

Summer 2016 Newsletter

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Announcements

Information

1) Message from Section President

Sherri L. Wallace, University of Louisville

Dear Colleagues:

It is my pleasure to bring you greetings on behalf of the Political Science Education Section Executive Committee (Term: 09.01.2015 to 08.31.2017):

Sherri L. Wallace, **President**
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Happy Summer Colleagues:

I would like to take this time to congratulate our two \$50 e-gift card winners: David L. Weiden (Metropolitan State University of Denver) renewed his membership in January, and Sara Parker (Chabot College, Hayward, CA) is a new section member.



David L. Weiden



Sara Parker

Coincidentally, Sara is also the first chair of the new APSA Community College Status Committee (CCSC). This year at the 2016 APSA Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, the CCSC will join Pi Sigma Alpha and the Political Science Education section as a co-sponsor of the APSA Teaching Reception. The affiliated event was a success last year as we recognized and celebrated excellence in teaching. This year's event will be **Friday, September 2, 7:30 – 9:00, room TBA. The Political Science Education Section Business Meeting will be held immediately prior to this, 6:30 – 7:30 in Commonwealth A2, Loews Philadelphia Hotel.**

Good news! Attendance at the 2016 Teaching and Learning Conference in Portland was up from last year. Also, we recognized our winners of the 2016 Craig L. Brians Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research and Mentorship: Elizabeth Matto (Rutgers University) and Jeffrey Fine (Clemson University).



Elizabeth Matto



Jeffrey Fine

Each will receive plaques at the APSA Teaching Reception, along with the 2016 Best APSA Conference Paper award and the Lifetime Achievement award winners. Both of these awards will soon be announced.

We remain indebted to Maureen Feeley (University of California, San Diego) and Bobbi Gentry (Bridgewater College), who share co-editing *The Political Science Educator* (TPSE), a valuable resource for the section. Maureen is also chair of the search committee for new journal editors to head the *Journal of Political Science Education* (JPSE). At the TLC meeting, she provided updates on the transition process. We will receive more information at the Annual PSE Business Meeting.

Lastly, I encourage you to register for the 2016 Annual Meeting to attend and support our section panels, organized by our section's program chair, Patrick McKinlay (Morningside College). THANK YOU PATRICK for this important work! For more information visit: <http://community.apsanet.org/annualmeeting/register/registration>.

Respectfully yours,

Sherri L. Wallace, President
Political Science Education Section

2) Call for Participation in SoTL Research

J. Cherie Strachan, Professor, Central Michigan University, strac1jc@cmich.edu

The Consortium for Inter-Campus Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Research offers a new opportunity to participate in research sponsored by the Consortium for Inter-Campus SoTL Research (CISR).

This unique opportunity is a call to participate in a 2nd CISR project, titled “Rude Politics and College Student Engagement.” This project will rely on an on-line experimental design to assess students’ reactions to the extreme levels of political incivility currently characterizing US politics. Participating in this project is relatively easy and largely involves gaining permission to provide student e-mail addresses. To learn more, please contact Elizabeth A. Bennion: ebennion@iusb.edu

CISR now has over 200 member campuses, where faculty and administrators have expressed an interest in participating in cross-campus data collection for Political Science pedagogy, SoTL, and civic engagement research. These campuses are diverse, representing every major region of the United States, several British and European institutions, and every type of higher education institution (including four-year colleges, regional comprehensive universities, research-intensive universities, and community colleges). Those who solicit participants through the CISR agree to provide campus reports in exchange for assistance.

The Teacher-Scholar Column**3) Rethinking Internships to Maximize Student Learning**

Elizabeth Bennion, Professor, Indiana University South Bend, ebennion@iusb.edu

I've been thinking a lot about internships lately. Internships provide a valuable opportunity to connect students to post-graduation service and work as alumni. Our College is redesigning our internship program to achieve more standardization of requirements, greater adherence to best practices, broader participation, and better learning outcomes for students. As good teacher-scholars do, I decided to consult academic journals, professional associations, and colleagues to learn more about best practices. As part of this work, Xander Laughlin and I compiled an annotated bibliography of recent articles about internships in Political Science (see pages 8 – 10 below).

