

# 2001 Executive Director's Report

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## Issues Facing APSA

Nonprofit organizations are not all alike, though much literature on the third sector fails to make distinctions among them. What they do have in common is their tax status. Charitable, educational, scientific, and related organizations—often referred to by U.S. tax code section 501(c)(3)—vary in structure, size, and purpose. Structurally, APSA is an individual membership association. This fact permeates every aspect of what we do and separates us from many other nonprofits that have no membership base.

As political scientists, we know that every group is political and thus susceptible to strategic and tactical maneuvers designed to influence it. This is especially true of a membership organization. However, APSA is an enterprise established not only to advance the interests of its members but also to recognize and advance excellence in scholarship, teaching, and related service. Hence, we call ourselves a scholarly society, suggesting, in a sense, that politics is off-limits in much of what we do.

Given recent and not-so-recent scholarship, this idea of what APSA is might seem naive and uninformed. We cannot remove subjectivity from scholarly judgments, nor can any organization effectively proscribe political motives. Even though the standards of excellence may be artificially constrained by dominant intellectual trends, the entire scholarly enterprise rests on the idea that reasonable estimates of quality can and should be made.

Of course, determinations of what is best recognize some works to the exclusion of the rest and the few to the exclusion of the many. As a membership organization, a scholarly society is, as a result, in a state of permanent disequilibrium, poised for conflict between two inherently opposing ideas: on the one hand, openness, democracy, and broad representation; on the other, a more Platonic concept of identifying and honoring the best and the brightest.

How have we managed to exist, much less thrive, in this state of tension over the 100 years since our founding? We came perilously close to imploding three decades ago over a series of issues, most memorably that of the Vietnam War and whether APSA as an organization should take a position on U.S. military

involvement. Divisions erupted over control of APSA; openness of the Association to women and African Americans; the dominance of behavioralism in *APSR*; and, within the profession, secrecy of sponsors like the Central Intelligence Agency of scholarship and professional activities. Over a number of years, APSA's members forged an unofficial agreement, the elements of which included the establishment of the Committee on Professional Ethics and an evolving guide to ethical behavior (initiated by the Bernstein Report of 1968); the creation of Committees on the Status of Women in the Profession and Blacks in the Profession; and the decision, bitter to some, that APSA would not take public positions on issues not pertaining directly to the profession.

It is a truism, however, that people's perceptions of change lag behind the reality. Some disaffected colleagues dropped out of APSA, though the causes of membership decline at that time were multiple (see chart).

Never in our history had our differences been so visibly protracted and damaging. Though a state of relative normalcy gradually arose within APSA, the underlying tension continued but manifested itself more gently than the tidal waves that engulfed the Association in the late 1960s and throughout much of the 1970s. Moreover, the mechanisms designed to mediate between demands for change and protection of the prevailing scholarly standards worked fairly well from an organizational point of view for two more decades.

These mechanisms included the establishment and growth of Organized Sections; the development of a series of programs and professional standards designed to increase fairness and representation; the evolution of *PS* to allow new voices to be heard and to offer fuller reporting of Association activities; the creation of two new Status committees (on Latinos and on Lesbians and Gays); an ever-expanding Annual Meeting Program providing outlets for wider scholarship; the selection of Nominating Committees that broadened representation on the Council in part by nominating a proportion of women and minorities greater than their respective membership levels; a growing number of awards to recognize a wider variety of scholarship and a larger number of scholars;

and a more thoroughgoing selection of committee members to assure in particular the representation of teaching.

At the same time, the concern for excellence did not abate but became more focused on two aspects of the Association: *APSR* and the nomination process for president. At the most enlightened level, the battle has been joined over who decides what constitutes excellence and, specifically, who determines what will be considered the best scholarship and whose achievements are the most admirable.

Scholarly societies operate under the presumption that the question of what should be published is not best decided by a vote of the membership. In APSA the nominees for editor of *APSR* are vetted by a search committee that the president selects and the Council confirms. The search committee makes its recommendations to the president. The president selects a candidate and asks the Council to confirm the selection. Under APSA's constitution, the editor has complete control over the content of the journal, with one recent caveat: the editorial board must be approved in toto by the Council. Additionally, in practice only candidates who agree to utilize a double-blind peer review process are considered for *APSR* editorship. The system is designed to eliminate, to the degree possible, personal bias and to identify excellence.

