Winter 2013 Newsletter

1) Message From the Section President

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2012 was a big year for our section! Some of the highlights include: first, after running a full search, we welcomed our new editorial team for *JPSE*, led by Kerstin Hamann. The journal continues to thrive and promote quality scholarship of teaching and learning. Our deepest gratitude goes to John Ishiyama, Marjike Breuning, and their team for launching the journal and establishing it as a rigorous publishing venue.

Second, as required by APSA, we wrote and passed our section bylaws. Many thanks to Karen Kedrowski and her team for writing them. Third, Mary McHugh and Fletcher McClellan agreed to serve another term on the section board.

Finally, we are saying goodbye and thank you to Shannon Jenkins, our newsletter editor, who has worked tirelessly for years on this project. I would like to introduce Maureen Feeley (UC San Diego), who will be taking over for Shannon after this issue. Please contact her (mfeeley@ucsd.edu) for submission ideas. So, we will be seeing some new faces in certain positions and look forward to their contributions, as well as maintaining some continuity.

Since we did not get to have an annual conference in New Orleans this year (FYI – power didn't go out in the Quarter, but it did between the Quarter and the airport!), we are moving some of our business intended for NOLA to the Teaching and Learning Conference (TLC) in Long Beach next month. This key piece is two of our awards: a Lifetime Achievement Award for Michael Brintnall and a Distinguished Service Award for John Ishiyama. Soomo, APSA, and the section are sponsoring a reception on Friday night of the conference that will serve as both the welcome reception for the conference and the award reception. It is an exceptional arrangement due to the cancellation of APSA annual, and we are thrilled that we can still honor Michael before his retirement this summer. We will have pictures and a summary of the reception in the next issue of the newsletter.

Thank you for your continued membership in the section. In 2013, I hope that the section will engage in some formal reaching out to our community college colleagues. This effort will be led by PSE board member Erin Richards of Cascadia Community College (details forthcoming). I welcome your ideas on other areas in which the section can improve. In the meantime, I look forward to seeing many of you at the TLC in February – the section will have an informal meeting on Saturday at 5pm, so please reserve time in your schedule.

2) PSE Section Bylaws
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During the summer of 2011, PSE section President Alison McCartney told the executive board that the section needed bylaws and called for volunteers to draft them. I volunteered to assist and contacted Sean Twombly at APSA, who sent samples from other sections. I used these as the basis for the PSE section bylaws; the bylaws for the Voting Behavior section were particularly instructive. I then sought input from other committee members, Fletcher McClellan, Ryan Ememaker and Alison McCartney.

The PSE draft bylaws deviated from other sections' models in three significant ways. First, the PSE section makes note of the Teaching and Learning Conference and indicates that section business may occur at that conference as well as the annual national APSA meeting. Second, the PSE bylaws make special mention of all the APSA membership categories, including community colleges and high school teachers, to recognize the important and innovative political science education that occurs at those meetings. Third, the bylaws allow for electronic voting, as opposed to voting only by mail or in person.

The bylaws were circulated prior to the 2012 APSA meeting, and discussion on the bylaws was to be held in New Orleans. With the cancellation of the APSA annual meeting, the section commenced to a comment period and vote electronically using the APSA section distribution list in October. They were approved on November 1, 2012 and came into immediate effect.

3) JPSE Editors Report
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Starting July 1, 2012, the *Journal of Political Science Education* moved to the Political Science Department at the University of Central Florida. At the same time, the journal moved to an electronic manuscript management system, Scholar One (Manuscript Central), which is widely used by journals in the discipline. Book reviews will continue to be processed manually.

Both transitions have gone very smoothly so far. Many thanks to Routledge for supporting both transition processes, and to John Ishiyama and Marijke Breuning from UNT for making the editorial transition very smooth.

JPSE continues to be the journal of the Political Science Education section, and all members receive a paper copy as part of their section membership.

The new editorial team consists of:

Editors: Kerstin Hamann (Editor-in-Chief), Philip H. Pollock, Bruce M. Wilson (UCF)
Book Review Editor: Rebecca A. Glazier (University of Arkansas at Little Rock)
Managing Editor: Jonathan Williams (Graduate Student, UCF)

Support for the journal is provided by Routledge, the College of Sciences at UCF, and the Department of Political Science at UCF.

The full editors report is available in the Political Science Education Section of APSA Connect.

4) The Teacher-Scholar: Election Event Series Reinforces the Importance of Teaching Outside the Classroom
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I am convinced that much of the best teaching and learning takes place outside of the classroom. This year I had the privilege of working with students to organize a robust series of election-oriented events.

