

Executive Director's Report 2020

Steven Rathgeb Smith, *Executive Director, APSA*

It is once again a privilege to submit my executive director's report in 2020. APSA had a very busy year in 2019: we expanded our government relations and public engagement efforts; we introduced additional new resources for teaching and learning; and we continued to implement an array of initiatives to promote more diversity and inclusion and support professional development in the association. We also had record attendance at the 2019 annual meeting in Washington, DC, and our membership continued to grow. We look forward to continuing to expand our programming to benefit the membership in the coming year. The following pages provide more in-depth information on these many initiatives.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

The APSA Government Relations Program works to inform policy makers and the public about the importance of political science research and advocate for robust federal support for political science research. In 2019, APSA specifically engaged with the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE) directorate and with Congress regarding the rebranding of the political science program within the NSF. This rebranding became official on August 30, 2019 and replaced the existing political science program with two new programs: Accountable Institutions and Behavior (AIB) and Security and Preparedness (SAP). In response, APSA expressed concerns that these changes would unintentionally limit the scope of research funded under the original program and that the change could negatively affect the diversity of proposals and applicants. Based on the political science community's feedback following the official announcement, the NSF restored the political science program for a year-long transitional period to allow the NSF to evaluate the potential impact of the change. Thus, researchers may currently submit to the political science program

generally but are encouraged by the NSF to submit through the AIB and SAP programs. APSA greatly appreciates the openness of the SBE leadership to further study and welcomes additional consultation on the future of political science at the NSF. We remain concerned that the potential removal of the program obscures the importance of the political science discipline and will narrow the diversity of funded political science research. APSA continues to believe that maintaining the political science program is very important for the future of the discipline. However, APSA certainly shares NSF's commitment to broadening participation in science and the agency's belief in the power of social science to improve the lives of the American public. We have also engaged with members of Congress who share this commitment and look forward to collaborating with both branches of government to celebrate and support the critical political science research funded by the NSF.

In 2019, the Public Engagement Program also saw an exciting expansion in its programming—including a number of new grant programs and the public scholarship program, which trains graduate students to write about political science research for public audiences. In 2019, APSA also held the inaugural Institute for Civically Engaged Research, which trains political scientists to conduct ethical, rigorous research with community partners, and the introduction of the APSA Distinguished Award for Civic and Community Engagement. In 2020, the Public Engagement Program looks forward to continuing to expand its programming to further engage applied political scientists and practitioners, increase data collection on public engagement activities in the profession, and continue the publication of profiles of publicly engaged APSA members. It will also host (with the APSA Centennial Center) the Kvali Civic Science Fellow, and participate in a new steering committee for professional associations' public engagement efforts.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The APSA Teaching & Learning Program assists all APSA members with their work in the classroom. APSA's teaching and learning programming includes the Teaching & Learning Conference (TLC), TLC at APSA, a co-sponsored international teaching and learning conference, the Centennial Center Teaching & Learning Symposia, various annual meeting events, and online resources—including the new RAISE the Vote civic engagement campaign.

APSA hosted another successful Teaching and Learning Conference (TLC) in February in Albuquerque, New Mexico. A unique biennial event, TLC provides a highly interactive forum for scholars to share research and innovative tools for political science education. In addition to the stand-alone TLC program, in 2018 APSA's teaching and learning program introduced an annual "TLC at APSA"—a full-day conference-within-a-conference at the APSA Annual Meeting focused on teaching and learning. Approximately 225–250 people attended the events in 2018 and 2019, which included panels, workshops, and teaching cafés. Planning for the 2020 TLC at APSA is already underway.

APSA also continues to improve and expand upon its teaching programming in other ways. Building on early teaching workshops, APSA is now offering regular Centennial Center Teaching & Learning Symposia at our headquarters in Washington, DC. These three-day events bring together 15–20 teacher-scholars to produce concrete teaching resources in emerging substantive and pedagogical areas, as well as short summary articles for the *Journal of Political Science Education*. APSA also co-sponsored the first International Teaching & Learning Conference, in Brighton, UK in June 2019 with the Political Studies Association (PSA), the British International Studies Association (BISA), and the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR).