Despite the *Review's* preeminence in the profession—or perhaps because of it—complaints have once again become more vocal and persistent that the journal leaves out much that is in fact excellent and worthy of publication. If this grievance has merit, the problem must largely be systemic, as editors are limited by a series of factors: peer review eliminates much editorial discretion; the rate of submissions coupled with page limits yields a mere 9% acceptance rate; and only submitted manuscripts can be considered for publication. I would add that the *APSR* is asked to carry a greater load than a single scholarly journal can bear.

For the past two years APSA has been formally struggling with these publication matters. The 1999–2000 Strategic Planning Committee discovered early in its existence the intense salience of these concerns. They transmitted their findings to the Search Committee for

**TABLE 1**  
**APSA Members 1974–2001**

Year	Regular	Unemployed	Associate	Retired	Life	Family	Student	Total Individual	Total Institutional	TOTAL MEMBERS*
1974	7,793			217	101	137	4,006	12,254	3,504	15,758
1975	7,335			206	100	149	3,912	11,702	3,648	15,350
1976	7,428			245	96	134	3,603	11,506	3,588	15,094
1977	7,228			270	95	142	3,076	10,811	3,466	14,277
1978	7,094			301	97	154	2,655	10,301	3,338	13,639
1979	6,845			310	91	148	2,335	9,729	3,339	13,068
1980	6,592			344	91	135	2,159	9,321	3,337	12,658
1981	6,423			349	92	129	1,901	8,894	3,283	12,177
1982	5,838			388	97	134	1,984	8,441	3,156	11,597
1983	5,764			382	104	130	2,068	8,448	3,018	11,466
1984	5,891			378	111	151	2,511	9,042	3,059	12,101
1985	5,879		106	411	116	166	2,595	9,273	2,996	12,269
1986	6,009		145	432	117	173	2,589	9,465	3,046	12,511
1987	5,913		154	439	127	202	2,775	9,610	3,109	12,719
1988	6,171		173	450	129	186	2,728	9,837	2,975	12,812
1989	6,445		249	489	166	192	3,054	10,595	2,948	13,543
1990	6,708		258	488	163	180	3,436	11,233	3,004	14,237
1991	6,967		266	519	160	199	3,656	11,767	2,890	14,657
1992	7,046		279	557	159	182	3,740	11,963	3,057	15,020
1993	7,061		291	573	157	194	3,979	12,255	2,887	15,142
1994	7,505		343	593	159	195	4,121	12,916	2,908	15,824
1995	7,654		340	623	164	205	4,750	13,736	2,812	16,548
1996	7,349		323	596	168	210	4,618	13,264	2,841	16,105
1997	7,808	82	429	625	167	218	4,611	13,940	2,706	16,646
1998	7,464	226	400	607	165	206	4,428	13,496	2,653	16,149
1999	7,247	248	412	590	163	191	3,981	12,832	2,550	15,382
2000	7,454	247	415	617	164	196	4,065	13,158	2,475	15,633
2001	7,477	229	487	614	163	203	3,997	13,170	2,399	15,569

\*As of January 15 each year.

the next editor of *APSR* and proposed that the Council consider a new journal. At the same time, a standing Committee on Publications unequivocally recommended the creation of a new journal. A Council-authorized Publications Implementation Committee worked to refine the various proposals: The new publication would be integrative and include policy essays, would incorporate the book review section of the *APSR*, and would aim for quality, breadth, and readability. In ceding book reviews, *APSR* would gain pages to accommodate a greater variety of articles that the editor would redouble efforts to solicit. Both journals would be peer reviewed. *PS* and APSA's website would be reevaluated in light of the changes.

Ironically, just as these decisions were being made, a letter under the pen name

**In a scholarly society that is also a membership association, how do we honor both our representational and our scholarly commitments, flawed as they may be in practice?**

"Perestroika" appeared on the Internet complaining about *APSR* and the process APSA uses to elect the Council and officers. The letter struck a great resonance among many members of the Association and added to the urgency to address concerns about APSA's journal offerings. The gist of that exchange is captured in the pages of *PS* over the last several issues (December 2000, March and June 2001) and in a response from the editor of *APSR* in its March 2001 issue.