The topic of internships was also an important element of this year's APSA-TLC civic engagement track. While valuable for the hands-on practice they provide, internships are most effective as learning experiences when students have an opportunity to reflect upon what they have learned. Jennifer Pahre described an innovative way to deepen student learning, while also benefiting future interns and strengthening program assessment of the internship program. As director of a legal externship program, Pahre sends students out into the field to work with legal professionals: judges, governmental attorneys, and attorneys working for non-profits. Students donate their time in exchange for course credit. While a strong experiential learning experience requires reflection, students may not have access to faculty-guided reflection at the right time. They may not feel that standard guided reflection formats are appropriate or interesting. They may resist completing “another class assignment” in an experiential course.

To address these problems, Pahre requires students to complete a “letter to successor” that describes the placement mission, and

activities. Students must explain to future interns what was most interesting and challenging about the internship and also tell their successor what they wish they had known before they began. The letter demands that the student reflect upon their experiences in order to inform others. Future students consult the letters to decide which placements would suit them best, to decide which particular placements they should reach for, to make their applications strong, and to educate themselves about their new placements before they start work. Letters are submitted as part of each student's final paper (and therefore not subject to the Federal Freedom of Information Act). The letter is separated from the final paper and the student's name is removed. The letter is stored in hard copy format in the Externship Office for five years. The document is available for in-office viewing only and is never copied or made available to the supervisors. Student reflections have greatly increased in depth and quality since taking a "letter to successor" approach and the letters provide valuable information to future interns and to the College.

John Berg seconded Pahre's endorsement of the "letter to successor" as a powerful reflection tool for internship students, while considering a variety of best practices for fostering civic engagement, disciplinary education, and resume building through well-designed internships. Berg stressed the importance of avoiding low quality internships and discussed ways to assure quality (and learning) in credit-generating internships. Berg stressed that civic engagement and internships should be academically situated. They should start with a learning contract in which students work with their academic and site supervisors to set their own learning goals (based on a set of goals for all internships set by each

department or college). To make internships worthwhile, Berg suggests a site supervisor contract, a learning contract, weekly or bi-weekly reflective journals (including links to readings or coursework), a required articulation of transferable skills, midterm and post-semester evaluations completed by the site supervisor, and a letter to successor written by the intern. Minimum and maximum number of hours, student evaluation of site placement/supervisor, and student reflections on the achievement of stated learning objectives are other important requirements. Asking students to submit their resume before and after the internship is another way to encourage students to reflect on the knowledge and skills developed through the internship experience.

I appreciate the advice I've received in reading colleagues' work and attending the Teaching and Learning conference. I look forward to working with colleagues on campus to strengthen our internship program. I hope that you have found this advice useful when thinking about your own internship program and I look forward to seeing your advice in a future issue of *The Political Science Educator*.

Featured Essays

4) Using the Results of the National Survey of Student Leaders to Help Lead Campus Change

*Katherine M. Robiadek, Ph.D. Student,
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Higher education institutions are called upon to bolster civic and political engagement of students through courses across academic disciplines as well as through other campus activities, including participation in student organizations. The National Survey of Student Leaders (NSSL) was launched by the Consortium for Inter-Campus SoTL

Research (CISR) as a way to investigate the degree to which campus organizations train students in ways that cultivate civic and political skills, knowledge, dispositions, and identities.

Indeed, NSSL is the first attempt to systematically assess the quality of learning experiences and political socialization that student organizations provide on campuses across the United States. Thirty-six participating campuses administered the survey to student leaders representing 5,567 registered student organizations. Upon completion of data analysis in 2015, CISR provided each participating institution with the NSSL overall results along with the results specific to their campus.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison) participated in the inaugural round of the NSSL. The UW-Madison Campus Coordinator works in the Center for Leadership and Involvement (CfLI), which is a unit in the Division of Student Life. After obtaining permission from CfLI as the unit that registers, trains, and advises student organizations, NSSL was delivered by email to student leaders in 850 campus organizations, yielding 328 responses for a total 38.6% response rate.

Upon receiving the NSSL results, the Campus Coordinator analyzed and condensed the findings into a targeted report for campus stakeholders. The NSSL results and targeted report became the basis of weekly meetings between the Campus Coordinator and the Director of CfLI to discuss implications for CfLI programming, relevance for programming through other units in the Division of Student Life, and strategies for meetings with other campus stakeholders on issues brought to light by the report.

