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## Executive Director's Report

Steven Rathgeb Smith, *APSA Executive Director*

### INTRODUCTION

It is once again a privilege to submit my executive director's report for 2018. It has been a very active year with important efforts in implementing a new strategic plan and governing documents, engagement in conversations around and efforts to prevent harassment, continued quality and innovation in our key publications, support for teaching and learning programs, and continued investments in diversity and inclusion programming. The following pages provide more in-depth information on these many initiatives.

In addition to these programmatic efforts, APSA worked throughout 2017 to continue efforts at engaging the public and government with the political science community in our role as scholars, teachers, and practitioners. As part of this effort, we also were very active in advocating on behalf of the discipline and the social sciences, especially as it pertains to federal policy.

### STRATEGIC PLANNING

This year marked the completion of the first full year under APSA's new strategic plan, which has created an opportunity to guide staff and the APSA Council in their work supporting the aims of the association, as well as providing a set of goals and outcomes against which the council, and the membership, can measure progress. As part of this strategic plan, a council committee developed mission and vision statements to guide the implementation of the strategic plan in the coming years. APSA's primary aim under the strategic plan is to increase the value proposition of APSA membership. Toward this end, APSA has

pursued six key goals: 1) to provide and/or enable the knowledge production system; 2) to provide support for political scientists entering the profession, and to help political scientists in the profession flourish by supporting them in their research, teaching, and professional service; 3) to promote and encourage diversity and inclusion in the profession; 4) to foster public engagement with the discipline and promote connections between political scientists and society; 5) to advocate on behalf of the discipline and political scientists; and 6) to maintain APSA's organizational efficiency and financial stability.

Over the past year, APSA has moved forward on key priorities to support these overarching goals, including securing high-quality editorial teams and smooth transitions for APSA journals; significantly increasing our programming and support for teaching and learning; working to secure the long-term stability of the Ralph Bunche Summer Institute; and moving forward with the governance reform process. APSA's strategic plan is available on the APSA website at <http://www.apsanet.org/strategicplan>.

### GOVERNANCE REFORM

In 2017, APSA completed the transition to the new bylaws that were approved in a vote by the full membership in October 2016. APSA's governing documents had not been revised in many years, and the new APSA bylaws better reflect current practice and ensure that APSA is responsive to its membership. The first APSA election under the new bylaws was held in July 2017, and more than 25% of APSA members voted. More information about APSA elections is available on the

APSA website at <http://www.apsanet.org/About/Governance/Elections>.

The implementation of the new bylaws has also included the establishment of APSA Council policy committees to help guide APSA policies and programs. The implementation of the new APSA bylaws marks an exciting new chapter in APSA's governance. To support these changes, APSA is working to update the policies for implementing governance procedures to better reflect the new bylaws. Many of these policies have already been approved by the APSA Council, and a full board policy manual will be published online in the spring.

### HARASSMENT POLICY

Following the approval of APSA's anti-harassment policy in 2016 and then implementation procedures to address violations of the policy, these procedures were fully in place for the first time at the 2017 APSA Annual Meeting in San Francisco (these policies are available at APSA's website at <http://www.apsanet.org/divresources/sexualharassment>). In addition to implementing procedures to address possible violations of APSA's anti-harassment policy, an APSA Ombuds will be available onsite at APSA meetings, including the APSA Annual Meeting and the APSA Teaching and Learning Conference. The ombuds resource was first available at the 2017 Annual Meeting, and the role of the ombuds is to speak with any meeting attendee on a variety of topics including but not limited to, consultation with any meeting attendees who believe that they have experienced any form of harassment, or have concerns about violations of the

sexual harassment provisions of the APSA anti-harassment policy while onsite at the APSA annual meetings.

Between February and March 2017, the APSA Committee on Professional Ethics, Rights, and Freedoms surveyed the APSA membership to determine the extent and nature of perceived harassment experiences at the APSA annual meetings. Committee chair, professor Virginia Sapiro, Boston University, and former committee member, professor David Campbell, University of Notre Dame, coauthored a report based upon the survey findings. The full version of the report is available on the APSA website at <http://www.apsanet.org/divresources/sexualharassment>, and a condensed version was published in the January 2018 issue of *PS: Political Science & Politics*. APSA will continue to engage on these issues and to support the creation of spaces for professional development and scholarly and educational interchange in the spirit of free inquiry and free expression, free of harassment.

