

Editorial Statement

APSA is pleased to announce the next editorial team for American Political Science Review. The new team, to be located at UCLA, will begin their term on July 1, 2007. Their Editorial Statement follows. Lee Sigelman, the current APSR editor, and his team at George Washington University will conclude their term in August 2007. The transition from the Sigelman's GWU team to the UCLA team will be complete by the end of the calendar year, and the change will be reflected on the APSR masthead commencing with the first issue of Volume 102 in February of 2008.

From 1 July 2007, submissions to the *Review* will be directed to the new editorial team at UCLA, and Lee Sigelman's group will begin its transfer of files to the West Coast. We anticipate that the transition will be complete by the end of the calendar year, and the change will be reflected on the journal's masthead commencing with the first issue of Volume 102 in February of 2008.

It's traditional for new Editors to speak in some detail about their editorial policies. That tradition binds us with particular force, because we intend – and the APSA Council has approved – two innovations in addition to whatever subtle changes come automatically with an editorial turnover. First, and most importantly, we are instituting a *collegial editorship*; second, with the enthusiastic help of the APSA staff and the Cambridge University Press, we are moving to a system of *web-based editorial management*. In neither case are we breaking new ground: collective editorships have long been common in Sociology and Economics, and by now most social science journals have moved, or are moving, to web-based editorial management.

Before describing these changes, we want to add our voices to the chorus of praise that Lee Sigelman has, deservedly, already been receiving. He has done an incredible, indeed almost superhuman, job as Editor. We shall regard ourselves as extremely successful if we do half as well; and it is precisely because we have felt that no one person (none, at least, in our group) could take Lee's place that we have moved toward the concept of a collective editorship.

As regards general editorial policy, we find it hard to improve on – and therefore we will continue to use – the exact language that Lee has employed throughout his tenure:

The *APSR* strives to publish scholarly research of exceptional merit, focusing on important issues and demonstrating the highest standards of excellence in conceptualization, exposition, methodology, and craftsmanship. Because the *APSR* reaches a diverse audience of scholars and practitioners, authors must demonstrate how their analysis illuminates a significant research problem, or answers an important research question, of general interest in political science. For the same reason, authors must strive for a presentation that will be understandable to as many scholars as possible, consistent with the nature of their material.

In this by-now traditional formulation, we would only stress the obviously crucial terms: *exceptional* merit; focus on *important* issues; of *general* interest; and *understandable* to as many scholars as possible. Putting some of these same points another way, we said in our initial proposal to the Search Committee that, while Political Science grows more “multifaceted and plural, . . . yet it remains *one* discipline, whose best work in each of its facets should appeal to a broad spectrum of political scientists.” We take it as an extremely important task of the discipline's “flagship” journal to promote conversation among as broad a spectrum of political scientists as possible. It may be important to add what we hope would be obvious: the *APSR*, in the future no less than in the past, welcomes excellent scholarship of all approaches and persuasions. To quote again from our original proposal: “No paper will be excluded on the basis of subject matter or methodological approach.”

Collective editorship. The UCLA team will consist principally of nine people, backed up as occasion demands by UCLA colleagues, the Executive Committee of the Editorial Board, and the larger Editorial Board itself. In alphabetical order, the UCLA group of co-editors consists of: Kathleen Bawn, Michael Chwe, Kirstie McClure, Karen Orren, Daniel Posner, Ronald Rogowski, Arthur Stein, Daniel Treisman, and John Zaller. Rogowski is designated as “lead” editor (in the constitutional parlance of the APSA, “Managing Editor”), but in academic year 2007–08, when Rogowski will be on leave at the *Wissenschaftskolleg* in Berlin, Treisman will assume the “lead” editor duties. In conformity with past practice, we will have an Assistant Editor (the professional who makes the operation run: currently Elizabeth Cook) and graduate student assistants.

