

# Editor's Report for the *Journal of Political Science Education*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Our application to edit the *Journal of Political Science Education* (JPSE) identified a number of challenges that we considered priorities for the journal. This included increasing the profile of the journal and making timely decisions with regard to submissions. Among APSA journals, JPSE is responsible for creating a forum for key teaching and learning discussions, as well as supporting inclusive and accessible pedagogical innovation. We believe that over the last year we have made progress in addressing the challenges and opportunities facing the journal. Key initiatives have included increasing the diversity of the editorial board, organizing our first symposium at the Montreal APSA Annual meeting on "Teaching Political Science in Times of Conflict," introducing a best article prize, and publishing a call for papers for a 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary special issue that will be published as the first issue of volume 20.

One of our first tasks as editors was to set out a statement of focus for the journal, which we published in volume 18, issue 4. In this statement we clarified the submission process so that articles would be structured into the following tracks:

- Pedagogical and Curricular Innovations
- Civic Engagement and Experiential Learning
- Virtual and Technologically Enhanced Learning
- Simulations, Role-Play, and Games
- Symposium
- Books, Teaching Tools, and Educational Resources

Our process that we undertake for articles submitted to the journal is that they are initially screened by Charity Butcher and Alasdair Blair. Once an article has been deemed fit for consideration, it is then accepted for review and assigned to a member of the editorial team. Articles which are desk rejected tend to fall into the following categories:

- Out of scope and not being relevant to the journal
- No evidence of research being undertaken
- Single case studies that are solely reflective accounts
- Articles that cannot provide ethical approval for the research that has been undertaken

Similarly, during review, we were interested in articles that made a substantive contribution to the field. Priority was given to articles that provided data to support the effectiveness of their pedagogical interventions and to rigorous case studies. To account for these changes, the word counts for articles were changed to be 4,000-8,000 words for all articles (with Book Reviews, Teaching Tools and Educational Resources being 500-2,000 words).

Ethical approval is an area where we have taken a firm line; we now require a statement of ethical approval for articles that include data from human subjects. In a number of cases this meant asking for further clarity from authors who already had articles under review. For newly submitted articles that do not have ethical approval, we have returned them to the author(s) for clarification. One impact of this has been to extend the decision time period from submission to decision on articles.

To help potential authors navigate these journal changes, the Editorial Team hosted panels at a variety of conferences, including the 2022 American Political Science Association Annual Conference in Montreal, the 2023 APSA-TLC in Baltimore, and the 2023 International Studies Association Conference in Montreal. These panels provided potential authors with guidance on ethical review of SoTL works and discussed the new direction of the journal.

Over the last year we have worked through the transition from manuscripts that were already in the submission system from the previous editorial team. This has meant that editorial download data includes articles that were categorized at the point of submission, and therefore includes historical submissions as well as submissions that reflect the new submission tracks identified above. It has taken some time to fully transition the journal management system so that it reflects these tracks, with many of the automated templates continuing to reflect previous editorial details for most of the last year. Although we have worked with colleagues at Taylor & Francis on this matter, it has not been as timely a process as we would have hoped. Indeed, the data that we are drawing down for this report is based on

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the old submission categories because the publishers' changes were not made to the submission categories until they switched to a new submission system in June 2023. The change to the submission system also resulted in a significant disturbance to the editorial process, as author submissions were not being pulled through on the system to the editor decision page. From the point of submission change, it took nearly a month for this to be rectified, which we consider to be a serious matter. Once the issue became apparent, our contact at Taylor & Francis worked closely with us to ensure that this was resolved. Moving forward, we expect the process to be smoother, though longer average wait times might be reported next year due to this issue.

### EDITORIAL TEAM

The new editorial team for *JPSE* has now been running the journal for nearly a year with the support of APSA. We were excited to take over the editorial and managerial duties from the managing editors and editorial assistants at the University of Albany, Auburn University, and Roger Williams University. We extend our gratitude to our predecessors for their support in the transition process and look forward to a continued collaboration with all former and newer *JPSE* members and associates.

As anticipated, Dr. Charity Butcher, from Kennesaw State University, is now Editor-in-Chief. Her support staff include Lead Editor Alasdair Blair and Associate Editors Tavishi Bhasin, Elizabeth Gordon, Maia Carter Hallward, and Simon Usherwood. Dr. Alison Rios Millet McCartney edits book reviews, teaching tools, and resources. Rita Kettani Christiansen, a PhD student at Kennesaw State University, is currently managing editor.

