

# 2023 Executive Director's Report

STEVEN RATHGEB SMITH | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

It is once again a distinct privilege to submit my executive director's report in 2023. This report provides an opportunity to share information about APSA programming and operations and to invite feedback and accountability from our members. In 2022, the year began with continued uncertainty and concluded with a dynamic environment full of challenges and opportunities for our members, higher education, and the discipline. APSA has responded to this changing environment through: new professional development resources; promoting and expanding teaching and learning materials; revitalized international programming; a forward-focused Annual Meeting; and continued commitments to diversity and inclusion, to the dissemination of research, and to supporting our members and the discipline. While many APSA programs such as the 2022 APSA Annual Meeting in Montréal have returned to an in-person format, APSA staff are excited to continue offering and expanding virtual programs to meet the needs of members. It has been a great privilege to work with the APSA staff and numerous volunteers to support our members and the discipline through this unique time.

## 2022 APSA ANNUAL MEETING

The 2022 APSA Annual Meeting & Exhibition was held in-person in Montréal, Québec, Canada from Tuesday, September 13 through Sunday, September 18 alongside a small virtual component. Featuring more than 6,100 attendees and nearly 1,250 panels and events, the 2022 APSA Annual Meeting provided opportunities for political science students, professors, researchers, and practitioners to share cutting-edge research, engage with relevant issues, and network with colleagues.



The meeting began with a Pres-

**Steven Rathgeb Smith** is executive director of the American Political Science Association and adjunct professor at the McCourt School of Public Policy at Georgetown University. Previously, he taught at several universities including the University of Washington. He is the author of several books, including, most recently, *The Changing Dynamic of Government—Nonprofit Relationships: Advancing the Field(s)*, co-authored with Kirsten A. Gronbjerg (Cambridge University Press, 2021).

idential Address by APSA President John Ishiyama entitled "Whither Political Science in a Post-Pandemic World? Challenges and Opportunities." Program co-chairs Sherri L. Wallace, University of Louisville; and Pei-Te Lien, University of California, Santa Barbara created a program focused on the conference theme of "Rethink, Restructure, and Reconnect: Toward a Post-Pandemic Political Science." The program addressed a variety of important and timely issues including those highlighted in three plenary panel discussions: "Is Canadian Democracy Under Threat," "Voices of the Right: Political Conservatism in Academia," and "Breaking News: The Russian Invasion of Ukraine and its Consequences."

APSA was excited to host our members in-person in Montréal and to offer a small virtual component to make the meeting accessible for participants who were not able to travel and meet the desire for virtual content. I would particularly like to recognize the efforts of the staff, volunteers, and members who helped ensure the meeting ran efficiently and provided participants with a great opportunity to connect and share research.

We look forward to welcoming political scientists from across the world to Los Angeles, California, in 2023 under the conference theme "Rights and Responsibilities in an Age of Mis- and Disinformation."

## TEACHING AND LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING

APSA's core objectives include the promotion of high-quality teaching and the professional development of members. As scholars, practitioners, students, and educators navigate a challenging post-pandemic higher education and career environment, APSA has expanded its opportunities for instructors to further develop their curricula and teaching materials through APSA's teaching and learning resources while also offering increased academic and professional development events and resources for political scientists both within and outside of the academy.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING PROGRAMMING

As in-person programming returned in 2022, APSA expanded its offerings for teaching and learning resources as well as both in-person and virtual events. The 5th annual TLC at APSA, a full-day mini-conference held in conjunction with the APSA Annual Meeting in Montréal, brought together nearly 150 political science educators in highly interactive forum to share innovative

tools and techniques for political science education, present research on the scholarship of teaching and learning, and enhance the role of teaching in disciplines. TLC at APSA will be held again at the 2023 APSA Annual Meeting in Los Angeles.

In 2022, APSA also held a series of symposia on teaching political science, including Teaching Introduction to American Government; Teaching Race, Ethnicity, and Politics; Teaching Political Science at a Community College; and Teaching Economic Inequality and Social Class. These symposia bring together 15-20 teacher-scholars to produce concrete teaching resources in emerging substantive and pedagogical areas. In addition to symposia, APSA also expanded virtual teaching and learning opportunities through webinars on teaching strategies for breaking news topics. These webinars included topics such as “Strategies for Teaching Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization” and “Strategies for Teaching About Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine” and “The Crisis in American Democracy.”

