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American Journal of Political Science

Committed to significant advances in knowledge and understanding of citizenship, governance, and politics, and to the public value of political science research.

**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
March 30, 2012**

Introduction

This Report of The Editor – the third of four during the 2010-14 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 two 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. These numbers count new submissions that were received in the calendar year. Submissions steadily declined between 2007 and 2009. There was a 58.7% increase in manuscripts in 2010– possibly due to an editor transition. There was a downturn in manuscripts in 2011. However, as Figure 1 notes, there has been an uptick in the number of manuscript submitted in the first three months of 2012.

Table 1. Submissions.

Table 1.		
AJPS Total Submissions and Average Times-To-Decision, 2000-2011		
Year	# of Submissions	Days To Decision
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	760	101.4
2011	665	91.3

The average time-to-decision (that is, from date of submission to date of notification of the Editor’s decision) decreased in 2011, averaging slightly over 3 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 four weeks in July and August when the Journal is closed to new submissions, and the last two weeks of December when it is closed for all business. These data are further broken out in Table 4A discussed below.

Figure 1 provides a comparison for the number of first submissions for 2009, 2010 and 2011. This figure covers the same period, January 1 through March 15, in each year.

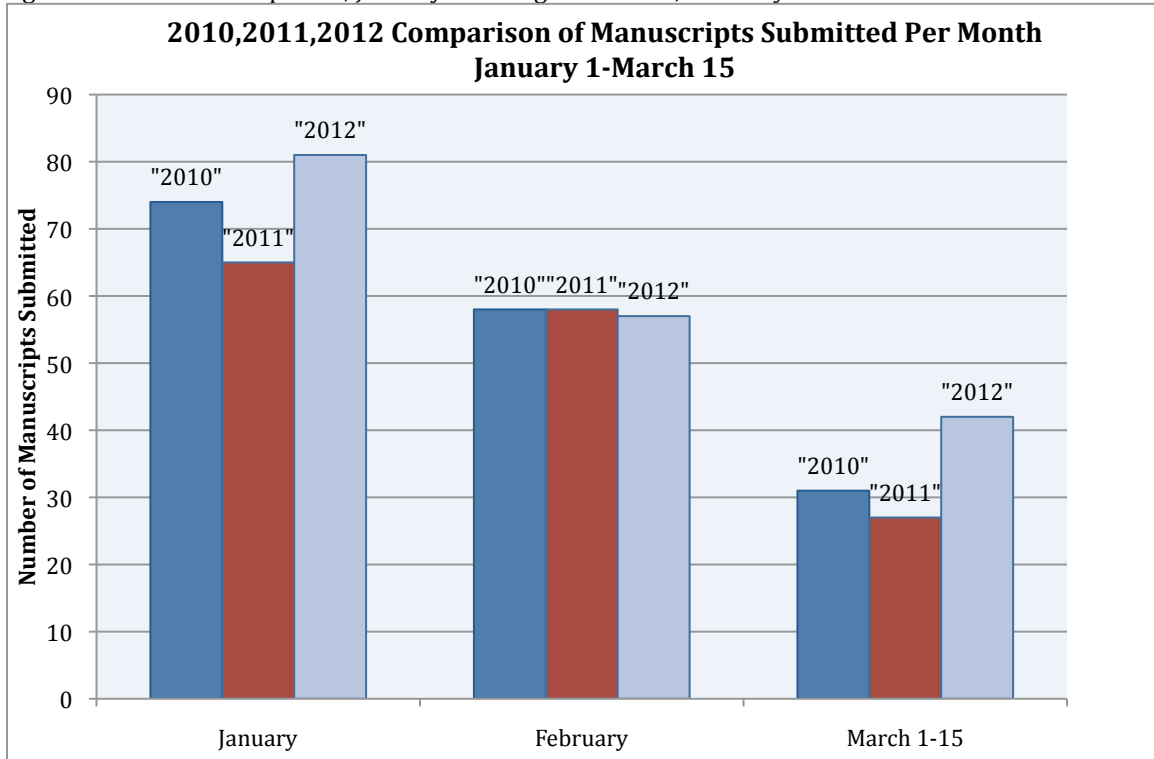


Figure 2 details the number of manuscripts submitted (new submissions only) by week. The figure gives a rough sense of the workflow (steady) and notes when the journal was closed to new submissions.

