Call to Order: The meeting of the Council on Communications (“the Council”) was called to order by Dr. Prabha Krishnan, chair, at 8:07 a.m., July 15, 2023, Central Time in the Executive Board Room of the American Dental Association (ADA) Headquarters in Chicago.

Roll Call: The following Council members and liaisons were present for all or part of the meeting:

Dr. Prabha Krishnan (chair); Dr. Laura Schott (vice chair); Dr. Carol A. Baker; Dr. Amber D. Cziok; Dr. Ann Hammi Blue; Dr. Terry Fiddler (Trustee liaison); Dr. T. Stotts Isbell; Dr. Lindsey D. Jackson; Dr. Amir E. Kazim; Dr. Rachel L. Lewin; Dr. Mark A. Limosani; Dr. Tanya Sue Maestas (New Dentist Member); Ms. Shafa Nathani (American Student Dental Association representative); Dr. Angela P. Noguera; Dr. James J. Phillips (via Zoom); Dr. Rhett E. Raum; Dr. Riley A. Schaff; Dr. Jill Shelton Wagers; and Dr. Andrew Zucker.

Council Members Not Present: Dr. Lynse J. Briney

Following the roll call, the presence of a quorum was noted.

Dr. George Shepley, ADA President; Dr. Linda Edgar, ADA President-elect; and Dr. Karen Irani, 13th District Trustee were also in attendance for all or part of the meeting.

ADA Staff (in attendance for all or portions of the meeting): Dr. Raymond Cohlmia, ADA executive director; Ms. Tracy Jensen, senior manager, Council on Communications; Ms. Julia Nissim, director, Communications; Ms. Ivy Woods, coordinator, Council on Communications; Ms. Leslee Williams, vice president, Public and Professional Communications; Ms. Stephanie Moritz, chief customer innovation officer; Ms. Samara Schwartz, senior associate general counsel; Mr. Robert Quashie, chief operating officer; Ms. Jenn Sutherland, senior director, Digital Marketing; Ms. Joan Podrazik, director, Professional Communications; Ms. Nicole Anderson, manager, Social Media and Influencer Strategy; Ms. Sandy Eitel, Senior Director, Research, Analytics and Member Growth (via Zoom 7/15); Ms. Kelly Ganski, ADA News Editor-in-Chief; and Mr. Tony Frankos, senior vice president, Publishing and Sales Enablement Business Group.

Preliminary Business

ADA Confidentiality Statement and Disclosure Policy: The Chair referenced the Confidentiality Statement and ADA Disclosure Policy included on the agenda. No disclosures were made.

Adoption of Agenda: The agenda was adopted with the stipulation that the chair could alter the order of the agenda when necessary to expedite Council business.

Report of Mail Ballot Actions: It was reported that the Council took action pursuant to seven (7) electronic mail ballots since its last meeting: 1) the minutes of the February 17-18, 2023 meeting were approved via electronic ballot on April 7, 2023; and 2) six (6) actions were taken in connection with reviewing policies pursuant to Resolution 170H-2012, Regular Comprehensive Policy Review (Trans.2012:370). In accordance with the Standing Rules for Councils and Commissions, these seven (7) actions conducted via mail ballot are recorded in the Council’s minutes from this meeting. The Council adopted the following resolution:

CC-9-2023. Resolved, that actions approved through e-ballots since the Council’s February 2023 meeting be recorded in the minutes of this meeting.

Mail Ballot Actions:
CC-1-2023. Approval of the Council on Communications February 2023
Meeting Minutes.

CC-2-2023. Policy Vote: Modification of Clarification of Dental Professional

CC-3-2023. Policy Vote: Modification of ADA Policy Mechanism for

CC-4-2023. Policy Vote: Modification of Standards for Dental Society

CC-5-2023: Policy Vote: Rescission of ADA Policy: Institutional Advertising
(Trans.1979:598).

