2007 APSA Teaching and Learning Conference Track Summaries

The fourth annual APSA Conference on Teaching and Learning in Political Science was held in Charlotte, North Carolina from February 9–11, 2007.

Through this special annual meeting APSA continues to promote greater understanding of cutting-edge approaches, techniques, and methodologies that can be applied in the political science classroom. This conference provides a forum where scholars and educators share effective and innovative teaching and learning models and discuss broad themes and values affecting political science education.

The Conference addressed crucial questions in higher education, such as enhancing student engagement via civic education, service learning, and assessing learning outcomes; integrating international models and into teaching and learning methods; and strengthening efforts by learned societies such as APSA to support good teaching. In addition, the Conference reflected APSA's objective of reaching out beyond traditional approaches to higher education, and includes college/university faculty, high school teachers, librarians, publishers, as well as international participants. For a full list of participants and more information on the 2007 Conference, visit www.apsanet.org/section_236.cfm. For information on the 2008 Conference, contact teaching@apsanet.org.

Track One: Teaching Research Methods

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During the third annual meeting of the Teaching Research Methods section, participants spent the conference addressing two major issues in teaching political science research methods: where research methods fit across the undergraduate curriculum and innovations in teaching research methods that help minimize student anxiety and maximize student learning.

The first group of topics addressed concern the place of research methods in the undergraduate political science curriculum. Presentations focused on several issues, including when methods courses are taught; whether it is possible to embed research methods into other substantive political science courses; whether the way we teach research methods as a field short-changes the future of the field; and how to best select and prepare undergraduate students for graduate studies.

The results of a national survey examining the timing of methods courses was presented. The authors found that methods requirements are more common in larger universities than in liberal arts colleges and these classes are taught later in a student's progression than they are in the liberal arts programs that do offer them, however liberal arts schools are more likely to require a senior thesis. A second national survey of research methods classes suggests that the way we teach methods as a field is fairly divergent, and many professors do not teach students how to conduct literature reviews, assess academic literature, nor present this information. Another group of authors focused on whether it is possible to embed this material into substantive courses for students who will not take a methods class. The results from their experiment show that test group students increased performance on items related to reading and understanding research articles as compared to control group students, but not on more complicated items. Yet another presentation presented a developmental approach to integrating methods into substantive courses, but cautioned that such an approach is possible only when there is buy-in from faculty across the department. Two other papers focused on the transition between undergraduate and graduate studies. One national survey of undergraduate courses showed that the research methods offerings do not match the expectations of graduate programs for entering students. A second paper outlined a five-step process to identify and groom talented undergraduate students for graduate studies.

The second group of topics discussed focused on innovations in teaching methods and barriers students face in taking these classes. A writing intensive approach was discussed by one author who uses it to help students understand the relevance, substance, and methods of the field. Two presentations focused on using actual research projects to teach students methods, one in which students worked as pollsters outside of voting stations and then learned to code and analyze the data collected, and another in which the professor partnered with a service learning program to have students conduct research that would be helpful to local government, non-profit, and human service organizations in the community. Finally, an approach based on building information competency was presented in which students are trained to become critical consumers of information, including scholarly research.

At the close of the conference, track members developed a set of recommendations for the field. The first is to re-emphasize recommendations from previous years: research methods should be a required course for undergraduate majors; students need to be exposed to research methods early in their undergraduate experience; and research methods should be included in other, more substantive, courses across the discipline.

Second, although it has been mentioned in past recommendations, we believe special emphasis should be placed on increasing research about and assessment of teaching approaches in research methods courses. Many interesting approaches were presented at the panel this year; however, there was little systematic study of their effectiveness. We need to ask ourselves, are these approaches worthwhile based on student outcomes?

Third, we urge other professors to think not only about embedding research methods across the political science curriculum, but also about the place of research methods in other disciplines. Those teaching methods should seek out colleagues in other related disciplines and engage in dialogue about how methods can be incorporated across our different curricula. This can minimize redundancies and may be a particularly important approach for smaller programs that do not have the capacity to regularly offer a strictly political science research methods course.

Fourth, we encourage research methods faculty to include a discussion about ethics in their courses. The research methods course provides a good opportunity to discuss ethics in the social sciences generally

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and in political science particularly.

Finally, we encourage the Teaching & Learning Conference planners to include two topics as part of future Research Methods tracks. First, we would like to have a discussion with research methods textbook authors about their choices to include (or exclude) certain topics. Second, participants felt that they would benefit from a discussion on dealing with Institutional Research Boards (IRB) when teaching undergraduate courses that have a student-conducted research component.

Track Two: Teaching and Learning in the Core Curriculum: Political Science and General Education

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Overview

This was the first APSA Teaching and Learning Conference to include a General Education/Core Curriculum track, which had led to some confusion about the purposes of this track. This stimulated a lively discussion about the purposes of "liberal arts" or "core curriculum" generally. From the very first presentations, a theme emerged: the need to structure "general education courses" to emphasize the importance of different viewpoints, as a means to engage students and ultimately empower both students and faculty.

The track emerged with a consensus regarding several ways to improve teaching in the "core curriculum" (with the caveat that many universities no longer have an actual core course distribution requirement, but rather a core "outcomes" requirement). The first was attitudinal: by telling our own students they "need to get this stuff out of the way," we diminish the value of the core in our eyes as well as theirs. Political science as a discipline is well-suited, in many ways uniquely suited, to foster the "informed, engaged citizenship" and appreciation of diversity that are primary goals of general education. Beyond that, explaining the relevance of the skills of general education—across all disciplines—seems to be important. We must promote the idea that a liberal arts education is a practical education.

The Question of Non-Majors

Participants in the track generally agreed that political science courses offered as part general education teach several key skills, including critical thinking, independence, citizenship, global awareness, and the importance of recognizing and respecting alternate viewpoints. However, questions remain about how to teach these skills without detracting from political science content, and how to communicate the value of these skills. Many commented on the marked divide between political science majors and general education students in classes; the latter often enter classes somewhat cynical and resistant to the idea of engaging in class. Participants also raised the related concern, affecting both majors and non-majors alike, of different venues—large versus small classes, community versus four-year colleges, homogeneous versus more diverse student populations.

The pervasive lack of substantive background knowledge among non-majors poses a significant challenge to the effective delivery of course content. How can faculty balance the presentation of comprehensive material to engaged, motivated majors while at the same time reach the under-prepared, unmotivated non-majors? It was mentioned that perhaps our political science students deserve to start out their freshman year with majors-only courses or honors sections, rather than having to sit (most likely bored) through courses where the professor must spend tremendous amounts of valuable class time getting general education students "up to speed." The establishment of prerequisites or specific course sequencing could assist in placing students in courses that will meet their various skill and interest levels.

Many participants disagreed, however, with this idea. There are several potential advantages of having both majors and non-majors together in introductory sections. For example, when our majors demonstrate their enthusiasm and interest in the field, it can spark interest in the subject among their peers. Another great example is that faculty can take advantage of the situation to provide new leadership opportunities for our undergraduates. Political science majors can be identified to lead discussion groups, or facilitate study sessions for non-majors in general education courses. These strategies are particularly noteworthy for improving active learning opportunities (for majors and non-majors alike) in large introductory sections. It is definitely possible, and quite beneficial, to structure large, introductory, general education classes to create active learning environments. By incorporating an organized discussion group element into the class, all students can actively apply the information received in large lecture sessions.

An important general education issue to consider is that many professors whose main area of expertise is either comparative politics or international relations must often teach introductory American government courses. We determined that bringing a comparative perspective to these courses not only allows them to bring their expertise and enthusiasm into the introductory course, but also achieves the broader institutional and societal goal of internationalizing the curriculum. Providing examples of how other governmental systems work actually enables American college students to better understand, evaluate, and critique the American system of government. Political scientists' varied backgrounds in fields such as political theory, public administration, elections, and international relations don't have to be homogenized away in our introductory courses, but can be used to make those courses better.

Somewhat related to this subject, a question was raised about how we can better teach American government to international students. However, the group did not have the opportunity to adequately address this question. Perhaps it could be a topic of future conference sessions.