Figure 2. Number of manuscripts arriving by week.

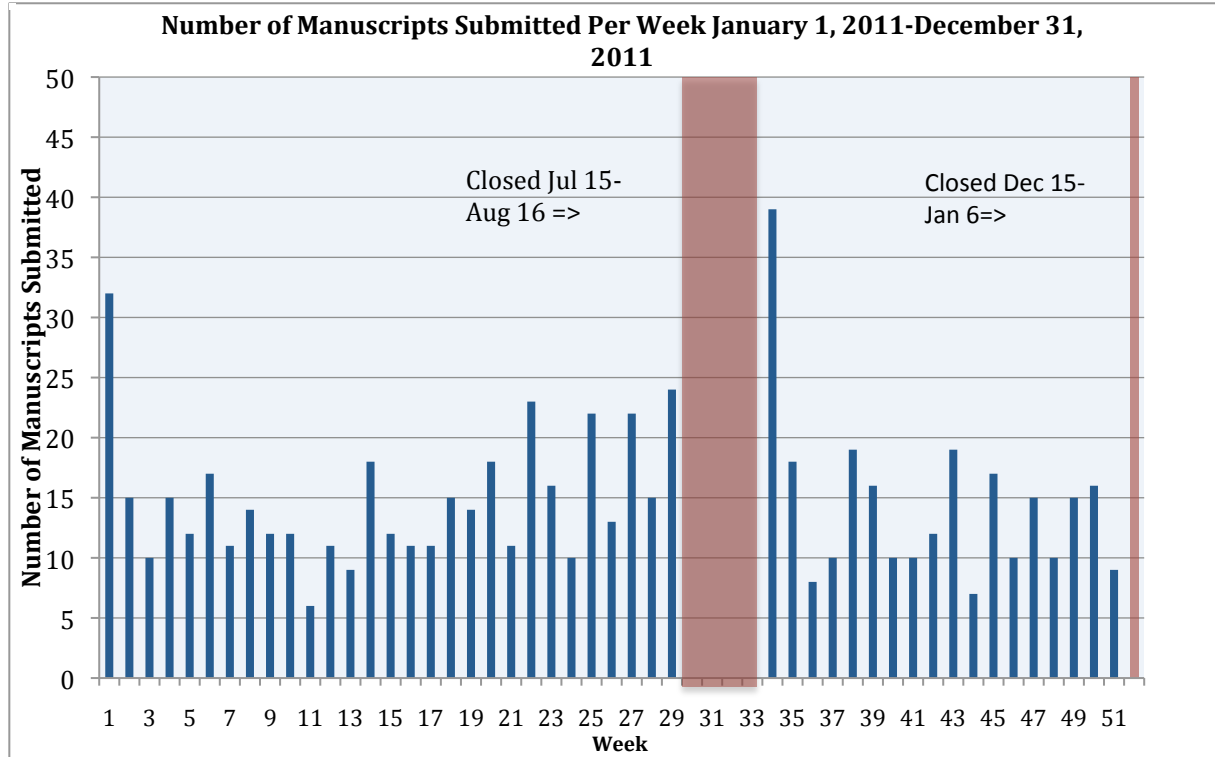


Table 2 indicates the distribution of manuscripts by field for the calendar year 2009. These are very rough categories. I used the first category that an author notes to classify an article. Most authors use two or three classifications for their manuscripts. This enables the Journal to better select reviewers, but makes it cumbersome to report all of the categories. What is apparent from this listing is that almost half of the manuscripts fit generally into American Politics (about the same as in 2010). Comparative politics submissions are up to 33.7 percent. International Relations submissions have increased since 2010 and are at the same level as in 2009. Methods and Formal Theory continue to decline from 2009 levels. Normative theory submissions have slightly decreased from the level in 2010.