CC-6-2023: Policy Vote: Rescission of ADA Policy: Guidelines for State
Boards of Dental Examiners on the Definition of Routine Dental Services for Purposes
of Dentists’ Advertisements (Trans.1977:616, 945).

CC-7-2023: Policy Vote: Rescission of ADA Policy: Guidelines for an Advertising Code

Opening Remarks: Remarks were made by the Council chair, Dr. Prabha Krishnan; Council vice chair,
Dr. Laura Schott; Board of Trustees liaison, Dr. Terry Fiddler; ADA President-elect, Dr. Linda Edgar; vice
president, Public and Professional Communications, Ms. Leslee Williams; Council sr. manager, Ms. Tracy
Jensen; and ADA President, Dr. George Shepley.

RELEVANT ADA INITIATIVES

Member Value Discussions: Dr. Edgar presented the Council with recently developed member value
collateral, focusing on the value of Tripartite membership. Three (3) pillars for successful engagement
with dentists were noted: connecting, collaborating, and communicating. The Council discussed Tripartite
matters as they relate to communication strategies in closed session and, in open session, shared
strategic input that will help iteratively update the communications messaging and tactics for volunteer
leaders and grassroots members regarding the value of the Tripartite and being stronger together. The
Strategic Communications Workgroup of the Council will engage in further discussion and share its
recommendations for updates. The Council adopted the following resolution:

CC-8-2023. Resolved, that the Council on Communications recommends that the ADA Board of
Trustees (“BOT”) ensure that a document explaining ADA member benefits be distributed
expeditiously to as many U.S. dentists as possible, and be it further

Resolved, that the BOT consider communicating such document via email, the ADA App,
www.ada.org, and any social media channels.

Additionally, to provide the dentist perspective to member value communications strategies, the Council
further engaged in strategic discussion about member benefits, value at all levels of the Tripartite, and
successfully communicating these advantages.

ADA Executive Director Presentation: Dr. Cohlmia presented “Continuing the ADA’s New Day:
Defining Our Future”, which outlined how, as the profession of dentistry is experiencing a major
generational transition, ADA resources are being focused on bringing innovative member value offerings
to the table to sustain as well as attract members so that ADA may remain the unified, inclusive, future-
focused voice of the dental profession. He highlighted several trends in dentistry, which include changing
technology, dentist demographics, patient expectations, declining ownership, and continued practice
consolidation. The goal is for the ADA to be a disruptor; implementing agile governance, collegiality and
synergy, and improving digital experiences and membership opportunities. Dr. Cohlmia also updated the
Council on the status of the ADA’s Strategic Forecasting efforts.

**ADA News Engagement Session:** ADA News Editor-in-Chief Kelly Ganski shared details on ADA News
readership and engaged the Council in a one (1)-hour interactive brainstorming session around the
various sections of ADA News (government and access to care, practice and group practice, education
and science, and other ADA topics), noting that there is a delicate balance regarding what topics are
included within publications. Council members shared insights about the ADA News publication from the
district, leader, and member dentist perspective. This session served as a forum for the Council to advise
on the ADA’s allocation of communications resources consistent with the Council’s duties.

**Influencer Strategy:** Ms. Joan Podrazik, director, Professional Communications, and Ms. Nicole
Anderson, manager, Social Media and Influencer Strategy, presented on the newly developed ADA
Social Media Influencer Strategy. While noting that influence can be achieved through multiple channels
(such as face to face, traditional media, or keynote addresses), the focus of the conversation was on
social media specifically as a channel of influence for the ADA. The new ADA Ambassador program
serves to educate all dentists about the value of the ADA through authentic interactions in closed dentist-
only social media groups. The ADA Ambassador program will be a collaborative effort between staff and
member dentists to focus on sharing proactive information, clarifying misinformation, and identifying new
ways the ADA can support all dentists in closed social media groups. The ADA is also working on social
media influencer campaigns outside of closed social groups around the ADA Member App and SmileCon.

