

APSA Executive Director's Report 2008

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This executive director's report provides a status report on the Association, an update on programs and activities, and reflections on some issues facing APSA for the future. The basic indicators for the APSA remain strong.

APSA membership is steady at 14,692, and without appreciable change in its composition. See Table 1 on page 981 in the Gazette section. In spite of continued expectations from speculations about the baby boom, numbers of retired members has not grown and is at 583. Members applying for a special unemployed member status have grown 10%, to 249. APSA continues as well its interdisciplinary memberships with partner associations, allowing scholars anchored in one discipline to get discounted memberships in another. The most active users of this program in APSA are historians, with 174 memberships.

Organized sections remain a vibrant part of APSA activity. Thirty-five sections are now active, with the addition of the Health Politics and Policy Section this year. Sections lead in organizing the intellectual content of much of APSA's annual meeting, and network and disseminate information to members within their fields. This year, sections totaled 20,357 individual memberships. This is a bit lower than last years' peak number of total members of 20,689, but is still higher than any other previous year.

Annual meeting attendance remains strong as well. The 2007 meeting in Chicago drew 6,929 attendees—the second largest meeting attendance in APSA history after the record attendance of 7,030 in Philadelphia the year before. See table 3 on page 982 in the Gazette section.

APSA's Teaching and Learning Conference is designed to remain at just over 300 participants, because of the space limitations of its intensive working group format. Attendance at the emerging Department Chairs conference so far is small, but we count on it to grow significantly as it becomes more recognized.

In the course of these activities, APSA finances remain strong. The growing complexity of the financial and auditing world has led us to add one new position in our finance office. APSA staffing has otherwise remained steady.

Finally, APSA activity is not measured only by programs, but by member participation as well. Each year about 280

members serve as members of APSA's committees or council, as liaisons to other organizations, or in editorial roles. This does not include the large number of officers and council members of each of the 35 organized sections.

Active APSA Programs

APSA programs continue to develop broadly. The Association remains deeply committed to its classic role of providing forums for the presentation, dissemination, and academic peer review of scholarship. The Association has extended its reach to support other major tasks of the scholarly career, particularly teaching and learning. We are actively engaged in support for professional development of the political science career, in many different ways. And in the face of strong encouragement from members, APSA takes many steps in support of what is generically called enhancing the "public presence" of political science.

International Programs

Africa Project

Perhaps the program area that has moved forward the most extensively in the one (past) year is APSA's international programs. The highlights surely are the recently completed Africa workshops, held in summer of 2008 in Dakar Senegal with 20 emerging early career African political scientists, and led by two U.S.-based and two Africa-based senior scholars. Reports on the success of this workshop will be forthcoming on the web and in *PS*. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has supported this effort generously.

Other International Initiatives

The Africa project is complemented by other efforts—with modest MacArthur Foundation funds, APSA has started a networked project with Indian political scientists on comparative analysis of Toquevillian democracy in our two countries. Two workshops have been held in India, to be followed by one in the U.S., and if resources allow then a study tour in India.

APSA also has expanded its resources for conference travel support for scholars in lower income countries, and has created a new membership category for such

scholars. And we have taken an active role in collaborating with IPSA projects. Political science is unavoidably a global project. While I have always felt the claims of U.S. hegemony and American domination of the discipline have been overblown, the cautionary message in such assertions are worth heading and APSA is working to contribute to opportunities for research collaboration with scholars in countries entering the global academic scene.

Support for Scholarship

Annual Meeting

The APSA annual meeting remains the largest and most diverse scholarly activity in political science. The APSA Annual Meeting Review committee reported in fall of 2007 on an extensive overview of meeting practices. The committee surveyed attendees and non-attendees of the 2006 meeting, requested comments from all members of the profession, and consulted with past presidents, program committee chairs, department chairs, and the staff at the national office. Overall, the committee concluded the meeting "works well to meet its many goals." Drawing from this report the APSA Council adopted practices to anchor the size of the meeting and to update methods for allocation of panels in the conference based both on panel attendance and on proposal submission rates. The council also affirmed a commitment to provide space for so-called related groups—self-organized networks of scholars holding panels in conjunction with the APSA conference and to make more transparent and better integrate their panel planning with APSA processes.

APSA Journals

Growth in the breadth and size of the discipline, and in technologies related to publishing and scholarly distribution, press on APSA journals and have lead the Association toward more complexity in its publishing program. Over the course of 2008–2009, all APSA journals were put on to Editorial Manager online manuscript submission and peer-review system software.

