

In the COMMONWEALTH

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For most of its first fifty years the scholarly activities of the Pennsylvania Political Science Association (PPSA) centered on planning for and participating in the annual meeting. Recently these activities have been augmented by the inauguration of this journal. Now there is a new development: about the time that PPSA members are sent this issue of COMMONWEALTH they should also receive Pennsylvania Political Scientist (formerly the PPSA Newsletter). Designed to enhance reader awareness of new research in political science and disciplinary developments in Pennsylvania, each from a different perspective, both publications, together with the opportunity to participate in the annual meeting, constitute the core activities of PPSA as this venerable yet dynamic organization begins its second half-century.

Communication with the larger constituency of this journal is essential to its continued growth and vitality. Thus, I joined three other state journal editors at the 1989 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association in Atlanta where, under the auspices of the "Applied Political Science" section, we presented a panel titled "Getting Published in a State Political Science Journal: Editorial Perspectives." (An account of the panel's proceedings should appear soon in PS.) The panel was chaired by APSR Managing Editor Samuel C. Patterson. In the paper I wrote for that panel, "An Author's Guide to Editorial Decision-Making in COMMONWEALTH: A Journal of Political Science," I explored some aspects of what our panel chair has called "the sociology of knowledge in political science" (Patterson et al, 1989, p. 878). While the full text of this paper appears in the first issue of Pennsylvania Political Scientist, I want to draw attention to a few items which bear on decision-making for the issue you hold in your hands.

The largest number of the articles refereed for this issue were in American politics, and this included those focusing on politics in Pennsylvania. Political theory ranked second, followed by comparative politics, international relations, and biopolitics. None were exclusively in either methodology or formal theory, but a number were grounded in statistically-based quantitative data.

One of my major tasks as Editor is to try to ensure that the editorial process is as fair and efficient as possible. While far from ideal, data indicates that the peer review process was reasonably fair, as measured by the consistency factor. Thus, over 80% of the papers refereed by more than one person had fully consistent reviews. This indicates a very strong degree of

common underlying standards of evaluation among our reviewers on the scholarly merit of submissions. Furthermore, referee views guided my editorial decision-making a significant 80% of the time. In every case when all referees said "reject" I concurred, while all papers which had either uniformly positive or mixed reviews were asked to revise and resubmit. The result is an issue a little larger than past ones: it features six articles rather than the five articles each printed in Volumes 1 and 2.

The process was also reasonably efficient, based on the time it took for manuscripts to be evaluated. While referee responses ranged from as little as one week to as long as four months, the average time from manuscript submission to my letter to authors stating my editorial decision was ten weeks. Some papers required extensive revision, and in several cases these ran into as many as five drafts. Still, the average time from initial submission to publication for the articles appearing in this issue was slightly over a year.

The comparative data given in the full paper indicates that in terms of both fairness and efficiency, decision-making on Volume 3 compares favorably with outcomes found for a range of over 50 political sciences journals, including some of the top ones in the discipline. Past and prospective authors seeking an honest appraisal from us will, I hope, be encouraged by this information.

Those who wish to evaluate for themselves the extent to which Volume 3 continues to realize the mission of this journal, "to publish important scholarly writing germane to political science," are urged to read the end product of the decision-making process described above. Among the six articles selected for this issue is an analysis and evaluation of American policy toward five major revolutions of the late twentieth century, followed by a study of implications of research into "chimpanzee politics" for human political behavior. Two other papers examine the effects of political disputes: one looks at a central controversy which strengthened early American support for freedom of speech and press, while a second examines a more recent controversy that led to a shift in elite attitudes toward a notable component of the American political economy. A research note studies the relationship between the way judges in three states are selected and their legal-democratic role orientation. The last piece, which focuses on Pennsylvania, examines some underlying reasons for gender differences found by researchers studying public policy attitudes. All these works are clearly germane to political science. Beyond this, are they eclectic? Unquestionably. Important? "Yes" say our expert referees. Do you think otherwise? Write us!

A final word: COMMONWEALTH is a cooperative undertaking which relies on the professional efforts of a variety of participants; authors, peer reviewers, editors and editorial board members, and our other external advisors and friends, as well as the members and