Table 2. AJPS Manuscript Submissions by First General Classification.

Classification	2011 Submiss.	2010 Submiss.	2009 Submiss.	2008 Submiss.
American Behavior	155 (23.3%)	205 (27.0%)	135 (28.5%)	162 (25%)
American Institutions	109 (16.4%)	139 (18.3%)	102 (21.6%)	135 (20%)
Comparative	224 (33.7%)	242 (31.8%)	76 (16.1%)	200 (30%)
International Relations	90 (13.6%)	66 (8.7%)	66 (13.9%)	103 (15%)
Methods and Formal Theory	50 (7.3%)	63 (8.3%)	56 (11.8%)	36 (5%)
Normative Theory	36 (5.4%)	45 (5.9%)	38 (8.0%)	28 (6%)

Table 3 reports on manuscripts submitted for the calendar years 2009, 2010 and 2011 and equally weights all classifications used by authors. So, for a manuscript with three classifications (e.g. American Behavior, American Institutions and Methods and Formal Theory) that manuscript was counted as a third in each general category. Appendix 1 gives the breakdown of all classifications (including sub classifications) for 2011. Also included in Table 3 are the weighted classifications of articles accepted across all three years. These percentages are given in the italicized percentages. Manuscripts that came in during 2011 are unlikely to be reflected as accepted manuscripts given that the process normally takes nine to twelve months from when a manuscript shows up. What is reflected in italics are manuscripts sent on to the copyeditor during the calendar year.

Table 3. AJPS Manuscript Submissions Weighting by Classification. The top percentage is the weighted percentage of manuscripts submitted. The bottom percentage, in parentheses, is the weighted percentage of manuscripts accepted in that calendar year.

Classification	2011 Submiss.	2010 Submiss.	2009 Submiss.
American Behavior	25.5% (34.1%)	29.6% (21.6%)	27.2% (25.4%)
American Institutions	19.3% (20.8%)	21.5% (23.4%)	20.2% (21.2%)
Comparative	20.2% (16.7%)	18.2% (12.8%)	19.6% (16.7%)
International Relations	16.6% (8.2%)	11.75% (20.9%)	13.6% (10.9%)
Methods and Formal Theory	11.6% (20.3%)	11.9% (13.5%)	11.5% (18.8%)
Normative Theory	5.9% (0.0%)	6.0% (6.4%)	7.1% (4.5%)

Table 4A notes the time to decision for manuscripts in 2011. The table is broken out by first submissions, first revisions and second revisions. Typically a manuscript is given only a single chance for a revision. Requests for a second revision generally reflect an acceptance with a minor revision. In each cell the first number indicates the frequency, the second number in parentheses is the percentage and the last number in italics constitutes the number of days from submission to decision. The bulk of the manuscripts under first submission (58.2 percent) are declined with an insert. This means that each manuscript in this category gets comments from the editor – usually a paragraph indicating my decision and often a suggestion as to where the manuscript should be sent. One manuscript was given a decline without insert, which meant the author received a form letter and the reviews. Slightly over 26% of all first submissions are declined without review. These are desk rejections by the editor and include a paragraph or more indicating the editor’s reasons for rejection. These desk rejections were turned around in a little over two weeks. By contrast, decisions on reviewed manuscripts are averaging over four months. I will address workflow issues below.

Table 4A. Time to Decision 2011. Each column represents a different stage in the submission process. The first column constitutes all new submissions. The second column reflects decisions for manuscripts that have been given a revision, and the third column are those manuscripts with a second revision. The top number in each cell is the frequency, the number in parentheses is the percentage of the column and the number in italics is the average number of days.