In addition, APSA is significantly expanding and enhancing its online teaching

and civic engagement resources. In 2019, APSA launched its new civic engagement campaign, RAISE the Vote (where RAISE stands for “Resources to Amplify and Increase Student Engagement”). The campaign aims to increase student civic engagement by highlighting the research, teaching, and campus engagement of political scientists in accessible blog posts on the campaign website and encouraging political science faculty to draw on these examples and resources in the classroom. In addition, in 2020, APSA will launch APSA Educate, a website for everyone interested in teaching and learning about political science. The website will act as a centralized hub for high-quality political science teaching and learning resources and will provide space for conversations about teaching innovations and challenges facing political science faculty today.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

APSA remains committed to offering programs to increase diversity and inclusion in the discipline. One of APSA's most prominent diversity and recruitment programs is the Ralph Bunche Summer Institute (RBSI). The RBSI is an intensive summer program designed to introduce undergraduate students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups to the world of doctoral study in political science. Each year between 12–20 students attend the RBSI. In addition to completing graduate level coursework, training in research methodology, and professional development sessions, RBSI Scholars participate in an annual graduate school recruitment day that is attended by over 25 political science PhD departments. Presently, the RBSI is funded by the NSF, Duke University, and APSA, with NSF funding in place through 2021. In early July 2019, APSA announced that program director and current APSA president Dr. Paula D. McClain had been awarded a \$462,000 National Science Foundation grant to support the program over three years. This support will allow for a 20-student program in 2020 and 2021. The RBSI Advisory Committee submitted a final report in the spring of 2019 and will work with APSA staff to implement the recommendations for future programming and strategies for sustainability and funding.

Last year also witnessed another successful iteration of the APSA Minority Fellowship Program (MFP), a fellowship competition for individuals from underrepresented backgrounds applying to

or in the early stages of doctoral programs in political science. 2019 marked the 50th anniversary of the APSA Minority Fellowship Program. In the fall of 2018, the APSA MFP Fellowship Selection Committee named 12 funded MFP Fellows for the 2019–2020 cohort. Each funded MFP fellow will receive a \$4,000 award distributed over two years. The spring fellowship round provides predoctoral fellowships to first- and second-year political science PhD students from underrepresented groups. During the spring 2019 cycle, the fellowship selection committee named 16 spring graduate MFP fellows. Spring MFP Fellows are current first- and second-year PhD students. Bios of the most recent class of APSA MFP Fellows are available online.

In 2019, APSA also awarded annual meeting travel grants in the amount of \$400 to 13 current and former MFP fellows to support their participation in and professional development at the APSA Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. The association was also pleased to announce the new APSA Lee Ann Fujii MFP Travel Grant. This grant was made possible by the generous contributions of the Fujii Family and Dr. Fujii's colleagues and friends. The grant supports APSA Minority Fellows' participation in the APSA Annual Meeting to engage in research, professional development, mentoring and collaboration. Grants in the amount of \$500 were awarded to nine MFP Fellows this year.

CENTENNIAL CENTER

The APSA Centennial Center has had a very busy year continuing and expanding on its mission to advance the discipline through a broad range of programs supporting research, teaching, and public engagement. In 2019, the Centennial Center greatly expanded its programming through the APSA Task Force on New Partnerships, spearheaded by 2018–2019 APSA President Rogers Smith and chaired by Robert Lieberman. The Presidential Task Force on New Partnerships supports new partnerships across ideological and institutional lines, and between academics and their communities, and its work has spanned public engagement, teaching and learning, and professional development. Through the task force the Centennial Center has launched six new programs, including the Institute for Civically Engaged Research (ICER), Peer to Peer Pedagogical Partnership (P4) grants supporting collaborations between community college and research-intensive faculty, the APSA Distinguished

Award for Civic and Community Engagement, Research Partnerships for Critical Issues grants supporting collaboration between APSA members and policy practitioners, the APSA Educate online hub for teaching and learning materials, and the Public Scholarship program training graduate students to write about political science research for public audiences.

The Centennial Center is also excited for the 2020 cycle of the APSA Special Projects Fund. The Special Projects Fund provides support of up to \$25,000 for projects aimed at advancing the political science discipline or tackling a challenge facing the discipline. For the most recent cycle of the Special Projects Fund, APSA provided grants for 10 collaborative projects aimed at advancing the discipline. These projects focused on a wide variety of topics, including climate justice, sexual discrimination and harassment, and the cross-national study of race in the Americas.

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOPS

APSA's Department of International Programs has continued to engage with political scientists across the world both through APSA's International Workshops and through other activities and partnerships with international political science associations. The 2019 MENA Workshop was a two-part program on “Women and Politics: MENA Experiences.” Twenty-one early-career scholars from the MENA region attended workshops in the United Arab Emirates and Morocco. APSA's programming in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) will continue through 2021 with a grant renewal from Carnegie Corporation of New York, building on six years of successful MENA Workshops. The 2019 Asia Workshop was a seven-day program on “Dynamics of Political Institutions in Asia.” Twenty-one early-career scholars from East and Southeast Asia, Australia, and the United States attended the workshop in Malaysia. The Asia workshops will continue through 2020 with support from a Henry Luce Foundation grant. In addition to the workshops described above, APSA's Department of International Programs works closely with APSA members to promote international scholarly exchange, such as annual research development groups at the APSA Annual Meeting for African scholars (with the African Politics Conference Group Organized Section) and Arab scholars (with the MENA Politics Organized Section). It also seeks opportunities

for bilateral collaboration with other national political science associations. Through a project with the UK Political Studies Association (PSA), now in its fourth year, APSA Organized Sections and PSA Specialist Groups are invited to submit proposals for an International Engagement Grant. We also work with the Mexican Political Science Association (AMECIP) on an annual project to organize a joint research methods short course prior to the AMECIP International Congress.

