

## Notes from the Chair

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This year has been a significant one for the section as we have seen the values of Teaching and Learning within the discipline of Political Science become more institutionalized within the American Political Science Association. This institutionalization has come about because of your support, a concerted effort on the part of our membership to maintain our support of the mission of the section, and a growing recognition by the discipline of the importance of our activities.

The only peer-reviewed journal focusing on teaching and learning scholarship within political science—the *Journal of Political Science Education*—is the official journal of the Political Science Education section. The journal has been doing exceedingly well in both submissions and subscriptions and will expand to four annual issues this year. Indexing will continue into more prestigious venues as we develop the necessary track record of timely publications. The journal (first published in 2005) has been a very successful venture of the section, mostly due to the leadership provided by John Ishiyama and Marijke Breuning as editors. With their relocation from Truman State University to the University of North Texas, we hope to see the journal gain a wider audience. As you continue to cite this source in your research, the journal gains recognition. If we decide to include the journal as part of section membership, we will continue to see the significance of this research grow in the intellectual life of the discipline. Later in this newsletter are the responses from the membership to this proposal; remember we will vote on this proposal at the annual business meeting in Boston.

The APSA is beginning a new series of books focused on the discipline of political science. One of the first publications focuses on program assessment in departments of political science. There has been an increased interest in and need for information on the process and possibilities in developing departmental assessment programs specifically related to our discipline, and APSA desires to help take the lead in providing supportive materials. The editors of this volume are Kerstin Hamann, John Ishiyama, and myself; many of our contributors are members of the section who have been publishing on this topic. The volume will be published in September; if you are in Boston for the conference, APSA will have a pre-publication package that will contain a table of contents, an order form, and sample chapters. We hope you will support this endeavor and that APSA will follow up with other materials.

Our membership has been involved in the leadership of the Teaching and Learning Conference (TLC) and consistently been

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represented on the program committee, as moderators, workshop facilitators, and as participants. This year is the fifth annual conference, and the TLC has stabilized at 300 participants; there is clear evidence of continued APSA support. As a section we need to ensure that our members continue to support both the Teaching and Learning Conference and the Political Science Education section of the annual convention. Our submission of paper proposals has decreased in both forums with the result of some members of the APSA council questioning the demand for teaching forums. Our membership needs to ensure both opportunities continue to be selective peer-reviewed forums for our teaching and learning scholarship. I strongly encourage you all to submit proposals for the 2009 Teaching and Learning Conference in Baltimore, Maryland in February.

Finally, with our collective effort last fall we elected one of our own to the APSA Council. John Ishiyama's election to the Council ensures that issues of teaching learning will be carefully advocated at the highest levels. Thank you all for your support.

Remember, your attendance and participation help determine how many slots we are awarded next year (as does the number of proposals we receive for next year). If you are coming to Boston, I hope you will support our section activities. **PSE**

## Notables

**Judithanne Scourfield McLauchlan** of the University of South Florida St. Petersburg was recently awarded the College of Arts and Sciences "Teacher of the Year" award and the "Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence" at USFSP. She was also awarded the "Student Organization Advisor of the Year" award for her work with the Law Society.

## Teaching Constitutional Law Within Political Science Departments: Sacrificing Traditional Breadth to Achieve Political Science Goals

Donna K. Axel • New Jersey City University • [daxel@njcu.edu](mailto:daxel@njcu.edu)

The political science major has shifted its focus from “promoter of substantive knowledge to an emphasis on skills, such as critical thinking, which are associated with a liberal education” (Ishiyama et al. 2006, 659). Pre-law courses housed within political science departments offer an excellent opportunity to promote critical thinking skills. As a mainstay within political science, Constitutional Law (“ConLaw”) courses have been taught not only by political scientists, but by lawyers—with or without the Ph.D.— as well. ConLaw instructors often incorporate teaching methods that have their roots in the traditional law school Socratic, case-dialogue method. Despite criticism about the usefulness of the Socratic, case-dialogue method in law school and at the undergraduate level (Sullivan et al. 2007; Giuluzza 1991), this method and its underlying implicit “canon” and case-centric-based rationale persist as the governing paradigm for the structure of most ConLaw courses and textbooks. In this essay, I suggest that the traditional case-centric paradigm does not promote undergraduate and political science goals as set forth in the “Wahlke Report” which is the “most recent ‘officially’ promulgated set of proposals regarding the undergraduate political science curriculum...” (Ishiyama et al. 2006, 659).