	1st Submission	1st Revision	2nd Revision
	# Decisions (Percent) <i>Time to Decision</i>	# Decisions (Percent) <i>Time to Decision</i>	# Decisions (Percent) <i>Time to Decision</i>
Accept	0	0	62 (83.8%) 18.3
Accept with Minor Revision	1 (0.1%) <i>255</i>	69 (74.2%) <i>128</i>	11 (14.9%) <i>40.7</i>
Decline With Insert	395 (58.2%) <i>128.2</i>	13 (14%) <i>158.2</i>	1 (1.4%) <i>82</i>
Decline Without Insert	1 (0.1%) <i>120</i>	0	0
Decline Without Review	177 (26.1%) <i>19.2</i>	0	0
Revise and Resubmit	104 (15.3%) <i>146.9</i>	11 (11.8%) <i>173.3</i>	0
Total Editor Decisions	679 (100%) <i>107.4</i>	93 (100%) <i>137.6</i>	74 (100%) <i>22.5</i>

As a basis for comparison I have recompiled the same information in Table 4B for 2010. The data from 2010 and 2011 can be directly compared. Generally, the number of days to decision has slightly increased from 2010 to 2011. The percentage of desk rejections has slightly increased.

Table 4B. Time to Decision 2010. Each column represents a different stage in the submission process. The first column constitutes all new submissions. The second column reflects decisions for manuscripts that have been given a revision, and the third column are those manuscripts with a second revision. The top number in each cell is the frequency, the number in parentheses is the percentage of the column and the number in italics is the average number of days.

	1st Submission	1st Revision	2nd Revision
	# Decisions (Percent) <i>Time to Decision</i>	# Decisions (Percent) <i>Time to Decision</i>	# Decisions (Percent) <i>Time to Decision</i>
Accept	0	5 (8.8%) <i>89.6</i>	32 (72.7%) <i>44.9</i>
Accept with Minor Revision	3 (0.5%) <i>133</i>	36 (63.2%) <i>130.3</i>	11 (25%) <i>52.6</i>
Decline With Insert	407 (61.3%) <i>123.4</i>	9 (15.8%) <i>113.7</i>	1 (2.3%) <i>152</i>
Decline Without Insert	6 (0.9%) <i>170.8</i>	0	0
Decline Without Review	159 (23.9%) <i>16.7</i>	0	0
Revise and Resubmit	88 (13.3%) <i>146.9</i>	7 (12.3%) <i>131</i>	0
Total Editor Decisions	664 (100%) <i>101.4</i>	57 (100%) <i>125.5</i>	44 (100%) <i>49.3</i>

The general workflow is as follows. All submitted manuscripts are given a technical check by the Assistant to the Editor to ensure that the manuscript complies with AJPS guidelines for length and anonymity. The average time from electronic submission to completing the technical check is 2.3 days. Once the technical check is completed the manuscript is assigned to the Editor. I read each manuscript and assign it to an Editorial Assistant. The average time from technical check to assignment is 5.2 days. If I do not send on a manuscript (because of a desk reject), the time to decision is 19.2 days from submission. The Editorial Assistants suggest reviewers to me. It takes an average of 32 days from submission until the first Reviewer is contacted. I think this time is well worth it. The quality of the reviews that I see is very high. A large part of this is due to the care taken by my Editorial Assistants when selecting reviewers. The Editorial Assistants perform an important job and do so in an exemplary fashion. I do not believe it is necessary to speed up

the first month of the process. Once manuscripts are under review, the Editorial Assistants monitor the progress of the manuscripts assigned to them. They then notify me when a manuscript is ready for a decision.

Table 5 indicates the total number of reviewers used in 2010 and 2011. The top number indicates the frequency for the category and the percentage of this is in parentheses. As can be seen from the table a large number of reviewers were used (several were used more than once). Over half of this set completed their review and I found them to be very high quality. A little over a quarter declined to review, and of this set, many proposed alternate reviewers. Finally, 17 percent of the reviewers were terminated prior to sending in their review. I try to let reviewers off the hook when their review is not needed. Typically this is because the manuscript will be declined and I do not need an additional review.

