

# Executive Director's Report

Steven Rathgeb Smith, *Executive Director*

It is a longstanding tradition of APSA and *PS* to publish an annual executive director's report. I am very honored to have the opportunity to present this report: APSA is a thriving association with a very active and dedicated membership, and the association has many new initiatives underway or planned. The new programming is designed to provide leadership to the discipline of political science throughout the world and provide research and professional development opportunities for its members.

## ACADEMIC PUBLISHING

Many exciting changes are underway in APSA's academic publishing efforts, including the introduction of two new APSA-sponsored journals, three editor searches, and continued efforts to ensure that APSA's publications maintain high quality and impact and promote innovation and public engagement.

First, APSA is excited to be moving forward with plans for a new APSA-sponsored open access journal. This online-only journal will be free of all paywalls or subscription requirements, meaning that it will be accessible to anyone in the world with an Internet connection. This new publication will be a top-notch, peer-reviewed journal that will offer an opportunity for the quick and timely dissemination of political science research. The online-only format will provide opportunities to leverage new technologies for the presentation of research findings, and the founding editorial team will have the opportunity to explore innovations in the review process, transparency, and public engagement. In September, the APSA Council approved plans to move forward with a search for a founding editorial team, which is in process and discussed in more detail later in this report.

In addition, we are thrilled to soon add the *Journal of Political Science Education* to APSA's official publications portfolio. The *Journal of Political Science Education* was founded by APSA's Political Science Education Organized Section as an intellectually rigorous, peer-reviewed journal that publishes evidence-based and theoretically informed scholarship on teaching and pedagogical issues in political science. With the

help and cooperation of the Political Science Education Organized Section, we are happy to be able to expand the reach of this excellent journal to all APSA members; pending final contract negotiation, you can expect to receive your first issue, online, later in 2016.

Significantly, APSA, in conjunction with Cambridge University Press, also produced its first virtual issue: "Navigating the Profession: Sage Advice from the Pages of *PS*." This online-only issue brings together some of the journal's most highly cited articles about the profession from more than a dozen past issues. Originally proposed as a tribute to *PS* editor Robert J-P. Hauck, this virtual issue also serves as a prototype for future virtual issues for each journal or across all three APSA journals to highlight timely and important content to new members and audiences.

However, APSA publications are planning for yet more changes. Both of the new APSA journals, the open access journal and the *Journal of Political Science Education*, are in the midst of editor searches, as is *Perspectives on Politics*. After council approval to constitute an editorial search committee for the new open access journal, a search committee was appointed for a new editor, chaired by Evan Lieberman (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and including Lisa Garcia Bedolla (University of California, Berkeley), Melani Cammett (Harvard University), James Druckman (Northwestern University), Jane Green (University of Manchester), Melissa Schwartzberg (New York University), and Michael Tomz (Stanford University). The committee has issued a call for proposals with a closing date of May 15, 2016. The goal is to have an editorial team identified by the 2016 APSA Annual Meeting in Philadelphia to begin the launch of the new journal.

The current editorial team for the *Journal of Political Science Education*, Kerstin Hamann (Editor-in-Chief), Philp H. Pollock, and Bruce M. Wilson, is scheduled to conclude its term on June 30, 2016. As a result, Jennifer Hochschild, with broad consultation, has appointed a search committee to identify a new editorial team. The search committee is chaired by Maureen Feeley (University of California, San Diego) and comprised of Lynne Ford (College of Charleston), Marcela Garcia-Castañon (San Francisco State

University), Rebecca Glazier (University of Arkansas at Little Rock), Gregory Hall (Morehouse College), Susan McWilliams (Pomona College), and James Sloam (Royal Holloway, University of London). The committee issued a call for proposals with a closing date of April 1, 2016, with the goal of having a new editorial team in place by this summer.

In terms of *Perspectives on Politics*, the term of the current editor, Jeffrey Isaac, expires in May 2017, and Jennifer Hochschild has appointed a search committee to identify a new editor. This search committee is chaired by Jack Snyder (Columbia University) and includes Marisa Abrajano (University of California, San Diego), Jude Browne (University of Cambridge), Joseph Carens (University of Toronto), Andra Gillespie (Emory University), Marc Lynch (George Washington University), and John Patty (University of Chicago). The committee has issued a call for proposals with a closing date of May 15, 2016. The goal is to have a new editor identified by the 2016 APSA Annual Meeting in September in Philadelphia to allow adequate time for a transition between editors.

