

**Report of The Editor
to the Editorial Board of The American Journal of Political Science
and to the Executive Council of
The Midwest Political Science Association
April 22, 2010**

Introduction

This Report of The Editor – the first of four during the 2010-04 editorial term – to the Editorial Board of The American Journal of Political Science, and to the Executive Council of the Midwest Political Science Association, has three purposes. The first is to review developments and trends in submissions during the previous year. The second is to describe my editorial goals for the next four years. And, the third is to discuss future changes to enhance what is increasingly regarded as the premier journal for advancing knowledge and understanding of citizenship, governance, and politics, and the public value of political science research.

I. The Year in Review

Table 1 reports the annual numbers of submissions received as well as the average times-to-decision for the past 11 years. In this regard, the quantity of submissions declined by approximately 9% between 2007 and 2008 and declined by an additional 9.8% between 2008 and 2009. There has been an uptick in the number of manuscripts – probably due to an editor transition. From January 1, 2009 – March 31, 2009 a total of 134 manuscripts were submitted. For the comparable dates this year (January 1 – March 31, 2010), a total of 188 manuscripts were submitted.

1999	546	47
2000	530	46
2001	586	39
2002	657	51
2003	803	36
2004	783	36
2005	691	41
2006	694	67
2007	583	130
2008	531	118
2009	479	113.1
2010 (01/01-3/31)	188	NA

The average time-to-decision (that is, from date of submission to date of notification of the Editor’s decision) slightly decreased in 2009, averaging 3.5 months. This figure is calibrated in terms of calendar days, including weekends, the

four days when the editorial staff attends the annual MWPSA meeting, the month of August when The Journal is closed to new submissions, and the last two weeks of December when it is closed for all business. This average of 3.5 months also includes two days of technical check of new submissions, 26 days of reviewer selection, assignment, and reassignment, 84 days review, and approximately 25 days for cluster processing of editorial decisions and author notification. Revisions also take some time. In 2009 there were 66 requests for revision, with the average turnaround on first revision being 134 days. An additional 9 manuscripts received a request for a second revision. These manuscripts took an average of 51.2 days of revision.

Table 2 indicates the distribution of manuscripts by field for the calendar year 2009. These are very rough categories. I have used the first category that an author notes to classify an article. Most authors use two or three classifications for their manuscripts. This enables the Journal to better select reviewers, but makes it cumbersome to report all of the categories. What is apparent from this listing is that over half of the manuscripts fit generally into American Politics (up 5 percent from 2008 and equivalent to figures from 2007). Comparative politics submissions are down from 30 percent in 2008 to 16 percent in 2009. International Relations submissions have dropped slightly from 2008 (about 1.5 percent), while Methods and Formal Theory has doubled since 2008. Normative theory submissions have slightly increased in that period (from 6 percent to 8 percent). On Table 2 the reporting periods are different, with the years 2007 and 2008 including the first three months of the following calendar year.

Classification	2009 Submiss.	2008 Submiss.	2007 Submiss.
American Behavior	135 (28.5%)	162 (25%)	192 (28%)
American Institutions	102 (21.6%)	135 (20%)	153 (22%)
Comparative	76 (16.1%)	200 (30%)	183 (26%)
International Relations	66 (13.9%)	103 (15%)	88 (13%)
Methods and Formal Theory	56 (11.8%)	36 (5%)	45 (6%)
Normative Theory	38 (8.0%)	28 (6%)	36 (5%)

Table 3 notes the time to decision for manuscripts and indicates the general distribution for decisions in 2009.

Table 3. Time to Decision.

Editor Decision Term	Total Decisions	Frequency of Decision	Time to Decision (Days)
Accept	11	2.6%	206.8
Decline With Insert	75	17.4%	160.4
Decline Without Insert	266	61.7%	107.3
Decline Without Review	37	8.6%	35.1
Revise and Resubmit	42	9.7%	160.8
Total Editor Decisions	431	100%	118.1

Table 4 indicates the total number of reviewers used in 2009. As can be seen from the table, almost half of the invited reviewers turned in a review. Almost 29 percent declined to review and 21 percent were notified by the Editor that their services were no longer needed. Usually this was due to the fact that sufficient reviews had arrived and additional reviews were no longer needed.

Table 4. The Reviewer Pool.

	Number	Frequency
Total number of reviewers invited	2654	
Declined to review	764	28.8
Completed review	1325	49.9
Terminated by Editor	559	21.1

On average it took 41 days for a reviewer to complete a review once notified about a manuscript. Over 60 percent of the reviewers who completed a review turned it in early (and thereby were not pestered with a message informing them they were late).

Table 5 indicates the distribution of recommendations. One point to note is that reviewers tend to recommend an R&R even when they do not believe it deserves such a recommendation.

Table 5. Reviewer Recommendations.