Over the past 10 years, I have been considering ways to teach ConLaw that promote critical thinking, reading, and writing skills and, at the same time, introduce and prepare students for law school. My approach aims to situate ConLaw within the context of the Wahlke Report. Two premises of the Wahlke Report are: first, that the goal of an undergraduate liberal arts education is to develop students’ “general intellectual abilities—curiosity, powers of critical analysis, aesthetic appreciation, and creativity—thus equipping them “to master complexity,” “to undertake independent work, and [to attain] critical sophistication...” (Wahlke 1991, 48) and second, that study in political science, as a distinct discipline, “entails sequential learning” (Wahlke 1991, 55) “building on blocks of knowledge that lead to more sophisticated understanding and...leaps of the imagination and efforts at synthesis” (Wahlke 1991, 49). (See Ishiyama et al. 2006). The Wahlke Report cautions against “shallow learning” (Wahlke 1991, 54)<sup>1</sup> which results from merely cumulative exposure to substance and recommends that political science courses promote skills, such as critical thinking, written and oral communication skills, and computer skills (Wahlke 1991, 54-55).

When considered in light of the Wahlke Report’s envisioned cohesive curricular structure, ConLaw can be reconfigured to develop students’ critical thinking skills, add to students’ knowledge base, and afford them a more sophisticated understanding of both disciplines: law and political science. This proposal sug-

gests abandoning traditional breadth of cases and topics in the hopes of situating ConLaw as part of sequential learning within the discipline of political science, not purely as a free-standing introduction to law school methods, nor as an extensive overview of many of the cases and materials that one covers in Constitutional Law in law school. For lawyers without a Ph.D. in political science, this may be challenging at first; for political scientists, it may be an exciting opportunity to introduce students to their own areas of research and interest. In this essay, I propose some alternatives to traditional Socratic/extensive case-centric-based ConLaw courses that also comport with the Wahlke Report.

### Giving up tradition fosters academic freedom for professors and promotes depth

An approach in line with the Wahlke Report promotes depth of substance rather than breadth of constitutional concepts and legal cases. Most undergraduate ConLaw textbooks incorporate numerous cases, but I reject the notion that there is a constitutional law “canon” that must be taught in an undergraduate context (Goldman 648, 2005). Instead, in my course, as a means of fostering depth, initially we examine one case per week to uncover the socio-economic, historical and political context. The cases are but one part of an examination of the Supreme Court as a powerful institution that impacts our daily lives. The biographies, biases and jurisprudential leanings of individual Justices are significant, as well, since they are the human forces who interpret our Constitution. (See Susan M. Leeson’s unique textbook, *Constitutional Law: Cases in Context*, and Mark Graber’s online work-in-progress in this area.)

By abandoning the notion that there are numerous rules, principles, and norms with corresponding cases to be covered at the undergraduate level—which is modeled on the law school’s breadth of topics and methodology—one is freed from the law school model. Secondly, this approach permits greater individual academic freedom for the professor: each professor sacrifices breadth for depth of select ConLaw concepts and related cases—in keeping with Wahlke Report objectives and recommendations—on the basis of each professor’s expertise and research interests, and with due consideration to current Supreme Court cases that dramatically alter and reflect laws and values.

In my interdisciplinary skills-based approach to teaching ConLaw, fewer topics and cases are covered, but I draw from the rich array of teaching techniques (the Socratic, case-dialogue approach is one among many) with a focus on training students in the areas of critical thinking, reading, and writing, as well as an appreciation for the use of technology. This variety of teaching

styles serves as a means for students to “gain familiarity with the different assumptions, methods, and analytical approaches used by political scientists and by cognate disciplines (e.g., economics, history, psychology, law, and others)”<sup>2</sup> (Wahlke 1991, 51). However, I have an alternative rationale for employing a wide variety of teaching styles: I emphasize to students that they must consider the way they learn.