APSA Educate, which was launched in 2020 with the support of the Ivywood Foundation, had another strong year in 2022. APSA Educate is a dedicated online library for political science teaching resources. More than 50 new resources were added to the site in 2022, with teaching materials for undergraduate and graduate courses across all subfields of the discipline. All materials are free and allow users to easily search, upload, and “favorite” materials.

#### ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In recent years, APSA has endeavored to increase the number of professional development resources and events for political scientists in both academic and non-academic careers. The 2022 APSA Annual Meeting featured more than 50 professional development-focused panels and events, including dissertation workshops, communications training sessions, and publishing related events. APSA also hosted a series of virtual professional development events throughout the year for non-academic careers: “Using ImaginePhD to Identify Professional Skills and Explore Careers,” “Turning your Academic CV into a Resume,” and “Careers Outside of the Academy: A Roundtable Discussion,” and a pedagogy workshop on “Preparing Teaching Materials for the Job Market.”

In addition, APSA is excited to assist in the development of members working to combine academic research with an interest in civic engagement through the Institute for Civically Engaged Research (ICER). The Institute provides political scientists of any rank or institutional affiliation with training to conduct ethical and rigorous civically engaged research, which can be defined as an approach to inquiry that involves political scientists collaborating in a mutually beneficial way with people and groups beyond the academy to co-produce, share, and apply knowledge related to power or politics that contributes to self-governance. Gathering in-person for the first time since 2019, the June 2022 Institute welcomed 20 political scientists to Tufts University for four days of learning, reflection, and community building led by Amy Cabrera-Rasmussen, California State University, Long Beach; Peter Levine, Tufts University; and Valeria Sinclair-Chapman, Purdue University. ICER is an initiative of APSA’s Presidential Task Force on New Partnerships and is made possible by generous financial support from the Ivywood Foundation.

#### PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCES

APSA presidential task forces seek to expand the public presence of political science by putting the best of political science research and knowledge at the service of critical issues that have major public policy implications, and by sharing with broader society what political scientists know about important trends and issues in areas of public concern. In 2022, two task forces presided over by APSA president John Ishiyama, University of North Texas, addressed the future of political science education and the behavior of political parties in the United States.

The Presidential Task Force on Rethinking Political Science Education is focused on making recommendations on best practices regarding the curricular structure of undergraduate and graduate political science programs. The task force, which is co-chaired by Michelle Deardorff, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and David Lake, University of California, San Diego, will assess how political science departments structure programs to ensure that students have the necessary skills to succeed as engaged citizens in the modern world. The task force’s report will be released in 2023.

Co-chaired by Liliana Mason, Johns Hopkins University, and David Lublin, American University, the Presidential Task Force on Responsible Political Party Behavior draws upon the work and expertise of scholars of both American politics and comparative politics to make recommendations for responsible political party behavior in the United States. The task force is held in partnership with Protect Democracy, who provides significant logistical and financial support for the work of the task force. The task force will issue an edited volume in 2023.

#### INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOPS

In 2022, APSA was excited to collaborate with partners to expand opportunities for political science students and scholars from the Global South to deepen connections and share research at conferences and workshops. With support from Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY), 13 fellows from countries across the Arab Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region participated in APSA’s first Arabic-language program. The research development workshop was hosted by the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies in Qatar and held in a hybrid format in May. A second MENA Workshop on “Studying Public Opinion in the Contemporary Middle East: Challenges, Opportunities and Best Practices” was held in Amman, Jordan across 6 days in June and was attended by 18 fellows. All alumni were given 3 years membership to APSA and the opportunity to apply for small grants to support their research and professional development.

In December 2022, Carnegie Corporation of New York renewed its support for APSA’s Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Program. The three-year grant will continue APSA’s professional development activities for scholars from the Arab MENA region which, since 2014, has had an impact on hundreds of early-career political scientists. Through a series of annual workshops, departmental collaborations, research grants, methods trainings, and mentoring initiatives, the program extends APSA’s engagement with the international political science community and builds capacity for publishing empirically rich analysis of emerging issues in political science.

APSA also partnered in organizing two research conferences for the MENA region and Southeast Asia, respectively.

Over three days in July, 65 scholars, including 36 PhD students and early-career scholars from across the MENA region gathered in Amman, Jordan, for the MENA Political Science Conference on “New Landscapes in MENA Politics Research.” This conference was organized in partnership with Columbia Global Centers, Amman and the Special Commission on Social Science Research (REMENA). The Asia Pacific Political Science Research and Publication Conference was held in Bangkok, Thailand across three days in July. This conference was organized in partnership with Thammasat and Chulalongkorn Universities and the Southeast Asia Research Group (SEAREG). The conference was attended by approximately 70 scholars, including 32 PhD students and early-career scholars from across East and Southeast Asia.

### DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAMMING

APSA values diversity, equity, and inclusion. The APSA strategic plan states that one of APSA’s overarching goals is to promote and encourage diversity and inclusion in the profession, and the APSA Diversity and Inclusion Programs include longstanding programs to increase diversity, inclusion, and access within the discipline of political science across all levels and at APSA meetings and events.

### APSA MENTORING PROGRAM

The APSA Mentoring Program was created in 2003 and connects undergraduate, graduate students, and junior faculty from all backgrounds to experienced and senior members of the profession for professional development support on a wide range of academic and career topics. Mentorship is vital to success for women, scholars of color, first-generation scholars and other underrepresented groups in the profession. Mentor matches are made twice a year, once at the beginning of the fall semester and once at the beginning of the spring semester. Mentor matches can be short-term (on semester) or long-term (for one academic year). In fall 2022 APSA staff matched 101 mentors and mentees. In spring 2023, APSA staff made an additional 62 matches.

### RALPH BUNCHE SUMMER INSTITUTE

One of the most prominent of APSA’s diversity and recruitment programs is the Ralph Bunche Summer Institute (RBSI), established in 1986 to increase diversity within the political science discipline. In 2022, 14 undergraduate students participated in the annual, intensive five-week program hosted by Duke University on May 29–June 30, 2022, under the direction of Dr. Paula D. McClain. The 2023 institute will host 15 students and will be held May 28–June 29, 2023. The program is funded in part by the National Science Foundation. In 2019, Dr. McClain was awarded a \$462,000 grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to support the APSA Ralph Bunche Summer Institute (RBSI) for 2019–2021. Due to the pandemic interrupting the normal cycle of the program, Dr. McClain has requested and received no cost extensions to fund the program for 2023 and possibly through 2024.

### RESPECT CAMPAIGN

A key component of APSA’s efforts to create a diverse, inclusive, and respectful environment at APSA meetings and events is the RESPECT Campaign, which encourages “professional respect”

by and towards all APSA annual meeting attendees and participants at all times, was featured at the 2022 Annual Meeting through email messaging, signage, and buttons. RESPECT stands for Respectful, Equitable, Safe, Professional, and Ethical Conduct Towards All. The APSA Sexual Harassment Survey Report and Anti-Harassment Policy (code of conduct) addresses the importance of facilitating a climate of respect at the annual meeting. The goal is to promote a respectful climate throughout the profession. The presence of APSA resources like the APSA Meetings Ombuds and Bystander Intervention Training, which were available during the 2022 meeting onsite and virtually, also embody this message of RESPECT.

### MCCLAIN TASK FORCE ON SYSTEMIC INEQUALITY

In 2022 the final report and recommendations from the APSA Presidential Task Force on Examining Issues and Mechanisms of Systemic Inequality in the Discipline was shared widely with the discipline, in particular department chairs. Convened by former APSA President Dr. Paula D. McClain, the Task Force conducted research in the following four areas of concern, led by four co-chairs:

- Tenure and Promotion Standards: Burdens of Faculty of Color: Cathy Cohen, University of Chicago
- Citation Patterns and Inequities: John A. Garcia, ICPSR
- Climate and Context: Carol A. Mershon, University of Virginia
- Graduate Training and Graduate Student Experiences: Niambi Carter, Howard University.

The task force report includes recommendations for APSA and for departments of political science regarding strategies for ameliorating the effects of, and removing, systemic inequalities. To engage these recommendations, the Task Force held a short course at the 2022 Annual Meeting entitled “Creating and Enacting Your Department’s Plan for Equity” and a roundtable entitled “Implications for Journals and Publishing Practices. In 2023, the Task Force leaders will hold a convening of department leaders at the APSA headquarters in Washington DC.

### PUBLICATIONS

In 2022, APSA publications focused on promoting cutting-edge research in the association’s journals, helping editorial transitions, and promoting ventures including APSA Preprints and the association magazine, *Political Science Today*. Both *PS: Political Science & Politics* and the *Journal of Political Science Education* transitioned to new editorial teams in summer 2022. The APSA publications team worked closely with the new editors to ensure smooth transitions. The *PS: Political Science & Politics* editorial team is from Wake Forest University, and the editorial team for the *Journal of Political Science Education* is from Kennesaw State University.