Each co-editor will assume responsibility for those parts of political science within his or her realm of expertise, though we will leave these somewhat imprecise and adjustable to equalize workloads. As we now envision the process, each new submission will be scanned by a graduate RA, who will: (a) classify it by field and suggest appropriate referees (exactly the current practice) and (b) using the division of fields currently agreed upon by the editorial team, route it to the seemingly most appropriate co-editor. Step (b) may involve consultation with the lead editor; and of course the co-editor to whom the submission originally comes is free, after consultation, to route it to a different team member who seems, on reflection, to be more appropriate.¹

¹ Where the submission comes from anyone affiliated, or recently affiliated, with UCLA, we shall ask a member of the Executive Committee to become the responsible editor, and will otherwise take the greatest possible care to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest.

The responsible co-editor will assign the referees, consulting with the lead editor or members of the Editorial Board in cases that are difficult and/or outside her area of expertise. Like most members of the profession, we regard it as crucial that expert and conscientious referees be appointed, and we believe our system is well suited to do that. Particularly where a submission falls into an area none of us knows well, we will seek the advice of an appropriate member of the Editorial Board's Executive Committee. The assignment made, we will do our best – though it will be hard to surpass Lee's record in this regard – to make sure that the referees report back promptly.

If, as now happens in 88 percent of cases, the referees' reports do not support publication in the *Review*, the co-editor will write the letter of rejection, normally without further consultation. (Where referees strongly and inexplicably disagree, co-editors will often follow current practice and consult a member of the Editorial Board's Executive Committee.) If the referees do support either acceptance or a "strong" revise-and-resubmit (i.e., one likely to result in publication with only minor changes), the responsible co-editor will route the paper, with referees' reports and her own recommendations, to a weekly meeting of the whole group of nine co-editors.

At that meeting, there is no presumption that the co-editor's sole judgment is sufficient to merit publication. We expect a substantive and probing discussion about the contributions of each paper. We shall make every effort to reach consensus on whether to publish the paper; in the cases (we trust, rare) in which even extensive discussion yields no consensus, the lead editor makes the final decision; there is no voting. Through this process, intellectual responsibility for the entire *APSR* rests on the team as a whole. We are intent on avoiding any tendency toward multiple "journals" within one binding. The co-editorship should, in our view, create synergies, not fiefdoms.

We of course reserve the freedom to tinker with these procedures as experience dictates, but this is how we now envision the process – and, again, how many existing journals appear to make something similar work.

Web-based editorial management. The *APSR*, by now almost alone among major journals in the social sciences, has held to an all-paper submission and refereeing process, even as its annual number of new submissions has mounted significantly, from around 350 annually at the start of Lee Sigelman's tenure to about 550 in the most recent year. Successful web-based editorial management lightens the burden on contributors, editors, and staff, and seems to us particularly important in facilitating the kind of collaboration among co-editors that we envision. Learning from the experience (good and bad) of other journals, and after due consideration of alternatives, we have chosen state-of-the-art software that, we are assured by editors of other journals, can be up and running by 1 July. The online system, Editorial Manager, will provide a user-friendly environment for authors, reviewers, and editors to work with submitted manuscripts and interact with the journal office. Authors will receive timely and automated notifications from the journal office and will be able to check the status of their submitted manuscripts at any time. Information about how to access and use Editorial Manager will be posted on the *APSR* webpage (www.apsanet.org/apsr). The other APSA journals *Perspectives on Politics* and *PS: Political Science and Politics* will also use the Editorial Manager interface. Thus authors, reviewers, and editors will be able to use a single login to all three Editorial Manager sites. The next issue of the *Review*, as well as *PS*, will contain more detailed information about it.

Finally, on behalf of each member of the new editorial team, I want to express our awareness of the heavy responsibility that we bear to all scholars within our diverse discipline. We are honored by the confidence that the Council, on behalf of the Association's membership, has shown in us. We hope to be judged deserving of it. We welcome, individually and collectively, comments or questions from any of our thousands of colleagues.

Ron Rogowski
UCLA
on behalf of the Editorial Team