

Winter/Spring 2017 Newsletter

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1) Message from Section President

Sherri L. Wallace, University of Louisville

Dear Colleagues:

Happy New Year! I pray that 2016 was productive and successful for each of you. As we gear up for the 2017 Teaching & Learning Conference in Long Beach, CA (February 10-12),

I greet you on behalf of the Political Science Education Section Executive Committee:

Sherri L. Wallace, **President** (2015-2017)
University of Louisville
Email: sherri.wallace@louisville.edu

Patrick McKinlay, **Vice-Chair | Secretary** (2015-2017)
Morningside College
Email: mckinlay@morningside.edu

Joseph Roberts, **Treasurer** (2016-2019)
Affiliation: Roger Williams University
Email: jroberts@rw.edu

Bobbi Gentry, **Editor of**
The Political Science Educator
Bridgewater College
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Elizabeth Bennion (2017-2019)
Indiana State University, South Bend
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Terry Gilmour, (2015-2017)
Midland College
Email: tgilmour@midland.edu

Boris Ricks (2017-2019)
California State University, Northridge
Email: boris.ricks@csun.edu

Michael Rogers (2017-2019)
Arkansas Tech University
Email: mrogers6@atu.edu

Thomas Ringenberg (2017-2019)
Rockhurst University
Email: Thomas.Ringenberg@rockhurst.edu

2017 APSA Annual Meeting Section Program Chairs:

Joseph Roberts, Roger Williams University
Terry Gilmour, Midland College

We warmly welcome our new officers recently elected in 2016: Elizabeth Bennion, Boris Ricks, Thomas Ringenberg and Michael Rogers, as we gratefully acknowledge the years of dedicated service of our immediate past officers: Victor Asal (State University of New York at Albany), Chad Raymond (Salve Regina University) and immediate past-president, Renée Van Vechten (University of Redlands).

At the business meeting, the section approved revisions to the Bylaws and we officially greeted Victor Asal as the new lead editor of the Journal of Political Science Education (JPSE) with some long-time section members, who will comprise the new editorial board. We're excited about this transition as JPSE becomes an APSA journal.

Also, with our stable membership and growth, the executive committee decided to suspend our 2016 new/renewed membership campaign, but not before awarding \$50 Amazon Gift Cards to our final randomly-selected winners. Congratulations to all!



Jarrod Kelly
New Member
Dept. of Political Science
University of Pittsburgh

No Picture

Randall Lee Pomeroy
New Member
Kalamazoo Valley
Community College



Amy Atchison
Renewed Membership
Dept. of Political Science
Valparaiso University



Kirsten L. Taylor
Renewed Membership
Dept. of Political Science
Berry College

Even before their tedious, yet vital work begins, we extend our hearty thanks to Joseph Roberts and Terry Gilmour for serving as our section program chairs for the 2017 Annual Meeting to be held in San Francisco, CA (August 31-September 3). This year's theme is "The Quest for Legitimacy: Actors, Audiences and Aspirations." We hope that you submitted a proposal and plan to attend the meeting to support our section.

Finally, our award committees are in place and ready to receive (self) nominations/submissions for our **2017 Awards**. Below are the committee chairs and committee members who will receive your (self) nominations/submissions **DUE by APRIL 1, 2017:**

The Craig L. Brians Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research and Mentorship

Chair: Thomas Ringenberg
(Thomas.Ringenberg@rockhurst.edu)
Committee Members: J. Carlos Huerta (Texas A&M Corpus Christi) and Karen Hult (Virginia Tech University)

The Best APSA Conference Paper Award

Chair: Michael Rogers (mrogers6@atu.edu)
Committee Members: Ellen Claes (University of Leuven) and J. Cherie Strachan (Western Michigan University)

The Lifetime Achievement Award

Chair: Elizabeth Bennion (ebennion@isub.edu)
Committee Members: Executive Committee

The Distinguished Service Award

Chair: Boris Ricks (boris.ricks@csun.edu)
Committee Members: Executive Committee

In hindsight, 2016 was a pretty smooth year for our section, and we enthusiastically look forward to 2017. As always, we welcome your active comments and suggestions at any time.

Wishing you much success,



Sherri L. Wallace, President

The Teacher-Scholar Column

Undergraduate Research Assistants and Scholarly Productivity

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

One of the responsibilities of our lives as teacher-scholars is to teach students how to be scholars. Research papers, methodology courses, and intensive writing courses can all help students to develop their reading, writing, and research skills. Requiring students to read, summarize, analyze, criticize, and synthesize academic journal articles in courses across the curriculum is another way to develop essential skills while teaching them about the discipline.