At UW-Madison, CfLI's mission is to cultivate and engage students through providing practical

leadership skill development and involvement experiences. As CfLI implements the University's Diversity Framework, the NSSL results have had a direct impact by highlighting the need to revise the agenda for Registered Student Organization (RSO) training in order to focus on strategies groups can use for diversifying membership. The implementation of this change is a response to the fact that upwards of 42% of UW-Madison student officers specifically requested further assistance with attracting members from diverse backgrounds. Thus, participation in the first round of NSSL has already proved useful and the results have demonstrated an added value beyond the other surveys in which CfLI and the Division of Student Life regularly participate.

The NSSL results also brought to light another important area where CfLI is interested to explore potential interventions through programming. Specifically, there is a need to increase the political efficacy of students in RSOs and to connect them to the political process. This is due to student leaders reporting through NSSL that they lack knowledge about how to work with others to change public policies and that they perceive that their organizations are less successful in influencing policies than in other efforts, like undertaking effective volunteer efforts or coordinating activities with other groups. This insight has led the UW-Madison Campus Coordinator and Director of CfLI to reach out to strategic stakeholders for meetings to discuss ideas to address the issue in light of the full NSSL campus results. These stakeholders represent various units across the UW-Madison campus including: Morgridge Center for Public Service in the Division of Student Life, The Center for Community and Nonprofit Studies in the School of Human Ecology, Wisconsin Campus Compact in University of Wisconsin-Extension, and the UW-Madison Departments of Political Science and Educational Psychology.

In view of these activities, UW-Madison looks forward to participating in the next expanded round of NSSL, and bolstering its campus participation rates for student leaders in RSOs. A valuable, and highly anticipated, benefit in the next round of NSSL will be the ability to customize a portion of the survey to ask questions important to the University, the Division of Student Life, and CfLI as each unit works to improve the educational impact of student life programming and to support the civic and political engagement of students.

5) Collaborating with Graduate Students to Enhance Civic Engagement: Lessons from Organizing an Interdisciplinary Panel Discussion

Georgia Nilsson, Lucas Alward, Jaydeep Bhatia, Sean Stephens, Adam Irish

Contact: Adam Irish, PhD, *Chico State*,
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The graduate student experience risks becoming a monastic existence of classes, reading, and research necessary to master a literature, pass comps, and write a thesis. But there exist a number of vibrant communities that graduate students could benefit from interacting with beyond classroom, library, and departmental walls. In this essay, we review a civic engagement activity (CEA) to explore civic engagement at the graduate student level. We begin by noting the benefits CEAs bring to the graduate student experience. Next, we provide a case study of a recent CEA that drew a crowd of over 250 students, local media attention, and attendance by citizens of the local community. Lastly, we analyze our CEA experience to draw out general lessons.

The Benefits of Civic Engagement for Graduate Students A growing body of literature points to

the benefits of CEAs for undergraduate students.¹ We contend that CEAs benefit graduate students as well. CEAs help graduate students explore the nexus of research and policy, learn professional and organizational skills, and draw connections between disciplines. These benefits further graduate student education as well as make graduate students more competitive candidates for future study and employment.

Firsthand understanding of the research and practice nexus is difficult to achieve. By planning a CEA, however, graduate students must ask how their studies connect to real life policy concerns, whether this might mean, for example, mobilizing care for the indigent or informing the public. CEAs also move graduate students from understanding to implementation. CEAs unify undergrads, grad students, faculty, and the community in one constructive act. The high stakes and immediate feedback of CEAs provide a venue that puts graduate student knowledge to work. Moreover, the walls of academic disciplines crumble when planning a CEA. By their nature, CEAs require engagement with a variety of community concerns and questions beyond the scope of any one field. Thus, CEAs open graduate students up to interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation.

Case Study: An Interdisciplinary-Panel Discussion of the Global Refugee Crisis. California State University Chico's Council of Graduate Students (COGS) is an organization of graduate students whose mission is to support graduate studies. In 2015, we (Nilsson, Alward, Bhatia,

¹ As of this writing, the three most recent volumes of the *Journal of Political Science Education* all contain articles focused on undergraduate civic engagement activities.

² Our sincere thanks to Professor John Crosby, Dr. Doris Schartmueller, Dr. Tony Waters, Dr. Hannah

and Stephens) were selected to lead COGS. Our goal was strengthening the intellectual discourse on campus. We wanted to provoke an informed discussion of contemporary important events among graduate students.