The Teaching of Theory

A substantive contribution to our group dialogue revolved around the question of teaching theory to undergraduates. We recognized three key points. First, political science professors teaching general education classes have a responsibility to communicate to our students that we have no clear agreement amongst ourselves of any particular theory or perspective.

Second, therefore, many participants found the idea of teaching multiple theoretical frameworks useful. We need to avoid presenting conflicting ideas as dichotomies. Instead, we should always attempt to provide three or more theoretical perspectives as alternatives to promote critical thinking. By offering three perspectives, as opposed to two, students avoid falling into either/or, or good/bad, dichotomies. Alternative theoretical frameworks can also give students a sim-

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plified understanding of complex events.

Third, we emphasized the importance of presenting students with concrete applications to illustrate very abstract theories or concepts. Using current newspaper articles, op ed pieces, etc. can easily achieve this objective, as well as motivate students to be more interested in current political issues.

Though some may view the lack of agreement on theory as a drawback to teaching, we find the ability to teach multiple frameworks, rather than a particular set of concepts, to be good news. Rather than seeing our general education classes as responsibilities with limited (albeit vital) goals such as teaching citizenship, respect for democratic institutions, etc., we can view them as opportunities to expose our students to political and theoretical viewpoints that we find interesting. Though teaching the fundamentals of government is part of the goal, exposure to different points of view about politics is, itself, an important learning activity. Teachers will serve students well to select and present the approaches that interest them (be they international points of view, ideological points of view, or even practical applications for political knowledge).

Technology

It is quite clear that process (how we teach) is just as important as content (what we teach). Making active learning a top priority, regardless of class size or course format, is crucial. Using alternative pedagogical tools and providing creative projects and assignments in several different formats can contribute to the success of students with diverse learning styles.

A wide variety of methods exist to engage students of all interest levels in classes: tablet PC technology, survey "clickers," course management software, online course delivery, simulations, and discussions led by faculty or peer leaders. Each has the ability to reach students, including those that might not seem engaged. Our discipline has been slow to embrace (or assess the benefits of) many of these methods; the potential to expand our teaching arsenal is substantial. However, faculty comfort is key to using these strategies effectively. Many faculty need to pursue more training opportunities, as often our students' technological skills are far more advanced than our own.

We should also be careful to not overgeneralize and assume that all students automatically view technology in the classroom favorably. Adding substantial technological "bells and whistles" might simply result in "over-teching" the classroom. Nevertheless, allowing students to express their opinions by instantly viewing an entire class of "clicker" responses, incorporating their questions and comments into presentation materials, or by reading other students' opinions posted online, appear invaluable to student learning. In fact, in online classes students may learn more by reading the posts of their classmates than from reading the textbook or other information provided by the professor of the course.

A concern was raised that students might not be willing to offer their own opinions if they knew their responses would be immediately presented to the rest of the class. Interestingly enough, however, it appears as if today's students actually respond even more honestly via technology. In addition, there are other types of interactive classroom technologies available that allow for "private" student responses, and even provide the professor the ability to give instant "one-on-one" assistance to a student right in the middle of a class. Information on some of these software alternatives is available at www.dyknow.com.

Assessment

Finally, as more and more colleges and universities tackle departmental assessment, the point of assessment in determining what is effective becomes more relevant. Our group discussed improvement of political science general education through assessment of student learning. It was clear to us that value added assessment is important, even if external accreditation entities or university general education committees may not require it.

A significant concern with assessment is the temptation to trade more complex (perhaps more important) course objectives that are difficult to measure, for those that are more simplistic and easily quantifiable. We must continue to focus on measurement of student understanding of major concepts and frameworks, and the development of critical thinking abilities, rather than rote memorization of forgettable facts. And we must continue to be creative in devising tools and standards for assessment, as demonstrated by one track presentation measuring the benefits of reading—as opposed to posting—in online threaded discussions. Faculty also continue to struggle with the tradeoffs in achieving general breadth of knowledge versus imparting substantial depth of specific subject matter.

Many institutions are successfully utilizing standardized tests for measurement of certain general education objectives. Although they do not have a political science-specific test, if you are seeking to assess reading, writing, or critical thinking skills ACT's Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) tests are nationally recognized and provide excellent quantitative data on student learning. Further information may be obtained at www.act.org/caap.

While many faculty dislike or even fear the external assessment activities sometimes demanded of us, a unique point was made that assessment should be viewed as faculty empowerment. Assessment can be a very positive way to give us direct control over our classes by generating demonstrative evidence of the impact our classes make on student learning, and quantifying the various tools of student engagement. Assessment can also represent student empowerment, as students begin to recognize and value the development of their own learning.

Overall, the teaching and learning issues surrounding the fundamental role of political science in a general education or "core" curriculum definitely merit further investigation and dialogue.

Track Three: Internationalizing the Curriculum I

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Indiana University
—Marcheta Lee Wright,
Lee University
—Michael Kuchinsky,
Gardner-Webb University
—Ruth Ediger,
Seattle Pacific University

This year's Internationalizing the Curriculum I track built on the contributions of past TLC conferences by focusing on two major questions: what should we strive to accomplish in our efforts to internationalize the curriculum and what means are available to reaching those objectives? Track participants explored a myriad of goals to move beyond the rhetorical popular promise to "internationalize" curricula and provide substantive experiences to students. Two goals emerged as having paramount importance: the development of global citizens and forcing students out of their comfort zones, especially when these concerned Western narratives and stereotypes.

The concept of global citizenship goes beyond knowing something about "foreigners." As Heidi H. Hobbs (North Carolina State University) and Harry I. Chernotsky (University of North Carolina)

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explained in their research, students need to develop an increasing awareness of the world's complexity and interdependence, appreciate differences, and acquire the ability to communicate across cultures. The concept of global citizenship also emphasizes the connections between what is local and what is global and stresses the importance of breaking away from a purely Westernized view of the world. Nancy E. Wright (Long Island University, Brooklyn) demonstrated practical application of these ideas using a series of narratives by the Ojibwa tribes of Michigan's Lake Superior region along with class readings and discussions on environmental policy to help students shift away from the more traditional Western anthrocentric approach to environmental issues.

Getting students to explore beyond their comfort zones and see things from different perspectives is a second important goal of international encounters. Edward Weisband and Courtney Irene Powell Thomas (both of Virginia Tech) showed that students are able to grapple with foreign and domestic situations of prejudice, racism, nativism, etc. as well as their own reified beliefs when provided with learning environments that encourage them to face situations where people have reified their beliefs to the point that they deny freedom and humanity to others. Denise M. Horn and Florencia Ines Gabriele (Northeastern University) introduced G-PACT, a program in which student groups of various nationalities were given overseas opportunities to develop local political action entities to try and solve local challenges. Through this the participants had ample prospects to interact with the local culture and people, learn from each other, as well as challenge their mutual stereotypes.

Global internships are one of the few ways to internationalize college political science curricula that emphatically juxtapose theory and student experience, the action and reflection of global citizenship, and the link between college and career. Eugene Schmiel of the Washington Internship Institute (WII) described his program, where "civic engagement occurs as the students are placed in foreign embassies and thereby immersed in a foreign culture allowing intensive opportunities for cross-cultural communication and an examination of their own culture." Brigham Young University's Danny Damron concludes that the successful internship is in direct proportion to the efforts taken to prepare, screen, or "fire" candidates who may not have the survival skills or global savvy that sustain the program's goals. The quality of an overseas program can be maintained by stressing independent problem-solving abilities and enhancing them through preparatory classes. Maryville College colleagues Scott Henson and international program director Kirsten Sheppard evaluated some of the institutional dynamics involved in promoting international experiential education. They conclude that experiential education must be supported by administrative support and faculty guidance. Students who have returned from an international experience can be an invaluable tool at their home campus if they are incorporated into the curriculum. This interaction is particularly important for those students who are unable to go abroad.