Employing undergraduate research assistants is a less utilized, but particularly valuable, way to mentor students in the area of scholarship. The benefits are tremendous. Carefully selected undergraduate students can increase research productivity for the faculty member, while preparing students for future work in the academy and beyond. Students can manage databases, conduct literature reviews, draft sections of a research paper, and edit book chapters. My research assistant, Xander Laughlin, has done all of this and more. Without his help, my scholarly output would be drastically reduced as I balance my research time with a heavy teaching and service load. Importantly, this arrangement has proven to be mutually beneficial, as Xander describes in his essay printed on page 3.

I encourage all faculty members to consider working with undergraduate research assistants. Students can sign up for an independent

research course or be hired as hourly or work-study students. Faculty should have specific projects in mind, assign specific weekly tasks, set specific hours, and plan to check in with the student every week. Ideally, faculty should select a student, like Xander, who is detail-oriented, responsible, and self-motivated. A student who works quickly and efficiently, asks for additional tasks upon completion, and seeks opportunities for co-authorship is ideal. Some tasks may be more difficult to delegate than others. An undergraduate student cannot be expected to do the work for you – or to work without active feedback and mentoring. Sometimes the faculty mentor may find it difficult to keep up with a diligent task-oriented student! Still, the time invested is repaid many times over in increased productivity. Co-authorship and mentorship offer many rewards for both faculty and students. It's a winning combination – well worth a try!

Featured Essays

From the Student: The Value of an Undergraduate Research Assistantship

Xander E. Laughlin, Indiana University, Bloomington IN, xelaughl@uemail.iu.edu

When I began my undergraduate career, a political science faculty member at my university selected me to serve as her research assistant. While research assistantships benefit the professor by giving her a “helping hand” in her research, it also benefits the student. My experience in this position has been valuable in two key respects, each discussed in turn. First, it has presented a challenging learning opportunity through which I have grown not only academically but professionally; and second, it has opened doors to internships and other competitive opportunities. Indeed, because of my positive experience, I often recommend that my friends and peers seek out similar opportunities.

As I would find out, a research assistantship, coupled with a full-time academic schedule, would be demanding, yet rewarding. An obvious reward has been the further development of my

critical thinking skills. One assignment required me to review literature from multiple academic journals. Another required me to review manuscripts on a related topic for a forthcoming edited volume. Commenting on forthcoming publications from scholars in the field helped me to think more critically about their content. I read over recommendations given to authors by my supervisor and other scholars of civic engagement, and they first helped me to see what kind of questions I *wasn't* asking. My relatively passive reading habits—which did not lend themselves particularly well to rigorous inquiry—slowly transformed into a more nuanced approach. I witnessed questions I had never bothered to ask arise in my mind: *What* does the author mean by *this*? Wait, but is the present finding not at odds with previous research on the subject? *How* does this research fit into the body of literature and what is its broader contribution? In short, the process of reading ceased to be a passive act in which I failed to recognize the intimate relationship between previous and new knowledge. Instead it became a dynamic process in which I learned to look at information with a critical eye.

Another skill that I further developed was organization. Throughout my research assistant experience, I was responsible for organizing and keeping track of vast amounts of data for multiple projects with different deadlines. I tracked new participants, IRB approval forms, administrative permissions, campus contacts, email communications, and more for a multi-campus research survey. Meanwhile, I tracked course titles, classroom activities, learning objectives, learning outcomes, and assessment data for several review essays on civic education. I also conducted my own multi-campus research project on voter ID compliance with state voter ID laws. Whether helping to administer a survey on campuses across the country, conducting a systematic review of different approaches to civic education, or conducting a review of Indiana college campuses' compliance with state voter ID laws, the work required attention to details and careful documentation. At first, it was a lot to take in; after all, I had never been responsible for keeping track of so much data

with the added necessity of accuracy. With time, however, I learned to balance the demands of multiple projects and their deadlines.

Perhaps one of the most important parts of this experience has been skill transfer. In other classes, and indeed outside of them as well, I am able to apply these skills to enrich my understanding of what I am learning or the information presented to me. Whether a class lecture, an academic article, or a piece of news, I am persistently questioning with skepticism and critically examining new information.