#### PUBLICATIONS

APSA's academic publishing efforts have completed another busy year, as APSA journals have continued to publish cutting-edge, top-notch political science research while navigating leadership transitions and extensions, as well as continued innovation. In June 2017, a new editorial team led by Michael Bernhard, University of Florida, and Daniel O'Neill, University of Florida, assumed editorship of *Perspectives on Politics*. This transition has proceeded smoothly and the editors have moved forward with streamlining the production process and enhancing access and transparency, including introducing FirstView articles in advance of publication of an issue and using social media to increase publicity and engagement for articles in *Perspectives*. In addition, the editors of *PS: Political Science & Politics*, Paul Gronke, Reed College, and Phillip Ardoin, Appalachian State University, were granted an extension of their term through 2022, and plan to continue the quality and timely engagement of *PS* including through symposia and virtual issues focused on topics that are fundamental to the profession. The editorial team at the *American Political Science Review*, based at the University of Mannheim and London School of Economics and led by Thomas Koenig continues to introduce innovations

including the new Letters format, encouraging shorter pieces that show a novel perspective on existing research and advance scholarly debate in the discipline. The editorial team at the *Journal of Political Science Education*, led by Victor Asal (University at Albany, State University of New York), completed its first full year in August 2017 and has continued its focus on quality scholarship of teaching and learning while introducing new sections on political science instruction and reflections on teaching and the academy. APSA is proud to support our journals' traditions of high quality and innovation.

#### TEACHING AND LEARNING

APSA is strongly committed to providing resources and support for APSA members for their work in the classroom, and has continued efforts to integrate these issues into many aspects of APSA programming. The 2018 Teaching & Learning Conference was held February 2–4 in Baltimore, MD with the theme “Teaching Politics as a Public Good: Citizenship and Civic Engagement in the Classroom.” Following this conference, the Teaching & Learning Conference will become a biennial event, while extended teaching and learning programming will be added to the Annual Meeting. Thus, a mini-conference focused on teaching and learning will occur at the upcoming 2018 Annual Meeting in Boston. This mini-conference seeks to provide an interactive forum for scholars to share tools for political science education and research on the scholarship of teaching and learning. More information is available on APSA's website at <http://www.apsanet.org/tlcmini>.

In addition to the Teaching & Learning Conference and Annual Meeting events, the APSA Education Program will be offering a teaching-oriented workshop for faculty of introductory courses related to American government in May at APSA's national office in Washington, DC. The APSA Education Program continues to expand the resources it offers, including a more robust and up-to-date online syllabi collection, particularly through the solicitation of syllabi from the Campus Teaching Award winners recognized by APSA. These resources, along with information on simulations, assessment resources and civic education are available at [www.apsanet.org/programs/teaching](http://www.apsanet.org/programs/teaching).

APSA is also investing more resources for faculty at teaching institutions including faculty at liberal arts colleges, contingent faculty and community colleges. New and expanded initiatives include more travel grants to the annual meetings, additional funds for small research grants, and new resources available through the APSA website.

#### DIVERSITY

Support and promotion of diversity and inclusion throughout the discipline are central components of the mission and goals of the association, and APSA is proud to support diversity and inclusion initiatives including the Ralph Bunche Summer Institute, Minority Fellowship Program, Minority Student Recruitment Program, and Mentoring Program. Since 1986, one of our prominent diversity and recruitment programs, the Ralph Bunche Summer Institute (RBSI) has inspired over 500 undergraduate students to consider pursuing academic careers in political science by exposing them to graduate-level coursework in research methodology and racial and ethnic politics. The 2017 RBSI Class was comprised of 14 students from colleges and universities from around the country. Seven of the 2017 RBSI Scholars attended the 2017 Annual Meeting to present their research. APSA continues to raise money to secure the long-term sustainability and growth of the RBSI program.

APSA also is investing in the growth of the Minority Fellowship Program, the Minority Student Recruitment Program, and the Mentoring Program. For 2017–2018, the Minority Fellowship Program awarded fellowships to support graduate study for 37 PhD students from underrepresented groups. Information about APSA's programs to support diversity and inclusion in political science is available on the APSA website at <http://apsanet.org/diversityprograms>.

#### CONCLUSION

During 2018 and beyond, APSA will continue to advocate for political science in the public arena and develop programs and initiatives to support its membership and the discipline as whole in the conduct of the research, teaching and service roles. Moreover, the association will remain active in promoting the value of the social sciences and the vitality of our educational institutions. ■