In early 2022, the *Journal of Behavioral Public Administration* became an APSA-owned journal to be administered through the Public Administration Organized Section. The *Journal of Behavioral Public Administration* became the 7th organized section journal owned by APSA and will provide the association the opportunity to better serve members across the discipline in an open access format.

Two additional APSA publication initiatives continued growing in 2022. The association magazine, *Political Science Today*, completed its second volume. The quarterly magazine,

## SPOTLIGHTS

---

which is available to all members in print or online, includes news about the discipline, member spotlights, and association updates. APSA Preprints continues to serve as an important resource for scholars to share research. By December 2022, the site had 600 papers and 350,000 views.

### **GRANT INITIATIVES AND RESEARCH SUPPORT**

In recent years, APSA has considerably expanded the opportunities and amount of grant funding and members assistance programs. In 2022, APSA continued to expand these resources in support of our members' research, professional development, community engagement, and teaching:

#### **SPECIAL PROJECTS FUND GRANTS**

In 2022, APSA awarded the biennial Special Projects Fund grants. Nearly \$250,000 were awarded to a total of twelve projects. The thirty-two scholars who make up the twelve project teams collectively represent twenty-six institutions ranging from research universities to community colleges in eight different countries. Each of these projects seeks to push the discipline forward by advancing best practices in teaching and research ethics, supporting members of underrepresented groups who wish to join the profession, championing digital research methods, and creating partnerships between APSA and scholars across the globe.

#### **DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ADVANCING RESEARCH GRANTS**

The APSA Diversity and Inclusion Advancing Research Grants are a fulfillment of the APSA Strategic Plan to expand support for the advancement of scholars from underrepresented groups and for research that examines political science phenomena affecting under-served communities and underrepresented groups. The Advancing Research Grants complement APSA's existing Diversity and Inclusion fellowships and grants—namely the APSA Diversity Fellowship Program (DFP), the Lee Ann Fujii APSA Diversity Fellowship Travel Grant, and the Fund for Latino Scholarship—providing additional research funding opportunities for scholars at multiple points in their professional careers. In 2022, APSA awarded a total of \$24,000 in the third annual cycle of Diversity and Inclusion Advancing Research Grants for Early Career Scholars and for Indigenous Politics. The Early Career Scholars Grant supported six projects for a total award amount of \$12,000. The Indigenous Politics Grant supported six projects for a total award amount of \$12,000.

#### **DOCTORAL DISSERTATION RESEARCH IMPROVEMENT GRANT**

In 2020, the National Science Foundation (NSF) made an

award to APSA to administer the Political Science Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant program (DDRIG), which promotes the progress of science by identifying and supporting doctoral dissertation research projects that have the potential to advance knowledge of citizenship, government, and politics. In 2022, the program's third year, APSA received nearly 150 applications and was excited to disburse over \$355,000 across 27 grants.

### **SUPPORT FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

In line with one of APSA's core objectives of defending the legitimacy of scholarly research into politics and government, APSA leadership has, over many years, made public statements on issues pertaining to the rights and freedoms of political scientists and scholars. As researchers, students, practitioners, and educators face threats to their academic freedom, APSA will continue to issue statements and engage with the proper authorities to support the scholarly independence and academic freedom of political scientists in the United States and around the world.

### **APSA OPERATIONS**

In Spring 2022, a multi-year renovation of APSA headquarters in the Dupont Circle neighborhood of Washington, DC, was completed. The renovation includes a new HVAC system, replacement of rear windows, and refurbishment of the original front-facing windows that date to the 1880s. This renovation along with technical and equipment upgrades will permit APSA to continue serving members through a collaborative environment for staff. APSA staff returned to the newly-renovated headquarters building in Spring 2022 and are currently working in a hybrid format. Additional renovations were also completed at an adjacent property that APSA leases to a small private school. APSA's rental income helps provide a diversified income and investment portfolio that, through careful fiscal management, maintains APSA's strong financial position.

### **CONCLUSION**

This past year, through a return to in-person events alongside increased virtual events and resources, APSA programming expanded to better serve the membership and discipline. I would like to acknowledge the APSA staff, who continuously support these initiatives. I would also like to thank our many members who devote time and resources in support of APSA's extensive programming, annual meeting, and publications. I look forward to continuing to work with the APSA staff and our members to advocate for academic freedom, support political research and teaching, promote professional development, and further engagement in the public sphere in 2023 and beyond. ■