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APSA Task Force On Graduate Education

2004 Report to the APSA Council

The American Political Science Association
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Introduction

In spring 2002, APSA President-Elect Theda Skocpol appointed this Task Force on Graduate Education, representing a variety of institutions, political science subfields, scholarly backgrounds and methodological viewpoints. She asked its members to report on ways to strengthen graduate education in political science. The Task Force quickly concluded that no single structure of graduate training could be appropriate for the wide range of institutions offering graduate instruction in political science, and that departments must decide for themselves what programs best suited their capacities and interests.

We also found, however, that we agreed on certain basic principles that all graduate programs could and should seek to embody, even if in widely differing forms. The principles are not so broad as to be meaningless or trivial, so they are also not uncontroversial. Still, we believe that most political scientists will on reflection come to endorse them. We also found that we could readily identify a number of steps that departments and the APSA can undertake, and often need to undertake, to fulfill these principles in ways that fit their circumstances. This report describes the principles and their rationales and then reviews a series of options for their pursuit by individual departments and institutions and the APSA.

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Principles for Graduate Education in Political Science

Half a century ago, an APSA committee attempted to set goals for political science and proposed changes in departmental structures to achieve those goals (Dimock et al., 1951). Among their recommendations were proposals for improved graduate training, including better advising systems, deeper training for teaching, more inter-institutional cooperation, more information for prospective graduate students, and a more unified perspective on the study of politics. In our own deliberations fifty years later, we found ourselves returning to these perennial issues in the education of graduate students. While the specifics have changed, the underlying challenges have not.

Like our predecessors, the Graduate Task Force believes that, despite the diversity of substantive interests and approaches visible in contemporary political science, there are some beliefs and commitments that genuinely serve to unite our discipline. Although these commitments often have to be pursued in varying fashion because of the distinctive resources, student needs, and intellectual strengths and interests that different departments have, we believe they can serve as common guides that can assist in structuring effective graduate programs in a wide variety of contexts.

- 1). Perhaps most foundational is the belief that politics is often if not always of fundamental importance to human life--so that *exploration of how far politics can help explain human experiences and help resolve human difficulties is one of the primary tasks of intellectual life*. This belief in the importance of politics is what motivates most students to enter political science. Graduate education should equip them to pursue the questions this conviction raises, not divert them from substantive political interests.
- 2). Of equal importance is the belief that *political scientists must seek to analyze politics in the most intellectually honest and rigorous ways they can attain*. We may differ on how to pursue this goal -- but not on its centrality to our work.
- 3). Most if not all political scientists also affirm that *the complex subject matter of politics must be studied using many methods* if we are to obtain the greatly varying sorts of data, form the wide range of powerful descriptive and explanatory concepts, and engage in the many sorts of inferential testing that we need to achieve rigorous analyses.
- 4). *Studies of ethical norms and normative commitments, including those in our own work, are central to the study of politics*. Their rigorous analysis, clarification, and evaluation belong not only in the subfield of political theory, but in many other parts of the discipline as well.
- 5). We also affirm that *the discipline today must address a diverse range of long-neglected subjects, including the political experiences of traditionally marginal groups*, using all appropriate methods. Doing so requires attracting to the discipline and aiding the development of scholars with backgrounds and perspectives more varied than those that have long characterized our field.
- 6). We believe that *it is essential for political scientists to be able to communicate clearly to each other and to broader publics why and how the aspects of politics they study are helping us to achieve improved understandings of substantively important features of human life*. Not all aspects of all political science research can be accessibly expressed and shown to be significant to wide audiences, but our core concerns and claims can and must be.

7). Finally, we share the view that *a serious graduate education includes a broadly informed perspective on the discipline*. In contemporary academic life, research excellence is prized and rewarded. Research requires specialization and a focus on the new. Thus “cutting edge” methods and theories have a natural appeal to young scholars in any methodological tradition, and they may be tempted to put most of their energy there. However, excessively narrow training can lead to myopic perspectives and unduly parochial research.

Members of the Task Force are concerned that, for historical reasons, graduate training in many departments is now almost bifurcated. Some students stress credentials in quantitative analyses and formal modeling at the expense of other sorts of methodological, historical, and substantive preparation, with the risk that their seemingly sophisticated analyses repeat the intellectual blunders and blindnesses of fifty or more years ago, which have long been recognized and overcome in other parts of the profession. Other students acquire qualitative and historical research skills to deal with the American presidency or the legal process, for example, but then find themselves without the tools to interpret sensibly public opinion polls about the president, or to evaluate the quantitative evidence in legal debates over capital punishment. Students of political theory are too often intellectually separated from the other graduate students, with resulting losses to both sides.