You will notice a broader range of concerns than in my distillation here.

It is clear that the considerable changes underway in APSA's journal publication program may not satisfy all the critics. *APSR* is and will continue to be a peer-reviewed journal of original research that will now have more pages

to accommodate more original research. Both the *Review* and the new journal will be able to feature a greater variety of new knowledge but only to the degree that a broad range of scholars is willing to submit their best material, to review others' articles, and to do so in light of what they would like these journals to be.

The other issue that is vexing our Association is one of how we should select our officers: (1) by the current system that provides for a Nominating Committee to solicit nominations and to present a slate recommending a single candidate for each position and that allows for challenges to the slate that are easy to mount in principle but have not been tried since the 1970s; or, (2) by a more explicitly competitive process? Gary Jacobson has agreed to chair a committee to review this matter and make recommendations to the membership and the Council.

How to achieve broad representation should be the bread and butter of political scientists. Putting the presidency aside for a moment, the data suggest that our current method produces, on average, broad representation, and it

**TABLE 2**  
**Organized Section**  
**Members, 1999**

Organized Section	Number of Members*
1 Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations	416
2 Law and Courts	843
3 Legislative Studies	625
4 Public Policy	816
5 Political Organizations and Parties	569
6 Public Administration	515
7 Conflict Processes	343
8 Representation and Electoral Systems	377
9 Presidency Research	403
10 Political Methodology	805
11 Religion and Politics	493
13 Urban Politics	397
15 Science, Technology, and Environmental Policy	300
16 Women and Politics	625
17 Foundations of Political Theory	699
18 Information Technology and Politics	246
19 International Security and Arms Control	448
20 Comparative Politics	1550
21 Politics and Society in Western Europe	380
22 State Politics and Policy	424
23 Political Communication	423
24 Politics and History	635
25 Political Economy	589
26 Transformational Politics	237
27 New Political Science	332
28 Political Psychology	385
29 Undergraduate Education	341
30 Politics and Literature	273
31 Foreign Policy	476
32 Elections, Public Opinion, and Voting Behavior	721
33 Race, Ethnicity & Politics	485
34 Interdisciplinary History & Politics	427
35 Comparative Democratization	349
36 Human Rights	145

\*As of June 1, 2001.

also recognizes achievement, as intended. The question is whether our established practice is sufficiently legitimate and, if not, can we devise something better?

The office of the president is a differ-

ent matter in that the Nominating Committee has treated that office as first-and-foremost a mark of achievement. How politicized should this position be? Is there a systematic, unwarranted bias operating that narrows the field?

In short, is there a better way to select our leaders than our current method? In a scholarly society that is also a membership association, how do we honor both our representational and our scholarly commitments, flawed as they may be in practice?

### This Year's Accomplishments and Projects

Surely this rendition demonstrates considerable vibrancy within APSA, as well as a willingness on the part of a large number of members to spend the time and energy to be responsive to serious concerns. In addition to a complete reconsideration and revamping of our journal publication program, the APSA Council, committees, members, and staff have accomplished much this year, under the judicious guidance of President Robert Jervis. For details, let me refer you to the pages of *PS* and to our website rather than repeating what already appears there.

I would like to make special note of several unrelated items. The Ralph Bunche Summer Institute celebrated its fifteenth remarkable year as it moved from the University of Virginia to Duke

**TABLE 3**  
**Annual Meeting**  
**Registration, 1968–2000**

1968	3723 (Washington, DC)
1969	4142 (New York)
1970	2397 (Los Angeles)
1971	2732 (Chicago)
1972	3380 (Washington, DC)
1973	2312 (New Orleans)
1974	2773 (Chicago)
1975	2478 (San Francisco)
1976	2295 (Chicago)
1977	2624 (Washington, DC)
1978	2373 (New York)
1979	2687 (Washington, DC)
1980	2745 (Washington, DC)
1981	2887 (New York)
1982	2205 (Denver)
1983	2859 (Chicago)
1984	3391 (Washington, DC)
1985	2842 (New Orleans)
1986	3602 (Washington, DC)
1987	3524 (Chicago)
1988	4161 (Washington, DC)
1989	3496 (Atlanta)
1990	4505 (San Francisco)
1991	5179 (Washington, DC)
1992	4998 (Chicago)
1993	5635 (Washington, DC)
1994	5902 (New York)
1995	5559 (Chicago)
1996	6055 (San Francisco)
1997	6391 (Washington, DC)
1998	6633 (Boston)
1999	5818 (Atlanta)
2000	6167 (Washington, DC)