### A more interdisciplinary approach: Incorporating each instructor’s expertise

Below is *one* interdisciplinary approach to teaching ConLaw (not *the only* approach) which aims: 1) to fulfill Wahlke Report goals, with due respect for the Ishiyama, et al. publications, and 2) to address *current* student interests, skills and needs. In my ConLaw courses, I:

1. Cover no more than one new case per week (until at least the last third of the course), but refer back to cases previously discussed (Wahlke Report, Recommendation 8 regarding skills and 9 regarding sequential learning);
2. Employ a modified Socratic method once during the semester with a view to teaching about the method; it is not used as the method of teaching the course or scaring students into doing the reading (Wahlke Report, Recommendation 8 regarding skills);
3. Employ in-depth case briefing with a focus on issue-spotting as a means to teaching legal reasoning and issue-spotting, not merely as a way to ensure that students have read the cases and can summarize them (Wahlke Recommendation 8 regarding skills);
4. Contextualize each topic, concept, and legal case in terms of feminist principles in which patriarchal aspects of the legal system are considered to uncover sexism, racism, and other discrimination inherent in our legal history and that is passed on via case law and notions of precedent and *stare decisis* (Wahlke Recommendations 5 and 6 regarding ethnic, racial and cultural diversity);
5. Require students to present information using technology (e.g., power point) to teach peers about a legal trend and the status of the law in a seminar-style format. (Wahlke Recommendations 8 and possibly 5, 6, and 9);
6. Internationalize the course curriculum by considering Supreme Court Justices’ opinions (including dissents and concurrences) regarding international law, customary law, and other nations’ views (Wahlke Recommendations 5 and 6);
7. Incorporate a variety of teaching techniques to help students identify the way they learn (Wahlke Recommendations 5, 6, 8, and 9);
8. Utilize the internet as a source for ConLaw documents, multimedia sources of information (e.g., podcasts) and rely less on a traditional casebook/textbook (Wahlke Recommendation 8 regarding skills);
9. Incorporate evaluative measures to ascertain student learning (Wahlke 1991; Breuning et al. 2001, 657), but also permit students to rewrite most assignments to ensure their learning.

### Conclusion: Traditional undergraduate ConLaw goals do not fulfill Wahlke objectives

I propose a shift in the traditional pedagogical approach to teaching ConLaw because it is incongruous with the undergraduate and political science major objectives as specified by the Wahlke Report and others. Despite express statements against ConLaw being “a mini-law course” (Guliuza, 1991) because the undergraduate ConLaw is the child of the law school course, there is a history of teaching ConLaw as if it were a mini-law course (Graber, 2005, 135) designed to teach the same core concepts and topics in a similar manner. However, when we buy into the law school paradigm that there are a set number of concepts and topics that must be covered and when our pedagogical approach to fulfilling this presumed mandate is based on a Socratic, case-dialogue method (multiple cases that correspond to each concept/topic that are elucidated through in-class questioning), we necessarily sacrifice depth for breadth. Teaching under this mandate renders impossible advancing students’ skills on any profound level. For example, developing “powers of critical analysis” to equip students “to master complexity,” is not likely when we require students to read many more cases than they can read carefully or that we are capable of teaching in-depth. Therefore, I propose a shift in pedagogical approach to teaching ConLaw.

A number of years ago, many Political Science Departments divided ConLaw into two courses, in part due to the breadth and depth of material; there are institutions that continue to offer one ConLaw course. But that is not the point. In both cases, the question is to what extent do we, professors and adjuncts of ConLaw, (still) sacrifice depth and critical thinking skills in our attempt to recreate a “mini-law school course” (Graber 2005, 135; Guliuza, 1991, 703)? Do we better comport with the Wahlke Report’s political science and undergraduate goals if we abandon traditional breadth, and limit the number of cases and subjects? Most importantly, by abandoning tradition, can we teach students the critical thinking skills essential to political awareness?