At the direction of the APSA Council, the publications committee for the first time has begun to codify responsibilities of editors and editorial teams, APSA as the journal proprietor, and Cambridge

University Press as the current publishing house in the form of editorial guidelines. These guidelines are meant as an affirmative step to recognize the increasingly differentiated roles that different institutions in the publishing process take.

American Political Science Review

The *APSR* is in its first year under the editorship of Ronald Rogowski and a team of scholars at the University of California, Los Angeles. The team editorship is an innovation for the *Review* and a major commitment from UCLA. It reflects the complexity of editing a peak journal that is meant to serve leading scholarship across the breadth of the discipline.

Perspectives on Politics

The council renewed the editorship of James Johnson for *Perspectives on Politics* through June of 2009, recognizing the continuing distinction of the research published in the *Perspectives* journal. They also initiated the search for a succeeding editor of the journal.

PS: Political Science & Politics

PS continued its blend of research on contemporary issues in politics and the discipline with detailed association news. In 2008, *PS* launched a regular supplement containing current academic job listings, plus the most current calendar of upcoming political science events and other association news. The supplement format employs web-based technologies to draw down job listings from APSA's online eJobs service in a highly automated manner, reducing staff overhead and allowing a last-minute publication schedule to assure print job listings are current. Print job listings are a requirement of the U.S. Department of Labor for positions that lead to foreign hires—which induced APSA to create a print version of its eJobs system.

Organized Section Journals

APSA is engaged more broadly in journal production and distribution than represented by our Association-wide journals alone. Fourteen of APSA's 36 Organized Sections now distribute journals with their memberships—amounting to nearly 7,000 additional journal mailings to APSA members. Four of these journals are owned by the APSA organized sections themselves (Politics and Gender, Religion and Politics, New Political Science, and Political Analysis) and the others are published and distributed in partnership with other associations or organizations.

Support for teaching and learning

APSA has focused on issues of teaching from very early in its history; at our first meeting in 1904 a section called Instruction in Political Science was established as one of the nine sections of

the new association.¹ By the 1990s APSA had regular panels at the annual meeting on teaching and learning, and learning assessment themes. In the last several years, APSA has started the standing conference on Teaching and Learning, and established a standing committee on Teaching and Learning that is focusing on Association-wide attention to the demands and expectations of assessment and on advancing other learning initiatives, on internationalizing the curriculum, and on broadening the understanding of teaching about American politics.

The emergence of the APSA Organized Section on Political Science Education (and its translation from the earlier name Section on Undergraduate Education) provided significant institutional infrastructure within APSA to advance this focus. The successful *Journal of Political Science Education* that the section edits has further advanced this attention.

Teaching and Learning Conference

APSA's Teaching and Learning Conference completed its fifth year in 2008, meeting on the West Coast in San Jose, CA. The conference provides a unique forum in political science for scholars to share effective and innovative teaching and learning models and to discuss broad themes and values of political science education. The conference has also been an added forum for APSA's international engagement, with joint participation from the Canadian and Brazilian political science associations, and with the European Political Science Network (epsNet.)

Since its start, 968 individuals have attended the TLC, 15 as many as 4 times and 193 more than once. Sixty of these attendees have been from outside the US.

Assessment

For many years, the idea of assessment of teaching and learning has been a controversial one in political science. More than one conversation about "dealing with assessment" foundered on a misunderstanding about whether that meant advancing assessment initiatives, or seeking to stop it in its tracks. Today, there is a widespread recognition that the issue is not "whether assessment" but "how to assess," and the political issues are how to assure that assessment initiatives stay in the hands of faculty who can focus it clearly.

In 2008, APSA will publish an edited volume on *Assessment in Political Sci-*

ence, providing work critiquing approaches to assessment and discussion about how to approach it. This work is significant in the attention and resources it brings to the assessment discussion, and also in its reflection on the advanced resources within the discipline for attending to this topic: many years of panels at the annual meeting and workshops with department chairs, the Organized Section on Political Science Education, the section's journal, and the TLC.

Public Presence and Engagement

A number of structured initiatives within APSA work to help advance the presence of the discipline and to engage political science scholarship with public issues. Some of this engagement is built on long-standing APSA activity, such as the Congressional Fellowship Program, which continues actively—placing mid-career political scientist and journalists in congressional offices for a year, with an active wrap-around intellectual enrichment program—and combines this core effort with support for government officials, foreign scholars, and medical experts in similar internships, managed by APSA.