Events included:

- <u>one</u> televised congressional candidate debate,
- <u>two</u> Convention Watch parties,
- <u>three</u> live county candidate debates,
- <u>four</u> presidential (and vice presidential) debate watch parties, and
- <u>five</u> voter information sessions: a *Times Talk,* two election forecasting sessions, and two post-election discussions.

The American Democracy Project and Political Science Club of IU South Bend also hosted:
- <u>six</u> voter registration tables, and a
- <u>seven</u>-day classroom registration campaign, and
- <u>eight</u> voter information tables, reminding people when to vote and how to get information about election rules.

The series started on September 17th with a Constitution Day voter registration drive, complete with free popcorn and nachos for those who could complete Constitution-theme crossword puzzles or games. It ended with an Election Night Party in the

River Crossing "Lodge" – where more than 100 students gathered to color their own electoral college maps and share predictions as the results come in. In sum, our events reached 600 live audience members, 200 new voters, plus TV viewers in 22 counties. Series events were highlighted in approximately two dozen media stories in eight different media outlets.

Some faculty members believe that "extra-curricular" events should be reserved for Student Affairs. I disagree. I was able to use my knowledge as a researcher, educator, and academic advisor to serve as a commentator, moderator, analyst, and advisor throughout this event series. I was also able to "open" my classes up to the campus and community – letting those who aren't my students get a "taste" of political science, and revealing to my students the possibility of life-long learning as they witness that people are eager to learn, even when they are <u>not</u> earning college credit. I do not view my work as the faculty advisor to the Political Science Club and Campus Director of IU our American Democracy Project as service work that falls outside of the realm of teaching. Rather, I view this work as <u>central</u> to my role as an educator.

5) Our Greatest Lectures
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After a group assignment, or after a lecture, I sometimes ask my students to show *five fingers* for "hated it" and a *fist* for "loved it." Even though there have only been few classrooms full of eager fists, I argue that those few class interactions which were very well-received should be *shared* with fellow faculty—if we as teachers are indeed student-centered. Might not other students and teachers benefit from my classroom breakthroughs? Or, in accordance with everyone's interest, wouldn't the faculty benefit from a database of the department's *best classroom lectures,* which could be accessed online?

Voluntary Solution: A faculty member should create a *blackboard space* or a *wikispace* (wikispaces.com/content/teacher) for *peers* to upload/download: syllabus, ice breakers, writing tools, group work assignments as student-centered lectures, primary resources, etc.

Blackboard (Web CT, etc.) is convenient for creating this online collaboration space because: (1) you won't forget the login and password, (2) the collaborative database link in Blackboard should be just above your "classes teaching" links, (3) you already know how to use it, (4) you will see which peers posted the document—which may help initiate collaboration / conversation, and (5) you will know where to find that "oldie but goodie" group work assignment that your class loved three years ago. To do so, usually, you simply email the "bbadmin" at your school. Otherwise, wikispaces are also quite popular—and free for educators. Master teachers craft master lectures, and the group assignments at the college level, for example, are really just one mechanism in a master lecture that you might use.

In theory, if only a few faculty members uploaded their successful classroom activities (i.e., a class full of eager fists), then an institutional memory would advance over time. And since most faculty indeed teach quite differently, we should expect to see a variety of successful lectures

which would help initiate differentiated instruction. This collaborative concept assumes (1) there are more teachers like me sitting on a small heap of in-class activities that they would like to share (i.e. some professors may feel proprietary about their teaching), and (2) more than one professor will teach the same class (i.e. P.S. 101) in any given school year. The point is that creative and active educators would gain efficacy in accomplishing my proposal. New teachers would have a heap of lecture examples / activities at their fingertips.

If so, then it is essential that faculty upload user-friendly documents. Any in-class assignments / handouts should be formatted with at least the following: (1) title, (2) the chapter it corresponds to in the class (i.e. Congress for P.S. 101), (3) detailed outline of activities and expected minutes used *for the teacher*—the instructions, (4) the actual handout (perhaps to be projected) *for the students*—the work to be completed. Indeed, if a department creates this online space, then the first document should be the *template* (delineating the former) to be used as fitting the department.

For instance, for my P.S. 101 section, I downloaded the DNC and RNC 2012 party platforms and divided each platform into 35 sections—I created 35 excerpts as 35 handout pages. Regarding the excerpt each student received, three questions would be answered by the student after silent reading: what is the main point of the excerpt, which attitudes or demographics does this appeal to, and how do you think the other party would be different? Since I have 70 students, the exercise was designed so that: (1) the students had five minutes to read the party platform excerpt and answer my questions, (2) five minutes

to find his or her fellow group member and "introduce yourself"—i.e. each excerpt was labeled at the top with a number from 1-35, (3) five minutes to create a "group answer," and (4) 25 minutes for me to call on groups to read his or her answer from a unique part of the party platform.

