

# To APS Members From the Board of Directors

January 24, 2020

Today, January 24, 2020, the APS Board sent [a letter to the Trump Administration](#), expressing regret for having signed a letter, led by the Association of American Publishers, in protest of an impending executive order from the Trump Administration to mandate immediate open access for all publications reporting on US federally-funded research. This letter is to you, our members, and to the wider scientific community. It builds on [our statement of December 23, 2019](#) and represents our current thoughts on the situation.

We continue to believe that an executive order that immediately implements changes—without sufficient planning and input from scientific stakeholders—would be harmful to the practice of science. Nonetheless, we understand that the letter led by the Association of American Publishers (AAP) mistakenly conveyed the idea that APS opposes open access. In addition, its tone suggested a jingoistic view of US science and publishing that is inconsistent with APS's core values. Some APS members were offended by the tone and content of letter and we understand why.

We write this letter to make our position clear: APS rejects any suggestion that our members' scientific work is the intellectual property of commercial publishers, a commodity to be sold throughout the world to benefit American industry. We also reject any suggestion that open access is a threat to scientific activity and unreservedly reaffirm our fundamental commitment to—as APS Fellow George Miller said—give psychological science away.\* We regret signing the AAP letter as it is inconsistent with our values as a society. And, accordingly, we offer an apology.

In early December 2019, the Board voted to establish a committee devoted to open and transparent research practices. When that committee generates its Terms of Reference, it will be guided by APS's commitment to open access. Charting the transition to complete open access will be high on its work plan. The new committee will evaluate existing publishing models and identify options for making the science produced by APS members more freely available. The committee will also identify alternate economic models for APS to sustain its core activities, including education and advocacy, as our publishing model changes.

We continue to encourage an open and constructive dialogue about these and other issues as we, together as a scientific community, chart our path forward as a global psychological science.

**Lisa Feldman Barrett (on behalf of the APS Board of Directors)**  
**University Distinguished Professor, Northeastern University**

**President, APS**

\* Miller, G. A. (1969). Psychology as a means of promoting human welfare. *American Psychologist*, 24(12), 1063–1075. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0028988>