

# Executive Director's Report

Steven Rathgeb Smith, *APSA Executive Director*

It is once again a privilege to submit my annual executive director's report. The past fiscal year has been a very active one with important efforts in government relations and public engagement, significant governance reforms, a new strategic plan, continued investments in diversity and inclusion programming, major transitions in our key publications, and new initiatives in teaching and learning and international workshops. We also continue to improve our member services, including research on the profession. The following pages provide more in-depth information on these many initiatives.

## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

APSA's Government Relations Program is a vigorous advocate for federal funding for political science and will continue these efforts. These activities seek to advance the discipline of political science by educating policy-makers and the public about the importance of political science research, and by advocating for robust federal support for political science research and for the independence of the peer-review process, and we will continue to do so through the upcoming legislative cycle. APSA will keep its members informed through our advocacy page (<http://www.apsanet.org/advocacy/issues>) and through updates on social media. As part of its work to inform the public and policy-makers about federally funded research, APSA will continue to participate in the 2017 Advocacy Days for the social sciences and the humanities, as well as in a yearly exhibition on Capitol Hill that showcases research funded through the National Science Foundation. We also work with a variety of groups and coalitions, including the Coalition for International Education, the Consortium of Social Science Associations, and the National Humanities Alliance, to carry out a multi-pronged strategy that supports political science within broader social science, humanities, and science campaigns.

More broadly, APSA continues to invest in programs to support the political science community in its engagement in the public sphere. As political scientists continue in their efforts to share knowledge of politics

and governance with the public, the APSA Public Engagement Program is committed to support these efforts. APSA provides online tips and resources for engagement, available at <http://www.apsanet.org/publicengagement>. These resources include communications trainings through our "Political Science in the Public Arena" workshops, delivered at a variety of regional political science meetings as well as an experts database that connects members with the media and allows the association to effectively respond to media requests for experts in all areas of political science. We invite you to take part in initiatives to expand our activities and impact, and to review the APSA Task Force Report on public engagement, "Let's Be Heard" (available at <http://www.apsanet.org/letsbeheard>) for more information on how we can best enable our discipline's diverse voices to promote democratic deliberation and activity.

## GOVERNANCE REFORMS

In 2016, the APSA membership approved an updated and revised set of governing documents to replace APSA's previous constitution and bylaws. APSA's governing documents had not been revised in a number of years, and the new APSA bylaws will better reflect current practice and ensure that APSA is responsive to its membership. These governing documents were developed by the ad-hoc committee on governance reform, headed by David Lake (University of California, San Diego) and composed of Jeffrey Berry (Tufts University), Terri Givens (Menlo College), Kerstin Hamann (University of Central Florida), Jonathan Koppell (Arizona State University), Ashley Leeds (Rice University), Joanne Miller (University of Minnesota), Jeffrey Segal (Stony Brook University), and Dara Strolovitch (Princeton University), and we thank them very much for their dedicated service. The proposed bylaws were approved by the APSA Council at its September 2015 meeting and, following input and amendment from members, were approved at the All-Member Business Meeting at the 2016 APSA Annual Meeting in Philadelphia. Finally, in an all-member electronic ballot in October 2016, members voted by a wide margin to adopt the new bylaws and articles of incorporation. These

new bylaws will go into effect at the opening of voting for the incoming 2017 council members in summer 2017.

These updated bylaws will, among other things, provide greater continuity and policy oversight on the APSA Council, better reflect the needs of APSA's large membership, and accommodate the increasing importance of electronic elections and participation relative to the in-person business meeting. The new governing documents are designed to promote broader participation in the leadership and life of the association by the membership. They will also equip APSA to handle future changes and challenges by enhancing the flexibility and nimbleness of the association's governance structure while at the same time increasing the institutional memory on the council and the association's leadership.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

Along with reforms to APSA's governing documents, the association has been engaged internally 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, a council committee has developed mission and vision statements to guide the implementation of the strategic plan in the coming years.

To this purpose, APSA has engaged all staff in a process of evaluating APSA operations and developing a strategic plan. These efforts were shared with the APSA Council and discussed at recent council meetings as well as made available to APSA members for comment. We invite APSA members to review this plan and the included mission and vision statements, available on our website at <http://www.apsanet.org/strategic-plan>. This plan is intended to support APSA in effectively serving the breadth and diversity of APSA members, and we welcome your feedback to ensure that it does so.

## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Support and promotion of diversity and inclusion throughout the discipline are central components of the mission and

goals of the association and key priorities in our strategic plan. We continue to add to the list of online resources for members and departments interested in diversity recruitment, retention, and advancement, found here, <http://www.apsanet.org/diversityresources>. Further, the APSA leadership was very pleased to be able to celebrate one of our prominent diversity and recruitment programs, the APSA Ralph Bunche Summer Institute (RBSI), a five-week intensive summer research program, which supports political science undergraduates from underrepresented backgrounds in their interest in graduate school, as it marked its 30th anniversary in 2016. APSA celebrated this milestone through several activities at the Annual Meeting including a professional development visit by the 2016 RBSI Scholars to the US Department of State and local DC universities, a festive and important dinner and roundtable in the fall on the legacy of former APSA president, Dr. Ralph Bunche, and with reflections from 30 RBSI Alumni, available online (<http://www.apsanet.org/rbsi>). The program is jointly sponsored by APSA, Duke University, and the National Science Foundation. APSA has continued to secure funding for RBSI for the immediate future and is currently working with the RBSI Advisory Committee to plan for the long-term future of RBSI.

APSA also continues to invest in building the APSA Minority Fellowship Program (MFP), which in addition to the fall cycle, now includes a spring cycle of predoctoral funding for existing graduate students, as well as Annual Meeting grants, along with the APSA Mentoring Program, which has undergone some key programmatic updates. The Minority Student Recruitment Program (MSRP) also continues to grow, with 36 PhD departments currently enrolled to recruit students from underrepresented backgrounds into their doctoral programs. Over the past year, program alumni outreach efforts have expanded to include a new professional development webinar series hosted by alumni for RBSI, MFP, and MSRP scholars and the newly formatted diversity and inclusion program's quarterly newsletter. In addition, we are committed to supporting the full diversity of our discipline. For instance, APSA has recently created four new status committees: 1) the Committee on the Status of Community College Faculty in the Profession; 2) the Committee on the Status of First Generation Scholars in the Profession; 3) the Committee on the Status of Contingent

Faculty in the Profession; and 4) the Committee on Graduate Students in the Profession. Established status committees also continue to produce valuable information and reports such as the Pipeline Report recently produced by the Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession and a forthcoming report on Career Trajectories of Faculty of Color by the Committee on the Status of Blacks in the Profession, and First Generation Scholar Experiences by the Committee on the Status of First Generation Scholars in the Profession.

#### ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

APSA's academic publishing efforts have completed another busy year, which has included several exciting transitions. In 2016, APSA negotiated a new 10-year publishing agreement with Cambridge University Press. More information regarding this agreement can be found in the treasurer's report in this issue. The Organized Section on Political Science Education chose to transfer sponsorship of the *Journal of Political Science Education* to APSA as of last year, and a new editorial team, led by Victor Asal (University of Albany) began its four-year term in August 2016. A new editorial team, based at the University of Mannheim and London School of Economics and led by Thomas Koenig at the University of Mannheim, assumed the editorship of the *American Political Science Review* in 2016. He is planning to introduce new format innovations including a stronger focus on online publication, such as "First-View" articles in advance of publication of an issue, along with the introduction of a new "Letters" article format encouraging shorter pieces. In addition, the editors of *PS: Political Science & Politics*, Paul Gronke (Reed College) and Phillip Ardoin (Appalachian State University), were granted an extension of their term through 2018, and will continue to publish their high-quality articles and promote the timely engagement of the discipline with important professional and policy matters through symposia and virtual issues focused on topics that are fundamental to the profession.

The upcoming year will see a transition in the editorship of *Perspectives on Politics*. After more than 10 years as an editor (first as Book Review Editor, then as Editor in Chief), Jeffrey C. Isaac (Indiana University) will be stepping down in May 2017. A search committee has recommended a replacement editorial team, which was then approved by APSA Council, and contract negotiations are

underway. An announcement is anticipated in early 2017. Similarly, a search committee for an editorial team for the proposed open access journal launched and promoted a call for proposals through June 2016 and is expected to make a recommendation to council in early 2017.

APSA's publications team also continues to engage in exciting opportunities outside of the APSA journals. In 2016, *The Double Bind: The Politics of Racial and Class Inequality in the Americas*, the report for the Task Force on Racial and Income Inequality led by Rodney Hero (as past president) and Alvin J. Tillery and Juliet Hooker (as task-force cochairs), was made available as a free e-book and the executive summary in both English and Spanish have been published in *PS* and are available online. *PS* has continued to offer virtual issues on themes of particular interest to political scientists, including *Navigating the Profession: Sage Advice from the Pages of PS* in early 2016 and *Capitol Hill Insights: Voices from the Congressional Fellowship Program* in May 2016. A third virtual issue on "Political Science in the Twenty-First Century" is planned for 2017. Last, *Teaching Civic Engagement Across the Disciplines*, a companion volume to *Teaching Civic Engagement: From Student to Active Citizen* (2013) is scheduled for release in August 2017 as an "e-book," and will be available to members at no charge.

