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# Association News

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## Executive Director's Report

Steven Rathgeb Smith, *Executive Director, APSA*

One of the important traditions of the association is the executive director's report in the January issue of *PS*. The journal is the official record of the association, and consequently, executive directors have used the January issue as an opportunity to reflect on the state of the association. Last year, I presented my first report as executive director; in that report, I noted that the association was in good financial condition but faced a variety of social and economic trends affecting academic associations that required the association to adapt and look to new strategies to continue to be responsive to members' needs and concerns. Thus, this year's report details new initiatives by the association during the past year and discusses emergent developments and opportunities in the association's key programmatic areas including the annual meeting; membership; academic publishing; the APSA Congressional Fellowship Program; diversity initiatives; the Centennial Center for Political Science and Public Affairs; international programs; and public engagement.

### ANNUAL MEETING

In terms of the annual meeting, the association had near-record attendance in Washington, DC. Moreover, the program co-chairs, Simon Jackman and Melanie Manion, introduced several innovations into the conference program including live-streaming of plenary sessions; important "breaking news" panels on civil rights tensions in Ferguson, Missouri, and the crisis in the Ukraine; an opt-in print program; and high-profile theme panels on the digital revolution and its implications for politics and democracy. The 2014 APSA Annual Meeting was also memorable for the early morning fire and evacuation at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel. We very much regret the inconvenience experienced by hundreds of members, and we are also

thankful that no one was hurt in this very unfortunate situation. Since the meeting, we have worked closely with the Washington Metropolitan Fire and Police Departments on their ongoing investigation of the fire.

At this point, we are looking forward with great anticipation to the 2015 APSA Annual Meeting in San Francisco. APSA President, Rodney Hero, has appointed two program co-chairs: Layna Moseley of the University of North Carolina and Alvin Tillery of Northwestern University. The theme of the conference is "Diversities Reconsidered: Political Science and Politics in the 21st Century." The APSA Director of Meetings, Heidi Souerwine, and the rest of the APSA staff are already deep into the planning of the conference and plan to introduce additional innovations into the annual meeting program for San Francisco.

### MEMBERSHIP

As I mentioned in last year's report, membership in APSA has been incrementally declining for several years; this decline has continued during 2014. To address this decline, I firmly believe that APSA (and other similar associations) need to rethink their relationship to members and the value proposition for membership. Toward this end, we have frozen membership dues and conference registration fees, recognizing that many members are facing limitations on travel budgets and professional development accounts as well as a generally uncertain financial situation.

In addition, APSA is in the midst of a complete overhaul of its data management system and content management system for its website. This conversion to a new system also entails a change in our conference submission system from our in-house submission program to All Academic. The website conversion has not been without its glitches, and we appreciate the patience

of and feedback from members during this very complicated conversion process. We are working diligently with our outside vendors to resolve any outstanding difficulties. This conversion is critically important because the website is, more than ever, a portal to valuable resources for our members.

One important resource is our online communities that are primarily organized through APSAConnect. For example, the Organized Section on International Political Economy has an online community by which members can network and exchange information on research and teaching as well as learn about new job opportunities and research grant programs. More generally, we are committed to helping members organize and network through existing and new communities of interest. These communities can be facilitated through the website but also at the annual meeting, the APSA Teaching and Learning Conference, section meetings, related groups, and the APSA journals. Indeed, sections and related groups are critical to the future of the association because our members increasingly identify with specific subfields and/or intellectual and policy interests such as migration and inequality.

### ACADEMIC PUBLISHING

Academic publishing issues remain a central and vital aspect of the association. Two of our flagship journals, the *American Political Science Review* (*APSR*) and *Perspectives on Politics*, have the highest impact factors of any journal in political science. And *PS: Political Science and Politics* continues its record of outstanding symposia and papers on a wide range of topics of concern to the profession and the broader policy community. Indeed, this January issue includes a symposium on the politics of the Ebola virus. *PS* also continues its long-standing tradition of publishing important news of the profession.

However, we are also in the midst of a time of editorial transition in each of our three journals. John Ishiyama and his team at the University of North Texas have done an outstanding job as editor of the *APSR*. Yet, he has recently announced that he will not seek an extension of his initial four-year term; consequently, John's term as editor will conclude in June 2016. In response to John's decision, Rodney Hero, in consultation with president-elect Jennifer Hochschild, me, and many other stakeholders, has appointed a search committee for a new editor chaired by Melanie Manion (University of Wisconsin, Madison). The other members of the search committee are Frank Baumgartner (University of North Carolina), Amy Mazur (Washington State University), Paulina Ochoa Espejo, (Haverford College), Reuel Rogers (Northwestern University), Peter Trubowitz (London School of Economics), and Christopher Zorn (Pennsylvania State University). The search committee has issued a call for proposals for a new editor with a closing

and in August 2014 the council ratified the selection of Phillip Ardo of Appalachian State University and Paul Gronke of Reed College as the interim editors for two years through August 2016.

Academic publishing is also an area marked by rapidly changing developments including more calls for research transparency and accountability. To help support APSA journals and our members in responding to these trends, APSA co-sponsored a conference at the University of Michigan in September 2014 on the ongoing initiative pertaining to research and academic journals called DA-RT, or data access and research transparency, co-chaired by Colin Elman of Syracuse University and Arthur "Skip" Lupia of the University of Michigan. The conference brought together more than 25 journal editors to discuss the adoption of voluntary standards for journals and authors in support of transparency and common standards for scholars in their research and journals in their submission and publishing expect-

(CFP) in 2014. Jeffrey Biggs, who was director of CFP for more than 17 years, retired in September 2014. He was succeeded by Kara Abramson, who has extensive experience on Capitol Hill and with the management of fellowship and internship programs. Kara and the entire APSA staff are committed to expanding the fellowship opportunities for political scientists and interested social scientists; indeed, CFP is central to the public engagement and professional development mission of the association.