Table 5. The Reviewer Pool.

	2010	2011
Total number of reviewers invited	4029	3196
Declined to review	1035 (25.7%)	824 (25.8%)
Completed review	2239 (55.6%)	1835 (57.4%)
Terminated by Editor	688 (17.1%)	554 (17.3%)

On average it took 4.5 days for a reviewer to accept or decline the opportunity to review. On average it took 33.1 days to complete the review once the review opportunity was accepted. 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 6 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 6. Reviewer Recommendations.

Reviewer Recommendation Term	Reviews Completed	Frequency of Recommendation
Decline	890	48.5%
Must publish as is	107	5.8%
Must publish with minor revisions	238	13%
Revise and Resubmit	600	32.7%
Total Reviews Completed	1835	100%

In 2011 the total number of AJPS article downloads through Blackwell Synergy and Wiley InterScience increased by 30%. In 2008 there were 131,555 downloads, in 2009 this increased to 145,266, in 2010 it increased to 159,287 and this past year there were 227,554 downloads. These figures exclude downloads from JSTOR. The top 10 downloads during 2011 are in Table 7.

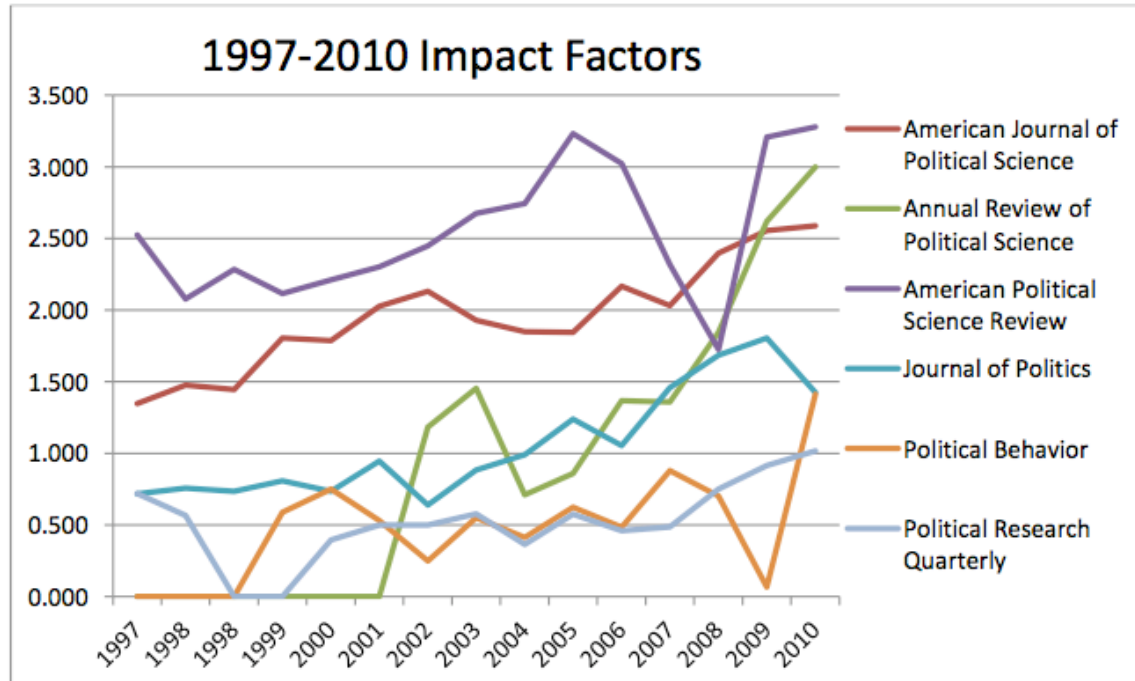
Table 7. Top 10 Downloaded Articles for 2011 (from Wiley-Blackwell)