Reviewer Recommendation Term	Reviews Completed	Frequency of Recommendation
null	1	0.1%
Decline	635	46.6%
Must publish as is	127	9.3%
Must publish with minor revisions	202	14.8%
Revise and Resubmit	399	29.3%
Total Reviews Completed	1364	100%

In 2009, the total number of AJPS article downloads through Blackwell Synergy and Wiley InterScience has increased. In 2008 there were 131,555 downloads and in 2009 this increased to 145,266. These figures exclude downloads from JSTOR. The top 10 downloads during 2009 were as follows:

- “Social Networks and Collective Action” (David A. Siegel) 53.1
- “Who is Mobilized to Vote? A Re-Analysis of 11 Field Experiments” (Kevin Arceneaux, David W. Nickerson) 53.1
- “What Triggers Public Opposition to Immigration? Anxiety, Group Cues, and Immigration Threat” (Ted Brader, Nicholas A. Valentino, Elizabeth Suhay) 52.4
- “Estimating the Causal Effects of Media Coverage on Policy-Specific Knowledge” (Jason Barabas, Jennifer Jerit) 53.1
- “The Politics of Foreign Direct Investment into Developing Countries: Increasing FDI through International Trade Agreements” (Tim Büthe, Helen V. Milner) 52.4
- “The Effects of Strategic and Economic Interdependence on International Conflict Across Levels of Analysis” (Zeev Maoz) 53.1
- “When Can Politicians Scare Citizens Into Supporting Bad Policies?” (Arthur Lupia, Jesse O. Menning) 53.1
- “Does Voting History Matter? Analyzing Persistence in Turnout” (Kevin Denny, Orla Doyle) 53.1
- “How Foreign Aid Can Foster Democratization in Authoritarian Regimes” (Joseph Wright) 53.3
- “Portents of Pluralism : How Hybrid Regimes Affect Democratic Transitions” (Jason Brownlee) 53.3

II. The Next Four Years

My Letter of Interest in the Editorship of The American Journal of Political Science stated that the principal goal was to maintain the integrity of journal and to enhance its reputation. This is perhaps an easy goal in that AJPS has been in very capable hands and the journal has maintained its reputation. There are several mid-term goals, however, that I intend to address. The first relates to the “tragedy of the commons” in the reviewer pool. The second relates to an enhanced presence by the Journal. The third involves an increased on-line presence. Each of these is commented on.

Reviewer Tragedy of the Commons.

My predecessor remarked that this was an important concern. My conversations with other editors find that we all share the same concern. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence that reducing the review time has two unintended consequences. First, it increases the number of manuscripts coming into the pipeline. These manuscripts often are marginal, at best, and usually misplaced. Second, this depletes the intellectual time and resources of the reviewer pool. As noted above, AJPS has solicited over 2600 reviewers in the past year. There is a concerted effort for us not to use the same reviewer more than twice in a year. Yet many journals are calling on the same capable reviewers. To help minimize the “tragedy of the reviewer commons” and to build the quality of the reviewer pool, AJPS is:

- Becoming more assertive in declining inappropriate or incomplete manuscripts without external review. I have continued the example of my predecessor in this regard. In 2009 she returned 37 manuscripts without review. In the first three months of 2010, I have declined 35 manuscripts without review and I intend to keep up the pace.
- Working with Associate Editors who are providing advice on troublesome manuscripts. These are manuscripts that show some promise, but need a quick and accurate eye in gauging whether the manuscript holds promise. I am trying to engage these Associate Editors only with manuscripts for which I am at a loss. I aim to get clear advice from them about 10 times per year.
- Using a very large Editorial Board, largely comprised of mid-level scholars, who I call on 5 times per year to provide reviews. I regard this as a two-fold activity. First, I have a very capable set of reviewers that I can call on. Secondly, these scholars are the promising next generation for the discipline.

- Pressing my Editorial Assistants to push beyond the current reviewer pool that AJPS maintains. I am encouraging junior faculty (and advanced graduate students) to participate in the reviewer pool. I am also insisting on cross-disciplinary review. Increasingly the AJPS is getting very high quality interdisciplinary work of interest to the general audience of the AJPS.
- Providing feedback to reviewers concerning their collective judgment. I write a decision for every manuscript that is submitted to AJPS. Those decisions, and the reviews of other reviewers, are now sent out to everyone involved in the process. As well, I take the time to compliment and encourage new and junior reviewers.

An Enhanced Presence by the Journal

I am working with the Midwest Political Science Association and Wiley-Blackwell to plan how to enhance the reach of the AJPS. These efforts are being expanded by working with the Association to detail forthcoming articles and by work with Wiley-Blackwell's marketing team to highlight forthcoming publications.