Figure 1: Editorial Board 2021-2022: 27 Members

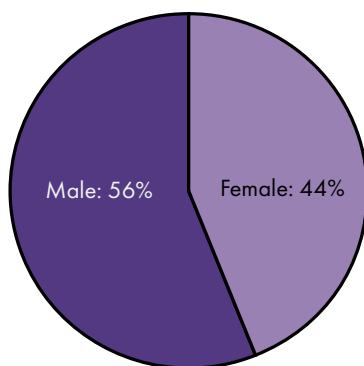


Figure 2: Editorial Board 2022-2023: 24 Members

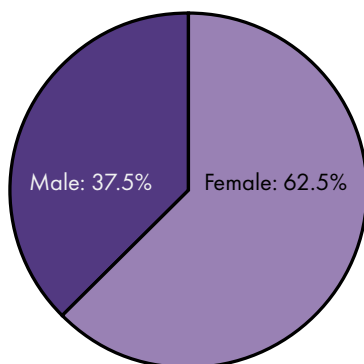


Table 1: Editorial Board by Gender (Percentage of Total)

| Year    | Female             | Male      | Total |
|---------|--------------------|-----------|-------|
| 2021-22 | Last Year 12 (44%) | 15 (56%)  | 27    |
| 2022-23 | 15 (62.5%)         | 9 (37.5%) | 24    |

### EDITORIAL BOARD

Over the last year we have made a number of changes to the Editorial Board, bringing in new colleagues to provide greater diversity in terms of gender, geography and institutional location, as reflected in Figures 1 and 2. The full editorial board information is available at <https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=editorialBoard&journal-Code=upse20>. We reduced the overall size of the board from 27 to 24 members. 13 members of the editorial board stepped down and a further 10 were appointed. We introduced a strategy of retaining on the board a minimum of two members of the previous editorial team to provide continuity. We have increased the percentage of female members of the board from 44% to 62.5% (Table 1). We have increased the international geographical diversity, with a reduction in the dominance of US members from 85% to 75% (Table 2).

We held our first editorial board meeting at the APSA Montreal Annual Meeting. This included meeting new members of the board, where we provided members with an overview of our plans for the journal and received feedback from board members. We introduced a process of writing to editorial board members at the start of each calendar year to thank them for their support and to provide an overview of the journal's work as measured by article submission and acceptance status as well as highlighting key initiatives over the previous year and planned developments for the coming year. We have also introduced a regular monitoring process of tracking editorial board engagement as measured by the number of reviews that have been sent to editorial board members so as to ensure that all editorial board members are making an active contribution to the running of the journal. When compiling the articles for our symposium and our special anniversary issue, we specifically reached out to those board members that had not yet been asked to review articles and requested their assistance in reviewing these special pieces. This helped to increase our engagement with the board and to incorporate all members of the board into our review process.

Table 2: Editorial Board by Location 2022-23 (Percentage of Total)

| Editorial Board Members | Percentage | Country          |
|-------------------------|------------|------------------|
| 18                      | 75%        | United States    |
| 2                       | 8%         | Netherlands      |
| 1                       | 4%         | Austria          |
| 1                       | 4%         | Hong Kong, China |
| 1                       | 4%         | Slovakia         |
| 1                       | 4%         | United Kingdom   |

**ANNUAL PRIZE**

We have introduced an annual prize for the best article published each year, starting with volume 18, sponsored by Taylor & Francis. A prize of \$200 is given to the authors of an article that makes a significant contribution to the field of political science education, particularly in relation to developing innovative ideas which are of practical use to the readers of *JPSE*.

The committee for determining the volume 18 winner was comprised of Mary McHugh, Michelle Deardorff and Patrick Bijmans. We are extremely grateful for their contribution in reading the articles that were published in the journal. The prize for best article in volume 18 was awarded to Dr K. Le Loan for her article titled "Freedom of Information in the Classroom: Teaching for Empowerment in the Social Sciences and in Ethnic Sciences," which appeared in volume 18, issue 2.

Going forward, the prize committee each year will consist of two members of the editorial board and the winner of the prize from the previous year. We are grateful to Taylor & Francis for providing the support for this prize.

Table 3: *JPSE* Key Metrics

| Year | H5-Index | H5-Median | SJR ranking |
|------|----------|-----------|-------------|
| 2022 | 27       | 32        | 0.38        |
| 2021 | 26       | 26        | 0.36        |

**IMPACT FACTOR**

We celebrate the journal's first Impact Factor of 1.1 for 2022. As this is the first year that the journal has had an impact factor, Table 3 presents the H5-index scores and the SJR ranking for the journal over the last two years. The journal is ranked in quartile 2 for Education and also for Sociology and Political Science. The h5-index reflects the largest number *h* of the *h* articles that have been published in the previous five years which have at least *h* citations. The h5-median provides the median number of citations for the articles that are used to create the h5-index. While the journal has seen an increase in its metrics over the last year, we recognize that the majority of this work reflects the efforts of the previous editorial team and that it will only be in the coming years that we will be able to track the journal's performance under our editorship. We are excited to continue the work of the previous team and continue to improve the journal's impact in the discipline.