**TABLE 4**  
**Market Value of APSA Funds, 1988–2001**

Year*	Trust and Development and Centennial Campaign Funds	Congressional Fellowship and Endowed Awards Funds
1988	1,685,345	382,268
1989	1,643,552	394,837
1990	1,630,718	419,021
1991†	1,555,574	5,452,252
1992	1,905,090	6,188,105
1993	2,118,787	6,847,760
1994	2,190,976	7,218,462
1995	2,807,182	7,774,290
1996	3,248,013	9,442,658
1997	4,283,425	10,624,573
1998	5,965,087	12,656,326
1999	6,984,978	14,166,705
2000	8,137,173	16,597,076
2001 (projected)	7,439,025	13,561,466

\*June 30 of each year.

†Figures for 1991–93 were restated to reflect a change in accounting practice.

**TABLE 5**  
**Operating Budget Summary, FY 1987–2001**

Year	Income	Expenditures	Surplus
1986–87	1,585,000	1,500,000	85,307
1987–88	1,637,637	1,563,252	74,385
1988–89	1,847,151	1,731,248	115,903
1989–90	1,891,773	1,871,302	20,471
1990–91	2,158,118	2,133,524	24,594
1991–92	2,256,647	2,199,632	74,804
1992–93	2,290,313	2,202,419	87,894
1993–94	2,574,436	2,294,128	280,308
1994–95	2,734,375	2,524,663	209,712
1995–96	2,822,154	2,590,227	231,927
1996–97	2,979,845	2,793,237	186,607
1997–98	3,068,237	2,981,914	86,323
1998–99	3,150,001	3,086,546	63,455
1999–00	3,395,355	3,224,919	170,436
2001–01*	3,760,500	3,610,500	150,000

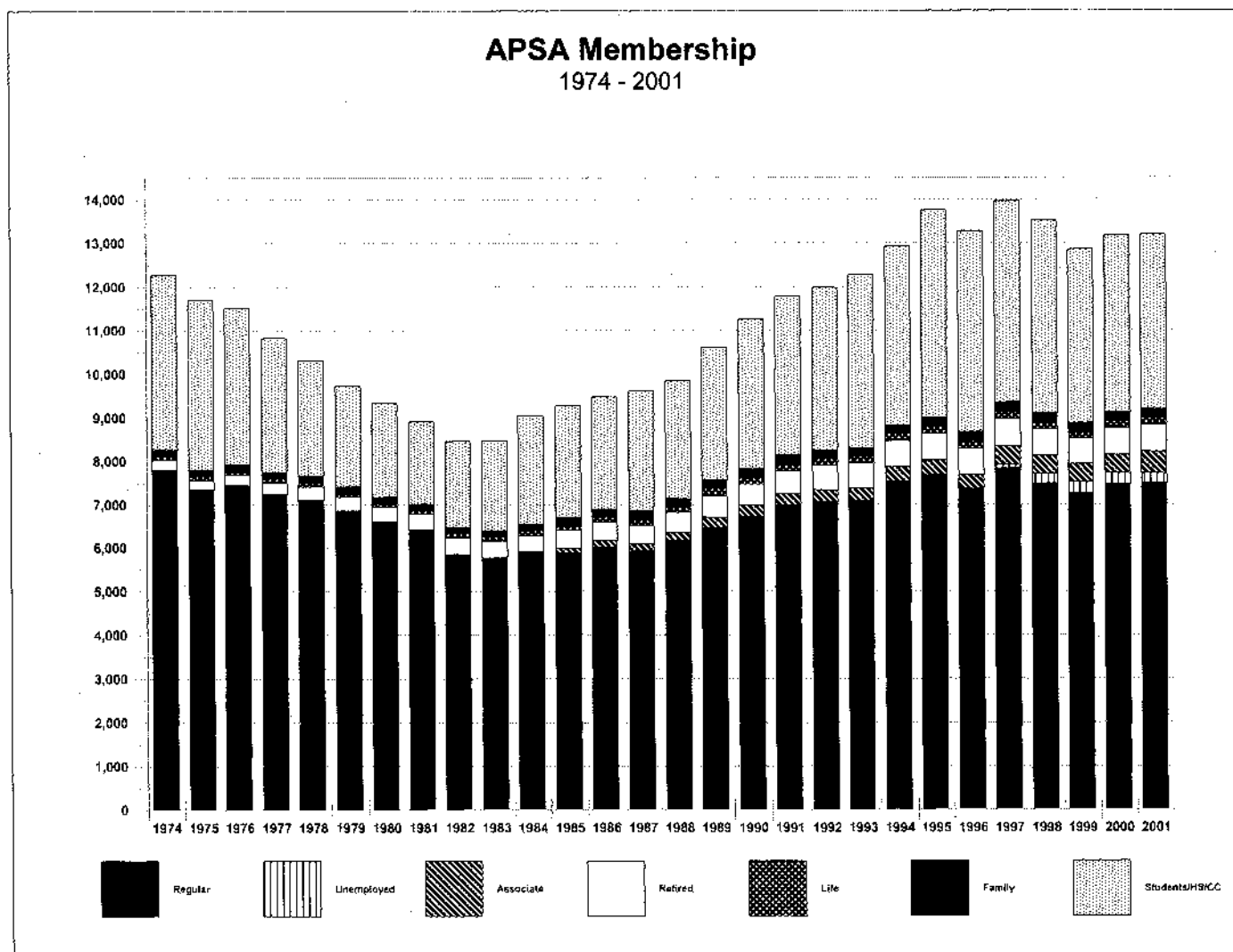
\*Projected.

