

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Politics and the Life Sciences: A Journal, A Mission, A Vision

Politics and the Life Sciences is about to enter its second pioneering decade. Its first decade has been exciting and productive; its second should prove even more so. I am honored to serve as editor as we enter that second decade. I hope I will be a worthy successor to Tom Wiegele, the extraordinary man who founded the journal and guided it for almost ten years. This issue is dedicated to Tom's memory, with affection, respect, and gratitude.

The mission of *Politics and the Life Sciences* is to advance knowledge of politics and promote better policymaking through multidisciplinary analysis that draws on the life sciences. Through the dedicated efforts of its editorial staff, its Editorial Advisory Board, and a host of creative authors, the journal has fulfilled its mission well in its first decade. Having made some adjustments in response to changed conditions and past successes, we look to our second decade with great enthusiasm.

PLS has always been multidisciplinary—in subject, in authorship, and in readership. However, the number of authors and readers from outside of political science has grown significantly since publication of the journal's first issue. Since this healthy and stimulating trend is likely to continue, I am delighted that a highly diverse group of distinguished scholars from around the world have agreed to serve on the journal's new Editorial Advisory Board. In addition to political scientists from varied backgrounds, there are representatives from medicine, psychiatry, psychology, law, biology, biotechnology, ecology, ethology, primatology, and anthropology, among others. I am pleased to have such a diverse and distinguished group of editorial advisors.

Our growing diversity is also reflected in the journal's new editorial staff. Joining *PLS* as new book review editors are Andrea Bonnicksen (public policy) and Joseph Losco (biobehavioral science). Our four new bibliography editors are Vincent S.E. Falger, Brian Gladue, Janna Merrick, and Raymond Zilinskas. These six new members of the editorial staff have already proven themselves to be both enthusiastic and energetic, and I am grateful for their willingness to serve.

We are making a number of adjustments in format as

part of the editorial transition. Beginning with this issue we will use rather sparingly the peer commentary format that has been the journal's standard article format. Commentaries are valuable for exploring certain kinds of issues. However, by using this format more selectively, we can publish more articles, and on a wider variety of topics. In addition, not all articles lend themselves well to the commentary format, and commentaries sometimes delay an article's publication.

Beginning with our first issue in 1993, we will also limit use of multiple book reviews. Multiple review essays, one of the journal's trademarks, have been both valuable and stimulating. We are all deeply indebted to Carol Barner-Barry for her dedicated and skillful handling of this complex format. However, the multiple review format limits the number of books we can review to five or six per issue. With so many more books now being published, we have reluctantly concluded that the costs of publishing multiple reviews now outweigh the benefits. With single reviews, we can review many more books per issue. We will reserve the multiple review format for an occasional "roundtable review," which will include a précis, multiple review essays, and a response from the book's author.

We inaugurate in this issue two features that we believe will be highly useful for a multidisciplinary field. First, each issue will normally include one or two "updates" on issues or subjects of broad interest to our readers. An update will provide a brief scholarly overview of an important current subject by an expert in the area. Updates should assist all of us in remaining informed about subjects outside of our primary area of expertise, and they should prove especially helpful to students.

Second, each issue will normally include one or more "profiles" of multidisciplinary programs or organizations relevant to those with an interest in politics and the life sciences. In addition to enhancing interdisciplinary communication, we hope these profiles will disseminate and stimulate organizational creativity. This issue includes two profiles: a memorial profile of Tom Wiegele and a profile of the graduate program in biopolitics that

Tom established at Northern Illinois University. Future profiles will be about two pages in length and will be devoted primarily to multidisciplinary programs, institutes, and centers.

While we are making a number of adjustments and changes in format, I do not anticipate any change in editorial policy. We will continue to seek high quality manuscripts from scholars and scientists in any discipline, and on a wide variety of topics. My goal as editor is for each issue to include at least one major article, one feature, and one book review that will interest every member of the organization. Thus, we are interested in a broad range of policy subjects, from biomedical policy to biological warfare, from biotechnology to environmental policy. We are also interested in a broad range of biobehavioral topics, both empirical and theoretical. And the subject or approach may draw upon or be inspired by any of the life sciences, including ethology, ecology, physiology, psychiatry, neurobiology, genetics, and evolutionary biology. If the subject involves both politics and any of the life sciences, submission of a high quality manuscript to *PLS* is welcome.

Politics and the Life Sciences is the name of the journal, but it is also the name of a vision that inspires the journal. Members of the association and other readers of *PLS* come from a wide variety of backgrounds and adopt divergent perspectives on all of the issues with which the journal is concerned. However, there are surely two viewpoints shared by virtually all of us: (1) we will never achieve an adequate understanding of political behavior without drawing on the life sciences, and (2) many of the great issues confronting human policy makers around the world involve the life sciences either directly or indirectly. The vision, then, is better theory, better science, and better policy through multidisciplinary analysis.

Those drawing on the contemporary life sciences are

constructing a new picture of human nature. Our very conceptualization of who we are is in the process of being fundamentally altered, with profound implications for political theory. Political theorists influenced by the life sciences are likely to transform political theory as fundamentally as did Aristotle and Hobbes, both of whom were also influenced by the scientific insights of their day.

Scientific explanations of political behavior are also likely to be fundamentally transformed. Some of the influential studies will draw perceptively on the research methods of ethology. Some will explore the neurophysiology of political behavior. And others, employing more conventional research methods, will make great progress in explaining old problems because their hypotheses will be derived from new theories generated by cross-disciplinary fertilization.

We also confront a host of policy dilemmas because of the continuing revolution in the life sciences themselves. These policy dilemmas involve matters ranging from gene therapy to biological warfare, from prenatal diagnosis to euthanasia, from abortion to parental surrogacy. In some cases, nothing less than human survival is at stake. Our members will be centrally involved in all of these policy debates.

Politics and the Life Sciences, together with a few other visionary journals, will continue to be at the forefront of an advancing revolution in the social sciences. It will also be at the forefront of the most exciting and profound policy developments of the last decade of the twentieth century. The excitement of the journal's first decade should therefore be surpassed in its second. Involvement in its mission promises to be a truly exhilarating experience.

Gary R. Johnson