

# Open Letter to Members of the Association from Robert E. Lane, President

November 1970

Dear Colleagues:

*Of the several things on my mind, I think the matter of Association assistance to members in finding positions suited to their talents is the most important. Here I would like to emphasize the work of the APSA Personnel Service and the policy of open listing that the Council has adopted. To be effective, the open listing policy requires that every department with a vacancy for which more than one person is to be considered shall arrange to have this vacancy listed in the APSA Personnel Service Newsletter. The Council believes this policy of open listing of vacancies is a "professional obligation" of each department chairman. The reasons, of course, have to do with the rationalization of the job market (particularly important at a time when positions are scarce), improving the scanning procedure for the hiring departments, and reassuring candidates that they are currently informed of all relevant positions and that they are not being prejudiced by an informal "old boy network." From the point of view of the profession as a whole, the open listing policy and wider distribution of information makes a lot of sense.*

*I understand the hesitation of some departments to invite a flood of applications from candidates who for one reason or another might not qualify, but some protection against unnecessary paper work may be provided by the strong suggestion that communications on behalf of applicants carry complete records, including confidential letters of reference. Also, although it is recommended that all applicants receive at least a form letter acknowledging receipt of application, departments are not obligated to respond to all inquiries. The Council has established a Committee on Recruitment and Placement which, among its tasks, will assist in reviewing the new procedures.*

*If you have suggestions on the new procedures, I am sure the Director of the Association's Personnel Service, Mrs. Rona Hitlin, will be glad to hear from you.*

*This brings me to the second aspect of the assistance the Association would like to provide for candidates seeking positions this year. We have puzzled over how best to provide assistance to the disadvantaged without drawing invidious distinctions where they are not wanted. On this score, the policies of the Personnel Service as approved by the Annual Business Meeting or the Council*

*will be to print conditions of employment that expand, rather than limit, the classes of candidates to be considered. We will also allow specifications of ethnic group, sex, or religion, where the spokesmen for the disadvantaged groups agree to such specification. Further, consistent with the Annual Meeting resolutions, the Association will undertake to try to change nepotism rules where these discriminate (as they usually do) against women, and will seek to increase part-time employment, a form of employment particularly suited for women with children. Finally, under certain circumstances, the Association will seek to find legal counsel for members who wish to file charges of discrimination on the basis of sex with the Office of Federal Contract Compliance as provided in certain Executive Orders.*

*Another matter on my mind – one on which I would welcome guidance from the membership – has to do with the problems of bibliographic search and more generally the question of how the Association can help the members find out what has been published on research topics of concern to them. Many American professional associations publish their own abstracts, providing quick guidance to current literature and, through bound volumes, reference to the recent and historic literature. Although the International Political Science Abstracts provide some assistance, its publication schedule does not permit a current appraisal of the literature, and its procedures do not lend themselves to machine treatment.*

*Under these circumstances, I would like to know if there is any demand for the publication of, say, the American Political Science Abstracts, to provide a quarterly publication to subscribers and a further computerized search and information retrieval capacity for those who seek it. Since the Association is not in a position to subsidize this new publication, it would have to be self supporting. This would probably be possible at a subscription cost of about \$20.00 per person. Would there be any takers?*

*Finally, I am still working on the problem of "knowledge into action" or how the research and counseling talents of the members of the Association can be related to policy decisions in government. Those of you who are doing policy research would greatly assist me with some concrete suggestions.*

**Robert E. Lane, President**