Yet another benefit from this experience has been greater access to other competitive opportunities. Impressed by this experience in particular, and my commitment to experiential learning overall, professors and others have offered me significant opportunities for which I am grateful. For example, an economics professor offered me an undergraduate instructor (UGI) position while a different professor offered me a peer-assisted student learning (PASS) position. Both would require me to lead a discussion section where students could seek clarification on concepts and ask general questions. An academic publisher affiliated with the university offered me yet another opportunity. It would require me to serve as an editor for a forthcoming book. I have also been very lucky to receive scholarships, at least in part due to my experience as a research assistant. Each of these opportunities for additional experience and funding will further my knowledge and skill-set moving forward.

My supervisor has made it clear that my work has helped her to achieve her professional goals. With this essay, I seek to emphasize that the benefit was mutual. I strongly encourage professors to consider working with undergraduate research assistants. Whether for credit or for pay, the value of the experience is difficult to measure. The benefits are extensive and far-reaching.

Changes to the Journal of Political Science Education

Victor Asal, State University of New York, Albany,

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I am writing to you as the new editor in chief of the Journal of Political Science Education (JPSE). The team of editors — myself, Mitchell Brown, Shane Nordyke, Joseph W. Roberts, Mark Johnson, and J. Cherie Strachan — would like to encourage you to submit manuscripts to the journal. The journal has become an important outlet for sharing ideas and knowledge about pedagogy in political science since its inception, and we would like to encourage further growth as the journal moves into being an Association-wide journal of the American Political Science Association. We also would like to make readers aware that the types of manuscripts that JPSE is looking for has widened and we believe that the variety of sections we now have in the journal will be of great interest to you both as readers and as contributors. We are continuing the tradition of JPSE of publishing articles devoted to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, but we are expanding the reach of the journal to include case studies, examples of useful approaches to teaching, and reflections on teaching from a variety of perspectives. Specifically we are looking for:

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (editors: Mitchell Brown and Shane Nordyke): Submissions should use the highest standard of evidence in writing about evidence-based approaches to teaching practices and encourage assessment of such teaching and practices. Submissions can be diverse in terms of topic, analytic approach, and levels of analysis, but must maintain systematic methodological approaches. Length of manuscript may range from 3,000-8,000 words, and research notes between 2,000-5,000 words. Authors of accepted papers will be required to make datasets publically available online through their choice of venue or provide a compelling rationale if they are unable to do so.

Political Science Instruction (editor: Joseph Roberts): Submissions should focus on innovative teaching cases that discuss useful pedagogy, including strategies, games, and experiential learning in teaching political science

to diverse audiences. They should also be organized around real classroom problems and potential solutions. Submissions may range in length from 2,000-4,000 words.

Reflections on Teaching and the Academy (editor: Mark Johnson): Submissions should be from experienced scholar-teachers that focus on reflections on timely and important teaching topics that include transitioning between institutional types, teaching under-prepared students, training graduate students for teaching careers, and other issues. Submissions may range in length from 1,000-2,000 words.

Books, Teaching Tools, & Educational Resources (editor: J. Cherie Strachan): Submissions should help readers identify available new books, software and resources, and to improve classroom and co-curricular learning experiences through reviews of textbooks, pedagogy tools and other related resources. Submissions may range in length from 500-2,000 words.

If you have any questions, such as whether a topic is appropriate for the journal, feel free to email me or the editor of the section you think is the best fit for a submission.

Using a Work Attitude Survey to Examine Student Motivation

Chad Kinsella, Ball State University,
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In 1982, Carl Stone set out to explore worker attitudes in Jamaica. Using a ten question survey, he discovered several critical findings about what motivates workers. The survey and his subsequent book serves as a key study for understanding employee motivation, especially in the field of public administration. While teaching Introduction of Public Administration, this same survey was employed, with some minor tweaking, to get students in the class to consider what motivates them. The findings are an interesting look inside the motivations of our students and may be helpful for faculty to consider and understand while working with them.

What Motivates Students?

Within the field of psychology, research has been conducted to find out about student academic

motivation. Perhaps the best explanation of academic motivation that can be used to examine the results of the Work Attitude Survey was done by Vallerand and Bissonnette (1992). They identified three types of academic motivations for students: Internal Motivation, External Motivation, and Amotivated. Within Internal and External Motivation types they also identified three subfields of motivation. Internal Motivation is characterized by a student acting voluntarily with no expectation of external reward and include the following:

- *To Know* internal motivation is indicative of students gaining satisfaction from learning;
- *Toward Accomplishment* means students gain motivation from achieving something; and
- *To Experience Stimulation* indicates students are motivated by mental or physical sensory stimulation.