#### TEACHING AND LEARNING

APSA, strongly committed to providing resources and support for APSA members for their work in the classroom, has continued efforts to integrate these issues into many aspects of APSA programming. In addition to the Teaching and Learning Conference, the APSA Education Program has begun offering a special short course at the Teaching and Learning Conference, open to both attendees and to local AP high school teachers, and also recently organized a webinar for AP teachers. APSA also supports expanded teaching-related programming at the Annual Meeting including regular panel sessions and short courses. The APSA Education Program continues to expand the resources it offers, including updating the online syllabi collection, particularly through the solicitation of syllabi from the Campus Teaching Award winners recognized by APSA. These resources, along with information on simulations, assessment resources, and civic education are available at [www.apsanet.org/programs/teaching](http://www.apsanet.org/programs/teaching).

## INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOPS

Throughout the past year, APSA's Department of International Programs has continued to engage with political scientists around the world both through APSA's International Workshops and through partnerships with international political science associations. The 2016 MENA (Middle East/North Africa) workshop was held in May at the American University of Beirut with a follow-up workshop in Amman, Jordan in September. This program gathered 24 scholars from the United States, Europe, and across the MENA region to discuss and share research on the theme "Civil Society Revisited: Researching Associational Life in the Middle East and North Africa." In the past year, APSA has also expanded its bilateral initiatives, including a three-day Spanish language methods training short course with the Mexican Political Science Association (AMECIP) in Monterrey, Mexico in August 2016 and a collaboration with the UK Political Studies Association (PSA) for a joint organized section-specialist group scheme to support joint workshops in the United Kingdom and the United States.

Plans for additional international projects are also underway. For instance, APSA's MENA Program will continue through 2017 with another round of small grants to support ongoing research by MENA Workshops alumni, a series of collaborations with departments of political science across the region, and a "MENA Political Science Research and Publication Conference" that will bring together alumni from all four years of MENA Workshops. Also, an Africa Project Steering Committee has been formed jointly with the African Studies Association to pursue collaborative programming, beginning with a

Research Development Group at the 2017 Annual Meeting. Planning for an Asia Workshops program is also well in process, with the Asia Projects Steering Committee meeting for the first time at the 2016 Annual Meeting.

## MEMBERSHIP INITIATIVES

During the past year, APSA has assiduously worked to better serve its members both by introducing new member programs and benefits and by working to better connect members to existing membership benefits. In September, APSA introduced a member-of-the-month program that celebrates the outstanding contributions our members make to the discipline and their communities through their scholarship and teaching, championship of the profession, and support of APSA and its programs. In addition, APSA has provided new resources for professional development, career planning, and students as well as highlighting existing member benefits through a new member orientation program and a top ten reasons for membership page. More information about the benefits of APSA membership can be found at <http://www.apsanet.org/membershipbenefits>. We have made the renewal process easier and more seamless. For the coming year, APSA plans to further expand and highlight member benefits through a member appreciation week, website updates to better serve member needs and highlight member benefits, a monthly membership "did you know" series to increase engagement and broaden familiarity with member benefits, and an overview of APSA membership return on investment to help members understand how their membership dollars are spent.

In 2016, APSA also introduced a new institutional membership category for libraries,

research institutes, think tanks, NGOs, and other similar institutions, and we are currently recruiting members for this new membership type. We hope that this new membership category will help us engage with organizations who have shared interests with APSA.

## RESEARCH

Throughout the past year, the APSA Research and Development Program has continued its important work gathering, analyzing, and sharing data on the political science profession, and it also serves as a resource to members conducting research on the profession. Thus, the regular APSA Graduate Placement Survey solicits data from directors of graduate studies programs about political science doctoral programs and political science job market candidates. In addition, the APSA Departmental Survey collects program data from department chairs about political science curriculum, majors, and faculty. In the coming years, APSA's Research and Development Program will continue to invest more resources in its capacity to undertake research on the profession. Recent survey reports, along with additional resources and data, and a monthly infographic highlighting relevant data can be found at <http://www.apsanet.org/RESOURCES/Data-on-the-Profession>.

## CONCLUSION

I welcome member feedback and input on APSA's diverse portfolio of programs in support of our members and the discipline. I can be reached at [smithsr@apsanet.org](mailto:smithsr@apsanet.org). Do not hesitate to contact me with any comments or questions. ■