

contributors to the international scientific community. Nearly 500 members of the NAS have won Nobel Prizes” (See <http://nasonline.org/about-nas/mission>).

For the past century and a half, members have investigated and responded to questions posed by our national leaders as a form of service to the nation without financial recompense. As Ralph Cicerone, president of the NAS, never fails to relate to new members at the annual installation ceremony, while our advice is often solicited—its first report to the Lincoln administration addressed whether our country should adopt the metric system, and sent back a consensus “yes” answer—this advice is not always followed. Scientific objectivity is the goal of the Academy, not political advocacy.

The NAS has its own research infrastructure, with political scientist members performing three roles.<sup>2</sup> First, political scientist members of the NAS serve as article editors for submissions to the NAS journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*, which has a vast readership across all scientific disciplines with an impressive citation count for its publications. The NAS also oversees a large staff of salaried professional researchers (usually not members of the NAS) who constitute the National Research Council (NRC). In the context of the NRC, political scientists in the NAS perform two further roles. First, they are often asked to serve as members or reviewers of committees that oversee research reports both in the natural sciences (where political scientists are asked to address questions of how scientific recommendations can be implemented effectively) and in the social sciences. Second, NAS members play a role in a branch of the NRC called DBASSE (the Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education) that approves and oversees contracts with government agencies. The many arenas of research of

DBASSE can be accessed at <http://sites.nationalacademies.org/DBASSE/index.htm>. Presiding over DBASSE presently is political scientist Kenneth Prewitt. Scholars who are not NAS members also regularly participate as members of NAS committees, and we urge all political scientists to give serious consideration to these requests.

The discussion at this year’s meeting of NAS-member political scientists at the APSA convention centered on how to effectively transmit the best social science knowledge to the government through the NRC. One issue facing the NRC in general and the DBASSE in particular is that by charter the NAS is not permitted to solicit contracts from government agencies, but merely to respond to their queries. In fact, after a query is posed, NRC staff can discuss how the proposal can be massaged in a way that will allow the scientific community to focus its attention on a specific problem. However, NRC staff are appropriately constrained on how much soliciting they can do, and therefore some excellent ideas for policy relevant research coming from both staff and from members do not always get funded. There are no easy answers here, but our discussion at this year’s meeting sustained a conversation on how we can provide better research to relevant government agencies. ■

#### NOTES

1. The political scientists elected to membership in the NAS include Robert Axelrod, Larry Bartels, Philip Converse, Gary Cox, Robert Dahl, James Fearon, Richard Fenno, John Ferejohn, Morris Fiorina, Robert Keohane, Gary King, David Laitin, James March, David Mayhew, Johan Olsen, Robert Putnam, Kenneth Shepsle, Beth Simmons, Theda Skocpol, Sidney Verba, and Barry Weingast. Lin Ostrom played an active role in our activities until her recent death.
2. Beyond research, under the leadership of a committee chaired by Sidney Verba, the NAS is active in protecting human rights of scientists throughout the world.

## Coming in the NEXT ISSUE



A preview of some of the articles in the April 2014 issue:

#### SYMPOSIUM

US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION FORECASTING

*Michael Lewis-Beck and Mary Stegmaier, guest editors*

#### FEATURES

Twitter Style: An Analysis of How House Candidates Used Twitter in their 2012 Campaigns

*Heather K. Evans, Victoria Cordova, and Savannah Sipole*

Republicans in Name Only: Onomastic Political Identity Signals

*Robert Urbatsch*

Reframing Polarization: Social Groups and “Culture Wars”

*Christopher Muste*

#### THE PROFESSION

Encountering Resistance: Qualitative Insights from the Quantitative Sampling of Ex-Combatants

*Kate Christopher Roll*

The Communication of Ideas across Subfields in Political Science

*Erin R. Graham, Charles R. Shipan, and Craig Volden*

#### THE TEACHER

Teaching Political Theory at a Prison in South Texas

*William W. Sokoloff*

A Sea of Riches: Teaching an Interdisciplinary Environmental Justice Course through Political Theory On-Campus and Online

*Teena Gabrielson and Kaitlyn Watts*

The Strategy Project: Teaching Strategic Thinking through Crisis Simulation

*Michael Allen Hunzeker*

#### ASSOCIATION NEWS

Completed Dissertations