The APSA Centennial Center also supports these initiatives. The center as a physical space provides a resource for scholars seeking a workspace while in Washington, D.C. and as an intellectual center for discussion, lectures, and brown-bag research presentations. The center as an endowment program manages a series of research funds generously established by the political science community to support new work in the discipline.

APSA has also committed itself to support applied research on topics of pressing global significance, through annual task forces and reports. Task Forces are named by APSA presidents, and charged to bring together core political science knowledge and recommendations on public issues. They speak in their own name, with the certification of APSA that the work they are reporting is research of high merit. Recent reports have been completed on topics of inequality in American democracy, and inequality in developing societies. Such topics as religion and democracy in the United States, and political violence and terrorism are underway.

Finally, APSA has increased its efforts to build press connections for the scholarly work in its journals and the work of members. Regular press releases are now issued on apt work from APSA journals. And the Association maintains a Media-

Connect linkage by which members may volunteer their expertise for press attention; 155 scholars have signed up to be a part of our MediaConnect database

Professional Issues and Support

Professional Development Responsibilities

A number of steps are being taken to strengthen APSA's general support of the discipline and the professional activities of political scientists, covering production of new resource materials, surveys of the faculty and departments, programs for peer to peer mentoring, and recruitment initiatives.

APSA is initiating a new series of books supporting professional work in political science, as part of a new series of work called State of the Profession. Initial volumes on the publishing process and on assessment in teaching and learning are being released this summer.

The lead-off book *Publishing Political Science: The APSA Guide to Writing and Publishing*, draws on the resources of work prepared for our *PS* journal, updated and augmented. *Publishing Political Science* describes of the current state of publishing and publishing opportunities in political science; provides guidance on writing for particular venues and audiences such as literature reviews, textbooks, journals, blogs, and reference books; and recommends practical approaches on how to build successful relationships with publishers. Topics like this represent areas where APSA can draw on its strengths from *PS* or our committee work to publish resources for the discipline in areas enhanced by the centrality of APSA's professional role and less well served by other publishers. The edited volume on assessment mentioned earlier is another entry into this publication series, on a topic consistent with these publishing principles.

A number of steps are underway to improve how we understand and document the political science career and the field. Dr. Vicki Hesli is leading a major survey of graduate students and scholars to better understand factors that influence career development and that may contribute to decisions to leave the profession. This work is being guided by APSA's Committee on the Status of Women and with advice from all of the APSA's status committees, and is addressed to all political scientists.

APSA is also building a new system for conducting departmental surveys that will focus on the structure of the professoriate,

the composition and policies of academic departments, graduate student placement, enrollments, and salaries. These surveys, following on paper surveys employed in the past, are online and designed to allow instant benchmarking of results for departments relative to self-selected comparison groups. The surveys should be populated this fall and ready for benchmarking analysis in the spring.

The mentoring initiative has been underway for several years. Based on an evaluation overseen by the Committee on the Status of Women and conducted by Barbara Burrell at Northern Illinois University, the mentoring process has been strengthened and broadened, and now includes 186 mentors. The service is widely used for guidance on issues ranging from publication advice to career decision making to problem solving for difficult career situations.

APSA also continues its commitment to recruiting minority students into doctoral study, and the advancement of minority scholars within the profession. We continue to support the Ralph Bunche Summer Institute at Duke University, and are working on prospects to develop additional institutes at other sites and to secure long-term funding for the RBSI. APSA also has recently expanded financial support for minority fellowships for graduate study, and is redesigning the Minority Student Recruitment program to provide more targeted student contacts.

Directions for APSA

New Technologies and Networks

APSA maintains advanced web services to support the discipline and the Association, which have gone through several stages of development. The Association operates with an integrated set of services involving membership and a meeting management database, extensive informational pages on topics in political science and on the work of APSA groups, access pages for individual members to update information about themselves and their networks and business services, and special services such as an online jobs databank. Several million dollars of Association business is transacted across the APSA web annually.

Still, there much more in the works for APSA web services, and expectations for quality services move forward rapidly as the commercial online world sets higher and higher standards. Two major initiatives are underway in APSA web development—one that is much behind the scenes that will improve how transactions occur on the APSA web site and the quality of service in financial transactions, and another will open up possibilities for

forms of interaction online.

