr. Norman Anderson**, reported his major concern about the possibility of a large deficit budget. He is also developing an APA strategic

plan to begin in 2008. A Chief Diversity Officer for APA will be hired in 2008 to oversee the implementation of APA's prioritizing of diversity.

Significant changes in Central Office staff were announced. Russ Newman, executive director of Practice will be leaving January 1, 2008, Jack McKay, executive director of Finance, announced his resignation, and Attorney Jim Mc Hugh also is leaving after many years leading APA's Legal Affairs.

The biggest new financial item was the approval of \$7,600,000 to fund the Web Relaunch Project to make APA's site more user-friendly and relevant for our members and the public. It is believed that this expenditure is necessary to support our current activities, enhance the availability of psychological information to the public and our members, and to do the Association business in a more effective and efficient manner.

On line voting for APA elections was approved.

A revision of the Recommended Postdoctoral Education and Training Program in Psychopharmacology for Prescriptive Authority was passed in principle to amend the 1996 document. The document is posted on APA's web page where you may see the details. The document recognizes the multitude of changes that have occurred in the education and training of prescribing psychologists in the past 10 years. There was significant support for the changes recommended. The primary differences were focused on the amount of doctoral course work that may be credited toward the granting of a post-doctoral degree in psychopharmacology.

APA's Attorney Natalie Gilfoyle reported on current litigation in which APA has been engaged. One APA amicus brief spoke to the lack of scientific evidence to predict future dangerousness in certain settings such as a secure correctional facility. I recommend you go on line and read her report, which includes Justice Stevens' opinion, "Expert testimony about a defendant's 'future dangerousness' to determine his eligibility for the death penalty, even if wrong 'most of the time' is routinely admitted." Another filing of our attorneys was to the Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education and Parents v. Seattle School District – U.S. Supreme Court that significantly impacts desecration efforts.

Corann Okorodudu received a Presidential Citation for her important work with the United Nations, and Florence Denmark was presented the Raymond Fowler Award for lifetime contributions to the American Psychological Association.

Finally, on a personal note, this Council meeting marked the end of our three-year terms representing the Division of Psychotherapy. John Norcross completed his second term and is rotating off Council. He will be replaced by Linda F. Campbell, who will join Norine Johnson, who was elected to a second term on Council. The three of us collectively thank you for the support and, as always, welcome your input on the directions of the APA Council of Representatives.