Intellectual and methodological narrowness harm the profession as a whole, and they can limit the rigor and substance of the research each of us does individually. Equally importantly, they can stifle the skills needed for effective pedagogy, especially in undergraduate teaching but also in graduate mentoring, and for accessible writing aimed at broader publics. Teaching, public service, and research all require a breadth of training in intellectual traditions and open-mindedness about methodological tools.

Imperative as all these commitments are, achieving these goals is hard. We recognize that efforts to pursue them will challenge any graduate program and that few if any graduate departments can hope to do equal justice to them all. Disparate goals require trade-offs. What may seem like minimally sufficient training in particular methods such as statistical analysis, formal modeling, philosophical reasoning, ethnographic analysis, in-depth interviewing, modes of textual interpretation, foreign language training, and more can be so extensive as to leave little time to learn other methods—much less the sorts of rich contextual knowledge of various arenas of politics that insightful concept formation usually requires. Broadening the composition of graduate student populations and faculties is also a major challenge, and departments must then go on to address the special problems minority scholars face. Amidst competing pressures, goals of promoting diversity in the topics and membership of the political science profession can lose out to a range of other concerns

The Task Force believes, however, that departments can respond to these sometimes conflicting imperatives in many appropriate ways, while still successfully conveying the shared core professional commitments delineated above. There is, in fact, no other intellectually respectable choice. Meeting those commitments will require changes in many graduate programs. We now turn to those issues.

The Structure of Programs and the Allocation of Resources

The values that we have enunciated will only have a positive impact on graduate education if they are implemented in an integrated and reinforcing way. Crucially, scarce resources need to be allocated in ways that maximize the opportunities of able graduate students to gain the training that they need in a demanding intellectual and professional environment. Departments of political science will need to

request sufficient resources from university administrations, but in a time of financial stringency we can only do so credibly if we are using those resources wisely.

With these considerations in mind, we put forward the following suggestions:

1). **Program Breadth.** A common structural problem – resulting from successful innovation in our field -- faces all Ph.D. programs in political science. Through the scholarship of ever-growing numbers of political scientists, no longer concentrated in the U.S. but working throughout the world, all subfields contain increasing amounts of knowledge, acquired through a broader range of methods. For example, technical competence in mathematics and statistics has become essential for political scientists in many areas of the discipline – and required levels of technical competence are becoming more demanding. Yet political science remains a largely problem-driven discipline, and neither the number nor variety of political problems is declining. Indeed, the types of subjects and activities that seem important for understanding politics continue to grow, and those subjects continue to innovate and to extend their activities around the globe. The results of this double process of innovation – by political scientists and those we study -- are increasing tensions in graduate programs between both substance and technique, and breadth and depth.

No Ph.D. program should turn out broadly but superficially educated dilettantes. Yet there is a real danger that excessive specialization could drive out imaginative reconceptualizations of politics, generated by explorations of relationships between subfields, and between political science and other disciplines. In the long history of the profession dating to the Greeks, we have learned a great deal from such reconceptualizations. Much would be lost if a new generation of political scientists found themselves so narrowly focused on particular sub-fields, using specific methods, that they could not learn from one another, or from scholars in other disciplines, using different methods.

We recommend that each program ensure that first and second year graduate students are exposed to a variety of approaches to political science – qualitative and quantitative, descriptive, interpretive, and explanatory – and to multiple substantive issues, viewpoints, and subfields of the discipline. Each student should also get deep training in at least one significant research area. This combination of breadth and depth is the necessary core of any good graduate education in political science. We believe that a well structured and balanced program of coursework in the first two years will go far toward ameliorating the excessive narrowness and seeming aridity of graduate work about which students have long complained (see the survey in Bennett et al., 1969).

As noted above, a major consequence of the increasing specialization and diversity in political science is that few if any graduate programs can offer state-of-the-art training in all methods and in all substantive areas. Coverage of the field is uneven in even the very large departments. Mid-size departments have no choice but to specialize to some degree.

Some amount of specialization is also highly desirable. Scholars working with a particular methodology or in a particular area of substantive research benefit from working in close proximity to others with similar intellectual interests. From the point of view of graduate training, it is preferable for departments to offer in-depth training in a few things rather than superficial training in many things.

