

# Highlights from *PS: Political Science & Politics* Editors' Report, 2016–2017

Phillip Ardoin, *Appalachian State University, Coeditor*

Paul Gronke, *Reed College, Coeditor*

Celina Szymanski, *American Political Science Association, Managing Editor*

## INTRODUCTION

*PS: Political Science & Politics* is in the midst of its 50th year of publication. Your editorial team strives to maintain the position of *PS* as a unique voice in the APSA portfolio of publications, providing an outlet for brief and non-technical articles featuring cutting edge research; political science commentary and research on timely political and social events; research into and discussion of the political science discipline; and scholarship on teaching and pedagogy. We have completed our third year as the editorial team, following the editorship of Robert Hauck and management of Barbara Walthall, and have tried to continue their high standards of editorial management and careful attention to publication timelines.

*PS* has had a busy and productive year. The number of submissions to *PS* continues to increase when compared to our four year average (see table 1). Several published articles and symposia received substantial media attention, most notably our special issue on the 2016 American election which appeared in October 2016. While *PS* has always been an important outlet for research about political science, we seem to have become the outlet of choice for research and commentary on gender, ethnic, and racial diversity in the profession, particularly important questions of gender bias in publications, citations, and syllabi.

We worked through an editorial transition this year, as Professor Paul Gronke returned to his permanent position at Reed College in Portland, OR, following two years at Appalachian State. Thus far, this transition has gone well. The Department of Political Science at Reed College has pledged additional financial resources, along with those already dedicated by Appalachian State University. This has allowed us to support events such as a breakfast for our editorial board at the Midwest meeting and a reception at the Annual Meeting. We hope these events will help us meet our Board on a more regular basis and encourage authors, reviewers, and readers to meet with us and our Board at the Annual Meeting. In response to

suggestions from the Council, and to help us diversify its membership, we welcomed 13 new scholars to our editorial board. Our first meeting with the enlarged Board will be at the 2017 Annual Meeting, and we hope to engage them in discussions about how *PS* can continue to thrive and evolve to serve the political science profession.

## EDITORIAL HIGHLIGHTS OF 2016–2017 Overview

For the first time in our editorship, we are maxing out the page limits allocated to us by APSA and Cambridge University Press, and we are filling issues that will appear six to nine months out from acceptance. Our submission rates have increased 150% since we took over the journal, with an increased interest in symposia making up much of the increase. It is worth noting that our method of tracking and accounting for symposia changed in 2015. Beginning that year,

symposia and spotlight contributions have been submitted through Editorial Manager. This contributes to the increased number of submissions for 2015, 2016, and 2017. In those years, respectively, we received 45, 103, and 53 symposia submissions.

A wealth of content is normally a good thing, but it's something of a double-edged sword for a journal like *PS*, which is in part intended to showcase political science scholarship and commentary on issues of public concern. We hope that the introduction of First View will allow us to accept this content and not dissuade authors from submitting.

The 177 articles we published included 318 individual authors. While this represents a significant increase in the number of contributors to *PS*, only 93 (29%) of the authors were female, which is a slightly smaller percentage of contributors as compared to the last three years. We believe the small decline in female contributors is related to

Table 1

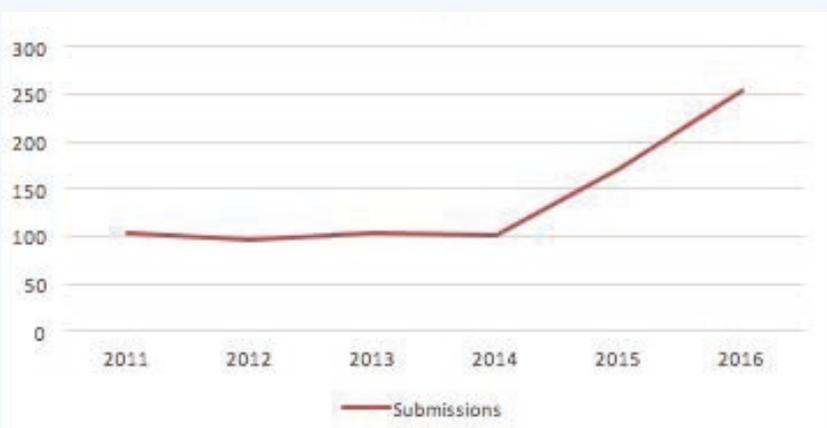
### New Submissions to *PS*

|                          | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| New Submissions Received | 130  | 118  | 101  | 171  | 254  | 115  |

Note: Table 1 is current as of July 13, 2017.