In 2015, APSA began its search for a new editorial team for the *American Political Science Review*, ably led by John Ishiyama (lead editor), Marjke Breuning, Valerie Martinez-Ebers, and Steven Forde, from the University of North Texas. A search committee, chaired by Melanie Manion (Duke University), Frank Baumgartner (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), Paulina Ochoa Espejo (Haverford College), Amy Mazur (Washington State University), Reuel Rogers (Northwestern University), Peter Trubowitz (London School of Economics), and Christopher Zorn (Pennsylvania State University), completed their search in July 2015 and presented their recommendations to APSA Council in September 2015. At the time of preparing this report, APSA is negotiating the contract and will make an official announcement when the negotiations are completed.

Along with the changes and transitions in the APSA journals, academic publishing in political science has faced significant discussion and debate over the past year around issues of data access and research transparency, and particularly around the

decision by several journals, including the *American Political Science Review*, to sign on to and commit to implementing the Journal Editors Transparency Statement. I believe this discussion and deliberation has been helpful in highlighting the importance of principles of research transparency and in identifying areas of concern regarding its implementation across subject areas and research approaches. I encourage you to continue this discussion through APSA channels, including an invitation for discussion on APSA's PS Now website: <http://www.politicalsciencenow.com/deliberation-about-research-transparency-and-interpretability/> as well as other venues.

### GOVERNANCE REFORM

Over the past year, APSA has been updating and revising its constitution and bylaws to modernize them and better represent the current structure of the organization. APSA's governing documents have not been revised in many years, and the APSA Constitution is not consistent with the APSA bylaws or current practice. Thus, these documents need to be updated to better reflect current practice and to ensure that APSA is responsive to its membership.

In September 2013, the APSA Council approved an ad-hoc committee on governance reform. Subsequently, this committee has worked diligently to draft an updated set of bylaws and articles of incorporation that provide greater continuity and policy oversight for the APSA Council, better reflect the needs of APSA's large membership, and accommodate the increasing importance of virtual participation and elections relative to the in-person business meeting. These documents were approved by the APSA Council at their September meeting and were discussed at length at the September all-member business meeting. Moving forward, the ad-hoc committee on governance reform will work to fine-tune these changes and share them with the membership this spring followed by council review and then approval by the membership at the all-member business meeting at the 2016 APSA Annual Meeting in Philadelphia. If the proposed bylaws and articles of incorporation are approved at the all-member business meeting, they will be sent to the full membership for a vote.

### STRATEGIC PLANNING

Since spring 2014, the APSA staff and council have been engaged in a process of strategic planning. Strategic planning is an opportunity to guide staff and the APSA

Council in their work supporting the aims of the association, as well as providing a set of goals and outcomes against which the council, and the membership, can measure progress. As part of this strategic plan, the council has developed mission and vision statements to guide the implementation of the strategic plan in the coming years. Through the past year, then, APSA has engaged all staff in a process of evaluating APSA operations and developing a vision statement, a mission statement, and a series of supporting goals. These efforts were shared with the ASPA Council and discussed at length at both the April and September 2015 council meetings. APSA is nearing the end of this process, and a draft strategic plan will be available on the APSA website for member comment in spring 2016.

### DIVERSITY INITIATIVES

APSA continues to value and support diversity in the profession. Diversity is one of the key priorities in the APSA strategic plan, and the APSA staff has adopted diversity, in its many different forms, as a principle to guide our work—from committee assignments to program development to data collection. The APSA staff is also devoting extensive resources and time to ensure the long-term sustainability of APSA programs designed to promote diversity in the profession including one of APSA's most prominent diversity programs: the Ralph Bunche Summer Institute (RBSI), which supports minority political science undergraduates in their interest in graduate school. At the September 2015 APSA Council Meeting, the RBSI Working Group, tasked in 2014 with developing a plan to ensure the long-term future, presented their report. This report suggests a number of ways to ensure the sustainability and expanded reach for the RBSI, including an ambitious fundraising plan and new partnerships to expand its reach, influence, and impact. APSA staff are currently implementing these plans. Also, APSA continues to invest in building the APSA Minority Fellows Program and the APSA Mentoring Program.