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Wahlke reiterates this caution first set forth by ACC National Advisory Committee Report (1989), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> This is Recommendation 2 of the Wahlke Report which specifically responds to the question, “Which particular mode of analysis is appropriate to *this particular question?*”

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## Call for Papers: *The Pi Sigma Alpha Undergraduate Journal of Politics*

Union College's Zeta Upsilon chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha is now accepting submissions for the Fall 2008 edition of *The Pi Sigma Alpha Undergraduate Journal of Politics*. The *Journal* is sponsored by Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Honor Society.

The *Journal* welcomes submissions from undergraduates of any class or major. To be considered for publication in the Fall 2008 edition, students should submit their papers by **September 15, 2008**, although we do accept manuscripts on a rolling basis. Any manuscripts received after September 15 will be considered for the Spring 2009 issue.

Our goal is to publish manuscripts of the highest quality in all areas of political science. In general, papers selected for publication have been well-written with a well-developed thesis, compelling argument, and original analysis. We typically publish papers of 15-35 pages in length. Submissions must be in the form of a Microsoft Word document and should be e-mailed to **psajournal@union.edu**. Please include name, university, and contact details (mailing address, e-mail address, and phone number).

We greatly appreciate your efforts to encourage your students to submit their research. The *Journal* is a student-run enterprise with editors and an Editorial Board who are undergraduate Pi Sigma Alpha members at Union College. We also have an Advisory Board consisting of political science faculty from across the nation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to e-mail us.

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## Proposal to Incorporate the *Journal of Political Science Education* into Annual Membership Costs

As many of you know, over the last year the editors of *JPSE* (John Ishiyama and Marijke Breuning) have been talking about incorporating the subscription of the journal into our current membership costs. This is a trend that many of the sections with print journals are following in order to keep the journals viable. At our 2007 business meeting we agreed that John would provide a proposal, we would discuss it in the *Political Science Educator*, and then vote on it. The vote will occur at the 2008 business meeting in Boston at the end of the month.

Our section currently has a membership of 460 (as of August 1, 2008). A section must maintain a membership of 250 to remain a formal section. Currently, 10 out of the 39 sections include a journal subscription in their membership fees and their membership fee ranges from \$15.00-\$30.00, with the majority between \$25.00 - \$30.00. Our dues are currently \$5.00, of which APSA takes \$3.00 to subsidize their section activities.

Taylor and Francis have proposed a rate of \$20.00 for mandatory print plus online subscriptions to the journal to be included as part of the dues paid by members of the Political Science Education section. The proposed \$20 mandatory rate represents over a 77% discount off of the regular personal rate, and a further 28.5% off of the discounted rate they had previously made available as an optional subscription for PSE section members. With this mandatory subscription, PSE members would receive both print copies as well as online access.

Because the rate is so low, they have not offered a less expensive rate for student members. Our new rate would be \$25.00, (member about \$3.00 of that goes to APSA, we only receive \$2.00 for every member).

Currently, 12% of our members are students (n = 54); 6% are community college faculty members (n = 29), and 1.3% are high school teachers (n = 6). It is not possible to determine what percentage are adjunct faculty (either as full-time or supplemental employment). Most recently, 60 individuals, or 13% of our membership, already subscribed to the *Journal of Political Science Education* at the reduced subscription rate of \$35.00.

In June, we put this question in front of our membership and we received forty separate responses that reflected all elements of our constituency. Virtually all were in support of the proposal, although some had some caveats or concerns. What follows below are their responses; I have excluded those who simply wrote a simple endorsement of the proposal (n = 15). We will have a formal vote on this proposal at the annual business meeting of the section on Saturday, August 30 at 6:15 at the Sheraton in Hampton B.

