



## ABRF PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS

The Association of Biomolecular Resource Facilities (ABRF) developed this **process** to evaluate when it will take public positions or issue public comments on issues of social concern beyond research-focused issues and established policy priorities. Examples of these types of issues include: media or political events attracting the public's attention on Black Lives Matter, immigration policy, voter reform, etc. Traditional ABRF priorities (NIH funding, recognition of core facilities and personnel, professional development opportunities) follow a similar process with engagement of appropriate Society committees and are separate from this protocol\*. All ABRF-related policy issues should be directed to the President for attention. All ABRF-related media issues should be directed to the Executive Director for attention.

### *Who Starts the Process?*

In reality, these issues come to light from a variety of sources, but usually land at the ABRF President's inbox or with another Board member. The request is usually something like: "Did you hear about X? ABRF really should do something..." These requests can come from:

- Member/Board member
- Media Inquiry or Social Media Post
- Policy Maker
- Journal Inquiry
- Another Organization
- Non-member

### *Step 1 – Authorization to proceed*

The ABRF President should initiate the process to determine if the issue needs to be explored by consulting with the Executive Board and Executive Director. The first step is determining whether the issue is in line with the ABRF mission/strategic plan and if the issue will impact any of the following:

- Diversity, equity, and inclusion in the core facilities profession;
- Professionalism/ethics within the field of biomolecular research; and
- The safety and well-being of Core facility professionals

The Society President, Executive Board and Executive Director will consider the following factors in determining whether the Society will take a public position or issue a comment:

**1. Does the issue relate to ABRF's mission and vision?**

ABRF members work at the Core of Research Excellence and Sustainability. The mission of the Society is to define excellence for shared research resources worldwide. ABRF's vision is to accelerate breakthroughs in scientific discovery.

**2. Does the issue fall within ABRF's current strategic priorities?**

The Society's strategic priorities are:

- Recognize Expertise in Core Facilities
- Build a Diverse, Inclusive, and Collaborative Community
- Collaborate with Partners in Team Science
- Enhance Fiscal Sustainability

**3. Will ABRF add substantive value to the discussion of the issue?**

FASEB or another entity may be in a better position to address the issue and/or the issue may already be adequately addressed by another entity. By weighing in on the issue we are actively shaping public and scientific discourse.

**4. Will taking a position demonstrate leadership by ABRF in an area relevant to its mission?**

As the leading organization for shared research resources, ABRF may be uniquely qualified to take the lead on issues. Furthermore, ABRF should explore whether the absence of a position would demonstrate a lack of leadership.

**5. Does the issue have a global scope?**

ABRF is a global organization with members in more than 16 countries. Sometimes an issue may be very localized and not have a broader impact on the Society, its members, or shared research resources. ABRF needs to be mindful if a position is too U.S.-centric.

If deemed appropriate to proceed, the ABRF President should send the issue/questions to an **Issue Task Force** (or the ABRF Public Policy Task Force) who will determine:

- Deadline for request – time for response will be determined by urgency
- Is this an issue on which the Society has already taken a position?
- Is there science to back up the position?
- Who are the subject matter experts or appropriate Committee to be involved?
- Do external experts need to be consulted?
- Are there any landmines to be aware of?
- Is there any conflict of interest to be aware of?
- Who are the potential partners?
- Is there a negative impact if we do not proceed?
- Are there any financial consequences and/or opportunity costs (diverting resources from other higher priority issues)?

ABRF President also would indicate when the **Task Force** should report back to the Board.

### *Step 2 – Issue Task Force reports back with background research and recommendations*

The Issue Task Force will report back to the President on initial background research and recommendations, including experts or Committees to be involved.

### *Step 3 – Next Steps*

The President, Executive Board, and Executive Director will determine next steps:

- Is there enough information to proceed or end the process?
- Who further should be involved?
- Positioning
- Communications should be engaged to align messaging
- Advocacy & Policy should be engaged to ensure messaging consistent with positioning
- Approval process followed if it is a consensus statement or position statement
- Does the President approve; or does this require broader approval by Board; or does this need to be referred to a Committee or Work Group

#### *Step 4 – Reporting Out*

Once a decision is made, the President should coordinate with staff to report back to the person who inquired and make others aware of the decision and justification.

\*The process for determining ABRF policy priorities includes first identifying if the Society has existing policy or precedent on the issue in question; reviewing the policy issue to determine if there is a scientific rationale, potential partners, timing, impact of action; and a review by the appropriate Committee and/or Board or President.