room at the Annual Meeting and is now self-supporting. After two years of consultation, the Committee on Education and Professional Development under Charles Johnson's resolute leadership, is instituting, with Council approval, two experimental programs designed to improve the preparation of graduate students and the mentoring of new faculty. The Centennial Campaign, led by Dale Rogers Marshall and Jack Peltason, is progressing nicely, and we are on target to open the new Centennial Center for Political Science on the occasion of APSA's hundredth Anniversary in the fall of 2003. Finally, APSA became very actively engaged this year in ensuring that the concerns of social science are incorporated in discussions and Federal rule making pertaining to human-subjects protections.

As you can see from the accompanying tables (1–5) and chart, our vital signs are strong. Membership levels are generally holding steady (Table 1 and chart). Though institutional membership, largely libraries, continues to decline despite

University under the direction of Paula McClain. In addition, the Centennial Biographical Directory of Members, a major Association project, was published

in print and CD-ROM editions. PROCEEDINGS, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and led by William J. Ball, has replaced the panel paper



our best efforts, we are putting a new strategy in place to reverse that trend. Similarly, Organized Sections and our Annual Meeting, brilliantly led last year by Ira Katznelson and Helen Milner who are also preparing the upcoming *State of the Discipline* volume, continue to attract large numbers of members (Tables 2 and 3). On the financial front, we were not unscathed by the steep sell-off in the stock market, but our position remains solid (Table 4). Once again, we will show a surplus in our operating budget (Table 5).

### Departures

Ada W. Finifter completes her second and final three-year term as editor of *APSR*. She has given dedicated, unstint-

ing service to our profession in what arguably is the most difficult of all the positions at APSA. We owe her a huge debt of gratitude. Also leaving office is Mark Lichbach who was recruited as Book Review Editor by Ada's predecessor, Bingham Powell. We imposed upon Mark to continue to serve far beyond his initial commitment. He has done a superb job, and the profession is in his debt.

In June I announced my decision to step down as executive director as of October, and to accept a tenured position in the Public Policy School at George Mason University where I will direct the Master's Program in Public Policy. I have been immensely privileged to serve the profession as executive director over the past 14 years and have

found my work at APSA to be deeply rewarding. As a life member, I plan to remain actively involved in the Association and to maintain the many friendships I have developed over the years.

For my successor, Bob Jervis has appointed a search committee led by James Stimson, and has asked Robert Hauck to serve as acting executive director until a permanent replacement is selected. More information may be found in this issue of *PS* and on our website.

As this is my last report to you, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed time, energy, money, and talents to the important work of APSA. It has been a pleasure working with and for you.

July 1, 2001

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