

**American Association of Physics Teachers
Strategic Plan 2010–2013**

Without Strategies for the Objectives

**Adopted by
AAPT Executive Board
July, 2010**

**With Input From
AAPT Section Representatives
AAPT Area Committee Chairs
AAPT National Office Staff**

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INTRODUCTION TO STRATEGIC PLAN

The AAPT Strategic Plan laid out in this document was adopted by the AAPT Executive Board at its meeting in Portland, OR, in July, 2010. This plan, however, has evolved over several years. In June of 2006, anticipating a change in AAPT's Executive Officer, the Executive Board held a retreat that was facilitated by Karen Johnston, who served as AAPT president in 1995–96 and who also has experience as a program evaluator. Following this retreat in the period from October 2006 to April 2007, a small group known as the Planning Advisory Group (PAG) and composed of Toufic Hakim (then AAPT Executive Officer), Dick Peterson, Ruth Chabay, Karen Johnston, Dwain Desbien, and Warren Hein (then AAPT Associate Executive Officer) worked to consolidate the discussions from the Board's retreat and develop proposed future directions for AAPT. At this juncture, the Board felt that a larger number of those involved in AAPT governance should have an opportunity to provide input. To that end, on the weekend of 23–25 May 2007, a retreat facilitated by Steve Iona and Ingrid Novodvorskys and attended by AAPT Section Representatives, Chairs of AAPT Area Committees, and a few members of the AAPT Executive Board convened at the American Center for Physics for a three-day session aimed at reviewing the governance structure of AAPT. Numerous recommendations to the Board emerged from that retreat.

Unfortunately, the outcomes from the May 2007 retreat did not provide a consensus for how AAPT should move forward. To provide for a more focused effort based on, but going beyond what had preceded, the AAPT Board in October 2007 authorized the creation of the *ad hoc* Committee on Governance Structure (COGS). In his President's report to the Board at its meeting in January 2008, then President Harvey Leff announced his appointments to that Committee and charged the Committee to

- Study the
 - Chart of AAPT's current structure being prepared by the Governance Review Committee,
 - Models from the Area Chairs–Section Representatives Retreat and the Board Retreats, and
 - Other relevant documents.
- Present to the AAPT Executive Board
 - A summary and synthesis (if possible) of the latter, and
 - Recommendations on how to deal with them, including for each recommendation (a) an assessment of its Strengths and Weaknesses and the Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) associated with it, (b) actions that would be needed for implementation, and (c) a timeline for needed actions leading from the current structure to the recommended new structure.

The members of COGS in the three years since its creation in January 2008 are listed in Table 1. These members have been appointed by the AAPT President. In the three years of COGS existence, its members have also held specific offices on the Board, though those specific members were not stipulated in the authorizing legislation.

The initial charge to COGS focused on developing a response to the report from the 2007 Retreat of Area Chairs and Section Representatives. In the minutes of the July 2008 meeting of the Board, Harvey Leff lamented that there was no clear framework or structure that could be used by the Committee to proceed and reported that the Committee had identified four areas of greatest need: Sections (formation, linkage, role within AAPT), Membership, Affiliates (definition, links to AAPT and Sections), and Area Committees (number, scope, roles within AAPT). The minutes of the February 2009 meeting of the Board record that COGS would continue to look at the relationship between Sections/Section Representatives and the Executive Office. Then the Committee will look at the relationship between Area Chairs/Committees and the Executive Office. At the April 2009 meeting of the Board, the Committee described its contribution to the creation of an Associate Membership level that had been launched in a pilot phase and that would be fully implemented by August 2009. In the same meeting, President Alex Dickison expanded the charge to COGS to include studying the ramifications of regional governance structures for AAPT.

Office	Individual in		
	2008	2009	2010
Past President (chair)	Leff	Adair	Dickison
President	Adair	Dickison	Cook
Secretary	Iona	Iona	Iona
Chair, Section Representatives	Gibson	Mogge	Mogge
Vice-Chair, Section	Mogge	Milner-Bolotin	Milner-Bolotin
Member-At-Large	Ramsey	Ramsey	Chesick
Executive Officer without vote	Hein	Hein	Hein

Table 1. Members of COGS since its Inception.

Also at the April 2009 meeting of the AAPT Executive Board, Karen Johnston returned to her role as facilitator and spent several hours guiding the Board through a structured revisiting of thirteen priorities identified in the February 2009 Board meeting and also of other planning documents. The objectives were to establish goals, timelines, and a monitoring process. This activity perhaps represents the point at which the previous discussions were beginning to create a strategic plan to guide AAPT for the next several years.

As the strategic plan began to take shape, the need for additional input from Area Chairs and Section Representatives became evident. Accordingly, COGS planned and then conducted a miniretreat of Area Chairs and Section Representatives at the 2010 AAPT Washington meeting. In the subsequent months, COGS invested considerable effort in reviewing the comments from that miniretreat, establishing priorities, matching goals with values, and ultimately completing a draft of the evolving strategic plan. At its meeting in July 2010 in Portland OR, the Board adopted the strategic plan that is presented in this document, and the work in which COGS had been engaged reached at least momentary closure.

The AAPT Strategic Plan contains two versions. The briefer version contains only goals and objectives and provides a compact but also comprehensible overview of the plan. While more difficult to comprehend on a first reading, the longer version adds numerous strategies by which

the goals and objectives might be pursued. These strategies are to be interpreted as flexible suggestions, not as mandates and, more frequently than the broader goals and objectives, will be reviewed, refined, or perhaps even abandoned and replaced over time.