Early in fall 2015, we tentatively settled on the topic of Syrian refugees fleeing to Europe because the media was saturated with reporting on the refugees, most of which sensationalized the issue. At the time, three of us were pursuing Masters in Political Science, so we approached a recent departmental hire, Dr. Irish, a specialist in international law, about forming a panel to discuss the topic with graduate students. Following discussions with Alward, Dr. Irish counseled us to invite professors from different disciplines to participate and open the event to the campus community. Dr. Irish's support for the panel created momentum, shifting a discussion among graduate students to a larger CEA.

To build the panel, we reached out to professors in a variety of departments. As a recent hire, Dr. Irish knew others would jump at the opportunity to establish their presence on campus, so he reached out to other recent hires. Two weeks later, we had six panelists, including three recently hired professors and two experts in international security. Because we then risked weighting the discussion too heavily towards international security, we contacted the panel candidates and candidly outlined our concerns. As a result, one of the security panelists readily conceded his participation to his colleague and this left us with five panelists with expertise in international security, criminal justice, sociology, Spanish, and international law.² We

selected Dr. Bhatia to moderate the discussion and drafted a mix of general and specific questions with the intent of pulling panelists into a discussion. We then sent these questions to Dr. Irish and, building on his feedback, we circulated the questions before the event.

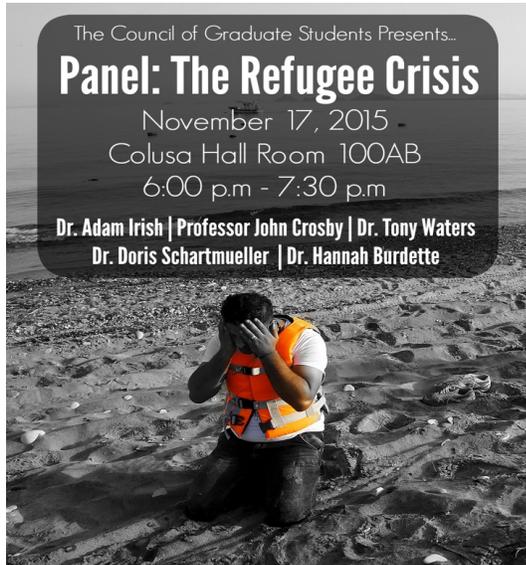
To promote the event, we emailed Deans, campus organizations, and the leaders of student groups. We also reached out to departments potentially willing to offer students extra credit for attending. We then created a flyer and posted it across campus and in local businesses a few weeks in advance of the event. Finally, we contacted local media representatives to advertise the panel discussion to the local community. The morning of the panel, Dr. Irish was interviewed by a local news station about the event as part of a report on the refugee crisis. Notably, on the night of the panel discussion, we inserted the word "Global" into the panel title to capture the varied origins of refugees. We also printed pamphlets with QR codes corresponding to humanitarian organizations (e.g. UNICEF and UNHCR), leaving them at each seat for attendees. The panel discussion was a lively and the panelists readily interacted with one another. The assembled crowd required extra seating and stayed throughout the Q&A.

Lessons Learned from this CEA

From the case study above, we found that three key elements of graduate student – faculty collaboration on CEAs contribute to their success: 1) targeted marketing and documentation, 2) the autonomy to create, and 3) logistical support to expand CEAs. (Please see below for a sample flyer.)

² Our sincere thanks to Professor John Crosby, Dr. Doris Schartmueller, Dr. Tony Waters, Dr. Hannah Burdette, and Dr. Irish for participating on the panel.

Additionally we thank Dr. Irish for helping us to craft this article on the experience.



6) Using Internships to Promote Student Learning: An Annotated Bibliography
 Elizabeth A. Bennion, Professor, Indiana University South Bend ebennion@iusb.edu

Xander E. Laughlin, Undergraduate Student, Indiana University, Bloomington
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Internships are a valuable way to further key Political Science learning objectives. Students who participate in internships are required to apply theoretical knowledge in a real world setting, master problem-solving skills in the community or workplace, and gain confidence in the application of critical thinking on issues facing their assigned organization and the world at large. Equally important, internships can help to develop a sense of political efficacy among participants. The annotated bibliography that follows summarizes a decade of articles published in two peer-reviewed political science journals: *The Journal of Political Science Education* and *PS: Political Science & Politics*. This list is designed to point instructors, departments, and colleges interested in developing successful, high-impact internships

utilizing effective designs tested by other educators in the field.