Recall, these are lectures. When a student finished reading his or her three part answer, I *at length added context and content to the conversation as it related to lecture (American parties)*. Total time for group assignment: 40 minutes. Total expected groups to speak: <15. Per the lecture, I spoke two minutes for every one minute by the students during the group's oral answers (part 4) in order to explain the American party system, while giving examples of historical party stances on the same platform planks compared to their legislative accomplishments when in power (e.g., NCLB, ObamaCare, etc.). Of course, I knew which groups that I would call on, since they would lead my lecture.

The point of the former example wasn't to teach the class the entire party platform— the point was let primary documents in real time teach for me, to break down lecture hall barriers, and to make American government feel real (I uploaded the full documents to the class Blackboard site for the interested). Indeed, this is an example of a group work assignment that I would upload to the *faculty collaboration online space*. It certainly would be a waste of time for other faculty to repeat the process of organizing this laborious group work assignment, assuming it was imagined. And even if other faculty does not use this assignment, perhaps it will lead to other useful teaching ideas-actions... Again, at the very least, this process allows for the creation of an *institutional teaching*

memory for all future teachers, keeping in mind the success we all wish to experience in our classrooms—for our students to experience. The education muse is right: master teachers teach their students in order for the students to master the material for future needs.

The hope of this letter is that institutions, that you, will organize and implement mechanisms for fellow teachers (i.e. you) to teach wiser, in fact *better*, using less time over time precisely because you are collaborating. Also, after a few semesters, documents that you upload / download from this online space will allow for reflection. You should be able to see how you have changed as an educator, which should help you become a Master Teacher at a faster rate.

Additionally, at my university, our Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) does schedule seminars for teaching and professional development, but there is no database where I can upload / download my *greatest lectures*, and I suspect that this should be a department activity, not a university initiative. Yet, there certainly is room for collaboration between the two, and perhaps, if the "greatest lectures" database became successful, then OTL could schedule a few more presentations regarding teaching and professional development—using examples from within the university / college—connecting the faculty.

Alas, what if many *local* universities / colleges did implement this online space in order to collaborate on *greatest lectures*? Wouldn't these professors need to collaborate more? Wouldn't they hope that P.S.E., or perhaps a group of active collaborating professors, would create a

website to display a master database of in-class activities—open to the world of educators? Perchance the skeptic, Hume, was right, "Your corn is ripe today; mine will be so tomorrow. 'Tis profitable for us both, that I should labour with you today, and that you should aid me tomorrow." And, if we are lucky, we just might find a "fantastic model of collaboration: thinking partners who aren't echo chambers" (Margaret Heffernan).

Brief Example:

Table 1: Our Greatest Lectures		
Political Science 101	Chapter	Time (minutes)
DNC 2012 Platform	Intro / Parties	40
RNC 2012 Platform	Intro / Parties	40
Public Opinion Scholars Workshop	Public Opinion	45
SCOTUS Models	Supreme Court	45
Decide like SCOTUS	Supreme Court	40

These lectures, which received many fists in my classes, are available at:

http://politicalpipeline.wordpress.com/teaching. Best of luck to you!

Notes
[1] I would like to thank Professors Sharon Lean and Kevin Deegan-Krause at Wayne State University for helping me with this letter. Thanks!

6) "Experimenting with an Embedded Librarian in an American Government Class"
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One of the most exciting new directions in our discipline has been the growing experimentation with library science-social science collaborations. These collaborations have taken the form of new ways of creating assignments, syllabi and curricula for undergraduates with an emphasis on learning not just political concepts, but learning better ways to perform research and information literacy. At the heart of this new pedagogical wave are two concepts: information literacy and embedded librarianship.

Information literacy (IL), can be defined as "the ability to identify and locate multiple sources of information using a variety of methods … Analyze and evaluate information within a variety of contexts … [and] Participate in collaborative analysis and/or application of information resources" (Demers and Rosenthal 2006, 3). The ability to quickly look up information that is not peer-reviewed or well researched has been referred to as "the Google effect" by scholars like Thornton (2010, 2008) who suggest that the Internet has had a huge effect on students' academic success, research skills, information retention and ability to understand and summarize academic sources.

Brians and Garaffa (2009) and Williams and Evans (2008) have also measured information literacy skills – or the lack thereof - of political science students. This follows other works by Andersen and

Harsell (2005) and Marfleet and Dille (2005) to gauge what students in our discipline know, what skills they use to access information and thoughts on how we, as political scientists, can improve research skills for our students. In particular, Andersen and Harsell (2005) suggested three basic objectives for any research methodology course: "some exposure to Political Science and International Studies research … have research skills that are relevant to political science courses … be able to critically evaluate research literature, data and findings" (as quoted in Brians and Garaffa 2009, 3).