**COUNCIL WORKGROUPS**

**2022-23 Workgroup Retrospective:** Dr. Krishnan commended the Council for its efforts throughout the
year. She noted that the work of the Council has guided other efforts across the ADA and accelerated
strategic initiatives across districts. She emphasized the top 10 highlights from the year: finalization of the
2023 Communications Trend Report; Culture of Change initiatives that were shared at the June Power of
Three meeting; strategic direction for the Social Media Reputation Defense Toolkit; consulting on the new
dental insurance advocacy spokesperson; promotion of the Institute for Diversity in Leadership and
realizing a record number of applications in 2023; Champions Network Culture of Change kickoff event
with D&I speaker Mauricio Velasquez; consultation on applicants for the ADA Ambassadors Program;
interviews with state and local leaders to provide guidance to reduce gaps between the ADA and state
and local organizations; providing strategic direction for a Culture of Change leader-to-leader toolkit; and
efficient review of eleven (11) policies, providing the House of Delegates with recommendations for
maintaining, modification or recission.

**Communications Innovation Workgroup Update:** Dr. Jill Wagers (chair); Dr. Carol Baker (vice chair);
Dr. Lynse Briney; Dr. Amber Cziok; Dr. Mark Limosani; Dr. Andrew Zucker; Ms. Joan Podrazik (staff
liaison); Ms. Nicole Anderson (staff liaison)

Dr. Wagers explained that the Workgroup’s purpose is to examine existing member and stakeholder data
to identify potential gaps and collect further research, resulting in strategic recommendations and
potential innovations to existing communications channels. The Workgroup’s 2022-23 goals included
developing a strategic direction and communication approach for the Social Media Reputation
Defense Toolkit, created in response to Res. 304H; exploring communications between the ADA and
state/locals to determine whether there are opportunities to innovate; supporting social media innovation;
and consulting on newly proposed expert spokesperson, Dr. Mark Vitale, on advocacy around medical
loss ratio and advance recommendation for the ADA Board of Trustees (“BOT”) to confirm new nominee
and spokesperson roster at June 2023 BOT meeting.

Since its implementation, the Social Media Reputation Defense Toolkit has received more than 20,000
views. This strong performance validates the strategy developed by the Workgroup. A paid Facebook
campaign targeted towards dentists with this Toolkit became the second most clicked campaign since
COVID with 15 million impressions (the number of times the ad is served) and 86,000 engagements (link
clicks, likes, comments, shares). More than 90% of people who accessed the page were on mobile
devices.
A survey geared towards better understanding communication gaps between the ADA and state/local societies is being finalized and will be fielded to state/local presidents and presidents-elect and national volunteer leaders. Results are expected to be available in August 2023, and a recommendation will be made based on the results of the data. Additionally, the new expert spokesperson candidate and current spokesperson roster was approved by the BOT in June 2023, and the ADA Ambassador application launched the week of June 19.

The Workgroup is looking to continue for the 2023-24 Council year, focusing on making a difference through strategic recommendations and action, which could include resolutions or requests to the Strategic Forecasting Committee. They will continue to consult on the ADA spokesperson and Ambassador programs and strongly encourage Workgroup members (and perhaps the Council on Communications at large) to monitor closed social groups in support of the ADA Ambassador program.

**Culture of Change Workgroup Update:** Dr. Angela Noguera *(chair)*; Dr. T. Stotts Isbell *(vice chair)*; Dr. Rachel Lewin; Dr. Tanya Sue Maestas; Ms. Shafa Nathani; Ms. Julia Nissim *(staff liaison)*

Dr. Noguera highlighted the Workgroup’s goal, which is to create a measurable communications plan promoting all the efforts the ADA is undertaking to welcome culture change. The plan launched in March 2023. The purpose of the Workgroup is to provide strategic oversight and guidance to the “Culture of Change” communications plan throughout the year, highlighting ADA change-based initiatives, programs, and resources. The Council leadership and Workgroup also created a feedback loop for input and insights from ADA Diversity & Inclusion stakeholders.