Allen, Mahalley D., Sally A. Parker, and Teodora C. DeLorenzo. "Civic Engagement in the Community: Undergraduate Clinical Legal Education." *Journal of Political Science Education* 8, no. 1 (2012): 35-49.

This article examines the learning outcomes of student participation in an undergraduate legal clinic. Student survey results indicate that a combination of academic work and community service allowed students to acquire new skills in the areas of legal research, legal analysis, legal writing, and client interviewing. Meanwhile, low-income community members benefited from access to free legal services. Impressed with the results, the authors suggest how other institutions might set up their own undergraduate legal clinics.

Anderson, Brian. "High-Impact Political Science Internships in a "Low-Density Opportunity" Environment." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 47, no. 04 (2014): 862-866.

The author of this article argues that even students who attend colleges located outside of capital cities can reap the benefits of high-impact internships. Students placed in small-city government agencies gain valuable knowledge if they are asked to reflect on their experiences and recommend improvements to enhance organizational effectiveness. Students engaging in such reflective practices become better acquainted with the mechanics of government and think more critically about how such institutions can best achieve their missions. Thus, even "low-density opportunity" environments provide invaluable opportunities for high impact internships.

Blount, Alma G. "Critical reflection for public life: How reflective practice helps students become politically engaged." *Journal of Political Science Education* 2, no. 3 (2006): 271-283.

This article provides an analytic framework for critical reflection designed to support political engagement and leadership development. The author promotes reflective practice that links writing assignments to specific experiences and academic study in ways that help students to understand complex social systems, contextualize difficult political issues, strengthen their understanding of their personal role democracy, and develop a sense of personal agency. The article provides an example of how community-based internships, when combined with critical reflection, lead to growth in personal, interpersonal, and public leadership skills.

Curtis, Steven, and Alasdair Blair. "Experiencing politics in action: Widening participation in placement learning and politics as a vocation." *Journal of Political Science Education* 6, no. 4 (2010): 369-390.

This article promotes socially inclusive short, research-based local placements that are open to all students, including those with family commitments and part-time jobs. Such placements, when embedded in the Political Science curriculum, enriched students' understanding of politics by complementing and reinforcing their studies on campus. Participants also reported a greater appreciation of political actors and processes, along with an increased sense of personal efficacy and interest in a range of possible political careers.

Doherty, Leanne. "Filling the Female Political Pipeline: Assessing a Mentor-Based Internship Program." *Journal of Political Science*

***Education* 7, no. 1 (2011): 34-47.**

This article assesses the effectiveness of an internship program matching young women with female state legislators in an attempt to increase the number of women in the political pipeline. Interviews and quantitative assessment of program alumni demonstrate that the mentor-based internship program made participants more likely to see themselves as potential political players, both at the state and national level. An analysis of recent participants' post-graduation job and graduate school choices indicate that they have continued on the pathway to political office.

Jones, David A. "The polarizing effect of a partisan workplace." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 46, no. 01 (2013): 67-73.

Group polarization theory suggests that partisan environments, in which coworkers rarely encounter alternative viewpoints, push individuals to the partisan and ideological extremes. This study tests this hypothesis by comparing opinion change among interns who worked in a partisan workplace with that of interns who were employed in less-partisan environments. The author concludes that partisan workplace environments foster opinion polarization, especially among Republicans. These findings have interesting implications for Political Science departments as they place their students into partisan internship environments.

Lowenthal, Diane J., and Jeffrey K. Sosland. "Making the grade: How a semester in Washington may influence future academic performance." *Journal of Political Science Education* 3, no. 2 (2007): 143-160.

A semester in Washington comprised of classwork and an internship has clear benefits

for students. Comparing students who participated in the program to students with similar GPAs who did not participate, the authors found that program participation had a positive impact on subsequent academic performance, especially for females and government majors. Other results included improved writing skills and greater involvement in service-learning and campus and community activities. Participant focus groups emphasized a strengthened focus on their majors, more defined career plans, an increased likelihood of attending graduate school, and excellent professional network opportunities as well as other program benefits.

Mariani, Mack, and Philip Klinkner. "The Effect of a Campaign Internship on Political Efficacy and Trust." *Journal of Political Science Education* 5, no. 4 (2009): 275-293.