Figure 1

### *PS* Submission Rates



the decline of articles within the Teacher Section of *PS* which has historically included more female contributors. In line with several articles we recently published examining gender disparities in publication, we recognized this as a problem. We plan to actively work on addressing this gender disparity in the pages of *PS* by actively recruiting more female scholars to lead symposia, to encourage symposium editors to seek out female contributors, and to continue addressing important issues of gender to the discipline in the pages of *PS* (see table 2).

Unfortunately, we do not have reliable data on additional demographic characteristics such as race, academic rank, subfield, or type of institution for authors who published and/or submitted work for publication with *PS*.<sup>1</sup> We hope will be able to support and engage APSA and the publications committee this coming year to develop a process for systematically collecting this data. This information will provide us with a better understanding of the current status as well as assist us in working toward increasing the diversity of *PS* authors and ultimately the quality of content published in the pages of *PS*.

### Breadth and Depth of Content

One of the advantages of *PS* is that we have a bit more flexibility to solicit content via the Spotlight, Symposia, and Reflections categories, as well as engaging in outreach via social media and e-mail blasts. One result is that we have been able to use our pages to spark political science dialogue across issues. We were also pleased to feature a number of symposia and articles that dealt with international relations, political theory, and comparative politics. *PS* submissions have been historically skewed toward American politics (and this skew was something that was mentioned by a number of respondents to our readership survey conducted in 2015).

Additional highlights to the past year of *PS* include several articles examining the issue of gender in the discipline. Two articles which received substantial media attention included Dawn Langan Teele and Kathleen Thelen's article "Gender in the Journals: Publication Patterns in Political Science" and Amy Atchison's article "Negating the Gender Citation Advantage in Political Science." These articles clearly address an important issue facing the discipline and we look forward to continuing this dialogue for the profession in the pages of *PS*. Similarly, Marc Lynch, Curtis R. Ryan, and Morten Valbjørn's symposium examining "The Arab Uprisings and International Relations Theory" highlights the critical role of the discipline in examining our constantly changing world and the importance of subfields to work together.

A brief review of our four issues starts with the October "Elections Issue," which included our traditional forecasting symposium edited by James E. Campbell plus 22 additional election articles within the politics, profession, and teaching sections. We sent out a solicitation for submissions to a number of political science e-mail lists and posted the call on the Political Science Facebook page. We were heartened—and a bit overwhelmed—by the enthusiastic response. The articles included in this issue ranged from David Anderson's reflections on the Iowa Caucus and Diana Mutz's analysis of the relationship between Harry Potter consumption and support for Donald Trump to Cohen et al.'s reassessment of the role of political parties in the nomination process and Herbert F. Weisberg's reflections on the collaboration that resulted in *The American Voter*.

The October issue also included an exciting symposium examining the field of political science from the perspective of Europe. Guest edited by Stokemer, Rashkova, Moses, and Blair, this symposium provided *PS* readers with a European perspective on several

critical issues facing political scientists on both sides of the Atlantic.

The 2017 volume issue kicked off the 50th volume of *PS*, and we decided to mark this milestone in a tongue-in-cheek fashion by digging into the archives and republishing a report on the 1975 APSA Annual Convention in San Francisco. It was fascinating not just to see how the major topics of interest have changed over 40 years, but also that APSA used to organize charter plane flights to the conference, as well as arranging a post-conference trip to Hawaii!

The January 2017 issue also featured an important symposium on ethnographic methods in political science, edited by Peregrine Schwartz-Shea and Samantha Majic, articles discussing the legacy of President Barack Obama, and a symposium addressing the legacy of Professor George C. Edwards, a leading scholar of the American presidency who had announced his retirement. This issue also included two sets of point/counterpoint articles, the first on research transparency in political science, and the second on reducing bias in political science estimates.

Inspired by the start of the baseball season, the April 2017 cover of *PS* included a set of "presidential playing cards" provided by Professor Jon Bond, and was linked to an article by Bond along with Manuel P. Teodoro on "What Can Sabermetrics Teach Us About Presidential Success?" This issue contained the aforementioned articles on gender bias in political science by Thelen and Teele and by Atchison; a symposium discussing the legacy of Daniel Patrick Moynihan; and a fascinating discussion of the politics of the knowledge economy and higher education. This issue also witnessed the initiation of a new symposium series, The Annual Guide to Choosing Your ..... Textbook. The aim of the symposium is to provide faculty with a simple and useful resource to assist with selecting their textbooks. We plan to include in each April issue of *PS* a review of several textbooks for 4–6 courses regularly offered in political science curricula.

Our final issue for this review appears in July 2017. We are pleased that this issue includes three symposia that are not focused on the United States: the first on the Arab uprising and international relations, the second a forecasting symposium on German elections, and the third a discussion of Canadian politics at the 150th anniversary of confederation. The issue also contains a symposium on the "Berkeley School" of political theory and a "reflections" article from the primary movers at #womenalsoknowstuff.

