

Editorial Statement

APSA is pleased to announce the next editorial team for the American Political Science Review. The new team, to be located at the University of North Texas, will begin their term on July 1, 2012. Their Editorial Statement follows.

Starting July 1, 2012, submissions to the *APSR* will be directed to the new editorial team at the University of North Texas (UNT). The UCLA team will begin the transfer of files to UNT and we expect that the transition to be completed by the end of 2012. This change will be reflected in the journal's masthead beginning with the first issue of volume 107.

In keeping with the tradition that has been established over the years, we would like to speak in some detail about our vision for the *Review* and the editorial process we have designed. In this brief editorial statement we would like to emphasize points of continuity with the past, as well as our vision for the journal and the design of the editorial process.

POINTS OF CONTINUITY AND OUR VISION

First, we would like to emphasize some points of continuity with the policies and practices of the previous team, who we believe did an excellent job in advancing the breadth and appeal of the *Review*. Under their leadership, the journal continues as the premier outlet for work in the discipline. Further, their efforts to increase the readability of the journal are highly admirable and we plan to continue and hope to expand upon these efforts. Indeed, we will build upon their efforts with the hope to make a great journal even better.

As with the UCLA team, we will continue the general vision for the journal as established by the late Lee Sigelman – that the *APSR* will strive to publish scholarly research that is of exceptional merit; that focuses on important issues; is of general interest; and understandable to as many scholars as possible.

To this we would add the following commitments that we made when we first applied for the editorship of the journal:

- To maintain the journal as the leading outlet for theoretically oriented, problem driven work of the highest scholarly quality in all subfields of political science.
- To ensure that the peer-review process is completed in a timely manner while emphasizing that reviewers should provide useful criticisms to authors.
- To increase the diversity of submissions to the *APSR*, especially those that use qualitative, normative, and mixed method approaches.
- To ensure *APSR* publishes articles that are accessible and of utility to both highly trained political scientists and interested “lay” readers.

- As with the previous UCLA editorial team we are also intent on NOT creating a journal which is a collection of niches – or to put it in our predecessors’ terms our intent is to “create synergies, not fiefdoms.”

Second, as with the UCLA team we will continue with the use of a collegial editorship. The four editors will work closely as a team, but each will supervise submitted manuscripts that fall within their areas of expertise. Fortunately, our editorial team is made up of individuals with a breadth of experience (and are not so narrowly concentrated), so that we expect to be able to divide the workload in an equitable way. We believe collaboration and cooperation among a group of editors with a diverse set of perspectives is a real strength of the current editorial team at UCLA, and we would like to continue with this practice.

Third, we will continue the use of the web-based Editorial Manager system, with the continued assistance of APSA and Cambridge University Press.

EDITORIAL PROCESS

We are committed to continuing the practice of collective decision making established by the previous editorial team, where the members of the editorial team consult with one another before the final acceptance of manuscripts. The UNT team is made up of four editors, a smaller team than the previous editorship at UCLA, which will be supplemented as occasion demands by colleagues in the UNT Department of Political Science and the *APSR* Editorial Board. The editorial team consists of – in alphabetical order – Marijke Breuning, Steven Forde, John Ishiyama, and Valerie Martinez-Ebers. Ishiyama will be the initial “lead” editor (or “managing editor” according to the terms used in the APSA constitution). In addition there is an assistant editor (a staff professional in charge of operations), a postdoctoral assistant and graduate student editorial assistants.

We will continue the practice of having multiple editors with varied perspectives and methodological skills. Further, we strongly believe that there is a very important advantage to having the editors in one location. Despite the existence of modern technologies that allow for direct communication between people across distances, we believe there is great value in having consistent face-to-face conversations regarding the operation of the journal and making decisions regarding manuscripts. We plan to hold weekly editorial meetings. Discussing important issues in the same room, face-to-face, fosters greater cooperation and coordination among the members of the team. Close proximity will allow the team to react quickly to issues that will inevitably emerge. Although one always runs the risk of limiting the variety of perspectives when all of the editorial team members are from the same

department, we believe that our unique combination of editors avoids that situation. Importantly, all four of us have had extensive experience at other institutions (and importantly, in our view, at very different kinds of institutions than where we are now located).

The editorial process will be much the same as before with each new submission carefully but quickly scanned by a graduate editorial assistant who will: (a) classify the submission by field (according to the division of fields agreed to by the UNT editorial team) and (b), direct it to the most appropriate coeditor. We believe the process is most efficient when one coeditor (preferably with expertise in the subfield) is responsible for overseeing the review process of a manuscript. The responsible coeditor will then assign the referees, consulting with the lead editor or members of the Editorial Board in cases that are difficult and/or outside the editor's area of expertise. If a submission falls into an area which we do not feel competent to handle, we will seek the advice of an appropriate member of the Editorial Board for recommendations for referees. Indeed, we will regard it as one of the most important functions of the Editorial Board to lend their expertise in areas where we lack intimate knowledge. The result, we hope will be, a fair hearing for every manuscript from every area of political science.

If the referees support either acceptance or a "strong" revise-and-resubmit, or the responsible coeditor strongly believes the piece to be publishable (with only minor changes), the responsible coeditor will forward the paper, with referees' reports and the coeditor's own recommendation, for perusal by the editorial team. At the weekly meeting, the team collectively will decide whether to accept the recommendation of the responsible coeditor. In instances where a manuscript is

recommended for publication, in addition to the regular discussion, at least one additional coeditor will read such manuscript, specifically to check for readability before a final decision is made. We will make every effort to reach consensus on whether to publish the paper; in the very rarest cases where no consensus is reached, the lead editor will make the final decision. However, the responsible coeditor will always write the decision letter on behalf of the editorial team.

Further, we think that we will be able to maintain a high degree of continuity in our team. All four members of the team are established senior faculty in our department, and are committed to "seeing this thing through." Thus we see a great deal of stability in the editorial team over the next four years.

Finally, we are keenly aware of the enormous responsibility we are taking on, and have no illusions about the amount of hard work required. We are, however, eager to meet this challenge, and are extremely grateful for the support and confidence expressed in our editorial team by the APSA Council on behalf of the thousands of association members. We will do our utmost to live up to this responsibility.

We welcome any comments or suggestions by our colleagues and the discipline – we are very open to any input and advice as to how to make the *Review* better.

Thank you all for this opportunity to serve the discipline and our wonderful association. We will not let you down.

John Ishiyama, Lead Editor
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Steven Forde
Valerie Martinez-Ebers
University of North Texas