### Member Comments:

The section fees really begin to add up if you are a grad student but that is not my biggest concern. Rather, I would really like to see all journals move towards a digital-only subscription (as an option, people could still get mailed hardcopies if they wished) that would include an email for each issue (similar to SSRN) sent to all members with hyperlinks and abstracts. Presumably that would save on paper, mailing, and publishing costs substantially and would still allow Taylor and Francis to make a small profit (and reduce our environmental impact as well, no?)

Stephen Bird, Boston University  
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This proposal sounds reasonable to me, but it might be best to determine what impact it will have on membership before going forward. Despite the addition of a journal, writing a \$25 check is tougher than writing a \$5 check. I'm willing to do it, but will there be a reduction in membership due to the higher cost?

As a way of increasing membership, are you making a special pitch to community college instructors? K-12? I can blast an email to regional colleagues if you like soliciting membership. Since so many polisci types teach, there ought to be a tremendous market for this section. Does PSE have recruitment strategies? I can't remember why I joined, but it seems to me that a deliberate strategy by members to recruit members in their areas would help keep numbers high. In my case, the fact that I went to grad school with Carlos Huerta had a big impact on my decision to join, and the quality of the conference took over after that.

Kevin Jeffries, Alvin College  
KJefferies@alvincollege.edu

The \$20 offer makes lots of sense to me. I would even ponder a dues of \$30 so that PSE section could access more funds to do more things. HOWEVER, I do understand and am sympathetic to the impact this might very well have on much of our audience—graduate students and younger assistant profs. Does APSA allow for sections to have graduated dues? My experience from ISA indicates that—sadly—lots of full profs of 30 years or so suddenly make a lot less money when one moves to this approach, but it *could* provide some relief to charge grad students and non-tenured faculty a \$25 fee to cover expenses and the others \$30????

Vicki L. Golich, California State University San Marcos  
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I'm in strong support of folding the journal into the membership fee. The state politics section did this and I really think it helped get *SPPQ* (*State Politics and Policy Quarterly*) off the ground. Yes, it might be prohibitive for graduate students, and

I am sorry about that; I wish we could make it even just \$15 for them. Despite this, however, I think it will be good for the section and the discipline.

Jennifer M. Jensen, Binghamton University (SUNY)  
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I think it's a good deal for the section and the journal. I am hoping that it will actually make section membership more attractive (since it will carry a real benefit), and it would be great to increase the circulation of the journal—both because it will make more people aware of the scholarship of teaching and learning, and also because if more people see the journal, more people will cite it!

John Berg, Suffolk University  
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A good addendum to your mail might be a note on how many student members of APSA are also PSE section members, if a sizable percentage of section members are students, we might want to consider playing with the price points. With a \$5 cost, the sign-up for a student isn't cost-prohibitive. At \$25, it might become so. So (by the way this is blue-sky speculation so it might not even be possible) maybe we could charge \$15 for a student membership with the subscription and \$30-35 for faculty members. Basically, I'd like to see a partial subsidy for student section memberships.

Chap Rackaway, Fort Hays State University  
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This sounds fine, although there is one stat I'd be interested in knowing if you have the info. Of our 425 plus members, how many already subscribe to *JPSE*?

Frank Franz, James Madison High School  
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I would like to speak in favor of this. While I recognize that our constituency is broader than that normally found in an APSA organized section and in particular our constituency might have financial constraints that make a rise in section dues from \$5 to \$25 difficult, this is offset by the fact that providing a strong subscription base for our section journal will in the long run help institutionalize the scholarship of teaching and, as a result, provide valuable scholarship that will benefit the entire discipline. It does no good to have an APSA section focusing on teaching if that section has no particular influence on the discipline. Our section's influence on the discipline will, in my view, come through our section's journal and the quality of the scholarship published in that journal. Thus, I think that PSE should provide the subscription base for that journal.

Quentin Kidd, Christopher Newport University  
Secretary/Treasurer, Political Science Education Section  
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I support the increase. What is being proposed is consistent with what other sections have been doing. While I suspect we might

lose some members, I don't believe that enough will leave to endanger the status of the section.