In her presentation, Maria Victoria Perez-Rios (City University New York) explained how she uses role playing exercises in her class on international human rights to broaden the perspectives of her students and demonstrate the complexity of human rights issues. Through the exercise, students not only learn about human rights issues in other countries but are enabled to see the multiple perspectives involved. When exploring terrorism's dynamics in the classroom, Shane Nordyke (Indiana University) emphasized learning objectives centered on students' abilities to define key concepts, use precise language, and ask the right types of questions. Examining the expanding (and overlapping) categories of "target" and "perpetrator" allows students to explore their assumptions and preconceptions of self and other.

The conflict in Iraq along with elections in Afghanistan and Palestine are focal points in the American government course of Rebecca C. Harris (Washington & Lee University). The goal is to encourage higher order thinking; students apply common concepts to unconventional contexts using situational assignments. Students are thus encouraged to engage global events in a "domestic" context thereby developing a more sophisticated understanding of the relationships between seemingly disparate topics: the U.S. Constitution and the Iraq conflict; elections in Palestine and voting irregularities in the U.S. Finally, Anas Malik (Xavier University) highlighted learning opportunities that emerge from incorporating three specific crises into course content: the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the Lebanese-Hezbollah-Israeli conflict, and Pope Benedict's comments regarding Islam. Malik underscored the need for faculty to recognize the potentially stressful aspects for some students due to personal connections with the crisis; "teaching at the edge of knowledge" acquires new meaning in such learning environments. Using peer/collaborative learning mechanisms, students again apply concepts of "self" and "other" and critically analyze themes of polarization and politicization.

To conclude, participants in this panel focused on the many benefits of and challenges to internationalizing the curriculum as well as a variety of methods for doing so. We sought to develop global citizenship and to break out of familiar territory, both figuratively and literally, as well as encouraging students to make the political personal. The quality of student cross-cultural engagement is independent of time spent and a diversity of programs, each with strengths and weaknesses, can develop global citizenship and encourage students to see beyond themselves. Overall, the crucial element is to continue to pursue efforts to internationalize the curriculum in as many ways as possible for the benefit of our students, our societies, and our world.

Track Four: Internationalizing the Curriculum II

—Pamela A. Zeiser,
University of North Florida
—William A. Jennings,
University of Tennessee
—D. Christopher Brooks,
St. Olaf College
—John C. Berg,
Suffolk University

Participants in the Internationalizing the Curriculum II track took a broad approach to considering how we can foster multicultural diversity and intercultural understanding in our communities, courses, and students. Participants generally agreed that empathy was the primary goal of international education. Substantive knowledge is also important, but empathy is needed in order to motivate students to acquire such knowledge. Consequently, the underlying theme of the track was how to encourage and sustain enthusiasm for the international dimensions of politics. Narrower topics included a range of foci including teaching for empathy, technology, bringing administrators on board, syllabi construction, and terminology.

Active learning is a particulary valuable way to build empathy and motivation. Christopher Van Aller and Pamela Zeiser presented active learning techniques for international relations and comparative politics courses. Tina Mavrikos-Adamou and William Jennings also emphasized active learning, particularly as it employs

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information technology resources such as web access to international news.

Lichao He's analysis of global issues syllabi demonstrated clearly the lack of a disciplinary center of global studies courses given their heavy reliance on concepts and theories from international relations and comparative politics.

Hayward Walker offered a critique of universal conceptual categories and suggested that attentiveness to limitations can improve cross-national education. Carolyn Shaw presented her online, cross-cultural peace-building simulation pairing U.S. and Canadian universities. Christopher Brooks offered research demonstrating that the study of comparative politics improves students' levels of intercultural sensitivity in both on- and off-campus courses.

Renford Reese and Elaine Rodriquez both gave presentations on community projects to increase multicultural tolerance and diversity. Reese's "Colorful Flags" program seeks to increase tolerance in multicultural communities by teaching K–12 students basic language phrases and key facts for the many cultures living in Los Angeles. Rodriquez's I-CAR program helps Hispanic and Latino immigrants to better acculturate and integrate in Chicago.

Together, this variety of presentations led participants to consider a number of topics key to internationalizing our universities and courses so that we may ultimately produce global citizens. In many cases, we are not only attempting to imbue in our students knowledge of the world and its cultures, but also empathy for those cultures. A number of participants valued activities that encouraged students to "walk in the shoes" of another culture.

The track also discussed the use of technology and resources to improve our students' knowledge of the world. Shaw's peacebuilding simulation utilizes technology new to most participants and highlights the advantages it provides. Papers by Bruce Pencek (with Scott Nelson) and by Kirsten Allen and Anne Osterman served as important reminders that faculty must not only be aware of technology and resources, but direct our students to them. The discussion also reminded us of the need to avoid the use of technology for its own sake and to employ technology *effectively* and *purposefully* while not overwhelming students.

Frequently, the examples of active learning shared by track participants were time-intensive and involved considerable risk, especially when the techniques and approaches emphasized skills and process over content. The realities of our profession and institutional cultures dictate that we be aware of the potential consequences of such teaching to our students, our research agendas, and our performance evaluations. The need for support from administrators and colleagues is key—especially when cutting-edge teaching techniques end in "magnificent failures" (Van Aller).

As we continued our discussion, we also came to realize the fuzziness of and multiple meanings behind many of our terms: internationalize, multicultural, intercultural, tolerance. In the face of overuse and misuse, we need to promote some degree of conceptual clarity to our students, colleagues, and administrators to avoid having them dismissed as meaningless buzzwords.

Track Five: Assessment I

—Sean Boutin,
Cornell University
—David Brodsky,
University of Tennessee-Chattanooga
—Serena Laws,
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
—Russ Mayer,
Merrimack College
—Maria Rost Rublee,
University of Tampa

The participants in the Assessment One Track represented institutions from community colleges to Ph.D.-granting universities. The presenters not only discussed assessment techniques ranging from grading rubrics to attitudinal surveys of interns to interdepartmental collaboration to promote informational literacy, but also the many challenges involved in developing, implementing, and utilizing assessments to improve student outcomes. Despite the participants and presenters' diverse perspectives, the presentations and discussions centered on three underlying themes: politics of assessment, deciding what to assess, and closing the feedback loop. The participants also identified several continuing questions—assessing critical thinking, developing meaningful incentive systems, and coping with external pressures for knowledge-based assessments—future research might address.

Politics of Assessment

The politics of assessment emerged as a major theme within the track, and perspectives on the assessment process depended to a significant degree on individuals' institutional political environments. The following discussion artificially disaggregates the politics of assessment into the following themes: 1) instructor agency or autonomy, 2) control over assessment data usage, and 3) the consequences of incentive structures.

Institutions vary in the degree of agency or autonomy granted to instructors, from total autonomy to a top-down evaluative approach with little or none. Each approach presents tradeoffs. For example, while the more permissive approach allows for relative free agency on the part of the instructor, it may produce relatively idiosyncratic information with limited institutional value. In contrast, while standardization may generate comparable statistics across an institution, it may generate relatively little data of use to an instructor seeking to assess student learning in a specific course. The participants showed considerable interest in the tradeoffs associated with the various approaches to assessment design and the extent of instructor and departmental control over the assessment process.

A second theme involved the use of data. The group articulated a concern over who controlled assessment information and the consequences data usage could hold for students, professors, departments, or institutions. Track participants expressed a real desire to de-politicize the assessment system. Some participants suggested creating parallel informal assessment systems to avoid political manipulation. Examples of such informal methods included instructor-initiated midterm questionnaires or more holistic departmental level assessments.

The final political theme focused on the incentives built into differing assessment systems. The discussion on this point centered upon whether we have created systems that align interests or encourage turf wars and distrust. The participants also noted many assessment systems function with more sticks than carrots, encouraging resistance to assessment within their institutions. Participants also indicated their institutions often failed to provide the resources necessary to achieve recommended improvements, thus raising questions about the true purposes and value of assessment efforts.

Deciding What to Assess

Our track concluded that most institutions and the political science programs

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within them pursue diverse objectives, including imparting factual knowledge, developing critical thinking skills, encouraging civic engagement, and increasing student retention. More important, we concluded that the selection of appropriate assessment tools depends on the goals we intend to assess. Consequently, deciding what to assess involves answering a series of substantive and practical questions.