To build a “Culture of Change”, the Workgroup convened leaders from the New Dentist Committee (NDC), Council on Membership (CoM), and the Diversity & Inclusion Committee of the BOT for dialogue and feedback on the draft communications plan (key messaging, prospective target audiences, launch event) in December 2022. A survey was fielded to 1,100 ADA leaders – the intended communications plan target audience – to determine resonance of key messages, types of resources leaders seek for cultural, diversity and inclusion-based topics, and their point of view on inclusion of diverse practice modalities at all levels of the Tripartite. Two hundred and forty (240) completed surveys were received (22 percent response rate) to inform the communications plan. The survey confirmed more-defined diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) goals for dentistry and the ADA, as well as self-assessment tools, training courses, and speakers are preferred resources for leaders.

To kick off the “Culture of Change”, the Workgroup hosted a launch event in March 2023, “Culture of Change: Building a Coalition for ADA's Future,” with one hundred and 60 plus (160+) registrants and one hundred and twenty-nine (129) ADA leaders in attendance. The session was presented and promoted at the June 2023 Power of Three meeting for leaders, and featured a nationally recognized DE&I speaker, Mauricio Velasquez, to help foster conversations about how leaders can be catalysts for change.

Additionally, the Workgroup developed promotional materials for the ADA Institute for Diversity in Leadership program to help drive awareness and applications for the 2023 class; 72 total applications were received; the highest amount to date for the program. The Workgroup and ADA Team are planning ongoing May-Nov. 2023 communications of ADA DE&I initiatives to national leaders, including Champions Network, Amplifying Voices and the Spectra Diversity & Inclusion Assessment tool, so that these critical programs receive more targeted promotion to drive ADA leader awareness and engagement. Metrics from these efforts will be available in December 2023.

The Workgroup will continue its efforts, developing a “Culture of Change” Toolkit for leaders and contributing ideas for an event at SmileCon, in conjunction with the Diversity & Inclusion Committee of the BOT and Committee on Annual Meetings. They will also focus on understanding whether the leader audience has been impacted enough for the Group to transition this “Culture” to other audiences.

**Strategic Communications Workgroup Update:** Dr. Rhett Raum *(chair)*; Dr. Ann Blue *(vice chair)*; Dr. Lindsey Jackson; Dr. Amir Kazim; Dr. James Phillips; Dr. Riley Schaff; Ms. Leslee Williams *(staff liaison)*; Ms. Sandy Eitel *(staff liaison)*; Mr. Steve Horne *(staff liaison)*
Dr. Raum shared that the Workgroup’s goal and primary focus was to develop, interpret, present, and distribute the 2023 Communications Trend Report (Report), which is a significant asset for short and long-term communications planning at every level of the ADA to inform the delivery of member value. This is the fourth year of the Report. Additional details about the Report appear below.

2023-24 Workgroup Development: Dr. Schott shared an overview of workgroup planning for 2023-24, which will seek to maintain the Communication Innovation and Strategic Communications Workgroups. An additional workgroup will be added to focus on better communicating the ADA’s benefits to members, as well as to address any new projects assigned to the Council. As the 2023 Communications Trend Report highlighted why and where ADA communications need to be improved, the Council brainstormed on specific communications for the new workgroup to focus on. Ideas such as tailored ADA Member App notifications specific to the user, a reimagined welcome package for members, data-driven communication, etc. were discussed.