The other side of this collaboration comes from the library sciences and specifically, Operating Iraqi Freedom. About eight years ago, there was a "revolution" among librarians; the terms "embedded librarian" and "embeddable librarian" started to appear in the library sciences literature with regards to collaborative attempts to move librarians away from "one-shot" instruction to more of a role where they would be embedded or placed in academic departments and other institutions to provide user-based and need-specific information literacy needs. Librarians like Dewey (2004) and Schroeder (2011) borrowed the notion of the "embedded librarian" from journalists who started to become "embedded" in combat units during the recent Iraq War to provide a more detailed, realistic and first-person perspective on combat.

According to Brower (2011), there are six characteristics of Embedded Librarianship: collaboration; long-term partnerships; providing needs-based services; the availability of services *outside* of the library; understanding the culture of the specific users; and also their research habits.

Embedded Librarianship can take several forms and there is not a one-size-fits-all model. From our perspective as a community college that prides itself being an "access institution," the impetus for such a collaboration was to help students with the most basic information literacy skills including knowing standard information about the library; the best sources for finding different kinds of research; and developing a personal relationship with a librarian for help with research issues in and out of class. More advanced information literacy techniques can be cultivated and focused on in higher-level political science classes and assignments.

With the concepts of embedded librarianship and information literacy in mind, we planned a unique collaboration at Georgia Perimeter College for the fall semester of 2012. During the summer, Ms. Glawe, a research librarian on the Clarkston campus of Georgia Perimeter College, contacted Mr. Sriram, an Instructor of Political Science on the same campus, to see if he would be interested in partnering on an Embedded Librarianship project with political science students. We decided to embed Ms. Glawe into five sections of POLS 1101, "American Government," a mandatory, three-credit course for all students at the college and in the University System of Georgia.

Some of the ideas we implemented included introducing Ms. Glawe not only as the embedded librarian for the course, but as a co-instructor; face-to-face class visits by Ms. Glawe so that students could put a name with a face and also develop a personal relationship with her; the creation of an online library guide specifically for Mr. Sriram's course with general and assignment-specific research guidance; and

a huge, online presence by Ms. Glawe on iCollege (WebCT) including weekly emails on a variety of research topics and IL-related discussion posts.

Here is a partial list of other EL projects that can be used in the political science classroom:

(i) Basic Library Trainings (BLTs) and online tutorials and research guides (Demers and Rosenthal 2006)

(ii) Integrating library services into Learning Management Systems through Web-based content, tutorials and direct methods of contact with librarians (Dewey 2004)

(iii) Creating specific information literacy (IL) assignment objectives for each course; focusing on research writing skills including thesis and bibliography development; and learning basic APSA citation style (Stevens and Campbell 2007)

(iv) Requiring students to read a manual on writing research papers; assigning writing assignments in conjunction with the research manual; and mandatory time to be spent in the library computer lab (Blankenship and Wilson 2009).

(v) Library and political science faculty co-creating and co-teaching classes, and librarians given "coursebuilder access" to individual classes so they may design course content more focused on ameliorating information skills (Daly 2011)

In conclusion, we believe that our embedded librarianship collaboration has already yielded rich dividends for our political science students. Based on results of our pre- and post-tests, we believe that Ms. Glawe's frequent discussion posts and emails on various information literacy topics have greatly ameliorated students' knowledge of library resources and steps to perform research. Most importantly, however, is that our students feel like they

have a friend or "ally" in the library to help them with research and several students this semester emailed her or visited her in the library for help with research. Too often, librarians are viewed as outsiders in higher education; if there is at least one benefit of embedded librarianships it is a change in how students view librarians and the belief on their and our part, as educators, that librarians should be more involved in teaching and learning because of the same goals – producing students with more advanced research skills and a greater understanding of information literacy, which is sure to benefit them in college and beyond.

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7) Announcements

Suan J. Harkness, University of the District of Columbia, was selected to receive a **2012 Blackboard Catalyst Award for Staff Development**. She joins a select group of e-Learning professionals, system administrators and institution staff from the around the world whose innovation has been recognized as significant and exemplary within the Blackboard Community.

The APSA Teaching and Learning Conference will take place from February 8-10, 2013 in Long Beach, California. Please check the APSA website for information and program details.

Any announcements or information for future newsletters should be sent to Maureen Feeley at mfelley@ucsd.edu.