The track discussions yielded four substantive questions requiring some consideration when planning an assessment. First, will the assessment yield data intended to facilitate individual or program improvements (formative assessment) or will it yield data intended to assess performance for accountability purposes (summative assessment)? Second, will the assessment focus on measuring factual knowledge, understanding of key concepts, attitudinal change, or critical thinking skills? Third, to what extent will the assessment reflect goals formulated by the university, by the department, and by departmental faculty? Finally, who will determine the goals reflected in the assessment?

The participants also identified a number of practical questions assessment planners should take into account. These practical concerns related to the scope of the assessment, the feasibility of assessing an objective or outcome, the possibilities for partnering with other departments or units within the institution or at other institutions, the possibilities for embedding assessments within ongoing courses or other routine faculty activities, the possibility of closing the feedback loop, the potential costs for the assessment, and the potential consequences of conducting the assessment. The discussion also made clear the participants' belief in the wisdom of not trying to assess too much—start small and expand the scope as you develop experience—and of not assessing things you're unable or unwilling to change—for example, an internship program tied to an institution-wide commitment to experiential learning.

The track also discussed the limits of assessment. Specifically, the participants pointed out the need to recognize we cannot assess everything, nor should we try to.

Closing the Feedback Loop

The track participants generally agreed the success of any assessment regime depends, to a great extent, on the degree to which the results lead to programmatic improvement (closing the feedback loop). We also identified a number of factors affecting the likelihood that departments and individual faculty will make use of assessment data to make meaningful changes. First, departments must have sufficient resources to support the assessment process and the implementation of necessary changes. Second, careful planning at the beginning of the assessment cycle can increase the value of outcome measures and the probability of their use. Thus, the assessment data should not only identify areas where we've failed to meet objectives but should also identify possible "causes" for these failures. Third, the assessment instruments should measure things we can actually change, as it makes little sense to identify a problem to which we cannot effectively respond. Fourth, we need to take a flexible approach in evaluating what the assessment data actually mean. For example, does an apparent failure to achieve a learning objectives result from problems in course delivery, possible problems with the assessment instrument, or problems with the objective itself? Obviously, how we interpret the data will dictate our response. Finally, we ought to remain alert to the possibility that the assessment results may show success in meeting one or more objectives. In such cases, we might then choose to focus subsequent assessments on other objectives.

In addition to their agreement on the need to close the feedback loop, the track participants also saw a number of barriers to the utilization of assessment data to spur changes in curriculum or instruction. At the faculty level, these potential barriers included faculty fatigue since closing the loop comes at the end of the assessment process when enthusiasm for assessment may have dwindled and faculty resistance to changing course content or teaching methods. At the institutional level, these potential barriers included a lack of sufficient authority to make curricular changes and a lack of resources sufficient to correct perceived deficiencies.

One final point raised at various points in the discussions among panelists and participants concerned external pressures to close the feedback loop. Specifically, the participants noted the increasing emphasis accrediting bodies have placed on institutions, demonstrating that they regularly use assessment data to spur program change and improvement.

Continuing Questions

As with any vibrant discussion, we ended our workshop with a number of questions for future consideration and research.

1. How can we build incentives for professors to "close the feedback loop"? In many of our sessions, we discussed the challenges involved in creating an environment where departments and individual faculty actually use assessment results to improve curriculum, instruction, and student learning. We identified two primary challenges to closing the feedback loop. First, what strategies can we use to make administrators aware of the "costs" assessment activities impose on departments and individual faculty? Second, what positive incentives can institutions provide to reward departments and faculty when they utilize assessment results?

2. How can we assess critical thinking at the department/program level? Nearly all participants agreed that political science faculty would include the development of critical thinking skills among the most important learning outcomes for their undergraduate majors. The participants also identified three challenges involved in assessing critical thinking skills. First, given the focus of most mandated assessments, especially those resulting from legislative edicts, on factual knowledge, how can we make the case for including the development of critical thinking skills as a worthwhile outcome requiring assessment? Second, we need to develop a consensus on what we "mean" by critical thinking skills. Finally, once we reach agreement on a conceptual definition, we need to develop techniques (e.g., analytical writing rubrics) for assessing student performance.

3. How do we deal with the push to measure knowledge? Many participants voiced concern with what they saw as an emerging overemphasis on assessing factual knowledge, often at the expense of assessing either an understanding of key concepts (e.g., federalism, democracy, liberty) or the development of critical thinking skills. The primary challenges identified included finding ways to persuade legislators, administrators, and accrediting agencies to take a more holistic approach to assessing what political science departments do and developing techniques for assessing conceptual understanding and critical thinking skills.

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Track Six: Program Assessment II

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—**Chandrouti R. Persaud,**
Mississippi Valley State University

The Presentations and Discussion—Resistance is Futile

Community colleges, large and small colleges and universities, public and private institutions, a European university, and even a sociology department were represented in this track. Most of the participants had participated in some form of assessment planning and some at multiple levels. The presentations and discussions about contemporary assessment efforts in our profession reflected fully its diversity. The papers and discussions explored multiple paradigms, difficulty in achieving consensus on critical definitions, many units of analyses, and the different foci of our efforts.

A number of the track's presentations reminded us that "Institutions Matter." Effective, responsive, and appropriate assessment programs incorporate and reflect various external stakeholder demands, the particular historical development of the department or program assessed, the different disciplinary paradigms of the faculty participants in the process, and technical measurement knowledge and skills. Other presentations reinforced our understanding that assessment programs use both qualitative and quantitative outcomes and measures because (a) both types of measures make sense in the highly political and interpretive environments in which we work; and (b) both types of outcomes and measures arise from our training as social scientists and our experience as teachers.

A number of presentations focused on the difficulty of achieving consensus on definitions of critical terms, such as critical thinking and disciplinary knowledge. These presentations, especially one on various definitions of "critical thinking" and the many standardized tests to assess it, reiterated the importance of departmental (and professional) discussion of what specific type(s) of cognitive "critical thinking" and related skills are developed within our curricula/department/profession, and what common disciplinary understandings should be achieved by graduating students. As in previous years, the assessment track participants agreed that clear cognitive, behavioral, and attitudinal outcomes and measures are crucial for meaningful assessment. Differences in opinion among members of a department on the importance of these various types of outcomes can be overcome by including all three types and providing qualitative and quantitative measures for each type.

One of the thorny tasks in assessment is to try to differentiate among the various levels of achievement we are trying to assess—individual courses, major program of study, or university degree-level outcomes and achievement. Differentiation matters, because as we try to modify practices and conditions to increase student learning in a complex social setting, we want to understand the interplay among the many levels and elements of the learning experience. Our track focused on assessment at the individual course and major program of study levels. One presenter spoke to the need for greater validity of assessment at the course level by increasing the number of observations/assessments of student performance with the aid of computer-assisted grading and trained-peer grading as well by creating more transparent course grading criteria. Another addressed the use of formative, faculty peer review techniques such as peer teaching reviews, teaching mentor programs, teaching portfolio development, and collaborative teaching to increase the faculty member's awareness of his/her ability to enhance student learning by responding to student learning styles.

At the major "program of study" level of assessment, various track members' highlighted the range and type of measurement techniques and resource inputs (time, money, and skills) necessary to assess major programs of study. Specific techniques used by political science departments include department-specific pre/post tests, standardized national tests of disciplinary knowledge, portfolio assessments of written and oral materials, imbedded assessments within individual courses or activities, internship or research evaluations by the supervisor, degree program profiles, exit interviews, comparative survey information, etc. Other presenters and discussions focused on curriculum changes that enhance student learning. For example, departments can use a freshman major experience course to outline expectations of learning outcomes for majors, orient students to the university and major, help students develop realistic coursework and experience plans based on their educational and career desires. Similarly, departments report greater use of capstone courses (individually or co-taught) to integrate student learning across the sub-disciplines, assist students with career development, assess student achievement, and develop additional student skills. A third area of interest was global and cross-regional similarities and differences in political science curricula as well as the sequencing and requirement of common core, disciplinary coursework. We concluded our discussions at these different levels of analysis with the imperative to "close the assessment loop" by intentionally and repeatedly sharing assessment outcomes with students, faculty, administration, and other interested stakeholders to build support among members of the learning community.

