Executive Director's Report, 2006

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Each year the executive director makes an annual report to the Council and membership, typically recounted in densely packed text in the fall issue of *PS.* It's always good reading to be sure, but rarely brings to life the vibrancy, breadth, and rich texture of APSA activities. This year we are trying something new, and have prepared a more tailored and graphical APSA Annual Report as a stand alone booklet. It is available to all members, and was first distributed at the APSA Annual Business Meeting in Philadelphia.

The Association invariably undertakes more activity than most members realize: supporting teaching, underwriting departments damaged by Hurricane Katrina, allocating small research grants, staffing task forces on the major issues of political and public life of the world, speaking out in defense of academic freedom, advocating for social science and humanities research funding, providing minority fellowships, partnering with Duke University to support the Ralph Bunche Institute, maintaing international networks, hosting scholars of Congress through the Congressional Fellowship Program and in Washington in our Centennial Center, mentoring, enhancing professional development, advancing opportunities within the discipline, publishing scholarship of excellence, and running the largest meeting of political science scholars in the world. We trust the Annual Report will give you a better understanding of APSA's work in these and many, many other areas.

In its stead, then, let me report here on the interior workings of APSA—its membership, finances, and agenda. Association operations are in strong shape. Our finances are in balance and are anchored by adequate reserves. Our budget is tight, but in line with our program commitments. Membership has leveled a bit after a number of years of growth. While student and associate memberships are at their highest levels ever, regular professional membership has shown some decline. We are working on improving the retention rate of regular members, drawing on an outreach experiment organized by the Council subcommittee on membership, and we will concentrate on how we can entice a larger percentage of the potential academic pool to join. Relevant data on finances and membership are at the back of this issue (in the Gazette section, starting on page 1001).

One key change in APSA staffing was the move by Dr. Linda Lopez from APSA to the National Science Foundation, where she is the new director for cross-directorate programs in the Division of Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Programs. It is hard to lose a talented senior political scientist, but good to know that there is a scholar at such an important position at NSF who understands our work. A search for a new APSA director of education and minority programs is underway. APSA's staff remains incredibly able and dedicated. Among our senior staff are Robert J-P. Hauck, APSA's deputy director and editor-in-chief of *PS,* Jeffrey Biggs, director of the Congressional Fellowship Program, and Bahram Rajaee, director of international programs and public presence, and a team of association professionals in meetings, membership, communications, and finance that is the best around.

Several different ventures are on the horizon for APSA. President Robert Axelrod has introduced a new task force focused on interdisciplinarity, and his program chairs have framed a conference theme of Political Science and Beyond. The task force, and the Annual Meeting, will work across science and the humanities to zero in on best practices to advance interdisciplinary work in research and teaching. The task force is supported by APSA and by a SGER award from the National Science Foundation, and chaired by John Aldrich.

The Association is not up to the levels we want to be in a couple of existing program areas. One of these is to renew our publications program. Some parts of our publications list have become outdated, and we need to adapt to how the Internet and new publications technologies have changed the publishing environment. The other is to complete the development of new systems of data collection about the profession—the departmental survey, graduate placement surveys, and so forth. These activities have flagged and the advancement of these areas now becomes a priority.

Shaping all of our activities is a responsibility to serve as an integrative presence across the discipline as a whole. APSA has a multi-dimensional role—scholarship, professional development, public outreach, and professional service. Our goal is to take initiative in each of these areas in a balanced manner across the discipline and to lead in bringing together, strengthening, and coordinating work by many individuals and groups working across the field. APSA organized sections and Annual Meeting related groups and working groups function in this way. Small steps in this direction are illustrated by the communally shared PROL paper server. Our directories reach beyond APSA membership to document all of U.S. academic political science. The Teaching and Learning Conference, and the proposed Chairs Conference, reach across membership lines. International initiatives are geared to building stronger ties with individual scholars, with departments and associations, and with national systems of political science. There's much more to do.

Our challenge is to act in creative ways in these different program areas, to assure we maintain balance across them, and to exercise these efforts in partnership with the many different associations and institutions that make up the enterprise of political science.

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