The Committee on Governance Structure (COGS) that shepherded the development of this strategic plan was originally a temporary AAPT Committee. The AAPT Executive Board is currently taking steps to make COGS a permanent advisory Committee to the Board. In broad terms, the permanent COGS will have the responsibilities to monitor progress towards the goals in the strategic plan, to oversee periodic and systematic review and updating of the plan, and to be alert to the need for adjustments in the plan as AAPT moves forward.

Sincere thanks are due to the many individuals whose labors and contributions have helped complete the following strategic plan. Profuse thanks are due to the members of COGS and, most especially, to Karen Johnston, who contributed a deep knowledge of AAPT and her professional expertise to keep the project moving forward and guide its evolution.

MISSION

When our organization was established in 1930, our goal was “*ensuring the dissemination of the knowledge of physics, particularly by way of teaching.*” In 2000 our mission statement was rewritten to offer a new emphasis while remaining committed to the goal that guided AAPT for over seventy years.

AAPT’s mission is to enhance the understanding and appreciation of physics through teaching.

VISION

AAPT aspires to be the leading voice and driving force in physics education.

CORE VALUES

As a member-driven volunteer organization, the AAPT is guided by and committed to the following:

- Promoting excellence in physics education by supporting AAPT members and reaching out to all teachers of physics in their efforts to provide an effective physics learning experience for all students at all levels and in all teaching and learning environments—in the classroom, in the laboratory, and in public settings.
- Publishing exemplary journals (*American Journal of Physics* and *The Physics Teacher*) and providing other physics teaching resources that adhere to the highest standards in content, pedagogy, and technology.
- Providing and supporting quality professional development for physics teachers at all levels through meetings, topical conferences, and workshops.
- Supporting and disseminating research into how students learn physics.
- Ensuring excellence in physics instruction by promoting research-based education of future teachers of physics at all levels, elementary through graduate.
- Advocating for physics education at local, state, and national levels.
- Keeping aware of the main issues facing the physics world and of the overreaching questions to be tackled by the physics community, and providing a forum for discussion of these issues at National Meetings.

AAPT MEMBERSHIP

GOAL:

To be a vibrant professional organization for those who teach physics at all levels. In broad terms, we seek to increase the net number of full dues paying regular members by 2.5% per year for the next five years, from 7,500 regular members in 2009 to 8,485 regular members in 2015. If we assume stable numbers (2,400) in all other membership categories, this increase will take total membership from 9,900 in 2009 to 10,885 in 2015.

OBJECTIVE 1: Recruit new members from the traditional physics education communities served by AAPT.

OBJECTIVE 2: Increase the annual retention rate for dues paying regular members by 1% per year from about 85% in 2009 to 90% by 2015.

OBJECTIVE 3: Re-engage former members whose memberships have lapsed within the last 5 years.

OBJECTIVE 4: Support a variety of communication venues for members and others, with expansion occurring primarily via the web.

OBJECTIVE 5: Expand and improve the Sustaining Membership Program.

OBJECTIVE 6: Expand international participation in AAPT.

AAPT PORTFOLIO: JOURNALS, MEETINGS, PROGRAMS AND AWARDS

GOAL:

To ensure that AAPT is providing the highest quality member services to support excellence in physics education and meeting the needs of its members. The AAPT will provide regular electronic communications, grants, journals, National Meetings, and awards. In addition to these primary services, the AAPT, individually and in cooperation with other physics and related professional associations, will undertake initiatives that advance the mission and vision of AAPT.

OBJECTIVE 1: Monitor the journals, including, the *American Journal of Physics*, *The Physics Teacher*, and *Physical Review Special Topics-Physics Education Research* using the Publications Committees, Executive Office personnel, and special review committees.

OBJECTIVE 2: Improve the quality and viability of the National Meetings.

OBJECTIVE 3: Increase the stature of the AAPT awards.

OBJECTIVE 4: Improve communication with the membership.

OBJECTIVE 5: Review and balance the AAPT Portfolio of Programs periodically across membership, *i.e.* pre-high school, high school, two-year college and four-year college/university communities.

OBJECTIVE 6: Explore new initiatives involving collaborations.

AAPT OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL HEALTH

GOAL 1:

To achieve and sustain a balanced operating budget by 2011.

OBJECTIVE 1: Implement business practices that will contribute to meeting budget goals.

OBJECTIVE 2: Endow the awards and increase fund raising for other AAPT programs.

GOAL 2:

Build the Long Term Unrestricted Financial Reserve equal to one year of operating expenses.

GOAL 3:

Improve the operation and efficiency of the association.

OBJECTIVE 1: Improve the efficiency, accountability, and transparency of the Executive Office.

OBJECTIVE 2: Establish a predictable cash-flow management plan that does not require transfers from the Undesignated Long Term Reserve.

OBJECTIVE 3: Improve the efficiency, accountability, and transparency of the Executive Board.

AAPT SECTIONS AND AFFILIATE GROUPS

GOAL:

To be a vibrant professional organization dedicated to improving physics education at all levels by working with sections, affiliates, and other local groups.

OBJECTIVE 1: Continuously improve the synergy between Sections and AAPT national.

OBJECTIVE 2: Increase the outreach and impact of AAPT programs, products and services by re-establishing connections with previous affiliate organizations and establishing new affiliate relationships.

AAPT AREA COMMITTEES

GOAL:

To expand the function that Area Committees serve in the Association to include advising the Executive Board on policy and on development of quality resources (e.g., Guidelines for ...) consistent with the Committees' areas of interest, while continuing the traditional Committee role of developing quality programs for the annual meetings of the Association.

OBJECTIVE 1: Expand the interaction between Area Committees and the Executive Board.

OBJECTIVE 2: Increase the participation of Area Committee members and Committee friends in the activities and mission of their respective Committees.

OBJECTIVE 3: Help Committees with overlapping interests connect with one another.