**II. REVIEW OF DATA**

**SUBMISSIONS**

During the new editorial team's transition and after, the journal continued to receive submissions from a variety of authors, from different parts of the world, and across all four of the sections. In the period between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023, the journal received a total of 79 original submissions (Tables 4a and 4b). This was eight more manuscripts than it received in 2021-22 (Table 4c). The journal saw the highest original entries in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (42), followed by Political Science Instruction sections (28). The lowest manuscript submissions were on Reflections on Teaching and the Academy (5) and Political Science Instruction (4).

As the new editorial management team is acclimating with

Table 4a: Original Manuscripts by Type Received between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023

| Manuscript Type                                  | No. of Manuscripts | Percentage    |
|--|--------------------|---------------|
| Books, Teaching Tools, and Educational Resources | 4                  | 5.1%          |
| Political Science Instruction                    | 28                 | 35.4%         |
| Reflections on Teaching and the Academy          | 5                  | 6.3%          |
| Scholarship of Teaching and Learning             | 42                 | 53.2%         |
| <b>Summary</b>                                   | <b>79</b>          | <b>100.0%</b> |

Table 4b: Manuscripts Received by Month between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023

| Month          | Original  | Revised   | Total      |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| July 2022      | 8         | 8         | 16         |
| August 2022    | 10        | 10        | 20         |
| September 2022 | 4         | 10        | 14         |
| October 2022   | 9         | 7         | 16         |
| November 2022  | 5         | 6         | 11         |
| December 2022  | 3         | 7         | 10         |
| January 2023   | 5         | 9         | 14         |
| February 2023  | 9         | 5         | 14         |
| March 2023     | 7         | 2         | 9          |
| April 2023     | 6         | 1         | 7          |
| May 2023       | 11        | 6         | 17         |
| June           | 2         | 3         | 5          |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>79</b> | <b>74</b> | <b>153</b> |

Table 4c: Original Manuscripts by Type Received between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022

| Manuscript Type                                  | No. of Manuscripts | Percentage    |
|--|--------------------|---------------|
| Books, Teaching Tools, and Educational Resources | 8                  | 11.3%         |
| Political Science Instruction                    | 32                 | 45.1%         |
| Reflections on Teaching and the Academy          | 2                  | 2.8%          |
| Scholarship of Teaching and Learning             | 29                 | 40.8%         |
| <b>Summary</b>                                   | <b>71</b>          | <b>100.0%</b> |

the different phases of production, a review of past year's submissions is worth revisiting. Tables 4d and 4e and Figure 3 illustrate the number of original submissions received during the prior years (beginning in 2019) by manuscript types. The year

Table 4d: Original Manuscripts by Type Received between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021

| Manuscript Type                                  | No. of Manuscripts | Percentage    |
|--|--------------------|---------------|
| Books, Teaching Tools, and Educational Resources | 10                 | 9.5%          |
| Political Science Instruction                    | 36                 | 34.3%         |
| Reflections on Teaching and the Academy          | 16                 | 15.2%         |
| Scholarship of Teaching and Learning             | 43                 | 41.0%         |
| <b>Summary</b>                                   | <b>105</b>         | <b>100.0%</b> |

Table 4e: Original Manuscripts by Type Received between July 1, 2019, and June 30, 2020

| Manuscript Type                                  | No. of Manuscripts | Percentage    |
|--|--------------------|---------------|
| Books, Teaching Tools, and Educational Resources | 15                 | 13.4%         |
| Political Science Instruction                    | 41                 | 36.6%         |
| Reflections on Teaching and the Academy          | 13                 | 11.6%         |
| Scholarship of Teaching and Learning             | 43                 | 38.4%         |
| <b>Summary</b>                                   | <b>112</b>         | <b>100.0%</b> |

ending June 2022 saw the lowest number of submissions, and the year ending June 2020 recorded the largest number of submissions. The leading types of manuscripts continue to be manuscripts on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and Political Science Instruction. The Covid-19 pandemic likely explains the drop of submissions between 2020 and 2022.