Thus some departments may well choose to specialize in particular approaches to political science. Large departments may be able to do so while offering a balanced exposure to a variety of quantitative and non-quantitative methods, and to substantive as well as methodological training. But other

departments may have to rely more heavily on individual student advising and mentoring, guided by explicit concern to see that each student is made aware of the whole range of topics and methods in political science appropriate to the student's interests.

Departments may also choose to work with other programs in their university that provide in-depth training in statistical, ethnographic, linguistic, interpretive or other skills the departments cannot offer themselves. They may establish partnerships with geographically proximate but substantively or methodological disparate departments at other universities. They can support the participation of their students in special training programs open to graduate students from across the country, as discussed below.

A few departments have recently begun to restructure their program to feature the study of various sorts of substantive political problems, such as the design and operation of institutions and issues of conflict and violence, rather than traditional subfields such as comparative politics, American politics, and international relations. This approach may help to communicate that political science is about substantive political issues and that a variety of methods are appropriate for their study. Other departments may choose to proceed differently.

Whatever their curricular choices, all departments retain a fundamental duty to familiarize their students, at least in general terms, with other approaches. All should advertise their own specializations clearly when students are applying for graduate school. And all should help their students to work elsewhere, or even transfer, if those students are not thriving within the program as established. Finally, all departments should seek to achieve appropriate demographic diversity of their faculty and student populations and to insure that members of groups recently added to the ranks of the profession are suitably supported.

2). **Specialized Training.** Some students will want to go beyond this core program, to get deeper training in more than one subfield of political science or in some branch of another discipline, such as economics or law. Preparation of that kind is increasingly common and necessary in political science. We urge departments and universities to take note that their students may need to undertake extra training and that doing so will lengthen time to degree. Additional financial support should be available for students requiring an extra year's training, or more, to accomplish this purpose. Without that extra funding, students will rush to finish before the money runs out.

3). **Fellowship Packages.** To make recommendations (1) and (2) workable for students, universities should reconsider fellowship packages that are too rich in the first year or two, relative to funding available in the fourth, fifth, and sixth years. The Committee particularly recommends providing more support for students to complete dissertations, without having to teach, when they are within a year of doing so. It makes more sense to us for students to teach in their second to fourth years, while they are completing course work and devising plans for their dissertations, than to have them continue teaching when they could be concentrating their efforts on finishing dissertations already in progress.

4). **Diversity Strategies.** The APSA's Minority Identification Program; its support for the Ralph Bunche Summer Institute, now held at Duke University; its Minority Fellowships and endowments within the Centennial Center; its pre-APSA Annual Conference workshops for scholars of color; the Road Show outreach effort of the APSA Committee on the Status of Latinos y Latinas in the Profession, among other efforts, have all helped to recruit and prepare more students of color interested in political science

and to assist them in their careers. However, much remains to be done by all of us to achieve a profession more representative of America's, and ultimately the world's, population.

Many universities also have programs for faculty mentoring of minority undergraduates interested in pursuing Ph.D.s. Departments should participate in these and similar efforts, such as recruitment letters targeted to traditionally black colleges and to programs in racial and ethnic studies, and gender studies, in order to expand the pool of qualified applicants from diverse backgrounds. Many departments also use an affirmative action advocate on their graduate admissions committee or some other institutionalized system to assure that minority applicants receive careful, comprehensive consideration going beyond standardized test scores. But it is vital for such admissions efforts to be followed by departmental and university programs to provide minority students with intellectual and social support; by a broadly shared faculty willingness to mentor students who may come from less familiar educational and social backgrounds; by a curriculum that does not treat issues of race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation as marginal political science concerns; and by student and faculty reward systems that recognize outstanding work done by scholars with diverse backgrounds and interests. As part of this general process, the APSA has established a mentoring program for women and minorities which can be accessed via the APSA website. Although it currently focuses on the special issues of gender and minority status among graduate students and faculty, this program could be extended to the undergraduate level.

5). **International Students.** Foreign students have become a substantial presence in many graduate program. All of them, but especially those from non-English speaking countries, face special challenges. Not only must they live and work in a less familiar language and culture, but their substantive interests may vary from those of American students. The job market at home may function quite differently from the American model, making it hard for them to prepare for it here. Moreover, during their graduate training, undergraduate teaching may be difficult for them, thereby eliminating a major source of funding. Travel costs, visa regulations, and fellowship restrictions may also add to their burdens.