Table 2

### Gender Distribution by PS Authors

| VOLUME: YEAR | FEMALE AUTHORS | MALE AUTHORS |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 50: 2017     | 93 (29%)       | 225 (71%)    |
| 49: 2016     | 70 (36%)       | 123 (64%)    |
| 48: 2015     | 54 (38%)       | 86 (61%)     |
| 47: 2014     | 63 (33%)       | 122 (66%)    |
| 46: 2013     | 48 (27%)       | 132 (73%)    |
| 45: 2012     | 41 (31%)       | 92 (69%)     |

## STAFFING

The *PS: Political Science & Politics* staff consists of a portion of two editors' time and a full-time managing editor as well as an editorial associate. Coeditor Phillip Ardoin is based at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina while coeditor Paul Gronke is based at Reed College in Portland, Oregon. Celina Szymanski, managing editor, is based in Las Vegas, Nevada. Drew Meadows (editorial associate) is based at APSA headquarters in Washington, DC, and serves as a liaison between official APSA news and events and *PS* developments. *PS* is further supported by part-time graduate assistants at both Appalachian State and Reed College.

Our current editorial board includes 29 members who represent a diverse set of universities and colleges, research interests and methodologies, and perspectives from the APSA membership. We would like to thank our current board members for their dedication and service to the journal and to the profession:

Michelle Bropy-Baermann, *Rhode Island College*

Lindsay Benstead, *Portland State University*

Jeffrey Bernstein, *Eastern Michigan*

James E. Campbell, *University at Buffalo, SUNY*

R. Scott Crichlow, *West Virginia University*

Michelle Deardorff, *University of Tennessee-Chattanooga*

Mary Durfee, *Michigan Tech*

Megan Ming Francis, *University of Washington*

James C. Garand, *Louisiana State University*

Kristin Goss, *Duke University*

J. Tobin Grant, *Southern Illinois University*

Todd K. Hartman, *University of Sheffield*

John Ishiyama, *University of North Texas*

David Kinsella, *Portland State University*

Amber R. Knight, *Saint Louis University*

Peter Lindsay, *Georgia State University*

Samantha Majic, *John Jay College of Criminal Justice*

Elizabeth Markovits, *Mount Holyoke College*

Kristin Michelitch, *Vanderbilt University*

Joanne M. Miller, *University of Minnesota*

Mark Carl Rom, *Georgetown University*

James E. Monogan III, *University of Georgia*

Charles R. Venator-Santiago, *University of Connecticut*

Bartholomew Sparrow, *University of Texas-Austin*

Brent Steele, *University of Utah*

Jennifer Nicoll Victor, *George Mason University*

Ismail White, *George Washington University*

Jason Windett, *Saint Louis University*

Betina C. Wilkinson, *Wake Forest University*

## PRODUCTION AND DELIVERY

*PS* has consistently met its production schedule and meets the scheduled delivery dates to the publisher and membership. We have a strong working relationship with our publisher, Cambridge University Press. Our compositor is TNQ, Ltd, based in Chennai, India. They have been responsive to our needs and work efficiently to typeset our journal to the high visual quality we demand.

The production of the "back of the book" (People, Business) is completed in-house by APSA staff, primarily by Drew Meadows, editorial associate. The back of the issue requires more layout and design features than the front of the book, which consists solely of peer-reviewed content.

We are in discussions with Cambridge about using the First View production process. Tentatively, our first First View articles could be published online as early as November 2017 and then published in print in the January 2018 (51:1) issue. Our goal is to be able to publish contemporary content and to decrease the time between an article being accepted and being available online to our readership.

## TYPES AND CATEGORIES OF CONTENT

*PS* has three main sections and five content categories. In the past year, we reorganized the headers and labels used in the journal so that it would be easier for readers

to navigate the journal, especially online, and so that all articles, especially symposia, appeared in the correct section.

A reader opening the print or online version of *PS* now encounters this organizational scheme:

- An introductory section consisting of:
  - Editor's Corner
  - Letters to the Editor
- POLITICS
- THE PROFESSION
- THE TEACHER
- And underneath each major section, there are five potential content categories:
  - Articles
  - Symposium
  - Spotlight
  - Reflections
  - From the Sections

Table 3 reports the types of articles submitted, by major category. The 2017 data incorporate symposia within the category in which they were published. Table 4 reports on symposia. Table 5 reports on our acceptance rates.

