

Membership Spotlight

Michelle D. Deardorff

Michelle D. Deardorff is the Adolph S. Ochs Professor of Government. She is also a professor and department head of political science and public service. Dr. Deardorff has been an APSA member since 1989.

HOW DID YOU LEARN ABOUT APSA? WHEN DID YOU BECOME A MEMBER OF APSA, AND WHAT PROMPTED YOU TO JOIN?

I learned about APSA through my graduate program and joined in my first year of doctoral studies in 1989 as a graduate student member. My impetus to join was that I was engaging in a professional community of which I knew very little; membership in APSA seemed like a wise way to become involved, as I was seeking to understand the academic and disciplinary cultures I was committing to join. It was a very good decision.

HOW HAVE APSA MEMBERSHIP AND SERVICES BEEN VALUABLE TO YOU AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF YOUR CAREER?

I have spent my career in smaller, more teaching-oriented institutions (12 years at a Midwestern, predominately white, private liberal arts institution; 10 years at a historically black Southern public institution; and now 10 years at a regional comprehensive mid-South institution). My departments have ranged in size from three people to thirteen, but that means I am often the only one who researches and teaches in my field. For the first fifteen years of my career, I was the only woman teaching in my department. APSA and its programs provided me with community and support. When I started, the APSA mentor program paired me with Susan Mezey from Loyola, who provided great advice and thoughtful critique. Later in my career, I have been able to serve as a mentor for others. I had support from APSA when I was on the job market and then when I led hiring committees and departments. When I became a new department chair, APSA departmental services provided guidance and training. In the Political Science Education section, I found my people and my network—my graduate program provided minimal support at conferences, so the section became my home base. At conferences, I was able to keep up in my field, meet people doing similar and adjacent work, and receive feedback from scholars in parallel areas. Later in my career, I assumed leadership roles—first in the Political Science Education section, then chairing the standing committee on Teaching and Learning, then on APSA Council, and now as a co-chair of a presidential

taskforce. Engaging in APSA provided me some support as a young, female, working class academic trying to find her way in political science in the early 1990s, and gave me the opportunity to help change the discipline so that people like me and others were more reflected in its ethos and purpose.



CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND AND YOUR RESEARCH?

I am the Adolph S. Ochs Professor of Government and department head of political science and public service at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. My PhD is from Miami University (Oxford, Ohio) in 1993, and my teaching and research have focused on the constitutional and statutory protections surrounding gender and race, as well as exploring the insights provided by political theory. I particularly enjoy teaching classes and engaging with the public in ways that allow people to apply their understandings of law, politics, and political theory to current events, believing an important role of a university is to foster thoughtful citizens prepared to participate in governing our communities and nation. While I have written articles and a book on pregnancy discrimination, much of my work has been in translating political science research in ways in which the public can engage. My work with historians and political scientists in the Fannie Lou Hamer National Institute on Citizenship and Democracy (1997-2017), resulted in the provision of pedagogical resources, workshops, tours, and two museums all designed for K-12 educators, community college and university faculty, students, and community members to understand the promise of democracy. We had numerous grants from NSF, NEH, Kellogg, etc. Currently I am part of two textbook author teams: *Constitutional Law in Contemporary America*, with David Schultz and John R. Vile, and *American Democracy Now* (8th E) and AP edition with Brigid Harrison and Jean Harris with McGraw Hill. I am currently writing a new text on race and law with Cambridge University Press.

WHICH APSA PROGRAMS OR EVENTS WOULD YOU RECOMMEND TO PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION, AND WHY?

I think the Teaching and Learning conferences are wonderful. I have been attending since the first one in 2004. It is a place where political scientists from all subfields, types of institutions, roles, and positions come together for a shared purpose. It is a community like no other that I have found in the discipline.

Most of us do substantive research in other areas, in addition to our work in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. But our goal is to support one another and challenge each other in improving our thinking; it is the best of our discipline. We mentor one another and celebrate each other's achievements. I also encourage new members to pick a section that is most meaningful to them and get involved in the programming and leadership of the section—go to the business meeting and reception. Finally, I think the mentoring program is an unsung prize of our discipline. I hope people are engaged in that program in various ways throughout the course of their careers.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE PEOPLE TO KNOW ABOUT YOU OR THE WORK THAT YOU DO?

One of the things I have valued about my career-long engagement in APSA is that I have been able to see how this large institution has changed and adapted due to the concerns and participation of its members. If someone like me, who has never attended or worked for an elite institution (or so desired), can help bring about substantial change in APSA's programming and priorities, everyone can. It really is our expression of the discipline. ■

BOOKS BY OUR MEMBERS

Youth Movements and Generational Politics, 19th–21st Centuries

Richard G. Braungart and Margaret M. Braungart

Anthem Press

The Islamic State in Afghanistan and Pakistan: Strategic Alliances and Rivalries

Amira Jadoon and Andrew Mines

Lynne Rienner Publishers

Technology and Oligopoly Capitalism

Luis Suarez-Villa

Routledge

Manufacturing Government Communication on COVID-19: A Comparative Perspective

Philippe J. Maarek

Springer

Born Innocent: Protecting the Dependents of Accused Caregivers

Michael J. Sullivan

Oxford University Press

Social Inquiry and Bayesian Inference: Rethinking Qualitative Research

Andrew Charman and Tasha Fairfield

Oxford University Press

