

Ad Hoc Review Committee on the Future of *PS*: Report

The Ad Hoc Committee on the Future of *PS: Political Science and Politics*, appointed by John Aldrich and Steven Rathgeb Smith, is charged with undertaking a comprehensive review of the journal. The Council's expectation is that the Committee will offer recommendations on the process for selecting a new editor and suggestions for the format and structure of the journal. The expectation is that the committee will provide recommendations to the Council at the Midwest meeting in April 2014. Below are these recommendations, by order of topics covered at the committee's final meeting held in Washington, DC, February 28, 2014. The report was presented to the APSA Council April 5, 2014, in Chicago, Illinois, at its spring meeting.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Michael S. Lewis-Beck, *University of Iowa*,
chair

Kathryn C. Lavelle, *Case Western Reserve University*

Rose McDermott, *Brown University*

Diana M. Owen, *Georgetown University*

Mark Carl Rom, *Georgetown University*

Jennifer Nicoll Victor, *George Mason University*

Kenton W. Worcester, *Marymount Manhattan College*

I. CONTENTS

Question: Should the contents of *PS* change?

Answer: Readers, according to our recent survey, appear highly satisfied with the contents of the journal as a whole. Many appreciate the diverse range of topics covered in *PS*. Members of the committee repeatedly noted that *PS* has a "Walter Cronkite" effect, where readers come the journal for one purpose, but wind up engrossed by many of the journal's other useful and engaging sections. It has a role,

helping make political science more inclusive and equalizing. Since it is not broken, it does not need to be fixed. However, some minor changes might add still more value, as discussed next.

1. *Symposia*. These solicited, but peer-reviewed, collections are highly successful, and no change is recommended. This is a place where the editor in particular makes a mark.

2. *Features*. This section, which contains mainline, peer-reviewed, papers, has some identity problems. The term, "features" itself lacks clear positive meaning, and sounds "too high school". Further, the fact that these papers are peer-reviewed needs more publicity. We recommend this section be renamed something like "Articles and Essays," or perhaps simply "Papers."

3. *Spotlight*. These are one or two papers appearing each issue under that title. They allow the editor to be innovative, focusing on important issues of the moment. No change is recommended here.

4. *The Profession*. This section offers articles which assess topics important for the professional political scientist. No changes recommended, other than to make clear these papers are also peer-reviewed.

4. *The Teacher*. This section focuses on papers to improve the teaching of political science. No changes recommended for this highly successful section, other than to make clear the papers are also peer-reviewed.

5. *People*. This section focuses on noteworthy "doings" of people in the profession. No changes recommended for this highly successful section.

6. *Association News*. This section offers news about the association. No changes recommended.

7. *The Annual Meeting*. This section, which focuses on the contents of the annual meeting, should be folded into the Association News section, and reduced in size as appropriate.

8. *Visuals*. Innovation in cover design should continue to be encouraged, including political cartoons.

II. FORMAT

Question: To what extent should *PS* move from a print edition to an online, interactive edition?

Answer: *PS* should continue to lead with its print edition, recalling that the core readership of *PS* remains an academic audience. However, its online edition, already up and running, has a serious presence. About 35% of the readership now opt for the online version of *PS*. This will likely increase, and advantage should be taken of that, especially the interactive possibilities, which would tend to vary by content section.

PS is uniquely situated among APSA supported journals to offer an innovative, elegant, user-friendly online platform that would provide the audience with a high quality interactive experience. The *PS* website could offer page-flip and/or .pdf versions replicating the hard copy journal, as well as digital versions of articles that accommodate comments and other interactive components. It could offer expanded features, such as supplementary material for articles, links to data sets and other resources, and short video clips. The *PS* website could facilitate improved branding of both the journal and APSA. Members would have access to all of the web content. Some content could be made publicly available, while additional content could be accessible for a fee. We anticipate that the website will be attractive to journalists, policy makers, and politically interested members of the public. The time is right for this type of experimentation. Next, we make more specific recommendations:

1. A more attractive website is needed, supported by its own app, with the more useful functions that have been developed in recent years for online publications.