The track members also explored how to manage assessment activities. In some departments, assessment of the major program of study was "managed" by specialization by one or a few faculty, while other departments shared many assessment activities. Again, "institutions matter" and the forms of managing the activity appear to vary depending on the needs of the faculty. Our colleagues, especially those in department leadership positions, wanted more technical assistance, resources, and clear direction on what is institutionally and professionally expected in assessment.

The Role of APSA—Helping Us Define Critical Terms and Being a Clearinghouse

Similar to recommendations of previous years, the track participants recommend that the Association act as a clearinghouse for assessment information and activities. Specifically, we recommend that APSA further develop a dedicated portion of the web site to assessment. At that location there should be sample models of assessment plans with documentation of process, time, and costs associated with various assessment activities and tasks; an annotated list of standardized national tests for critical thinking and disciplinary subject matter knowledge and their cost; sample assessment learning outcomes and measurement devices; rubrics for evaluating multiple levels of student performance in various discipline-based learning outcome areas; examples of student and faculty peer review processes; exit interview question frames; syllabi for introductory and capstone courses. We also recommend that APSA support departments by providing training workshops on assessment to be held in conjunction with national political science conferences. APSA might also take a leadership role in fostering disci-

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pline-wide discussion of whether we can identify common, discipline-based learning outcomes and link those outcomes to specific curricula and teaching/learning techniques that enable our students to better learn about our discipline. It is in our best interest as political scientists to develop discipline-specific assessment standards, tools, and strategies, or others will impose them on us. Our chances of forging our own future are enhanced if we collectively act on these matters as a profession rather than constantly re-inventing the wheel by acting on them individually in isolated departments. Of course, participants agreed that one size does not fit all, and stressed that final decisions about assessment goals and plans should rest with individual departments. In order to facilitate the creation of a state-of-the-art collection of assessment materials, track members proposed a specific TLC track dedicated to collating, abstracting, and preparing assessment materials for the APSA web site.

Toward Future Research—Uncharted Political Science Assessment Territory

There are now a growing number of departments with long-term, successful assessment programs. A number of possible research questions are suggested by this development. What are the elements/forces associated with effective and efficient implementation of assessment programs? Which particular curricula and teaching techniques appear most productive in increasing student achievement within a major program of study? Do the benefits of assessment outweigh the costs? What changes, if any, occur as a result of assessment at the accrediting, regulatory, institutional, departmental, or individual course level for faculty, students, and other stakeholders? Track participants hope that teacher-scholars nationwide will investigate these questions and publish their findings in professional journals—including new publications developed to disseminate this important research.

Track Seven: Simulations and Role Play I

—Sherri L. Wallace,
University of Louisville

—Helen G. Boutrous,
Mount Saint Mary's College

—William A. Brantley,
Walden University

Past conversations and summaries of the Simulations and Role Play tracks (S&RP) at the APSA Teaching and Learning conferences (TLC) reveal that these myriad active-learning techniques and exercises often can teach the complexities and dynamism of politics more effectively than do more conventional lectures by purposely engaging students in the learning process (*PS,* July 2004, 481). S&RP serve as useful mediums through which students can apply and interact with our discipline in a reflective way by utilizing a variety of cognitive and affective methods that expand students' knowledge base and skills in critical thinking, problem solving, and communication while making learning more lasting, fun, and memorable (*PS,* July 2005, 419). Because students come to college from diverse backgrounds with varying levels of skills and preparation, S&RP are a valuable complement to the traditional teacher-centered methods of content delivery (*PS,* July 2006, 540). Experiential learning, unlike the customary "stand-and-deliver" lecture, facilitates and encourages the synthesis and evaluation of information by having students "learn by doing," thus, creating active and empowered learners as opposed to passive receivers (542). As in real life, simulations require of students a mixture of skills such as effective communication, strategic thinking, consideration of history, or the handling of budgets to address particular political problems (541). This, in turn, broadens and enhances students' research, writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills across various fields of knowledge. The benefits of S&RP for faculty accrue through the immediate feedback that helps them better engage and connect with the students, which makes the teaching process more effective, fulfilling, and exciting. Additionally, the use of S&RP provides a way for instructors—both new and tenured, part-time and full-time—to demonstrate new cutting-edge pedagogical techniques and mastery of the discipline (542). All S&RP workshop summaries, including our own, have concluded that the end results are "win-win" for both students and faculty. The students achieve deeper learning via a practical, pleasurable, and unforgettable experience, and faculty receive better teaching evaluations and a cadre of students returning in their other classes. This year, the discussants in the S&RP I Track sought to extend the conversation toward a deeper appreciation and understanding of S&RP's potentiality as a ripe avenue for faculty research as well as teaching.

Papers Presented

The papers presented in the 2007 S&RP I Track represented a cross-section of the potential uses for simulations in classroom teaching, including various political contexts, levels of technology, time spans, and subjects. Like the previous TLC S&RP workshops, the discussants of the S&RP Track I explored multiple ways simulations might facilitate students' understanding and learning of complex political concepts and ideals. Discussants agreed that they must give careful attention to pedagogical goals when using simulations. This is necessary because S&RP requires more preparation time than the traditional lecture. More time is needed to develop supporting materials and assessment tools, including time for students to engage in reflective debriefings. Instructors must also carefully monitor group activities and use peer evaluations to avoid the free-rider problem and ensure widespread and meaningful participation of students while, at the same time, meeting their needs (*PS,* July 2006, 541).

A number of presentations focused on simulations and games in international relations. Brock Tessman (University of Georgia) discussed the benefits of extended simulations in the course syllabus and classroom. Chad Raymond and Kerstin Sorensen (Elon University) highlighted the dis/advantages of student-centered crisis simulations while Cynthia Boaz (International Center for Nonviolent Center Conflict & SUNY Brockport) demonstrated the potential of "A Force More Powerful," an interactive simulation that animates nonviolent strategies in decision-making. George Ehrhardt (Appalachian State University) revealed how game theory can be effectively utilized in the undergraduate classroom. After describing the state of game theory in international relations pedagogy, his presentation laid out how four different games can help instructors convey abstract concepts to students as an effort to help bridge the gap between a theoretically based curriculum and real world events. Michael Brittingham (McDaniel College) took

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an innovative approach to explore what can happen through the use of freeform simulations in teaching politics. He discovered that although there are "boundless possibilities," the farther away from the dependence on knowledge of real world events the students moved, the more they got into the "logic" of the game. Tricia Mulligan and Jeanne Zaino (Iona College) challenged the customary structure of S&RP discipline divide. In their creative presentation on a department-wide crisis simulation, they discussed the benefits of not only moving outside the boundaries of the traditional classroom but attempting to bridge the gaps between the disciplines within departments through the integration of students from all subfields of the discipline, upper and lower division, as well as majors and non-majors. Loren R. Cass (College of Holy Cross) revealed that creating student-incentive structures for maximum participation in classroom simulations can be effectively accomplished by using the case of the post-Kyoto Climate Negotiations where both success and failure are built into the game. Bedriye A. Koleman and Laura P. Moyer (University of Georgia, Athens) focused on integrating a series of games and activities throughout a course to teach students to recognize cognitive mistakes and biases in decision-making and how to overcome them, thereby engaging and enhancing students' critical thinking skills. The same was true for William J. Lahneman (Towson University), who demonstrated through a truly unique simulation on decision-making in national intelligence that helps students learn about the process of intelligence analysis and the skills required to produce effective analytic products by using excerpts from the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction and the unclassified White Paper (media version) derived from it. Students assume team-based roles of individual analysts mimicking the professional NIE process in order to answer the question: "Does Iraq have WMDs?" using actual intelligence products. The simulation exposes them to the ambiguities associated with incomplete information, the challenge of conveying substantive uncertainty, and the attendant difficulty in conveying accurate analysis to policy makers through written and oral briefing instruments.