Most universities with graduate programs now make special provision for improving the English language skills of foreign students. We urge that these programs be continued, supplemented by special university offices responsible for enhancing the social and intellectual experience of foreign students. At the department level, we encourage faculty to be alert to the special needs of international students, and to structure programs to meet the coursework, advising, and funding needs.

6). **Professional Ethics.** The basic principles of professional ethics are clear. All of us should practice intellectual honesty in our scholarship and teaching. We should treat all students and colleagues respectfully, according them appropriate recognition for their work and avoiding all forms of harassment and intimidation. We should conscientiously fulfill our responsibilities as teachers and institutional citizens, even as we seek to pursue our research agendas, contribute to our communities, and care for and enjoy our families. But especially for those entering the profession, it is often less clear just what their obligations and prerogatives are in a whole host of particular situations. Some departments have established workshops on professional ethics and/or adopted formal guidelines. In one form or another, all departments must strive to convey concrete standards of professional ethics to their graduate students, most of all by following them.

7). **Teaching and Research Experience.** Good graduate programs include opportunities for students to serve both as teaching assistants/graduate student instructors (TA/GSI), and as research assistants (RA).

Indeed, we consider the roles of TA/GSI and RA both to be essential elements of a graduate education. Serving as a TA/GSI under a fine, experienced undergraduate teacher is an excellent way to learn how to teach, especially when combined with departmental seminars and monitoring practices focused on teaching. Likewise, being an RA provides essential insights into how to do research.

We encourage departments to set up formal mechanisms to help graduate students become better instructors. Faculty advice and constructive suggestions are often very valuable. Departments should consider having faculty members visit the class meetings of their TA/GSI at least once in each course taught.

Departments also need to consider what special training may be necessary to help graduate students from other countries be effective in today's U.S. classroom. More generally, all graduate students must learn to address constructively the impact of many kinds of diversity on classroom environments and teacher/student relationships. If their university has not already begun such training, departments should do so themselves.

But diminishing returns set in for both teaching assistantships and research assistantships when pursued merely as a way of receiving financial support year after year. Departments should provide sufficient support for graduate students that they do not have to work as TA/GSI's or RA's in ways that are detrimental to their intellectual and professional development. Working in one of these roles should not be allowed to inhibit students from gaining the broad and deep knowledge necessary to be first-rate political scientists, or from making rapid progress toward completion of their dissertations, once they are fully engaged in their research and writing.

8). Structured Evaluations and Advising. Departments need to have systematic procedures in place to keep track of students' progress and to assess whether that progress is satisfactory. An average time to degree that is overly long ought to stimulate departmental discussion about the appropriateness of requirements and the adequacy of advising. On the other hand, because some students need deep training in more than one area, our Task Force does not recommend rigid criteria for time to degree. Rather, departments should remain flexible in allowing graduate students to pursue individualized programs that reasonably suit their intellectual needs and interests. Departments should engage university administrators in conversation about the meaning of averages in calculating time to degree.

Departments must be willing to drop students from their programs who are not making satisfactory progress despite appropriate support. Doing so could free up resources for more successful students, to give them additional years of support for in-depth study as mentioned under heading (2).

Evaluation procedures need to be clearly explained to graduate students, and the evaluators need to be well informed and fair. Thus departments need to pay attention to advising and mentoring of all graduate students, while taking into account the fact that students vary in their independence, and that stubbornness or even recalcitrance may suggest originality rather than bad character. Each student should have access for advice to more than one faculty member. Patterns of having one or two faculty members advising all minority students should be resisted.

Some departments have instituted a mandatory review of each graduate student at the end of the first year, attended by more than one faculty member of the student's choice, and another such review at the end of the second year. Registration for the following year is blocked until the meeting is completed, thus ensuring that students make the appointments and faculty keep them. These half-hour meetings

provide an opportunity for students to discuss their concerns and receive pertinent advice at critical points of their student careers. Excessive narrowness or lack of focus can be visible from the transcript, as are academic difficulties of other sorts. Students also have the opportunity, if they wish, to talk about their financial concerns, illnesses in their families, and other matters that might otherwise go undetected.

Thus we recommend that departments set up both procedures for regular graduate student evaluations and also formal mechanisms by which regular faculty advice to individual graduate students is not just recommended in laissez-faire fashion, but is instead a reality for each student.