External Motivation occurs when students are motivated by a reward beyond the act itself and include the following subtypes:

- *Identified* is an external motivation indicative of student being motivated due to future benefit from an action;
- *Introjected* is external motivation where students internalize emotions such as pride or guilt for accomplishing or not accomplishing work or goals; and
- *External Motivation* is indicative of student motivation due to an outside person or persons granting or withholding an activity as an incentive.

Amotivated students are those that are not motivated by any internal or external motivations and have no measurable drive or purpose.

Carl Stone's Work Attitude Survey

While teaching an Introduction to Public Administration course, we examined employee motivation, including various theories of motivation and the findings of Carl Stone's work. To examine the ideas of motivation in more depth, the class completed a slightly altered survey that Carl Stone used in his research (see below). The findings led to

an interesting class discussion but also provide an insight into what motivates students, especially when coupled with Vallerand and Bissonnette's ideas of student motivation.

The questionnaire was handed out to thirty-one students enrolled in the class. The class was composed almost exclusively of juniors and seniors with most being Criminal Justice majors, followed by political science majors, and a couple of education majors. The questionnaire used in the class, with Carl Stone's actual wording in parentheses, was changed to reflect the intended audience (students) as opposed to employees. Student answers are listed below the question with highest number of responses listed first.

What Motivates You?

Complete the following sentences with first word or phrase that come to mind:

1. I go to class (work) because _____

Have to/ Want a degree/ Want to learn and/or Get good grades/ Want to better their life/ Do not want to fail

2. College (Work) to me means _____

A better life/ Education/ Self-improvement

3. The best part about college (work) is _____

Friends/ the Structure/ Expansion of knowledge and skills

4. The worst part about college (work) is _____

Difficulty of class and stress/ Costs/ Unnecessary work/ Peers/ Food

5. My job (is) as student is _____

Work hard and get good grades/ Get a degree/ Learn

6. Motivation to do class work (work) comes from _____

Want to learn and graduate/ Grades/ Family/ Accomplish future goals/ Recognition

7. If I made one change to make my class work (work) more interesting, I would _____

More hands on and more discussion/ More organized/ Smaller classes

8. My motivation at college (work) would improve if

More time/ More financial support/ Better professors/ Less distractions/ A guaranteed job/ Less stressful

9. My motivation at college (work) would decline if

Costs increase/ Had bad professors/ Had to take unwanted classes/ Received a job offer/ Had no goals/ Had too much work

10. My ambition is to

Graduate/ Be successful/ Be knowledgeable/ Help others/ Go to graduate school/ Impress/ Get a job/ Find purpose

The array of answers to each question show a great range of motivations for students. Many students are motivated by external motivations, especially by such things as achieving good grades, graduating, and obtaining some future benefit like a degree, a job, or the ability to attend graduate school. Although slightly less prevalent, internal motivation such as self-improvement, learning, and gaining skill and knowledge also were listed. There were relatively few answers that could be characterized as amotivated, likely due to the number of upper level students.

Although the class is not representative of the whole university, there are still some helpful findings to consider when thinking about what makes our students motivated. Many do enjoy our classes and are motivated to learn. However, most are thinking in terms of external rewards and threats to motivate in class. This may also be the source of tension or frustration for us as faculty because it is likely that many of us were and are motivated by intrinsic motivations. Ultimately, this survey does show that our upper level students are motivated and do react, although somewhat differently than we might expect, to motivations that we have built in to our classes.

References:

Stone, C. 1982. *Work Attitude Survey: A Report to the Jamaican Government*. St. Anne, Jamaica: Earle Publishers Ltd.

Stone, C. 1983. *Finding of the Stone Survey*. Kingston, Jamaica: JIS Press.

Vallerand, R.J., Bissonnette. R. 1992. Intrinsic, Extrinsic, and Amotivational Styles as Predictors of Behavior: A Prospective Study. *Journal of Personality*, 60, 599-620.

Announcements

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. Submission deadlines are **June 15** for the **Summer/Fall newsletter**, and **December 15** for the **Winter/Spring 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, Newsletter Editor