Jeff Kraus, Wagner College  
Political Science Education Section Board Member  
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From a graduate student's perspective, \$25 is a lot to join a section. With no disrespect intended to contributors or others, JSPE is not something that most grad students can cite (or have reason to read) for our own research, and that's what we're pressured to focus on. It's hard to justify \$25 for membership in a section and a journal that you can't really use. I would strongly encourage the section to maintain a student membership option with no journal subscription to encourage graduate student membership and involvement.

[The other piece of data that would be useful here is the fraction of members who already get the journal. For how many of us would that mean a net increase in cost of section membership? Those who are already in the section and also subscribers would see a net decrease in cost.]

Leanne Powner, University of Michigan  
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I think it would be great if the *Journal of Political Science Education* were included in the annual membership fee. The additional annual fee of \$20 is very reasonable. It is much easier to simply check a box when renewing my APSA membership than to separately subscribe to the journal.

Russell G. Brooker, Alverno College  
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I think this is a good idea; the reality of journal publishing in today's world demands it. I would be more than willing to pay an extra \$20 - \$30 to keep PSE viable, especially given the relative status which teaching is regarded in our discipline. We have to keep working for change if we are ever going to push teaching to the forefront, where it belongs.

David Schwab, Indiana University-Purdue University: Indianapolis  
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I like the idea of combining a journal subscription with section membership. It's worked well for New Political Science.

Leonard A. Williams, Manchester College  
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The faculty in our department support the proposal. How about a membership drive among ALL graduate students?

Charles Burke, Baldwin Wallace College  
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I see two problems with including the journal as part of section membership. First, it forces the journal on section members rather than allowing them to decide for themselves whether or

not to receive the journal. Second, it threatens our well-deserved reputation as the “best deal in town” by instituting a five-fold increase in section membership dues. This could cost us some graduate student members.

Despite these real costs, I think the benefits of incorporating the journal into our section membership dues benefits outweigh the costs. Professors who are serious about teaching should read a peer-reviewed journal that provides evidence-based advice for maximizing student-learning outcomes. We are social science scholars who should apply our commitment to scientific research to the craft of teaching. Moreover, we should support our discipline’s decision to publish a SoTL journal. The section and its leaders fought hard for the journal. We should continue to support the journal and encourage the discipline to recognize and reward SoTL scholarship. Section members can further both teaching and research goals through active readership of the *JPSE*. The cost of \$20 is extremely reasonable for an annual subscription. In fact, many section members, including all *JPSE* subscribers, will actually save money under the new proposal. I do worry about graduate students. We may want to consider a different level of membership for graduate students. Perhaps student *only* could opt out of the journal? On the other hand, an investment of \$25/year seems both reasonable and wise for graduate students committed to future excellence in the classroom.

I support the move to link section membership to *JPSE* subscriptions. Rather than losing members, we may actually gain some. I renew two other section memberships primarily because of the discounted journals I receive with my membership. As an added benefit, I will no longer receive reminder notices from Taylor and Francis. It will be convenient to renew my subscription automatically along with my *JPSE* section membership!

Elizabeth A. Bennion, Indiana University South Bend  
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I’m entirely in favor of including journal membership as part of the section membership—this will be considerably more convenient than having to renew separately with Taylor & Francis (especially as they don’t offer online renewal).

Michael Baranowski, Northern Kentucky University  
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I am all for the incorporation. For those of us who are subscribers anyway this actually represents a savings. *JPSE* is the most useful, readable journal available for political science faculty who want to continue developing their teaching potential.

Charles C. Turner, California State University, Chico  
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I like the proposal of bundling the membership and the journal together in one manageable fee. It is a matter of “selling our strength.” The journal represents the section well and vice versa. I believe that the price point is also quite palatable. Our institution is preparing for its accreditation visit. Deans and faculty

report-writers are dashing around campus looking for evidence of “assessment.” This is a fine time for the continuing rise of this section. There is an audience, even quite larger than our current membership numbers. I advise the leadership of the section to move ahead.