Rank	Vol.	Iss.	Article Title	Full Text Total
1	52	4	The Politics of Foreign Direct Investment into Developing Countries: Increasing FDI through International Trade Agreements?	3024
2	55	1	Instrumental Variables Estimation in Political Science: A Readers Guide	2124
3	52	4	What Triggers Public Opposition to Immigration? Anxiety, Group Cues, and Immigration Threat	1987
4	54	1	A Global Model for Forecasting Political Instability	1413
5	55	1	The Party Faithful: Partisan Images, Candidate Religion, and the Electoral Impact of Party Identification	1396
6	55	3	Do Politicians Racially Discriminate Against Constituents? A Field Experiment on State Legislators	1328
7	55	1	Gendered Perceptions and Political Candidacies: A Central Barrier to Women's Equality in Electoral Politics	1308
8	55	2	Aerial Bombing and Counterinsurgency in the Vietnam War	1297
9	55	2	Foreign Aid, Democratization, and Civil Conflict: How Does Democracy Aid Affect Civil Conflict?	1280
10	53	3	How Foreign Aid Can Foster Democratization in Authoritarian Regimes	1249

II. The Next Two Years

In last year's report, I noted four goals for the future. The first is to further the integrity of the journal and to enhance its reputation. The *AJPS* continues to improve its impact factor. It rose from 2.397 (2008) to 2.554 (2009) to 2.588 (2010). Figure 3 indicates the trends over time for a number of different political science journals (this is taken from a report by Wiley Blackwell). *AJPS* continues to show a steady increase in rankings.

Figure 3. Change in Impact Factors 1997-2010



The report also noted three mid-term goals that I intended 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 below.

Reviewer Tragedy of the Commons.

These days all editors concede that the reviewer tragedy of the commons is an important concern. We are all chasing after many of the same high quality reviewers and running the risk of burning them out. As noted above, AJPS solicited over 3196 reviewers in the past year (not all of whom were new). To help minimize the “tragedy of the reviewer commons” and to preserve the quality of the reviewer pool, I have:

- Become more assertive in declining inappropriate or incomplete manuscripts without external review. In 2011 over 26% of the manuscripts were returned without review (177 manuscripts – not including another 15 manuscripts that were declined through technical check failures and the authors were told not to resubmit).
- I am now asking for five, rather than six, reviewers be requested for each manuscript. The journal is getting sufficient reviews in most cases for a

clear decision to be made. We augment the number of reviewers as needed.

- Worked with Associate Editors who provide 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 extremely grateful to my Associate Editors. They have been extremely responsive to my concerns and questions. They have taken the burden off of numerous reviewers.
- Used a very large Editorial Board, largely comprised of mid-level scholars. Many of these Editorial Board members have been called on three or more times during the course of the year. They provide important relief for the reviewer pool.
- Pressed my Editorial Assistants to push beyond the current reviewer pool maintained by AJPS. By the end of 2011, 1157 new reviewers have been added to the reviewer pool with more than 7000 reviewers now in the database. Many have been added by my Editorial Assistants. This includes new scholars in political science as well experts from other disciplines outside of political science.
- Provided 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 sent out to everyone involved in the process. As well, I have tried to take the time to compliment and encourage new and junior reviewers.
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Changes To The Journal

When the journal reopened in 2012, several changes were made to the submission process. First, manuscripts were limited to 8500 words. This includes the text, footnotes, tables and figures associated with the manuscript. It excludes the abstract, bibliography and supporting information. This word limit fits the equivalent of a properly formatted 38 -page manuscript, excluding the bibliography. Second, authors were instructed to place tables and figures into the body of the text.

An Enhanced Presence by the Journal

I continue to work 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 working 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 with major general science outlets (NY Times, Washington Post, Science and Nature).

