

FEBRUARY 2023 Council Meeting Highlights

APA's Council of Representatives held a hybrid meeting Feb. 24-25, with most Council members convening in person in Washington, DC.

Confidentiality and Reproductive Health

The Council passed a [policy](#) asserting that confidentiality is central to the practice of psychology, and that psychologists should follow the APA Ethics Code when it comes to patient confidentiality surrounding reproductive health. The policy reaffirms "that a psychologist's allegiance to the Ethics Code, including ethical standards related to patient confidentiality, should be given the utmost attention and significance especially when psychologists are faced with ethical conflicts with a law requiring the disclosure of confidential information regarding sexual and reproductive health, including birth control; fertility treatment; contemplating, seeking, or having had an abortion; and related issues."

The vote was 148-4, with one abstention. This measure follows on a [resolution](#) the Council passed in February 2022 reaffirming APA's commitment to reproductive justice as a human right, including equal access to legal abortion, affordable contraception, comprehensive sex education and freedom from sexual violence, with a particular emphasis on individuals from marginalized communities.

Establishment of a Committee for the Advancement of General Applied Psychology

The Council voted 144-13, with one abstention, to amend the Association Rules to establish a Committee for the Advancement of General Applied Psychology. The committee's purpose will be to promote, in settings outside the direct delivery of health care services, the utilization, application and advancement of science where psychologists work to enhance performance, learning, and well-being of individuals, groups, organizations, and society as a whole.

Adoption of Policies

The Council unanimously adopted revised [APA Principles for Quality Undergraduate Education in Psychology](#) and approved December 2032 as the expiration date. These principles offer best practices that faculty members, programs, and departments can adopt to facilitate student learning and development, in ways that fit their institutional needs and missions. This document is designed to complement, and to be used in conjunction with, the [APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major](#).

The Council voted by 151-4, with one abstention, to adopt [Educational Guidelines for Equitable and Respectful Treatment of Students in Graduate Psychology Training Programs](#). These guidelines encourage graduate psychology programs to promote the equitable and respectful treatment of graduate students throughout their education and training so that students may fully benefit from their graduate education and maximize their potential within and beyond their graduate programs.

The Council adopted a resolution on [Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in Quality Continuing Education and Professional Development](#) by a vote of 139-8, with two abstentions. This resolution is aimed at providing CE sponsors and the broader public evidence-based recommendations to support the integration of equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility in continuing education. The policy may be used as a foundation to develop additional resources that build on this document and provide tangible support to CE sponsors to infuse EDIA thoughtfully and intentionally in their offerings.

Amendments to Association Rules

The Council voted 147-2, with four abstentions, to amend the Association Rules to modify the review process for Board of Director member-at-large candidates and to apply that review process to all other members of the Board of Directors. Changes include asking prospective candidates, upon being slated, to disclose to the Election Committee claims made against them within the last 10 years for malpractice

or unethical or unprofessional conduct, or if they are currently the subject of criminal indictment. The Election Committee will then evaluate the disclosures and determine whether the candidate can remain on the slate. The decision of the Election Committee can be appealed to the Board of Directors.

Guidelines

The Council voted unanimously to extend the effective date of the [APA Specialty Guidelines In Forensic Psychology](#) through December 2026. The purpose of these guidelines is “to improve the quality of forensic psychological services; enhance the practice and facilitate the systematic development of forensic psychology; encourage a high level of quality in professional practice; and encourage forensic practitioners to acknowledge and respect the rights of those they serve.”

Recommendations from the Council Effectiveness Implementation Oversight Task Force

The Council voted to accept recommendations to publicize new business items in advance of Council meetings and give the movers and any opponents time to address the new business items at the Council plenary session. The motion passed by 104-40, with eleven abstentions. This was part of a series of recommendations aimed at making it easier to get new business items on the Council agenda. Several recommendations related to this effort were postponed until the Council’s August meeting.

The Council voted 103-52, with two abstentions, to create a liaison program of Council members who would be assigned to up to eight selected boards and committees. The program will be managed by the Council Leadership Team.

Report of An Offer of Apology, on behalf of APA, to First Peoples in the United States

The Council accepted a [Report of An Offer of Apology, on behalf of the American Psychological Association, to First Peoples in the United States](#). This report builds upon [APA’s Apology to People of Color for APA’s role in Promoting, Perpetuating, and Failing to Challenge Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Human Hierarchy in U.S.](#), which the Council adopted in October 2021. The offer of apology to First Peoples will be delivered by the APA president to the Society of Indian Psychologists at a time and place to be determined jointly with the SIP leadership. The report was received by a vote of 148-2, with three abstentions.

Reflecting on APA's Strategic Plan and Progress To-Date

Council began the process of reviewing and updating APA’s current strategic plan. Since the strategic plan was adopted in 2019, APA has been regularly gathering information to assess progress in advancing its short-and long-term goals. Rooted in APA’s organizational foundation of science and belief in data-driven decision making, APA governance and staff are asking questions that probe the effectiveness of APA’s transformation in accomplishing the association’s mission and achieving impact. Four years into the implementation and evaluation of the strategic vision, the data show APA is generating noticeable momentum as an association. A review of the strategic plan and accomplishments are available publicly, [IMPACT in Action: Reflecting on APA’s Strategic Plan and Progress To-Date](#).

Presidential Citations

APA President Thema Bryant, PhD, presented Presidential Citations to psychologists Gordon C. Nagayama Hall, PhD, and Wendi Sharee Williams, PhD, for their contributions to the field.