John F. Settich, Benedictine College  
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I love the idea of adding the journal to section membership; of course, I pay for the journal so it is cheaper this way. On the other hand, we may lose some younger members who are trying to save \$\$\$. Personally, I think that it is important for members of a section to have some the “shared” experience of the journal. This is the way the sections are going and I say we embrace it. Would it be possible to have student members pay a \$20 rate? How much would the “regular” rate have to go up?

Mack Mariani, Xavier University  
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I think it’s clear that it’s preferred that the journal be included with the section dues, for no other reason that it produces this really low price. That’s of course great for those of us who want to read the journal, but not for those who don’t and who therefore don’t subscribe. So the question comes down to whether or not the number of people who drop the section because they see an increase in their total costs will leave the section with still enough members to remain on the APSA roster. That’s a tough call without knowing more about the demographics of those who belong to the section: for example, if more (than most sections) of our members are graduate students, they may not stick with the section, since—who knows?—they may list the section as a cheap resume builder when on the job market. Like I say, who knows what’s going on in the section’s membership! Since I subscribe, MY total cost will drop, so I think it’s a good move.

Bob Trudeau, Providence College  
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By far the most frequent comment I have heard over the years in discussions at APSA conferences about the support for teaching is that excellence in teaching is not adequately respected by departments, institutions, and the profession. In particular, at every discussion of this type, the claim is advanced that innovation and accomplishment are not sufficiently recognized by tenure and promotion committees. This generally results in lots of head nodding and murmurs of agreement.

The problem has been the weakness of mechanisms for peer-review of accomplishment in this area. In-class observations by peers and even teaching awards just don’t make the same impression as the peer-reviewed publications expected for scholarship. Prior to the *JPSE*, the sole journal for publishing about teaching was *The Teacher* as incorporated into *PS*. While *PS* is very widely read, the nature of the publication means that articles have to be few and brief. *JPSE* allows for a wider selection of more full-length articles. Indeed it was quite embarrassing to the discipline

that, prior to *JPSE*, political science was the only academic discipline of its type not to have a teaching journal. Yet *JPSE* cannot continue to be a viable journal without a strong subscription base. So now we have the opportunity to quite literally put our money where our mouths have been.

Taylor and Francis have presented us with an extremely attractive offer. The subscription fee they have set is in the lower range for the quarter (and growing every year) of APSA sections that have their own journals. The combined section dues/subscription would be very low. \$20 seems very reasonable to meet the challenge presented to us as individual scholars to “fish or cut bait” about support for good teaching in our profession.

Adding a subscription to section membership may cost us a few members in the short run but it will build our section into a stronger, more supportive community in the long run. Ten sections have invested in supporting journals so far—none of them have gone under due to loss of membership. Our membership numbers are so healthy we need not be concerned about viability. Having our own journal would mean for us as a community having a vehicle for scholarly communication about teaching and learning that compliments and surpasses conference presentations because it is more regular and would be far more publicly accessible. It would give our section a public record of scholarly communication about political science education that not only allows us to stay in touch with each other but provides a basis for mentoring those new to teaching and a means of building support for what we do with external audience that is comparable to other scholarly publication.

So far, having *JPSE* has put us in a free ridership position—we have benefited from the existence of the journal without having to support the cost. But the free ride is coming to an end. Given that the \$20 subscription fee is the cost of a couple of mixed drinks at one of those conference hotel receptions, I really see it as an easy choice to ensure the future of our section as a vibrant community of scholars dedicated to advancing the cause of excellence in political science education.

Bill Ball, The College of New Jersey  
Political Science Education Section Board Member  
*JPSE* Editorial Board  
ball@tcnj.edu

On the journal issue, I was not initially enthusiastic about the bundling, but I do support the idea at the low rate offered. One benefit that I see in addition to having a print copy of the journal is that it will probably widen the audience for pieces in the journal, especially given how few libraries currently subscribe to the print copy. The section might even formally encourage section members to share their print copies with their departments in departments where not all members are section members.