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. A number of people are responsible for making the journal work. A special thanks goes to Nadia Hamid who joined the journal in November 2011. She has left the journal to return to school, move and get married (not necessarily in that order). She is missed but has been ably replaced by Donna Palizza. Marvin McNeese, one of the original Editorial Assistants, left the journal to take a tenure track position. He has been replaced by Jason Eichorst who has been living up to the high standards of my Editorial Assistants. The current group of professionals includes:

Editorial Office – Donna Palizza, Administrative Assistant; James Hedrick, Jason Eichorst and Aleksander Ksiazkiewicz, Editorial Assistants; Rice University.

Associate Editors – Matt Barreto, University of Washington; 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 Sharon Scalzo, Associate Production Manager, Journals.

AJPS Editorial Board Members -- 2012

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Mark	Crescenzi	University North Carolina
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Armando	Razo	Indiana University
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Burcu	Savun	University of Pittsburg
Edella	Schlager	University of Arizona
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Ahmer	Tarar	Texas A&M University
Michael	Ting	Columbia University
Nick	Valentino	University of Michigan
Georg	Vanberg	University of North Carolina
Erik	Voeten	Georgetown University
Langche	Zeng	University of California, San Diego

Appendix 1. Frequency of categories chosen by authors for manuscripts submitted to AJPS.

	Frequency	%
African-American Politics	7	0.43
African Politics	12	0.73
Ancient	5	0.31
Approaches and Themes	5	0.31
Asian Politics	18	1.10
Bayesian	4	0.24
Canadian Politics	2	0.12
Categorical Data Analysis	3	0.18
Causal Inference	9	0.55
Comparative Politics: Industrialized Countries	30	1.83
Comparative Politics: Political Behavior	44	2.69
Comparative Politics: Political Institutions	61	3.73
Comparative Politics: Transitions Toward Democracy	26	1.59
Comparative Politics: Developing Countries	54	3.30
Computational Methods	5	0.31
Computer Modeling	2	0.31
Contemporary	8	0.49
Discrete Choice Models	2	0.12
Econometrics	1	0.06
Economic Policy	32	1.96
Electoral Campaigns	32	1.96
Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models	42	2.57
Environmental Politics and Policy	13	0.80
Ethnicity and Nationalism	20	1.22
European Politics	19	1.16
Event Count	1	0.06
Field Experiments	9	0.55
Foreign Policy	39	2.39
Formal Models	45	2.75
Formal/Game Theory	3	0.18
Game Theory	1	0.06
Gender and Politics	12	0.73
Ideal Point Estimation	4	0.24
International Cooperation and Organization	38	2.32
International Law	11	0.67
International Political Economy	43	2.63
International Relations and Domestic Politics	66	4.04
International Security	69	4.22

Judicial Politics	21	1.28
Latent Variable Models	5	0.31
Latin American Politics and Caribbean Politics	14	0.86
Latino Politics	7	0.43
Legislative Politics: Campaigns and Elections	24	1.47
Legislative Politics: Institutions	52	3.18
Liberalism and Democratic Thought	8	0.49
Mass Media and Political Communication	35	2.14
Maximum Likelihood Estimation	2	0.12
Methodology	40	2.45
Middle East Politics	15	0.92
Modern	7	0.43
Multivariate Methodology	1	0.06
Other	2	0.12
Panel Data	4	0.24
Political Participation and Turnout	34	2.08
Political Parties and Interest Groups	34	2.08
Political Philosophy/Theory	37	2.26
Political Psychology	53	3.24
Political Sociology and Culture	12	0.73
Presidency and Executive Politics	24	1.47
Probit/Logit	1	0.06
Public Law	14	0.86
Public Opinion	79	4.83
Public Policy	52	3.18
Race, Class and Ethnicity	33	2.02
Random Utility Models	3	0.18
Regression	1	0.06
Religion and Politics	20	1.22
Representation and Electoral Systems	39	2.39
Social Policy	17	1.22
Spatial Methods	1	0.06
State and Intergovernmental Politics	28	1.71
Structural Equation Modeling	3	0.18
Survey Methodology	4	0.24
Time Series/Duration Models	1	0.06
Urban and Local Politics	13	0.80
Voting Behavior	87	5.32