- On going efforts are being made to increasingly use the electronic resources of the MPSA to broadcast the offerings of the AJPS. We will pursue direct links to articles through the MPSA and continued notification of members concerning forthcoming issues and articles.
- I am working with Wiley-Blackwell's marketing Department and Rice's publicity Department to enhance the scientific reach of AJPS. I will be targeting several articles in each issue for press releases for major general science outlets (NY Times, Washington Post, Science and Nature).
- I will be looking to "bundle" articles together in issues – possibly with a guest editor tying together the articles with a short overview of the articles. The aim here is to increase the citation count by having similar articles appear at the same time.
- In terms of readers, information provided by Wiley-Blackwell and the MWPSA Executive Director's Report (March, 2010), shows that:
 - a) Total circulation stood at 7,706 in 2008 (compared with 4,109 in 2002).
 - b) Institutional, consortia, and philanthropic circulation reported at 3,699 at the close of 2009. The International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) provides subsidized (philanthropic) consortia access to AJPS in Armenia, Bolivia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Moldova, Mozambique, Nepal, Sri

Lanka, Senegal, Tanzania, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and other countries. In 2008, there were 610 libraries receiving access to AJPS in this manner; in 2009 435 (in 2009, Pakistan left INASP due to its growing economy. Wiley-Blackwell has now negotiated paid access with libraries in that country).

c) Online institutional (e.g., library) subscriptions increased from 405 to 595 (by 47%). Total, full-rate institutional subscriptions (including print only and print & online options) totaled 1,164 in 2009 vs. 1,201 in 2008, a 97% renewal rate.

d) AJPS' impact factor reported in the 2008 JCR was 2.397 vs. 2.032 in 2007, ranking it 3rd of 99 journals in the Political Science category. The 2009 impact factor will be released by ISI in June 2010.

An Enhanced Electronic Presence

I am actively working to achieve an on-line presence for AJPS. Several short term goals have been achieved.

- I have worked with Wiley-Blackwell to provide “early” publication in an on-line format. Articles that are accepted and copy edited will be immediately posted. This will decrease the turnaround to publication by six to eight months.
- I have gotten Wiley-Blackwell to post on-line Supporting Information (SI) for each article. The SI will be permanently attaching to the article (with the link conforming to the Library of Congress DOI standard). The SI will contain information that is relevant to the article, but need not be included in the text. This might include formal proofs, additional econometric models, data transformations, computer code, or other information that might be of interest to a very specialized audience. Part of the aim is to decrease the page length of articles and provide an outlet for the specialist to visit to understand the mechanics of the article.
- AJPS has gone “paperless” in embracing Editorial Manager. The staff is not only exploiting Editorial Manager’s system, but we are pressing for improvements in that system.

III. Key Personnel

The AJPS is an intellectual activity and a professional business. The people who have given their effort, time, judgment, and intellect to achieving both during 2009

are listed below. A special note of thanks should go to all of these people for easing the transition.

Past Editor – Marianne Stewart, University of Texas at Dallas.

Editorial Office – Tommi Ivey, Administrative Assistant I; Michael Gunnin and Shawn Williams, Senior Editorial Assistants; Chelsea Jenkins, Kristina Mitchell, and Walter Casey, Editorial Assistants; all University of Texas at Dallas.

Associate Editors – Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Ohio State University; Darrell Dobbs, Marquette University; Raymond M. Duch, Nuffield College, Oxford; Forrest Maltzman, George Washington University; Will H. Moore, Florida State University.

Aries System Corporation – Jason Freemont, *Editorial Manager*.

Midwest Political Science Association – The Executive Council and Will Morgan, Executive Director.

Ohio State University – Susan Meyer, Office of Communications, Assistant Editor/Copy Editor.

Wiley-Blackwell – Michael Streeter, Editor, Journals, and Martha Lovvoll, Associate Production Manager, Journals.

The current group of professionals, who have taken over since January 1, 2010 include:

Editorial Office – Cathy Tipton, Administrative Assistant; Marvin McNeese and Aleksander Ksiazkiewicz, Editorial Assistants; Rice University.

Associate Editors – Elisabeth Gerber, University of Michigan; Jim Granato, University of Houston; Ashley Leeds, Rice University; John Patty, Washington University at St. Louis; Randy Stevenson, Rice University; Michelle Taylor-Robinson, Texas A and M.

Editorial Board – 64 members from Political Science, Economics, and Sociology in the United States, Australia, Canada, Norway, Japan, and the United Kingdom.

Aries System Corporation – Jason Freemont, Editorial Manager.

Midwest Political Science Association – The Executive Council and Will Morgan, Executive Director.

Ohio State University – Susan Meyer, Office of Communications, Assistant Editor/Copy Editor.

Wiley-Blackwell – Michael Streeter, Editor, Journals, and Martha Lovvoll, Associate Production Manager, Journals.

AJPS Editorial Board Members -- 2010

Arun	Agrawal	University of Michigan
Micah	Altman	Harvard/MIT
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