Andrew L. Oros, Washington College  
aoros2@washcoll.edu

I think the journal should be included. The fee is not a barrier. The articles are good and helpful—in a sense, one more tool to being a more effective teacher. That’s the purpose of the section and its outputs for the discipline (and hence, the students).

Mike Kuchinsky  
mckuchinsky@starpower.net

I agree with many who have already written in to support this change, particularly for the reasons that Bill [Ball] lists [above]. Peer-review of best teaching practices for learning can only help elevate the recognition of this area as a primary goal of the discipline. I do not think the costs are onerous and find that we deliver more than many sections already. In addition, given our main constituencies, I feel that greater readership of the journal that this change can advance will only help these political scientists find and stay in a “home” within the discipline.

Alison McCartney, Towson University  
Political Science Education Section Board Member  
amccartney@towson.edu

I don’t mind paying higher dues. I also think that members of this section tend to be quite serious about pedagogy *and* get good practical insights from the pedagogy research in our field. Therefore, I think the choir of members would support paying their preachers more.

Mark Zachary Taylor, Georgia Institute of Technology  
mzak@gatech.edu

### **APSA Political Science Education Section, 2007 - 2008 Officers**

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## McGraw-Hill Award for Scholarship and Teaching on Civic Engagement in Political Science

The McGraw-Hill Award for Civic Engagement selected Bill Ball, Associate Professor of Political Science at the College of New Jersey as the third recipient of the award, which was established in 2006 to recognize outstanding leadership, teaching, research, and activism encouraging civic engagement by a Political Scientist.

Thanks goes to the committee: Chair, Brigid Harrison (Montclair State University), Bruce Caswell (Rowan University), Quentin Kidd (Christopher Newport University), Nancy S. Lind (Illinois State University), Lanethea Mathews-Gardner (Muhlenberg University), Alison Millett McCartney (Towson University), J. Cherie Strachan (Central Michigan University), and Bill Minick of McGraw-Hill Publishing. **PSE**

### Call for Proposals

Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting in Chicago, April 2-5, 2009

Deadline for submission of papers, panels, roundtables, chair/discussant proposals is October 10, 2008. See the call: <http://www.mpsanet.org/~mpsa/Conference/call2009.html>

#### Section 56. Teaching Political Science

The section welcomes paper, panel, and roundtable proposals on all topics related to educating both undergraduate and graduate students. Proposals could explore such topics as: advising, assessment, civic engagement, curriculum development, diversity within the classroom, educational goals, experiential learning, internships, pedagogic responsibilities, service learning, simulations, teaching strategies, and technology. The focus may be on pedagogic practice or the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Qualitative, interpretive, quantitative, theoretical, or philosophical approaches will all be considered.

Contact: Michelle D. Deardorff, Jackson State University, [michelle.d.deardorff@jsums.edu](mailto:michelle.d.deardorff@jsums.edu) if you have any questions.

### Call for Articles

For upcoming issues of *The Political Science Educator* we are currently seeking the following features:

- Debates between members on pertinent topics
- “Lessons Learned”—a continuing column on how the teaching of participants in the Teaching and Learning Conferences has evolved as a result of the TLC (approximately 500-1000 words)
- Feature articles that are “think pieces” about teaching and the discipline, discussions of teaching experiences and approaches, or preliminary research under development (@ 1000 words)
- “Teaching tips” and suggestions—including approaches and experiments that have been less successful
- “The New Professor”—essays designed to help graduate students and new faculty who are navigating the job market and early years of careers at undergraduate institutions
- “Research and Resources: The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning”—a column including literature reviews on specific topics, research notes, examination of new research threads
- “Technology and the Professor”—a column examining current options available for the classroom and classroom management, including resources available on the web

Items for the “Notables” and “Announcements” sections.

The deadline for the next issue is January 15. If you are interested in submitting an article, essay, or announcement (or a suggestion for other items to be included in the newsletter), please contact:

**Michelle D. Deardorff, Editor**  
*The Political Science Educator*  
 Jackson State University  
[michelle.d.deardorff@jsums.edu](mailto:michelle.d.deardorff@jsums.edu)