2023 COMMUNICATIONS TREND REPORT

Dr. Raum presented the draft 2023 Communications Trend Report and noted that the Report is largely based on two surveys: one for member dentists and one for consumers. Once fielded and completed, results are nationally representative of ADA membership and the U.S. population. Key themes of the 2023 surveys being compiled for the Report include: public/consumer beliefs about public health topics such as pain medication, vaping, marijuana use, and dental visits from age one; and new and emerging issue topics from the dentist’s perspective, including inflation and its impact on dental practices, mental wellness, and pain management prescribing. For year-over-year analysis, relevant questions were maintained in the dentist survey and analyzed to demonstrate potential shifts in attitudes or beliefs for topics like workforce shortages and third-party payer issues.

The dentist survey was completed by four hundred and ninety-nine (499) participants in April 2023 with a margin of error of +/- 4%. Key highlights included: dentists needing additional support in areas of mental health and staffing; ADA needing to better promote its dental insurance reform advocacy efforts; and that ADA has done an excellent job building awareness around resources for opioids, oral cancer, and discounts. The consumer survey was completed by one thousand and fifty (1,050) respondents in April 2023 with a margin of error of +/- 3%. Key highlights that can be built upon included: consumers recognizing that there is a connection between oral health and overall health; fifteen percent (15%) of respondents have considered a career in dentistry; there is a growing number who go to their dentist, for both routine care and dental emergencies, because they are “in network”; and there is a reluctance for consumers to share health history information about vaping, which is a point of education.

A communications plan is being developed to share the 2023 Report with national, state, and local leadership later in 2023, as a strategic planning asset for the Tripartite to support 2024 communications planning.

AMERICAN STUDENT DENTAL ASSOCIATION (ASDA) REPORT

Ms. Nathani, ASDA president and representative to the Council, updated the Council on the activities of ASDA, which include membership statistics, national initiatives, national meetings, and its strategic plan. For the 2021-22 membership year, ASDA had 22,405 members. Final 2022-23 membership numbers will be distributed in August 2023. In November 2022, ASDA welcomed a new chapter: Lincoln Memorial University College of Dental Medicine. This new addition increased ASDA’s chapters to sixty-nine (69).

Current national initiatives include: Contour, ASDA’s national publication whose May 2023 theme was “Economics in Dentistry”; National leadership: ASDA’s new 2023-24 Executive Committee and Board of Trustees was elected at Annual Session, February 17-19; and the “Life in Loupes” Podcast. In April 2023, ASDA released season 1 of “Life in Loupes.” The inaugural season was created to help students think about the vast career options available to them through interviews and stories from ASDA alumni. Host Dr. Gabriel Holdwick interviewed five ASDA alumni about their interesting, and not always traditional, career paths. Guests provided relatable insights about the decisions, life experiences, and mentors that helped shape their journeys. Discussion topics ranged from why they chose dentistry, to career transitions and pursing passions outside of the dental office.
ASDA is highly engaged on social media and has recently launched an Instagram account that promotes connecting with current, as well as potential members, by highlighting what is happening in the community and sharing important news. The platform currently has 26,330 followers and is growing. ASDA is also currently exploring TikTok and video sharing (reels), as these are some of the primary methods of connecting and communicating with younger dentists. Within ASDA IG reels, there is the “Day in the Life” series, which features a new student each month. This series gives members the opportunity to share their story. ASDA also shares out three (3) separate newsletters monthly to communicate with members: Word of Mouth, Advocacy Brief, and New Leader.

ALL-COUNCIL DISCUSSION – LIGHTNING ROUND: KEY TOPICS IN DISTRICTS

The Council engaged in discussion, sharing insights from the district and member dentist perspective, regarding why they are ADA members, what the ADA is doing for them, and why this is important at the state and local level. Members expressed thoughts such as feeling represented at all levels, as there is heavy reliance on state and local dental societies for services; advocacy; funding; mentorship; and more.

COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The Council elected Dr. Laura Schott, Fifteenth district, to serve as the Council Chair, and Dr. T. Stotts Isbell, Twelfth district to serve as the Council Vice Chair, for the 2023-2024 term.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the Council meeting was adjourned at 11:32 CT on Sunday, July 16, 2023.