2. A link should be provided on the *PS* homepage to a PDF-version of the print publication. There could also be links there to the journal's core sections, discussed earlier.

3. New material could be added to the website, such as pieces that couldn't fit in

the print version, and announcements of forthcoming articles.

4. In the print version each obituary, for example, could include a brief announcement at the end inviting APSA members to make an e-contribution of their own reflections.

5. Interactive commenting would generally be limited to APSA members. While some material would be open access, i.e., available to anyone with a browser, other material would be password protected. We envision a website that would include enough substantive material to attract the interest of general readers, students, and so on, but not one that would allow for anonymous postings, trolling, etc. For this reason we believe that everything that appears on the website, including comments, should be prescreened before it is published online.

6. A revamped PS website would help attract readers to PS, and stimulate public debate and dialogue through its open access materials. At the same time, it would enable contributors, and APSA itself, to take advantage of the web. For example, the online version of PS could lead readers to additional readings, useful data sets, video clips, and the APSA channel of youtube.com.

7. This new e-presence will clearly expand the workload of the PS offices. Therefore, an additional tech-savvy staff member should be hired to manage the website and the activities related to it.

III. ORGANIZATION

Question: Should PS continue to be based at APSA headquarters, and staffed by APSA?

Answer: The basic answer is “yes,” but some flexibility should be introduced into the formula. Suggestions are offered here:

The editor-in-chief would carry on the broad vision of the field that has character-

ized *PS*. In practice, that would mean an eye for timely topics, a sense of balance regarding the subfields, an appreciation for the types of institutions that deliver research and teaching on politics, and a commitment to diversity and educational missions of political science.

PS would continue to be produced at APSA headquarters, under the direction of a full-time managing editor, aided by a web assistant and a copyeditor.

The editor-in-chief would continue to be a political scientist, but not necessarily one physically based in Washington, DC. He or she could reside, for example, at a university elsewhere. (This might have the additional advantage of gaining extra resources, such as university-paid leave time for the editor-in-chief and/or editorial intern support.)

The editor-in-chief would be able to “ask the right questions” concerning the e-future of *PS*.

IV. PUBLICATIONS

Question: Should *PS* expand its publications? In print? Electronically?

Answer: The answer is “yes,” to both. There are opportunities in print and electronically that *PS* should take advantage of. Further, their current publisher, Cambridge Press, seems cooperative, including in the electronic area. These opportunities are discussed below.

With respect to print, we recommend the following:

1. An initial publication honoring Rob Hauck, in the form of a monograph of selected PS articles, entitled something like “Navigating the Profession.” (If the publication committee approves, this could be presented

to him at the 2015 APSA. See the Appendix (next page) for such a monograph proposal.)

2. Exploration of a monograph series on topics such as teaching, writing, peer review, or symposia topics. (Cambridge might be interested in partnering with *PS* on this series. *PS* owns the copyright on all of its published papers.)

With respect to electronic, there are different possibilities:

1. Early release of symposia. (Cambridge University Press might be interested in this, if it were a partly gated website.)

2. Create a regular online e-presence for short research articles, effectively a new section of the journal, called something like *PS Researcher*. The articles would be peer-reviewed, with quick turnaround, and a limited interactive comments section. Such a presence would fulfill the growing call in the discipline for prompt but serious responses to important scholarly and social issues of the day.

3. Create a weekly online e-presence offering brief applications of political science research to current events topics, called something like *PS Scholar*. These comments would be reviewed by the editor-in-chief, and have a limited interactive comments section. Such a presence would help *PS* fulfill its public engagement mission.

These electronic expansions, in addition to keeping abreast of new directions in publishing, also justify the appointment of a qualified website assistant, and a qualified copyeditor. (The need for the website assistant appears obvious. What is less obvious is the increased need for good copyediting, which becomes more difficult as papers become more terse and timely. It is of course possible that one staff member might combine both web skills and copyediting skills).