This research utilizes a pre-test, post-test design to compare an experimental group, whose members participated in a 10-week internship course, with a control group, whose members did not participate. The authors find that internships increase internal efficacy and trust in government. The authors consider the role of self-selection in producing a statistically insignificant decrease in external efficacy among internship participants. Ultimately, the authors conclude that internships can change the way young people view political institutions and their role in the political system.

Pecorella, Robert F. "Forests and Trees: The Role of Academics in Legislative Internships." *Journal of Political Science Education* 3, no. 1 (2007): 79-99.

While experiential learning is recognized by academics as an invaluable tool for students to contextualize theoretical knowledge, without

proper monitoring and academic grounding, interns can become office "gophers" who learn very little. To ensure that internships will be useful learning experiences for students and productive for employers, the author proposes two rules: 1) students must be monitored before, during, and immediately after the internships, and 2) students experiences must be grounded in an academic context. The "coterminous academic component" of an internship provides the theoretical "forests" for the empirical "trees" of experience.

The above literature highlights several key lessons about creating high impact internships in Political Science. Sending students to Washington DC or placing them in local government agencies can be effective when student fieldwork is combined with both academic work and structured critical reflections. Both long-term and short-term placements can be effective, if objectives are clear and students are appropriately monitored before, during, and after the internship experience. Knowledge, skills, and dispositions can all be positively influenced by a high impact internship experience. Interns can be placed in off-campus locations or in campus-based clinics designed to engage students in community-based research and service. Adding a mentoring component to the internship experience can enhance learning outcomes and help students to chart a path toward a career in politics. Regardless of the placement, both students and site supervisors need to understand the student learning objectives and supervisor work expectations involved. Meanwhile, academic supervisors must help students to connect theory and practice in ways that promote active learning and long-term political engagement.

Announcements

- Active Learning in Political Science (ALPS) has moved! Its new web location is <http://activelearningps.com>. The move was facilitated by the generous sponsorship of Soomo Learning. The ALPS blog grew out of a conversation between a handful of attendees at the APSA Teaching and Learning Conference in 2011 – participants in the Simulations and Role Play track, who recognized a need for an online platform for the sharing of information. From these humble beginnings ALPS has grown to reach audience that stretches from Brazil to Germany to India with an average of 5,000 page views per month. Its goal is to provide resources and ideas for using active learning techniques in the political science classroom and to promote general discussion about innovative teaching methods. Its editorial staff consists of Chad Raymond, Salve Regina University; Amanda Rosen, Webster University, Simon Usherwood, University of Surrey; Nina Kollars, Franklin and Marshall College; and Michelle Allendoerfer, George Washington University. ALPS is looking for guest contributors who would like to share their positive and negative experiences with active learning techniques, whether in the form of assignments, discussions, assessment instruments, community engagement, or games. Contributions should be between 400 and 800 words. Please contact Chad Raymond at chad.raymond@salve.edu if interested.
- **Sherri Wallace** was promoted to Full Professor at the University of Louisville. Congratulations, Sherri!
- Craig L. Brians Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research & Mentorship; awarded by PSE Section; deadline: **Nov. 15, 2016**. For details see: <http://www.apsanet.org/section29>
- The annual **APSA Annual Meeting and Conference will be held September 1 - 4, 2016 in Philadelphia, PA: www.apsanet.org/**. The **Political Science Education Business Section Meeting** will held **Friday, September 2, 6:30 – 7:30 in Commonwealth A2, Loews Philadelphia Hotel**, and the APSA Community College Status Committee (CCSC), Pi Sigma Alpha and the Political Science Education Section will co-sponsor APSA's Teaching Reception immediately following, **7:30 – 9:00, room TBA**. We hope to see many of you there!

Archived issues of *The Political Science Educator* can be found here:

<http://community.apsanet.org/TeachingCivicEngagement/additionalteachingresources/new-item>

Please send any article submissions or announcements for future newsletters to Bobbi Gentry at bgentry@bridgewater.edu. The next submission deadline is **December 1** for the **Fall/Winter newsletter** and **July 1** for the **Spring/Summer newsletter**. Contributions may be as brief as 200 – 500 hundred words, but should not exceed approximately 1000 words, and should use APSA citation style. Please include "**PS Educator submission**" in the subject line of your email. Thank you!

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Bobbi Gentry and Maureen Feeley, Newsletter Co-Editors.