

# Recommended Board Actions Related to the Report of the Independent Review Relating to APA Ethics Guidelines, National Security Interrogations and Torture

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Below are the Board's recommended actions in response to the Independent Review (IR) Report as of July 29, 2015. The Board provided preliminary motions to the Council on July 8, 2015, which were also posted on the APA website along with the IR Report. The motions have been updated since that time to include some changes to the motions recommended for Council's consideration and additional actions the Board made after receiving initial input from Council and reviewing input on the APA website and listservs.

**The Board\* voted to recommend that Council approve the following motions:**

## Actions Related to the Ethics Office

1. Recommend that Council approves the establishment of a Commission comprised of psychologist members and non-members and experts from other fields to evaluate and recommend changes to APA Ethics processes (including, for example, the establishment of a Chief Ethics Officer, separation of the ethics advocacy role from the ethics adjudication function, and review of the efficacy and utility of the "limited investigation" adjudication process), based on an assessment of current practices and procedures as well as benchmarking against ethics processes of other professional organizations.
2. Recommend that Council approves that the Board and Council collaboratively will establish a panel of experts (to include psychologists and bioethics experts from a broad base of consulting and health professions) to address ethical considerations for psychologist roles in the broader scope of investigations and interrogations, including forensic psychology, police psychology, jury selection, military psychology, consultation, and related roles.

## Actions Related to the PENS Report/Past Actions

1. Recommend that Council adopts the following as APA policy: APA prohibits psychologist participation in interrogation of persons held in custody by military/intelligence authorities. Recommend that Council requests that the 2013 *Policy Related to Psychologists' Work in National Security Settings and Reaffirmation of the APA Position Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* be fully implemented (with the amendments proposed in [New Business Item 23B \[PDF, 651KB\]](#)).
2. Recommend that Council approves the substitute motion of Council New Business Item #23B.

## Actions Related to the PENS Report/Past Actions

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2. Recommend that Council approves the substitute motion of Council New Business Item #23B.

## Actions Related to Organizational Procedures

1. Recommend that Council approves that the Board and Council will collaborate to create governance constraints that address boundaries and appropriate oversight of elected and appointed officials, including Council, the Board, and boards and committees.
2. Recommend that Council approves that the Board and Council will collaborate to establish civility principles and procedures that promote respectful space for all voices and perspectives and define professionalism, including through the establishment of a moderator role for listservs.

## Action Related to Checks and Balances

1. Recommend that Council amends the Guidelines for Council Resolutions to ensure that all relevant future policies are anchored in APA core values, including promoting human rights, human health and welfare, and ethics.
2. Recommend that Council charges the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee with considering ethics, organizational restructuring, and human rights as a central focus of the Strategic Plan. This will assist in setting the organization's ethical compass and asserting our commitment to "do no harm" as a core value.

Recommendations from the Council Leadership Team on the above motions recommended for Council action are pending.

**The Board\* also voted to approve following actions under its purview:**

Action Related to the Ethics Office

The Board will establish a mechanism for immediate oversight in the processing of filed ethics complaints, including review of current adjudication and investigative procedures, and transparency and accuracy in the disclosure of current ethics office practices.

Actions Related to Organizational Procedures

1. The Board will evaluate and modify, as needed, conflict of interest policies regarding financial, policy, or relationship-based conflicts, and other associated processes to ensure that the policy is understood and followed.
2. The Board will create clear procedures for appointing the members of Task Forces, Commissions, etc., by including a standard conflict of interest assessment and procedure for assuring needed content expertise and diversities.
3. The Board will create specific criteria and procedures for emergency action by the Board in keeping with the authority established in the Bylaws.
4. The Board will direct the CEO to ensure an appropriate balance of autonomy and oversight in the supervisory process with respect to financial decisions, business processes and standards, and other activities.

Actions Related to Checks and Balances

1. The Board will increase APA's engagement around human rights activities and its collaboration with other organizations regarding these issues.
2. The Board will ask that an Office of Human Rights be established with an Advisory Committee building upon and expanding the current Work Group for Human Rights in the Board for the Advancement of Psychology in the Public Interest. The Office will develop on-line resources, books, curricular materials, CE programming, and human rights convention programming; educate the public about psychology and human rights to increase the knowledge of dangers and harm associated with the use of torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment and/or punishment; and coordinate with outside human rights organizations to organize a conference to address past human rights abuses and publish proceedings to include a plan for prevention.
3. The Board will recommend that the Education Directorate promote a focus on human rights and ethics as a core element of psychology education and training from high school through continuing education offerings.

\* Board members who had involvement with any of the significant events investigated, regardless of any level of culpability, were recused from deliberations and decisions related to the IR Report. This was done to avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest with regard to the Board's actions.