APPENDIX

Book Proposal (draft): *Navigating the Profession: Sage Advice from the Pages of PS*

Prepared by Kent Worcester

RATIONALE

Launched in 1968 and published on a quarterly basis by the American Political Science Association, *PS: Political Science and Politics* is the journal of record for the political science discipline. For the past quarter-century, the journal has been edited by Robert J-P Hauck. I propose that APSA publish a print/e-book collection of articles reprinted from the pages of *PS* that would celebrate Rob's many contributions to our discipline as well as offer valuable insights on professional issues for members of the discipline, regardless of status or institutional location.

PS features many different kinds of articles and notices, from symposia contributions and APSA presidential speeches to research essays and announcements of upcoming conferences and special journal issues. For many readers, however, their favorite sections are those devoted to teaching and the profession. *Navigating the Profession: Sage Advice from the Pages of PS* would bring together essays that have appeared in "The Profession" section into a single volume, with an emphasis on the kinds of insights that graduate students and faculty will find useful and thought provoking.

The potential audience for this proposed volume is sizable, as it includes graduate students and faculty alike. Indeed, scholars outside the discipline of political science might find value in this collection.

Robert J-P Hauck has been the editor of *PS* since 1989, and is only one of four APSA staffers to serve in that role since the journal was founded in 1968. Before joining the APSA professional staff in 1982, Rob taught at Vanderbilt University's Institute for Public Policy Studies and was assistant director of the Center for Children and Families Policy. He also held teaching positions at Smith College and Holy Cross College. He received a BA in government from Colby College, an

MA in East Asian languages and civilizations from the University of Chicago, and a PhD in political science from the University of Chicago. In addition to his work as a teacher, editor, and scholar, Rob is a talented painter. It strikes us that one of his paintings might make a wonderful cover image for the proposed volume.

The table of contents that appears next is organized around four main sections, plus a concluding interview with Robert Hauck. In this iteration, each section contains four essays, for a total of sixteen republished pieces. Please note that I have shortened some of the article titles. The proposed volume could offer a template for additional books culled from the pages of *PS*. A companion volume on teaching, for example, might readily find an audience within our discipline and beyond. The proposed volume could also serve as a bonus gift for new APSA members.

TABLE OF CONTENTS (PROVISIONAL)

Introduction (by the editor)

Section One: Articles, Books, Publishers

Publishing Trends in Political Science
Sonia Cardenas (42.1)

Collaboration: Change, Benefits, Challenges and New Ideas
Rose McDermott and Peter K. Hatemi (43.1)

Ranking Scholarly Publishers in Political Science
James C. Garand and Michael W. Giles (44.2)

Edited Volumes and the Social Sciences
David L. Leal (46.2)

Section Two: Ideas and Debates

Gender and Journal Authorship in Political Science Journals
Marijke Breuning and Kathryn Sanders (40.2)

Who Publishes in Comparative Politics?
Gerardo L. Munck and Richard Snyder (40.2)

How Conservative Academics Can Thrive in Liberal Academia
Robert Maranto and Matthew Woessner (45.3)

Restructuring the Social Sciences
Gary King (47.1)

Section Three: The Profession and the Public

The Political Scientist as Blogger
John Sides (44.2)

Lessons from an Academic's Year as a Reporter
David Niven (45.2)

Complicating the Political Scientist as Blogger
Robert Farley (46.2)

Political Science Funding Black Out in North America?
David J. Plazek and Alan Steinberg (46.3)

Section Four: Nuts and Bolts

Doing a Literature Review
Jeffrey W. Knopf (39.1)

Understanding Scholarly Writing through Metaphor
Michelle Boyd (45.4)

How to be a Peer Reviewer
Beth Miller, Jon Pevehouse, Ron Rogowski, Dustin Tingley, Rick Wilson (46.1)

Publishing as a Graduate Student
Timothy Rich (46.2)

Section Five: An Interview with Robert J-P Hauck

The editor(s)