New technologies for web transactions will provide real-time interaction between web transactions and the APSA membership and meeting database, and improve the exchanges that take place between the different software systems that compose APSA web services. This new technology will solve old problems, by providing for instance immediate access to services paid for on the APSA web site, such as JS-TOR access; it will also allow new kinds of services, such as the ability to build a "personal annual meeting program" by selecting panels of interest from the online program. It is one of many cases in which services that have come to be thought of as "routine" for working online involve significant planning and investment for the Association.

A more dramatic addition to web services will come from our adoption of new online web services for group interaction—so-called "social networking" software for political sciences. APSA's highly differentiated community today has distributed itself across the web with a myriad of individual listservs, specialized web sites, various community lists, and social network sites. And still there is a sense that the capacity to interact with specific subgroups of members—e.g., among members of organized sections or related groups—is limited.

This fall APSA will introduce a social network resource aligned with the APSA web site and databases that will provide an integrated capacity for groups to form and dissolve within the political science community. At the core is a much advanced list mailing capability for APSA that will improve communication APSA committees, sections, and other identified groups. Membership on the lists will be governed by recognized status within APSA membership itself. However the service will also allow members to share, at their own discretion, professional information about themselves and their interests, to form informal groups for exchange (e.g., among participants at a particular APSA conference panel, or scholars with similar specialized interests), and to build topic-specific web pages and work group pages. The site will allow access for APSA members and non-members, with opportunities to control where access is allowed.

It will take some time to learn what pathways the discipline will seek to use with this new software and we look forward to supporting a new generation of informal interactions that it allows.

Looking Ahead

On the foundation of the accomplishments and activity illustrated above, APSA can look forward with some confidence in our core strengths and capacity to adapt to changing circumstances. Still, as we look ahead there are many challenges—including to our core activities such as the annual meeting and our journals—that will call for thoughtful and careful planning. In addition to the pressures of a weakening economy and rising prices in general, there are specific areas of our activity that raise challenges.

The annual meeting is the single largest activity within the Association for advancing scholarship, professional development, and scholarly community. It defines what APSA is for many members, and is the meeting ground for many groups within political science. The conference has grown in recent years and has thrived. It also faces new threats. Perhaps the greatest challenge is the rising costs of travel and concomitant concerns about environmental consequences of travel and of large gatherings that add further to costs. Rising expectations for services at the meeting, especially provision of LCD projectors in all meeting rooms, further adds to cost. Disputes about meeting sites may result in reduced attendance, at least in the 2012 meeting, with financial implications.

Journals as well present strong challenges. As universities face financial

pressures, the resources to partner in establishing editorial offices are challenged. And the emergence of alternative means to distribute intellectual content, and for open access to journal articles, raises many questions about the long-term business model of journal production.

Governance

In the last year, the Association has gone through an especially demanding and complex consideration of policy regarding siting of its meetings with respect to state laws that restrict rights for same-sex families recognized in other states. There are extensive materials about this issue and the process of member feedback and deliberation leading to changes in APSA policies regarding siting meetings on the APSA web site.² The issue brings forward many intense issues for society in general and for the Association in particular including the nature of the Association's meeting itself—whether it is an active forward presence in our programming, to be used itself as a statement about principles, or it is background to the intellectual engagement that occurs there.

One shared conclusion is that the Association should have a voice in the city where it meets, joining with the community and public officials on matters that may make it difficult for us to attend and

on topics where our scholarship contributes to the public.

Looking broadly, the American Political Science Association is a much more broadly based and diverse entity than was the case when its present governance structures were formed. The Association represents the intersection of many roles and interests in the discipline—research scholars and teachers, emerging scholars and students, academic departments, publishers, research funders, and other associations. APSA publications, meetings, professional development efforts, job markets, and so forth directly affect and shape these other partners in the enterprise of the discipline as well as the Association itself.

But many of the entities that are so closely tied to APSA activity—political science departments, publishers, foundations, etc.—are not well linked with APSA governance. Their voices are not formally part of council discussion. They should be included.

There are many ways to approach such governance questions, and to broaden the communities reflected in APSA governance. There is no single, obvious appropriate answer. But I do believe it is time to begin a discussion of them, and to revisit the way our linkages to other associations and organizations are shaped, and the way APSA governance is constituted.

Notes

1. Ada Finifter, "Program Evaluation of the Division of Educational Affairs of the American Political Science Association," *PS: Political Science and Politics* (Winter 1978, 54).

2. www.apsanet.org/section_801.cfm.