PUBLICATIONS

APSA's academic publishing department has completed another busy year, as APSA journals have continued to publish cutting-edge political science research while planning for leadership transitions and innovative new projects. In 2019, following a rigorous search process, the association announced the new editorial team selected to lead the *American Political Science Review*, the flagship journal of the APSA. The association celebrated the new

editors, whose term will begin in June 2020, for their combined experience, dedication to diversity broadly defined, and attentiveness to emergent research trends in political science. In preparation for the transition next year, the publications team has been working closely with the new editors and the outgoing team to ensure that the *APSR* remains a top political science journal.

In August, the publications department formally launched *APSA Preprints*, a new platform dedicated to early research outputs in political science. On the server—a collaboration with Cambridge University Press—authors can upload unpublished content to stake an early claim to research topics, obtain a DOI, and solicit feedback on their work from peers. Since its launch, *APSA Preprints* has posted more than 80 working papers, posters, and presentations with a combined 25,000 views and 10,000 downloads.

CONCLUSION

APSA is in a very strong financial position and is excited to be able to plan a number

of new initiatives for the benefit of our membership. The association's overall financial position remains very strong compared to other organizations of similar size, and APSA's restricted funds have increased in value to over \$40 million dollars. More information on APSA's finances may be found in the treasurer's report in the July issue of *PS*. Overall, APSA continues to have sufficient resources for current and future operations, and to expand the association's activities in new directions as needed.

APSA, as an association, is very fortunate to have many, many members who devote time and resources in support of its extensive programming, annual meeting, and publications. I would also like to acknowledge the fantastic APSA staff, who support these initiatives and make them possible. I look forward to working with our members in 2020, as we continue to develop programs to support the research and pedagogical interests of political scientists as well as their professional development and engagement in the public sphere. ■



Achieving Diversity and Inclusion in Political Science

Diversity and Inclusion Programs

The American Political Science Association has several major programs aimed at enhancing diversity within the discipline and identifying and aiding students and faculty from under-represented backgrounds in the political science field. These programs include:

Ralph Bunche Summer Institute (RBSI) (Undergraduate Juniors)

The RBSI Program is an annual five-week program designed to introduce to the world of doctoral study in political science to those undergraduate students from under-represented racial/ethnic groups or those interested in broadening participation in political science and pursuing scholarship on issues affecting underrepresented groups or issues of tribal sovereignty and governance. Application deadline: January of each year. For more information, visit www.apsanet.org/rbsi.

APSA Minority Fellows Program (MFP) (Undergraduate Seniors or MA and PhD students)

(Fall Cycle for seniors and MA Students, Spring Cycle for PhD students) MFP is a fellowship competition for those applying to graduate school, designed to increase the number of individuals from under-represented backgrounds with PhD's in political science. Application deadline: October and March of each year. For more information, visit www.apsanet.org/mfp.

Minority Student Recruitment Program (MSRP) (Undergraduates and Departmental members)

The MSRP was created to identify undergraduate students from under-represented backgrounds who are interested in, or show potential for, graduate study and, ultimately, to help further diversify the political science profession. For more information, visit www.apsanet.org/msrp.

APSA Mentoring Program

The Mentoring Program connects undergraduate, graduate students, and junior faculty to experienced and senior members of the profession for professional development mentoring. APSA membership is required for mentors. To request a mentor or be a mentor, visit www.apsanet.org/mentor.

APSA Status Committees

APSA Status Committees develop and promote agendas and activities concerning the professional development and current status of under-represented communities within the political science discipline. For a listing of all APSA status committees, visit www.apsanet.org/status-committees.

For more information on all Diversity and Inclusion Programs, visit us online at www.apsanet.org/diversityprograms. Please contact Kimberly Mealy, PhD, Senior Director of Diversity and Inclusion Programs with any questions: kmealy@apsanet.org.

To contribute to an APSA Fund, such as the Ralph Bunche Endowment Fund or the Hanes Walton Jr. Fund, visit us at www.apsanet.org/donate.