Other singular presentations focused on the need to integrate different methods throughout a course to meet all students' learning styles. Pam Mason (John Carroll University) reflected on the use of S&RP like "Athens at the Dawn of Democracy" and "Thucydides Theatre" as ways of deepening students' learning central ideas/concepts in the history of Western political thought. Helen Boutrous (Mount Saint Mary's College) revealed that for female students from traditionally underrepresented populations, simulation and role-play exercises not only provide the skill-building benefits necessary for success in academia, but increase their sense of political efficacy, engagement, and participation. By including simulation or experiential learning in five separate political sciences courses, the benefits for students have been enhanced and reinforced with a taste for competition that has resulted in better performance in their classes, mentoring and scholarship opportunities, and increased acceptances to graduate and law schools. Bill Brantley (Walden University) demonstrated that the teaching of public administration, both undergraduate and graduate, needs to be reformed in order to reflect the practice of public administration in today's networked government. By using blended learning with simulations as the core of the course, future public administrators can acquire the negotiation, project management, and critical thinking skills needed to manage public agencies in the future.

Lessons Learned/Conclusions Reached

Overall the 2007 workshop reiterated former S&RP track themes such as: the incalculable challenges of using exercises and games in class; the need for both institutional and departmental support for extensive projects to reduce monetary costs and/or to coordinate student availability; the high investment costs of S&RP in terms of start-up funds, time, and energy for instructors; and the recognition of the need to move beyond the creation and use of simulations in isolation to those that engage faculty within and across disciplines/universities (PS, July 2006, 541). The presentations demonstrated that S&RPs have indeed evolved in rigor and techniques. In addition to raising serious questions and possible solutions on how S&RPs can and should be factored in merit evaluations for those faculty who engage them, the discussants explored how such faculty could receive more FTEs while students could receive more credit hours for S&RP engagement when taking teaching and class loads into account. A possible solution could be to create simulation learning labs that supplement courses like those found in the natural science and engineering disciplines.

In addition, the 2007 S&RP Track I discussants extended the conversation toward what needs to happen to actualize these ideals about S&RP as inimitable, inventive pedagogical approaches worthy of recognition as pioneering research that can influence our teaching and understanding of politics. The discussants grappled with how to highlight S&RP as a crucial and vital pedagogy within and across our respective disciplines through the research, writing, and publication of a base of literature via annotated bibliography and scholarship that is associated with this kind of practical, experiential and/or active learning and how it can be exploited and built upon in a larger university setting and in the outside world. The discussants explored ways to publicize and advance scholarship on simulations that accurately employ pre/post-test methods and other learning outcome assessments as a means of creating a base framework for future developments. Such scholarship would help to educate or "proselytize" higher administration, department chairs, and colleagues on the utility of these modes for facilitating and fostering civic engagement and active learning for students and promote an interest in producing "citizens" as well as "scholars." To achieve these goals, faculty engaging in S&RP must work to develop institutional standards for what simulations should do through more collaboration on S&RP models, best practices, within/across universities, and the organization and sharing between conferences via list servs, web blogs, and web site links. The immediate outcome of the 2007 discussion was the creation of a list serv that linked the track discussants and began the arduous, yet rewarding process of integrating S&RP within the overall discourse on teaching and learning within the discipline.

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Track Nine: Civic Engagement I

—**Alan R. Gitelson,**
Loyola University Chicago
—**Robert M. Mauro,**
Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy, SUNY
—**Elizabeth O'Shaughnessy,**
University of Illinois at Chicago
—**Amy L. Brandon,**
University of Houston

Track I on Civic Engagement explored teaching and learning techniques available to instructors to educate and join students in civic engagement. Presentations and papers covered pedagogies employed in the subfields of American politics, political theory, and international relations with emphasis on both empirical and normative approaches. Tools for modeling civic engagement included service learning, internships, and experiential learning requirements.

Civic education and civic engagement have gained broad recognition in recent years as popular pedagogical themes and effective teaching models in higher education. However, with this recognition has come disagreement over the justification and means by which civic education and civic engagement have been incorporated into the classroom. At the 2007 APSA Teaching & Learning Conference Track I: Civic Engagement, at least four issues surfaced repeatedly as the stream of discussion developed. First, what is civic education? Responses to this question included a debate about the appropriate skills a civic education course should impart to students. How do we weight the relative importance of general knowledge about the political system with the need to develop specific analytical skills that enhance critical thinking aptitude? Second, are civic education and civic engagement central to the mission of the university? What are our normative and empirical expectations of course work emphasizing civic education and engagement? Third, what pedagogies and curriculum should a course on civic education and engagement underscore? What is the balance between focusing on normative and empirical pedagogies and curriculum? Fourth, what means of assessment and evaluation are appropriate in evaluating the utility, goals, and outcomes of courses focusing on civic education and civic engagement. How do we best learn what pedagogies are optimums and which are of limited or no value in meeting the goals and outcomes of a course focusing on civic education and engagement (including but not confined to longitudinal studies that measure the impact of college civic education/engagement course work on political knowledge and civic activism over the life span).

Paper presenters and discussants answered these questions differently, reflecting an ambiguity among the participants in defining and fine-tuning the meaning and requirements of civic education and its accompanying skill sets. Some suggested that civic education is the education of tolerant, rational political actors while others claimed that a civic education is one that gives students the organizational and participatory skills necessary to negotiate American democracy. Still others suggested that civic education is about understanding the possible ranges of the "political" both from a normative and an empirical perspective. Attending these differences about the meaning of civic education was a diversity of teaching theories that supported specific models of civic education and engagement.

Throughout the discussion, participants grappled with different and competing perspectives on what politics is and what the ends of the polity are in the academy. Many participants suggested that politics is about communal interests and democratic citizenship. Some suggested that the communal interest comes from the community's history and American political history. Others approached politics in a less historical or normative direction and relied on competing interests to define politics and political ends. These differences have clear ramifications for the definition of civic education and its realization in fostering civic engagement outside the classroom. Some participants argued that what one believes about politics and the goals of political institutions shapes how one behaves toward and within government. It also impacts our expectations of what skills are necessary to act as an informed and active citizen in the political system.

Discussion also focused on the need for academics to conduct and publish teaching/learning-related research on the justifications and applications of civic education and engagement in scholarly outlets including the *Journal of Political Science Education, PS,* and other mainstream political science journals. Future conferences should also include discussion on private, state, and federal funding that may be available for the study of pedagogies focusing on civic education and engagement as well as funding for the implementation of civic education/engagement programs at college-based institutes.

An important conclusion of the Track discussion reflected a similar conclusion of the 2005 Teaching & Learning Track on Civic Education/Engagement: "While political scientists cannot 'own' civic engagement, we should lead it by being the academic catalyst for discussion and action." Most if not all of the presenters and discussants in our Track would agree with this statement.

Track Ten: Civic Engagement II

—**Timothy Dale,**
University of South Carolina, Upstate
—**Jeffrey M. Elliot,**
North Carolina Central University
—**Judithanne Scourfield McLauchlan,**
University of South Florida St. Petersburg

Political scientists have become increasingly concerned over the paucity of student interest, knowledge, skills, and participation in the political process. Citizen involvement has declined nationally since the 1960s, with voting rates plummeting from 65% to nearly 50% in 2000. Voting rates for young people between the ages of 18 to 24 fell from about 65% to a low of 36% in 2000. That participation rate improved slightly to 42% in the heated 2004 presidential race. This trend led the American Political Science Task Force on Civic Education in the 21st Century (1998) to conclude that "current levels of political knowledge, political engagement, and political enthusiasm are so low as to threaten the vitality and stability of democratic politics in the United States."

In response to this trend, classroom instructors have wrestled with a host of strategies and tactics to stem the decline. Several approaches were examined in Civic Engagement Track II, including service learning, civic engagement, internships, simulations, guest speakers, field projects, and classroom debate. Participants weighed the strengths and limitations of each approach; while concluding that each approach resulted in positive gains, there were many unresolved questions requiring additional research and investigation.

Service Learning and Civic Engagement

Initial track discussions explored the definitional difficulties in distinguishing between service learning and civic en-

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gagement, noting that the two are closely related. While some participants contended that service learning is ostensibly nonpolitical and less ideological, as opposed to civic engagement, which is more politically driven and policy-oriented, most panelists concluded that it was difficult, if not impossible, to draw this line. Indeed, both approaches embrace personal, policy, and political values.