Finally, departments should recognize that burdens of advising fall unevenly on faculty members for a variety of reasons. They should endeavor to ensure that – particularly with respect to untenured faculty – unequal advising and supervising burdens do not hinder the intellectual development and professional advancement of any category of faculty. Departments should be especially sensitive to the additional burdens often placed on faculty of color, as well as on women faculty.

9). Graduate Student Associations. Associations of graduate students can play a very important role in the education of graduate students, by sponsoring seminars and practice job talks, assisting in faculty hiring and graduate student recruitment, providing advice to junior graduate students, representing student interests to the faculty, and sustaining a minimal degree of social life. Such associations should be encouraged, since the intellectual community they help create will make possible all the goals we have discussed in this report.

10). Informing Prospective Graduate Students. Many prospective students choose among graduate programs with knowledge of little more than the geographical location of the university, the ranking of the department, and the terms of their financial aid package. Relatively few have a clear idea of the type of training they want or need.

If departments described themselves clearly in their application materials and websites, students applying to graduate programs would make fewer mistakes. And if applicants had a good source of centralized information about the types of training available and the departments where such training is offered, the matching of students to graduate programs would work better than it sometimes does at present. APSA can play an important role in that effort.

The Task Force recommends that the APSA publicize how undergraduates can use its Graduate Student Website to link to departments offering Ph.D. programs and that the website add links to Master's programs. The website could give a list of things that students might like to think about as they consider graduate education. These could include a list of the categories of information provided on individual departmental web sites, along with brief instructions on how to locate those sites. Such a list might therefore include items like the following:

Graduate Program URL	Financial Aid
Contact Information	Diversity Programs
Graduate Degrees Awarded	Requirements for the Ph.D.—Skills, Coursework
Ph.D. Program Objectives	Recent Student Papers and Presentations
Ph.D. Program's Distinctive Attributes, e.g., Joint Degrees	

Professional Preparation: Research,
Teaching, Other Professional
Development Activities

Other Academic Roles, Preparation for
Careers Outside the Academy

Placement Outcomes, average %

Placed and Types of Placement,
Placement procedures

Average/Maximum Time to Degree

Graduate Student Organizations

The APSA might revise its “Graduate Programs: Questions to Ask” program so that the APSA’s website, staff representatives, and member departments all advise undergraduates exploring graduate programs to consider the following topics, which departments should also be prepared to address:

Methodological focus, placement experience.

Actual availability of faculty of different specialties in specific departments; average time to degree.

Funding.

The nature and quality of faculty involvement with students, as evidenced by which faculty members have chaired dissertations, published joint articles, etc.

The existence of divisive departmental cleavages on disciplinary issues, such as views toward "science", behavioralism, quantitative/qualitative methods, formal modeling, rational choice or other political science perspectives.

The climate for women and other minorities in a department, its university, and its community.

Resources for students with spouses, children or significant others.

How the department assesses student progress.

Departments should especially make potential applicants aware of the APSA initiative providing website information on "Graduate Programs: Questions to be Asked" regarding professional preparation and training. Ph.D. departments are being invited to indicate that they are prepared to answer the questions; departments that agree are to be listed as “Rostered” departments. The APSA could revise its “Earning a Ph.D.” brochure to include a section on “Applying to Graduate Programs: Questions to be Asked” that could be a companion to the “Rostering” Questions. All of this material needs to be more readily accessible from the general APSA website, including links to pertinent activities of the APSA Task Force on Mentoring and the APSA Committee on Education and Professional Development.

11). Informing Enrolled Graduate Students and Connecting them to the Profession. No matter how hard the profession tries, some student vagueness about their future graduate educations is inevitable. That fact is neither surprising nor blameworthy. In many subfields, the undergraduate curriculum does not acquaint students with the methods commonly applied by active researchers. Hence choices of graduate programs made in good faith during the undergraduate years may result in unhappy surprises during graduate school. Inevitably, minds change during a graduate education, alternate paths open up, and students may find themselves intellectually marooned in a program ill suited to their interests or abilities. What can be done to help a graduate student who develops a strong interest in the politics of the Middle East in a department without a Middle East specialist, or someone who becomes fascinated with game-theoretic models of international conflict in a department where such work is absent among the faculty?