As illustrated in Table 5, the largest percentage of original manuscript submissions were from authors residing in the United States (36), accounting for 45.57% of total original submissions. 22.78% of the total original submissions were from Asian countries, and 11.4% from European countries. The remaining number of submissions (20.25%) included authors from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, the Middle East, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Table 6 represents the average number of days between the time a manuscript was submitted and the time a decision was made. Of the 79 original manuscripts that were submitted between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023, 66 had finalized decisions, and an average of 28.78 days were spent between submission and a decision. Submissions that include those requiring minor or major decisions or were rejected totaled 137, with 33.65 average days between submission and a decision. The Books, Teaching Tools, and Educational Resources manuscript type recorded the highest average number of days between submission and a decision (54), and Reflections on Teaching and the Academy recorded the lowest number of average days between submission and a decision. Table 7 illustrates the number of manuscripts in each category during the period under

Figure 3: Original Manuscripts Received During July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2023

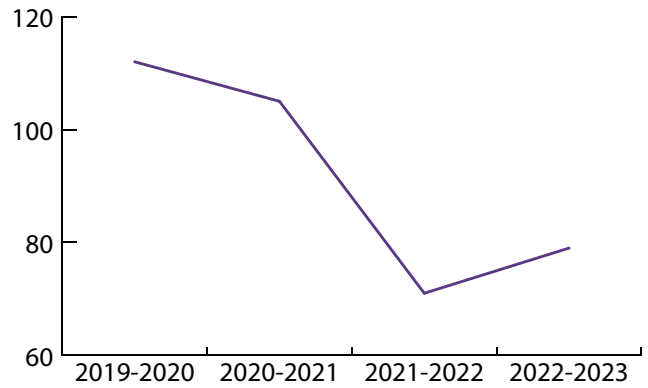


Table 5: Submissions by Country between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023

| Author Country/Region                                | Original  | Revised  | Total     |
|--|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Albania  | 4         | 0        | 4         |
| Australia  | 1         | 0        | 1         |
| Belgium  | 1         | 0        | 1         |
| Canada   | 3         | 0        | 3         |
| China  | 2         | 0        | 2         |
| Germany  | 1         | 0        | 1         |
| Hong Kong  | 3         | 0        | 3         |
| India  | 3         | 0        | 3         |
| Indonesia  | 6         | 0        | 6         |
| Iran (the Islamic Republic of)                       | 1         | 0        | 1         |
| Ireland  | 1         | 0        | 1         |
| Japan  | 1         | 0        | 1         |
| Malaysia   | 2         | 0        | 2         |
| New Zealand  | 1         | 0        | 1         |
| Nigeria  | 1         | 0        | 1         |
| Palestine, State of                                  | 2         | 0        | 2         |
| Poland   | 2         | 0        | 2         |
| Spain  | 1         | 0        | 1         |
| Sweden   | 1         | 0        | 1         |
| Taiwan   | 1         | 0        | 1         |
| Tunisia  | 1         | 0        | 1         |
| Turkey   | 1         | 0        | 1         |
| United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | 3         | 0        | 3         |
| United States  | 36        | 0        | 36        |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>79</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>79</b> |

Table 6: Average Days from Submission to Decision (includes original and revised manuscripts)

| Manuscript Type                                  | No. of Original Manuscripts | Average Days from Submission to Decision | No. of Total Manuscripts (including rejections and revisions) | Average Days from Submission to Decision |
|--|-----------------------------|--|---|--|
| Books, Teaching Tools, and Educational Resources | 3                           | 30                                       | 4   | 54                                       |
| Political Science Instruction                    | 26                          | 26.65                                    | 69  | 27.78                                    |
| Reflections on Teaching and the Academy          | 4                           | 13.75                                    | 5   | 11.2                                     |
| Scholarship of Teaching and Learning             | 33                          | 44.73                                    | 59  | 41.64                                    |
|  | <b>Total 66</b>             | <b>Average 28.78</b>                     | <b>Total 137</b>  | <b>Average 33.65</b>                     |

review. Some manuscripts may appear in multiple categories (thus, might have been in the major revision category and then eventually in the accepted or rejected categories).

**REVIEWERS**

Over the last year we have made a conscious effort to diversify the reviewer pool. This included a call for reviewers on Twitter and recruiting reviewers at the APSA Annual Meeting in Montreal and the APSA Teaching and Learning Conference in Baltimore. Over the last year we have added 40 colleagues to our reviewer database. The editorial team pays a lot of attention to ensuring diversity in the review process, including gender balance.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Over the last year we have endeavored to reposition the journal as a key outlet for articles that showcase rigorous research in political science education. Whilst we recognize that the shift back towards more substantive articles might be viewed by some scholars as taking away an opportunity to publish short pieces, we are of the view that many of these articles are better suited in other forums, including the disciplinary and pedagogical blogs and newsletters, and that there is a need for the journal to reclaim a position of publishing the best articles in political science education. We have diversified the editorial board and through initiatives such as the 20-year anniversary issue, we are trying to bring the work of the journal to a wider audience. We consider the introduction of an annual prize to be a marker of esteem for prize winners and also for the journal. Further, receiving its first Impact Factor marks a new era for the journal.