The panelists also grappled with the issue of assessment. How does the instructor measure the success or failure of service learning and civic engagement? On this issue, the participants reached consensus: far more work remains to be done in order to answer this question. While current methods reveal several positive instructional outcomes, especially of a cognitive nature, they fail to adequately measure student progress in terms of affective learning, skill acquisition, personal esteem, political efficacy, verbal and written competence, and values clarification. Related to this question is the issue of grading. Here, too, the panelists found that it is difficult to assess student performance in both the cognitive and affective domains, and they questioned whether pen-and-paper tests can adequately measure the myriad benefits associated with service learning and civic engagement. The panelists concluded that it is impossible to assess such experiences by employing multiple-choice tests, true-false questions, short-answer responses, or even formal essays. Subjectivity threatens to undermine rigorous measurement, limiting serious attempts at assessment.

A number of other questions were also debated. Do service learning and civic engagement enhance course content? Do these experiences actually foster civic participation? Do service learning and civic engagement encourage positive learning outcomes? Do these experiences heighten student performance in other courses? Do service learning and civic engagement promote personal efficacy? The answers to these and other questions remain unresolved. The participants expressed the need to more fully examine these issues, as well as how best to incorporate service learning and civic engagement into their instructional pedagogy. For example, are similar benefits derived from a highly-structured assignment to a less-defined one, or from a single-session or a multiple-session experience to a semester-long one? Additional research needs to be conducted to answer these questions.

Civic Engagement and the Curriculum

A primary area of interest for the track discussion was integrating civic engagement into political science curricula. Given a decline in civic engagement among students, one of our challenges as political science educators is to try to counteract this trend through cultivating knowledge about and commitment to civic participation. Several papers presented in this track addressed various ways that this might be accomplished. Ranging from course design to classroom activities and community outreach, participants were eager to discuss conventional and innovative ways to implement service learning and civic engagement activities in the curriculum.

Some discussion occurred, for example, relating to syllabus design, program placement, and the grading of assignments related to service learning activities. One of the concerns addressed within this discussion regarded how course objectives and content can be more or less relevant given certain service learning experiences and placements. Many participants agreed that service learning placements are an important factor in drawing connections between the course and the students' experiences at service learning sites. Alongside placement, assignments related to the service learning components of a course were also significant to discussants. Some suggested that the value of service learning activities can be brought into the weighted grading of the course through "low stakes" assignments. This kind of assignment requires students to participate and to reflect on their experiences without the pressure of an intensive rubric for evaluating these subjective components.

The weighting of service learning assignments also raised questions about the kind of courses most appropriate for service learning components. Various arguments were made about the value of service learning in both upper and lower division classes, with discussion focusing on the different objectives of the service learning activities in each. Most agreed that different courses at different levels should apply learning through service in different ways. This discussion involved considerations of "affective learning" versus "content learning" that is available to students in service learning experiences. A benefit of experiential learning not often incorporated into formal course assessments, for example, involves the growth that students may experience in the most productive service learning environments.

Civic engagement is not limited to service learning as a part of the curriculum, however, and track participants were also interested in how educators might be able to transform the classroom itself into a site of civic engagement. Papers and suggestions were presented proposing that different forms of communication might be useful for diversifying the classroom as a public space. Structured classroom debate, for example, allows students the benefit of presenting research while experimenting with their own advocacy and voice. Suggestions were also made for alternative forms of expression through assignments, including artistic forms of visual and oral communication. Especially interesting and promising for many participants was a presentation on the use of community service newsletters (and the narratives therein) as a method of integrating and communicating classroom and service learning experiences. If civic knowledge is not simply cognitive, educators should explore ways to facilitate and assess the expression of these other forms of civic knowledge.

Conceiving of the classroom as a civic space inspired a few presenters and discussants to focus attention on the philosophical area of our discipline. If discussion involves considerations of civil society and cultivating an ethic of civic-mindedness, then political theory courses may offer surprising opportunities for discussion about these ideas. Civic engagement requires in part that we come to terms with the public realm, and attempt to revitalize participation in political processes. Part of civic engagement, therefore, is learning how to take part in deliberative discussions. In this sense political theory offers opportunities, not unlike other political science courses, to evoke the public realm in the classroom. With this goal in mind several track participants offered suggestions for making a classroom more democratic, without sacrificing important learning outcomes. Many argued, for instance, that democratic practices may facilitate rather than compromise several desired learning outcomes.

Next Steps: Fostering Civic Engagement on Campus

Civic engagement can benefit campuses and communities as much as it can benefit student learning in the classroom. Research findings presented in this track helped participants understand the advantages and productive relationships that can evolve from civically engaged college students and university campuses. Engaged students predict engaged citizens. Likewise, engaged university communi-

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ties can improve and sustain involvement in our broader communities. One area for future research involves the development of productive partnerships between campuses and their communities. The sustainability of these programs should be of particular interest.

Track participants stressed the need for institutional support for civic engagement initiatives on campus. There was a cry for universities to "live up to their mission statements" and to commit resources to the task. This could involve the creation of a "center" that would provide an administrative support structure for faculty willing to develop civic engagement components in their courses. The support provided by such a center could include workshops and faculty development programs, course development grants, and other financial incentives designed to facilitate the inclusion of civic engagement in the curriculum. The staff at such a center would be devoted to finding creative ways to expand course offerings with civic engagement and to increase engagement on campus.

There was a consensus that institutional support was essential to develop long-term, sustainable community partnerships. These are simply too difficult to create and to maintain on an ad hoc, individual faculty member basis. In addition to having administrative support to facilitate civic engagement programs, participants also discussed the need to change the reward structure on many campuses. In particular, participants argued that tenure and promotion guidelines should reward the additional time and effort needed to implement service learning and field work components in the curriculum. Participants stressed the need for additional research of "best practices" to explore how campuses are developing their service learning and civic engagement programs as well as the creation of materials that would provide guidance for those seeking to increase engagement on their campuses.

One track participant was her campus' director of service learning, another was director of her university's Center for Civic Engagement, and another was leading her university's effort to create a sophomore-year experience of "citizenship across the curriculum." The diverse group of Civic Engagement II track participants shared their experiences and discussed the challenges and issues to be addressed when attempting to foster civic engagement on campus. In particular, participants emphasized the need to build support across the campus—to reach out to non-political scientists—and to develop citizenship across the curriculum and to promote a campus-wide culture of engagement.

And, finally, participants discussed the need to build support within the discipline, so that scholars who are interested in the scholarship of teaching and learning are less marginalized by their peers. Discussants praised the APSA's efforts in organizing the Conference on Teaching and Learning as a means of fostering scholarly debate and dialogue about these important issues.

Reference

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Track Eleven: Graduate Education

—**Janice Newton,**
York University

How well do we prepare our graduate students for careers in teaching and research?[1] We discussed at length the kinds of skills that are necessary to build a successful career in political science, reflected on how to teach those skills in graduate courses, and how to integrate them into the graduate curriculum. How can we make explicit our assumptions about the skills needed for a career in political science, and correspondingly develop graduate courses and curriculum that teach those skills? Below I summarize our discussion of some of the important themes generated by the papers and presentations.

Teach Both Process and Product

We often focus on the content of graduate courses while ignoring the process of how students learn in graduate studies. Yet, process is important. We reflected on how Paulo Friere's pedagogical principles and the tenets of good governance could be applied to our graduate teaching practices, making our teaching practices more transparent, participatory, and responsive. This is important in fostering the kind of development we consider appropriate for professional careers in political science.

Teach Students as Researchers

- Develop Research Skills: How can we explicitly develop students' ability to do research? Building this into course design is crucial, especially if done in collaboration with research librarians. It is also important to consider how this developed as a part of the overall graduate curriculum.

- Develop Judgment: How can we teach our graduate students to judge what is authoritative in their research? In some research areas, like foreign policy, scholarship might be dominated by publications authored by public servants or political appointees. How can we teach our graduate students to assess the scholarly integrity or bias of sources? How can we build this into a graduate curriculum?