Articles in "The Teacher" section are now expected to include not just an interesting idea or innovation in teaching, but to include some pre/post assessment of learning objectives, or a detailed description of the teaching resources, materials, and methodology needed for implementing the innovation. We believe that this is a change from past practice, but is in line with developments in our profession, most notably the successes

Table 3

### PS Submissions by Category

|                              | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Politics (formerly Features) | 55%  | 39%  | 42%  | 41%  | 43%  | 37%  | 53%  | 57%  |
| Profession                   | 19%  | 22%  | 13%  | 17%  | 19%  | 32%  | 30%  | 24%  |
| Teacher                      | 26%  | 39%  | 45%  | 40%  | 39%  | 32%  | 17%  | 13%  |
| Other (Letters to Editor)    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | 6%   |

Note: Table 3 is current as of June 16, 2017.

Table 4

### Symposia Published in PS

|                             | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Symposia published          | 6    | 8    | 9    | 6    | 7    | 10   | 17   |
| Number of symposia articles | 41   | 60   | 68   | 60   | 55   | 68   | 120  |

of the Teaching and Learning Conference and the *Journal of Political Science Education*. We continue to engage with the new editorial team of *Journal of Political Science Education* and the leadership of the Teaching and Learning section of APSA to assure that there are consistent standards for the evaluation of articles on pedagogy.

#### PUBLICITY AND OUTREACH

We continue to work closely with APSA staff, particularly Dan Gibson and Karima Scott, to use the resources and social media presence of the association and authors to promote *PS* content online. In line with this process, prior to publishing each issue we work with authors to submit and coordinate tweets regarding their content. We also actively promote content with individual authors on the Political Science Now website. While we recognize the need for continuing to improve our social media outreach efforts, we believe we have a strong and productive working relationship with the APSA staff and an effective social media plan in place.

Finally, we would be remiss not to mention the new Cambridge Core website which serves as the platform for access to *PS* online. While we were excited for the launch of the new Cambridge platform, which promised to provide a more user friendly interface for readers and more flexibility for the diversity of content published in *PS*, we have been very disappointed with the initial roll out of Cambridge Core. The Cambridge Core

website, unlike other journal portals, seems to provide a larger focus on promoting Cambridge University Press than the content of *PS*. We have noted on several occasions, our content on most web browsers falls below the “fold” and much of the information on the *PS* Cambridge Core front page is repetitive. Moreover, we have found little flexibility with Cambridge Core which has led to problems with online tables of contents and promoting articles via social media. For instance, the Twitter Share button defaults to a shared link which is longer than the maximum 140 characters allowed on Twitter. We hope we will be able to work with the Cambridge team to address these concerns and truly provide an interface for our readers that meets or exceeds the online interface offered by many other journals within our discipline.

#### From the Sections and Reflections

Our intention with creating the “From the Sections” and “Reflections” subsections was to provide a broader outlet for the excellent content that has been appearing in many of the organized section newsletters and/or informally online within the discipline and which merits wider dissemination among our membership. “From the Sections” contains articles that have been nominated by section newsletter editors and are deemed of sufficient importance and interest to be disseminated to the entire discipline. “Reflections” provides authors an opportunity to submit non-anonymized essays on

mentoring, research, graduate and undergraduate education, or other reflections on their experiences in the profession. Two excellent examples of the content in each of these new subsections are Kelly Ditmar’s From the Sections article, “Watching Elections 2016 with a Gender Lens” and Herbert Weisberg’s Reflections on “The Michigan Four and Their Study of American Voters: A Biography of a Collaborations.”

#### Symposia and Spotlights

Symposia have become an important part of the journal’s portfolio (table 4). As one of the only outlets in the profession to publish a thematic discussion about one particular topic, *PS* plays an important role. We now categorize symposia under the heading which is most appropriate. For example, we’ve published “The ‘Berkeley School’ of Political Theory: A Discussion of its Beginnings, its Development, and the Disagreements over Calling it A ‘School’” in the Profession section. The Teacher section has seen “‘Disembodied Shades’: Teaching the Territories of the United States” published under its heading.

We are also working to revive our Spotlight category. We published one Spotlight in January 2015, which was well received. We have a Spotlight on “Policy Conflicts between Cities and States” slated for the January 2018 issue. A Spotlight is a set of timely articles on a single topic or related topics. The Spotlight content category is intended to provide an outlet for short and topical treatments of emerging issues of interest to the profession. We welcome Spotlight contributions on topics that originated as a roundtable at a conference, or a series of blog postings, or even informal discussions on social media. We continue to welcome proposals for Spotlight topics. ■

#### ENDNOTES

1. Gender was hand-coded by PS. We recognize gender, if collected at all, should be provided by authors, not coded after the fact.

Table 5

#### Final Decisions on Submissions for Profession, Teacher, Politics (excluding submissions for symposia)

|      | ACCEPT | REJECT |
|------|--------|--------|
| 2015 | 33.3%  | 66.6%  |
| 2016 | 53.1%  | 46.8%  |
| 2017 | 50.6%  | 49.3%  |

Note: Table 5 is current as of July 13, 2017.