

APS Urges Psychological Science Expertise in New U.S. Pandemic Task Force

January 26, 2022



The U.S. has announced a new pandemic-focused advisory body, and APS has responded to urge that psychological science expertise be included in the group's personnel and activities.

Earlier this month, [policy reports indicated](#) that U.S. President Biden's administration had formed a new

Pandemic Innovation Task Force, led by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and the assistant secretary for preparedness and response at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Early reports suggest that the task force will focus on developing vaccines, treatments, tests, and tools to help combat new variants of the COVID-19 virus as well as future pandemics and other biological threats.

Responding to this news, APS Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director Robert Gropp wrote the chairs of this new group to encourage that psychological science be represented among the members and topic areas of the group.

“An integrated scientific and engineering response—one that fully includes behavioral science—is required for an effective response to the current crisis and to improve responses to future crises,” writes Gropp in the letter, dated January 26.

The letter advises that global technical and engineering investments and advances are most effective when paired with the scientific understanding of human behavior that psychological science can help provide. It references similar calls that APS has made to President Biden surrounding the formation of a COVID-19 advisory board that the president formed at the end of 2020.

Illustrating the insights that psychological science can bring to bear on combatting COVID-19’s effects and preparing for future pandemics, Gropp referenced the [APS Global Collaboration on COVID-19](#), which is bringing together psychological scientists to identify the ways that psychological science has—and should—been used to respond to the global pandemic.

[\(Watch a recording of a recent collaboration virtual event, “Psychology Meets Biology in COVID-19,” by clicking here.\)](#)

The development of this advisory body comes amid a heightened period of interest in and appreciation for the insights that behavioral science can provide to policymaking. Earlier this week, a bipartisan group of senators [released a draft bill](#) that would create a new public health information and communications advisory committee. The bill specifically encourages representation of psychologists on this committee. Look for future analysis of this bill online at www.psychologicalscience.org.

APS will continue to monitor the new Pandemic Innovation Task Force as it develops and will keep APS members apprised.

[To read APS CEO Robert Gropp’s letter to the chairs of the Pandemic Innovation Task Force, click here.](#)