Further, APSA is broadening our focus on diversity in the discipline by exploring the roles of community college faculty and first generation scholars in political science. At the September 2015 APSA Council Meeting, the APSA Council, at APSA President Jennifer Hochschild's request, approved the creation of a new Committee on the Status of First Generation Higher Education Scholars

in the Profession. This committee has been appointed and is working to develop a set of initiatives and activities to address the concerns and challenges faced by first generation scholars in the discipline. At this same council meeting, the ad-hoc committee on community colleges presented a report which encouraged APSA to work toward greater, more focused, and more sustained engagement with community college faculty in political science. In response, the APSA Council approved the creation of a Committee on the Status of Community College Faculty in the Profession. This committee has also been appointed and is developing their programming and scope of work moving forward.

### INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOPS

In 2015, APSA's signature international workshops continued with programming in both the sub-Saharan Africa and MENA (Middle East/North Africa) regions. The 2015 Africa Workshop—the final iteration of a very successful, Andrew W. Mellon-funded eight-year initiative—was held in July at the United States International University-Africa in Nairobi, Kenya. At the workshop, 30 scholars from 16 different countries explored sources of armed conflict and mechanisms for resolving conflict. Participants also presented their ongoing research and received feedback and suggestions for further research.

The 2015 MENA workshop, held at Qatar University's Social and Economic Survey Research Institute, with a follow-up workshop at the Alsalam Center for Development and Strategic Studies in Kuwait, gathered 27 scholars from around the world to discuss and share research on the effect of oil and other natural resources on governance and the economy in the Middle East and North Africa.

Looking ahead, planning is underway for two 2016 MENA Workshops on the theme of "Civil Society in the Middle East and North Africa," led by Fateh Azzam (American University of Beirut, Lebanon), Sandrine Gamblin (American University in Cairo, Egypt), Augustus Richard Norton (Boston University, USA), and Denis J. Sullivan (Northeastern University, USA). Following a competitive selection process, we expect to select 24 PhD students and early-career scholars to participate in the workshop and share their research. The initial workshop will be held at the American University in Cairo in May, with a follow-up workshop at the American University of Beirut in September.

## MEMBERSHIP INITIATIVES

Over the past year, APSA has made a very concerted effort to engage with the membership and other individuals and associations with an interest in and commitment to political science. Significantly, APSA has worked through a number of avenues to increase engagement with and services to current members including new member benefits and the restructuring of the eJobs system including the reintroduction of a daily downloadable eJobs pdf. We are also using our membership application and database to better connect members with the numerous engagement opportunities APSA offers, from mentoring to reviewing for APSA-sponsored journals to participation in APSA committees.

In addition, APSA has reached out to international and interdisciplinary organizations including the International Political

Science Association (IPSA), the American Historical Association (AHA), the American Sociological Association (ASA), and the American Society for International Law (ASIL) to build partnerships with these organizations including inter-association memberships. We have also used our projects, which bring together scholars from around the world, to expand our membership internationally, ensuring that participants are aware of the benefits of APSA membership.

As we move forward, APSA is also exploring the introduction of a new type of membership: an institutional membership to complement our institutional subscriptions/subscribers separate from the existing departmental memberships. We strongly believe that this new membership category would expand our possibilities for collaboration with libraries, research institutes, centers, think tanks, NGOs, and embassies, while

ensuring that these relationships fit with APSA's goals. We would expect the introduction of an institutional membership to attract a significant number of new members.

During the past year, APSA has also redesigned its website to encourage more member engagement and dialogue.

## CONCLUSION

APSA is involved in many tasks to improve its future: strategic planning, revised constitution and bylaws, new journal initiatives, and programs into increase participation. Through the implementation of these activities, APSA will be positioned for the future and, with your help, to welcome and reach a new generation of political scientists.

We welcome feedback and input on our existing and new programming. If you have any questions, I can be reached at [smithsr@apsanet.org](mailto:smithsr@apsanet.org). ■