#### DIVERSITY INITIATIVES

Similarly, the APSA staff are investing in building the long-term sustainability of the APSA diversity programs. The more prominent of APSA diversity programs is the Ralph Bunche Summer Institute (RBSI). In the summer of 2014, then-president John Aldrich appointed a Working Group to develop a plan to ensure the long-term future of RBSI. The goal is to develop a plan to submit to the APSA Council by its August 2015 meeting.

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date of April 15, 2015. (See "Request for Proposals, *American Political Science Review*" in this issue.) The goal is to have a new editor chosen by the 2015 APSA Annual Meeting in San Francisco to allow adequate time for a transition between editors.

In regards to *Perspectives on Politics*, Jeff Isaac, the current editor, requested a two-year extension on his current editorship. An ad hoc committee was appointed by then-president John Aldrich to review Jeff's request. The committee unanimously recommended that Jeff's term be extended to June 2017; a recommendation subsequently endorsed by the APSA Council at their April meeting. Given Jeff's renewal, the search for a new editor of *Perspectives* will be undertaken in academic year, 2015–2016, so a search committee for the new editor will be appointed in the fall of 2015 with the intention of a new editor in place by the 2016 APSA Annual Meeting.

The editorship of *PS* will change for the first time in more than 25 years with the retirement of Rob Hauck in December 2014. Rob has literally built a terrific journal from its humble origins as an APSA newsletter. The association will continue to be in his debt for years to come. The APSA Council decided to appoint an interim editor of *PS*,

tations. (See more in this issue.) APSA will be supporting continuing discussion of the DA-RT initiative within the political science discipline as well as other social science disciplines in 2015. Feedback on this initiative is welcomed by the association.

More broadly, the association is interested in supporting members in their research and teaching endeavors. For example, in January 2015, APSA is co-sponsoring a conference at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University on the ethical and practical challenges of conducting field experiments in political science especially as it pertains to voting and elections. As part of the agenda of the conference, the complicated issues of Institutional Review Board (IRB) review will be addressed. In my view, APSA should be an ongoing resource for members on navigating the complexities of the IRB process and helping universities develop review standards that appropriately address the diverse research interests of political science.

#### CONGRESSIONAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

A major transition also occurred in the APSA Congressional Fellowship Program

This Working Group is a joint effort of APSA and the National Council of Black Political Scientists (NCOBPS). Kimberly Mealy, APSA Director of Diversity Programs, is also playing a key role in supporting this Working Group and the APSA diversity programs in general. In addition, APSA continues to invest in building the APSA Minority Fellows Program and the APSA Mentoring Program. Also, we are continuing to raise funds for all of our diversity programs through the Ralph Bunche Endowment; indeed, we have made improvements in our website to make the process of donating money to these programs easier and more straightforward.

#### CENTENNIAL CENTER

Another programmatic area of APSA in the midst of change and transition is the APSA Centennial Center, a major source of research and fellowship support for APSA members. The center was established in 2000 as part of the Second Century Capital Campaign. One of the principal goals of the campaign is to support short-term stays by visiting APSA members who need to do research in Washington, DC. Thus, APSA has dedicated space for these scholars. But the center is also much more than a sup-

port vehicle for visiting scholars. The center also includes a wide array of award funds for research and scholarship including the Paul Volcker Award and the Robert Dahl Award. Jeffrey Biggs was the director of the Centennial Center; with his retirement, Betsy Super has assumed the director responsibilities. One of the strategic priorities of APSA is to build these award funds and expand the reach of the Centennial Center and its capacities to support the research endeavors of our members.

#### INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

Betsy Super is also the director of international programs for APSA. Two key initiatives are the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Workshops and the Africa Workshops. The former has been an ongoing project since 2013 and supported generously by the Carnegie Corporation; this project—which provides training to young political scientists in the region—was also recently renewed for another two years through 2016. The Africa Workshops have been an eight-year effort by APSA with support from the Mellon Foundation to support the research and teaching of political scientists in Africa.

The final workshops will be held in 2015. Both workshop programs have been very successful and trained countless political scientists.

#### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The public engagement activities also received concerted attention and support during 2014. The President's Task Force for 2014 focused on public engagement and was chaired by Skip Lupia. This comprehensive report offers detailed suggestions for the association and its members to enhance their public engagement activities, broadly defined. The committee's report to the APSA Council, presented in August, is available on the APSA website; the full report will be available in early spring. The APSA staff also looks forward to working with Skip, the APSA Council, and the membership on the implementation of the recommendations of the report.

Public engagement can refer to more direct attention by political scientists to present their research to the public including policymakers. To borrow from Habermas, public engagement can be members participating in the public sphere—from blogging to op-ed essays to legislative testimony. But

public engagement can also refer to more formal engagement with the policy process, including building long-term relationships with policy makers in support of the goals of APSA as well as targeted advocacy. We are investing more resources in building these long-term networks. For example, Kara Abramson, the new director of the CFP program, is also the director of government relations and public engagement. We are also working closely with our partner organizations including the Consortium of Social Science Associations in support of association priorities including protecting political science funding of the National Science Foundation. More generally, APSA Senior Director of Program Operations, Jennifer Diascro, has done an outstanding job supporting the association's public engagement and advocacy activities during 2014.

#### LOOKING FORWARD

Overall, the association is engaged in a wide range of programs in support of our members and strengthening the discipline of political science in the United States and abroad. With your continued support, we look forward to 2015 and beyond.