- Generate Useful Research Questions: How do we teach our students to generate research questions? We discussed examples of graduate programs that were designed to develop this skill in students.

- Develop Original Ideas: We discussed the need for graduate students to develop their ability to generate new ideas and take ownership of their work. How can faculty support them in this?

- Develop Writing Skills for Real Audiences: How can we teach our graduates to develop writing skills they will need in their future careers, such as how to write journal articles, policy documents, etc.? How could we build this into a graduate curriculum or course?

- Explore Interdisciplinarity: How can we encourage our students to use interdisciplinarity to enhance their understanding of issues?

Teach Future Teachers

Gabriela Pleschova's paper provided an overview of initiatives in Europe for training political science graduates in teaching. Some places seemed more advanced than their North American counterparts. The discussion that ensued clearly pointed to the need for more rigorous training of graduate students for teaching, but also highlighted the constraints posed by a graduate faculty who by-in-large were not themselves trained and possibly

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indifferent to this issue. Nonetheless, in our discussion we recognized the crucial importance of graduate programs offering training in teaching specific to our discipline.

Recruitment and Retention

The issue of who we recruit and retain in graduate studies is also critical. One paper addressed the challenges that foreign graduate students face in surviving graduate studies in the United States. Foreign students can be an incredible asset to a graduate program, yet their needs and concerns are often not well-understood, resulting in financial and emotional hardship. Some useful strategies for redressing these problems were discussed. The graduate student's perspective was useful in our discussions and perhaps could be explicitly solicited in the future. Recruitment and retention of other categories of graduate students should also concern us. Why have Black Ph.D. enrollments dropped in our discipline, especially when their enrollment in other graduate programs is on the rise?[2] Why is there an equally troubling attrition rate for women in moving up the ranks from undergraduate to graduate and from assistant to full professor? Future teaching conferences could welcome students' perspectives on these issues as well as successful practices in graduate programs to redress the issues.[3]

Curriculum Mapping

Many of the issues we discussed above at the course level also needed to be thought through at the level of the overall curriculum. The U.S. military provided one impressive example of curriculum mapping. We would welcome other examples of curriculum mapping that demonstrate how the above issues are addressed across a political science graduate curriculum.

Conclusion

This was the first time that graduate education was the focus of a track in the Teaching and Learning Conference. As our discussion developed over the conference, we noted that we generated more questions than answers. Many of the issues we raised were general concerns about graduate education, and not necessarily unique to political science graduate programs. Our hope is that this track will be offered in future conferences to allow us to develop multiple teaching strategies that address those general issues, but also target the needs of our discipline more specifically.

Notes

1. This question is posed by Julie Dolan, Martha E. Kropf, and Karen O'Connor in "The Future of Our Discipline: The Status of Doctoral Students in Political Science," *PS: Political Science and Politics,* 30 (Dec. 1997): 751–6.
2. Maurice Woodard, "Black Political Scientists: Where Are the New PhDs?" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 18 (winter 1985): 80–8; "Departments of Academic Caste: Blacks are Less than Marginal in the Academic Ranks of Political Science," *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 18 (winter 1997–1998): 52; and "African Americans Continue to Flock to Graduate School," *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 37 (autumn 2002): 69–70.
3. One example of this is found in Carlos E. Juárez's "Recruiting Minority Students for Academic Careers: The Role of Graduate Student and Faculty Mentors," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 24 (Sept. 1991): 539–40.

Track Twelve: Diversity and Inequality: Theories and Applications

—Jacki Fitzpatrick,
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—Dan Krejci,
Jacksonville State University
—William Lester,
Jacksonville State University
—Kendra Stewart,
Eastern Kentucky University
—Christopher Whitt,
University of Maryland

The topics and contexts of the presentations, as well as the backgrounds of the participants in the diversity track, were all very varied. This track contained both applied as well as theoretical research, research which touched upon key issues of diversity and inequality, presented by faculty in political science and other disciplines such as family science. Track participants addressed issues such as gay/lesbian marriage, racial inequalities, low-income families, and teaching ethnic and cross-cultural diversity in the university setting. Issues such as these tend to generate strong reactions, particularly among students who have not had these life experiences. We discussed teaching techniques to maximize dialogue and minimize stigmatization in panel symposia, open discussions, and paper presentations.

In contrast, students who have such life experiences tend to think that they are well-informed about the topics, yet they may lack theoretical/empirical knowledge on the topics (Rosenthal et al. 2007). In these cases, students might expect course credit for their life experience. In addition, students may feel justified in disputing or ignoring course material (readings and lectures) if they have not had the experiences noted in the material. The track discussions were very helpful in identifying ways to acknowledge students' histories without altering course expectations for student learning.

The presentations enlightened participants on several key factors. First, diversity needs to be tied closer to the concept of inequality. The discipline of political science can no longer afford to teach these subjects as if they are two separate areas. The concept of diversity is often tied to overcoming incidences of inequality. Second, we need to establish some firm goals as to why we teach diversity. It has to be more than just for diversity's sake. Diversity is a good concept and incorporating it into the discourse of our discipline is essential, particularly as these terms apply to developing a citizenry that respects democratic principles. Yet, we must have a sense of direction and purpose for incorporating diversity and inequality into our dialogues. It is important to expect some sort of progress from these dialogues. Third, and essentially, we need to develop educational delivery systems that overcome student-erected barriers that make it more difficult to deal with diversity and inequality. Several of the panel's presenters offered ways to broach these subject areas through theoretical and applied methods.

A common theme that emerged across these papers was the challenge of helping our students (and educational institutions) face the filters and sometimes the invisibility of their own cultural experiences and gain empathy for others' cultural diversity (Chilton and Woods 2007; Claes 2007; Krejci and Lester 2007; Rasmussen 2007; Summers 2007). Some authors discussed specific assignments that allow students to engage in perspective-taking or role play activities to build empathy over time (Fitzpatrick 2007; Krejci and Lester 2007; Rasmussen 2007). Others discussed the use of self-disclosure to reveal cultural patterns and open dialogues with stu-

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dents (Jungkunz 2007). Some colleagues discussed civic engagement as a means to address the balance between inclusiveness in the majority culture and respect of cultural traditions among minority groups (Disney 2007; Giordano 2007). All of the approaches had a long-term focus on social change (e.g., the promotion of diversity and the reduction of inequality), a focus shared by the various disciplines participating with this track.

Significant discussion on common themes among the various topics of diversity (race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) and strategies for greater institutional support for marginalized groups developed out of a panel discussion on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender issues (Rosenthal et al. 2007). Participants explored commonalities among various minority groups and ways to explore these in the classroom to create significant learning experiences. As in years past, concerns were raised over the lack of rewards for faculty willing to take on the challenges of teaching courses and producing scholarship on issues surrounding diversity.

Finally, participants came to realize incorporation of a discourse into the classroom related to diversity and inequality cannot be done to promote one political agenda over another. If we are truly going to have a discourse on diversity and inequality, then all voices need to be heard. Only through a dialogue can we reach any semblance of understanding. Diversity literally means "variety," and this includes varieties of opinions and viewpoints that often meet around issues of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender issues, to name just a few. Likewise, inequality can be rooted in deep misunderstandings and a lack of empathy. Overcoming this must be a primary goal of the discourse. Hopefully, we can elicit positive responses from our students through improved teaching methods. This track offered hope for a sound theoretical understanding of the issues as well as classroom application.

It was a productive and engaging track in which many participants left with activities to implement and ideas for further research. In addition, it was noted that future discussions need to focus on integrating issues of diversity into courses where students do not self-select because of an interest in the topic (such as general education) and strategies for dealing with resistance to the dialogue. The question came up as to whether the diversity and inequality track should remain separate or become integrated into the other various tracks. On one hand, it is encouraging and motivating to participate in discussions with like-minded supporters and believers. On the other, the goal of bringing issues of inequality and diversity more into the mainstream will be slower in advancing if we continue only preaching to the choir.

References

The following papers were referred to in this article and can be found on the TLC section of the APSA web site: www.apsanet.org/content_39501.cfm.

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