Brintnall Becomes Executive Director

On February 1 Michael Brintnall assumed the role of APSA executive director. Brintnall was selected to succeed Catherine Rudder after a search process led by a six-member committee and approval by the APSA Council.

Most recently Brintnall served as executive director of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). No stranger to APSA, he is both a longtime member of the Association and a political scientist who worked in the national office from 1990 to 1996. One of the many assets he brings to the Association is breadth of experience. He has been on the faculty at Brown University and later at Mount Vernon College, a research analyst and program director in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, vice president for academic affairs at Mount Vernon College, and an academic association administrator at APSA and director at NASPAA. He earned his doctorate in political science from MIT in 1976.

At both APSA and NASPAA he has been widely credited with working to broaden the base of participation in these associations and encouraging innovative program approaches. He has been especially good at listening and responding to a diversity of voices within NASPAA's constituencies. During his tenure he expanded NASPAA's international role in important new ways, advanced the program for accreditation and improvement of academic quality, and introduced a teaching oriented peer review journal, the *Journal of Public Affairs Education*. In a January email to the membership, APSA President Robert Putnam noted, "By common consent among those who have worked with him, Michael is a talented administrator and I know from my discussions with him that he has a deep belief in the value of professional associations and the roles they play both in strengthening the capacity of scholars and teachers to share their views and advance their work, and ultimately in enriching public life in general."

Brintnall won the unanimous and enthusiastic approval of the search committee, chaired by James Stimson, and including Sven Steinmo, Elinor Ostrom, Samuel DuBois Cook, and Dale Rogers Marshall; the Administrative Committee, composed of President-Elect Theda Skocpol, Robert Kaufman, Nancy Burns, David Collier, John Garcia, and Bob Holmes; and the APSA full Council.



Putnam went on to say, "I know Michael is eager to meet and talk with people from all parts of the APSA community, and that he will do this intensively. He is also committed to keeping up a strong voice in Washington and other public settings on issues affecting the future of our field, including funding for research across the social sciences and humanities.

As the Association launches an exciting new journal, prepares to celebrate our Centennial, and hosts a lively discussion about the intellectual directions of the field and our links to public life, we will benefit greatly from Michael's seasoned and energetic leadership."

Moving Towards Common Goals

Dear Colleagues:

I am delighted to join APSA as executive director. I have become increasingly interested in working on activities that increase choices and opportunities to advance scholarship, teaching, and policymaking, and in building infrastructure to sustain this. I've had the opportunity to explore this work in a number of different settings and perspectives: in the federal government in programs to support policy research, in academic administration, in international development through partnerships with groups like the Network of Schools and Institutes of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe, or the Inter-American Network for Public Administration Education, and with NASPAA and APSA.

From these experiences, I am confident that there is no more important building block than vibrant and active "learned societies" such as APSA to support scholarship and build effective linkages to teaching and policy. Associations such as ours play multiple roles in this process—providing the forum for exchange of views and findings, serving as the platform for dissemination of research, encouraging discourse, coordinating efforts to build resources, promoting diverse perspectives and the inclusion of many groups and perspectives, and organizing and legitimizing self scrutiny and accountability in the field when circumstances call for it. In the course of performing these roles, scholarly associations become building blocks in society for free and independent inquiry and for democracy.

Such accomplishments by scholarly associations, however, are not automatic. The association can be more or less effective in the ways it fertilizes good work, in the degrees to which it brings individuals and ideas together, in the bridges it builds across different approaches to scholarship and teaching or different bodies of scholars, and in how it enables linkages between scholarly work with the public. Since the research and teaching we do in political science are so important, we cannot afford to have anything but the best in performance by the Association.

So it is with great enthusiasm that I join APSA as executive director to help take on how the association undertakes its responsibilities to its members, to the field of political science, and ultimately to the community and the world. I have the privilege to work with an excellent staff and energetic leadership, and to follow in incredibly able footsteps. I'm looking forward to working with everyone towards these common goals.

Michael Brintnall

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