

Dear Relatives,

I am sorry that I cannot be with you today, and would much prefer to be on the call with you as opposed to engaging with APA council.

This report is meant to inform you to the key events of the APA council of representatives, as well as the activities of the EMPA delegates to council.

The Council Diversity Workgroup (CDWG) was placed under the authority of the new Council Leadership Team (CLT). This was done to protect the work of Melinda and others who worked hard on producing the wonderful whitepaper. [BTW, the whitepaper has been used to help to formulate the new APA Diversity Framework that was developed to inform the strategic planning process and the development of the job description of the new Chief Diversity Officer. APA is searching to fill that position now.] One of the consequences of that move, intended or unintended, is an expectation that the co-chairs of the CDWG report to and be under supervision by the CLT. I have always had concerns about this hierarchical arrangement that places the co-chairs, who are the EMPA delegates from NLPA, AAPA, and me as SIP delegate, reporting to APA CLT and at the whims of CLT directives. To expect that delegates from sovereign psychological societies will bend to the expectations of APA has placed us in an untenable position, and speaking only for me, I have been battling against that perceived control and making it clear that my first responsibility is to the needs of SIP.

Several predictable things have happened as a result. First, the recommendations of the CDWG have been watered down by APA slowly but surely overtime. Since CLT reports to the APA Board of Directors (BoD), and there have been several on the BoD who really dislike the CDWG and that its co-chairs represent EMPAs (and not elected council reps “that have climbed the ladder of APA governance”), there has been active resistance to the work of the CDWG. The BoD has been suggesting we be responsible for the diversity training at council ONLY, something they want to delegate away because it likely seems unimportant. All other functions of CDWG have been undermined or watered down in some way overtime, subject to an annual report in which recommendations are suggested by us but approved by CLT and the BoD. It has survived only because it has allies on CLT, but that has been eroding away as well. The point here is that the CDWG will likely survive in some form, but only the form that CLT and the APA BoD want, and CDWG is also vulnerable to the changing membership of CLT. Second, the CLT is going to review the role of the EMPA delegates as co-chairs of the CDWG in April I think, with the idea that they want their own in charge. In my mind, because we are meant to represent the positions our sovereign organizations not APA, so this does not bother me as much. In fact, I think maybe placing CDWG under CLT control might have been a typical APA strategy to kill the process. Anyway, true colors are being seen today.

EMPA Delegate Update

The EMPA delegate group has been in transition for several months and has limited our activities. Last autumn, the delegate from AAPA, Leilani Crane, resigned due to family care issues, and AAPA only appointed a new delegate this week. I had found Leilani to be a great ally in supporting concerns of SIP and in her alignment of values that we share about diversity. She has a good heart. Losing her on the delegate group was a major loss.

I have generally worked ok with the NLPA delegate, Milton Fuentes, but he is much more comfortable in the dual role of serving APA and NLPA than me. Several events overtime have made me worry that he might be too close to APA. This admission is done in confidentiality and meant to go no further than this report to you.

Our work was complicated by an unexpected turn of events during the last council meeting in August: for the first time in years, ABPsy was represented by what was referred to as an Observer, Linda James Myers. We were not informed of this ahead of the meeting and I think it may have been at the invitation of OEMA that she came. ABPsy was apparently testing the waters to see if APA was willing to change their ridiculous requirement that EMPA delegates must be members of APA to attend council. APA did not change the requirement, hence ABPsy has disappeared again. But for a time, it was confusing to us whether to include Linda in our biweekly calls or not.

AMENAPsy was formally invited by APA to send a delegate this last fall, and she chose Nabil El-Ghoroury as their delegate. We had begun to include him in our calls and were making plans to include him on EMPA delegate activities at council when APA informed AMENA Psy that they would not seat Nabil due to conflicts of interest [since he was CEO of the family therapists group in California]. None of us saw that one coming. AMENA Psy has chosen another person, but cannot attend the meeting this week. As you can imagine, all these events together have created some challenging circumstances going into the council meeting this week.

Progress on the Apology Initiative

There is very little to report except that nothing seems to be happening. The council representatives who chaired the working group on this initiative resigned about a year ago due to other work demands, and since that time the group has lapsed (with regard to its official protection by CLT). The EMPA delegates have made several efforts to get other members of CDWG to step up and take over the work, which we have been told the foundational work is about 85% complete, but in reality without sanction from CLT it is difficult to know exactly what can be done, officially. I wrote the new president of APA around the holidays, asking her to consider a presidential task force on the issue of apologies, using the work by the CPA as a model. Her response was sympathetic but non-committal, saying only that she would share my message with the BoD. One member of CLT confided in me last month that she was discussing with other sympathetic council members a process to develop a new business item for council that would establish a group to carry forward the process, but I have seen no evidence of follow-up so far. As this person pointed out, it should not be SIP that has to carry the water on this, and the CLT member understands such an expectation would be a sign of the insincerity of the process. I suggested we would still be willing to work as consultants to the process. However, I am not optimistic and feel personally that APA is not ready and may never be.

APA Initiatives of Concern Going into this Meeting

APA is voting on a new strategic plan with the arrival of the new CEO, Arthur Evans. Related to this activity, APA is currently in the process of hiring a Chief Diversity Officer as part of that strategic planning process, a promise they made years ago. The EMPA delegates were interviewed and consulted as part of these processes several times, and we were working closely with the consultant that was hired to develop the new Diversity Framework that informed both the strategic planning and CDO hiring processes.

There is a new initiative being discussed that proposes to amend Association Rule 100-1.4 regarding position and policy statements to provide more oversight and control to APA over what the divisions endorse. To me, this has seemed like a natural extension of APA's need to control things centrally as would be expected in a colonial organizational structure. APA is also a highly litigation-oriented organization, always afraid of legal risks, and therefore always afraid to take risks to advance psychological well-being. The APA lawyers have been involved in the process of developing this amendment, clearly. There has been a great deal of concern raised by council representatives on the list serve on behalf of divisions, so it may not go anywhere, and of course I will monitor and speak for us as needed. This is likely not of great concern to SIP members who do not belong to either APA or its divisions, but clearly would have potential impact on those of us who are active in divisions of APA that serve to challenge APA when they take poorly informed positions or no positions at all.

That is all to report for now. As you can probably sense from this report, I am a bit dismayed with APA and its lack of progress in key areas of interest to us. However, I cannot say that I am surprised.

Enjoy this beautiful day!



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