A key change over the last year has been a shift with the publishers towards a commitment of a minimum number of articles in each issue. We have tried to ensure that articles that were waiting for a decision in the system have been expedited for publication. Therefore, although we have committed with the publishers to deliver a minimum of eight articles for each issue,

Table 7: Manuscript Decision — Total Submissions

| Manuscript Status               | No. of Manuscripts | Percentage    |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Accepted                        | 48                 | 32.7%         |
| Accepted/Complete Production    | 2                  |               |
| Assign Reviewer                 | 2                  | 9.8%          |
| Select Reviewer                 | 1                  |               |
| Assign Reviewer/Awaiting Scores | 1                  |               |
| Awaiting Scores                 | 7                  |               |
| Awaiting Scored/Select Reviewer | 3                  |               |
| Complete Checklist              | 1                  |               |
| Major Revisions                 | 15                 | 32%           |
| Minor Revisions                 | 33                 |               |
| Make a Decision                 | 1                  |               |
| Reject                          | 33                 | 25.5%         |
| Reject/Unsound                  | 1                  |               |
| Reject/Old                      | 5                  |               |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>153</b>         | <b>100.0%</b> |

Table 8: Comparison between Recent Years

|                            | Total Manuscripts Received (Original Submissions) | Manuscripts Revised | Total |
|----------------------------|---|---------------------|-------|
| July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023 | 79  | 74                  | 153   |
| 2021-2022                  | 71  | 52                  | 123   |
| 2020-2021                  | 105   | 59                  | 164   |
| 2019-2020                  | 112   | 79                  | 191   |

Table 9: Reviewer Statistics

| No. of Reviewers who Agreed | No. of Reviewers who Declined | No. of No Responses | No. of Reviewers who Were Unavailable | No. of Reviewers not Contacted |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 126                         | 30                            | 5                   | 27                                    | 18                             |

## ASSOCIATION

over the three issues of volume 19 we have published an average of 13 articles per issue.

We have benefited from excellent support from the editorial board, such as through the introduction of the annual prize and support for reviewing the 20th anniversary issue and symposiums. We have also benefited from the excellent administrative support provided by Rita Kettani Christiansen.

### PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

We aim to make greater use of symposia to provide a focal point on key debates in the profession. We will continue to be active in promoting the work of the journal at relevant conferences and we envisage the 20th anniversary issue as being an important opportunity for APSA to showcase the work of the journal. We believe that there is more that needs to be done in relation to social media and in particular aligning some of the journal's back copy content with key moments in the calendar, such as International Women's Day, by bringing together online special issues. We would also welcome more collaboration with Taylor & Francis in bringing together online special issues that focus on key topics that can be made available through open access for a set period of time, including during the Annual Meeting.

Whilst we have made progress on ensuring that articles conform to ethical approval, we recognize that we can go further to promote the journal in terms of research transparency through the Transparency and Openness Promotion (TOP)

Guidelines. We would therefore aim to work over the coming year on bringing together a statement which sets out the journal's position on these matters. We will continue to strive to ensure gender balance in submissions and encourage geographical diversity of authorship.

### POINTS TO RAISE WITH THE APSA COUNCIL

Over the last year we have struggled to receive timely and adequate responses on a number of matters from Taylor & Francis. This includes changing the templates on the decision letters so that they reflect the new editors and the new submission tracks. This has resulted in a number of manual workarounds, which is not ideal. We experienced a significant issue in June and July 2023 with the change to the submission portal which meant that for nearly a month no new articles were visible to the editors to be able to process via workflow. We had an issue with one article that was accepted for publication during the year and which was then subsequently flagged for having some copy that was close to an article that had previously been submitted by one of the authors. It took a considerable amount of time to resolve this. We would also welcome more regular sharing of data from the publishers, such as metrics related to articles, authors, and reviewers. Overall, we feel that the journal has had a successful year, despite some key challenges, and look forward to working this next year to make the journal an even greater success. ■



# CONFERENCES IN THE PROFESSION

Conferences, events, calls for papers or authors, and even grant opportunities can be submitted to <https://www.apsanet.org/EVENTS/Conferences-In-The-Profession>