One answer is collaboration among departments. In the field of statistical methods, collaborative training is well established. Since 1962, the Summer Program in Quantitative Methods administered by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, or ICPSR, at the University of Michigan has offered summer courses in both introductory statistics and a variety of advanced topics. Both faculty and students from around the country come to Ann Arbor to participate in courses and workshops that last from two days to four weeks. Over time, the course offerings have expanded to include courses in mathematics and formal theory. No department of political science can offer courses in the full array of statistical techniques that political scientists have found useful. Many students, even students from departments that offer strong quantitative training, receive important benefits from being able to supplement the courses offered in their home departments with the variety of basic and specialized courses offered in the ICPSR summer program.

The ICPSR summer program is the most well known, but it is not the only inter-departmental training program. Students with an interest in survey research methods can find a variety of specialized courses in the Summer Institute in Survey Research Techniques, offered by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan. Within the past two years, two new inter-departmental training programs have been established. The National Science Foundation funded the establishment of an annual four-week Summer Institute in Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models, or EITM, for four years. The purpose of EITM is to provide graduate students with specialized training in both the content of formal models and the appropriate quantitative methods for testing formal models.

In addition, the discipline now has an annual training institute for training in qualitative methods. The Consortium for Qualitative Research Methods, or CQRM (web address <http://www.asu.edu/clas/polisci/cqrm>) offers an intensive two weeks of instruction in the philosophy of science and qualitative methods in social science at Arizona State University once a year. Like the EITM, the CQRM has successfully recruited top scholars to teach state-of-the-art research techniques in their respective areas. We urge the NSF and other funders to support this sort of qualitative as well as quantitative research training in the social sciences.

Subject to space limitations, all of these programs are available to graduate students in any Ph.D. program for a fee. One obvious thing that departments can do to improve their graduate programs is to provide funding for students to attend one of the training institutes in quantitative or qualitative training. (Since NSF funds EITM, students do not need funding from their home department to attend. All that students need is encouragement to apply.)

As valuable as such training programs are, a one-week or four-week course is no substitute for working closely with a faculty member on a research project or dissertation over an extended period of time. One program that might be expanded or emulated is the Traveling Scholar Program of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation or CIC. The CIC is a forum for institutional cooperation among the eleven members of the Big Ten Athletic Conference, plus the University of Chicago. The Traveling Scholar Program is an agreement among the CIC universities that allows a graduate student to study for up to a year at another CIC university. A student who wishes to spend a year at another CIC university must obtain the approval of both departments. Students remain registered in their home department. The host school provides the student with access to libraries and other university facilities. The home department provides the student with financial assistance. Credits earned are automatically transferred to the home department.

The Traveling Scholar Program enables a student who acquired an interest in Middle Eastern politics or game-theoretic applications in international relations to spend a year in a CIC school with a strong program in Middle East studies or game theory. Negotiating an exchange program among 12 schools is clearly better for both the students and the universities than a series of bilateral exchanges. From the university administration's point of view, participating in such an exchange allows the university to expand what can be offered to its students relatively cheaply. Departments may worry that participating in such an exchange reduces the pressure on the administration to allow the department to hire enough faculty to cover the discipline, but complete coverage of the discipline is no longer feasible. Expanding the Traveling Scholar Program to include a large number of graduate departments seems like a practical way to increase opportunities for graduate students to acquire deep training in more areas of research and more methodological approaches than any single graduate program can offer. Expansion will, however, require top level administrative support. The APSA as well as member departments should contact provosts or presidents belonging to the AAU, the Ivy League, the PAC-10, and similar university associations to encourage them to institute or expand Traveling Scholar programs. And because the APSA and political science more generally are becoming ever more internationalized, efforts to incorporate departments outside the United States in similar cooperative arrangements should also be pursued.

A final way in which the faculty of departments collaborates in training graduate students is in organizing graduate student conferences. The Society for Comparative Research, for example, holds an annual graduate student conference that is open to graduate students in sociology and political science who are doing comparative research, with faculty participating as discussants. Graduate students also attend the summer meeting of the Political Methodology Section of the APSA, where a part of the meeting is dedicated to graduate student posters. Faculty circulate around the poster room, learning about each student's work and giving informal, one-on-one advice and suggestions. These annual conferences present a good opportunity for graduate students to present their dissertation research to a broad audience and to meet other students from around the country who are working on similar topics.

Students can only avail themselves of these opportunities if they are aware of them. APSA is a crucial source of knowledge about research and training opportunities for political science graduate students. Thus departments should participate in APSA's programs of importance to graduate students, including its announcements of specialized training programs open to graduate students across the country. APSA can also sponsor training and mentoring sessions as part of the annual APSA meetings, as it has done in the past, to aid students whose departments cannot provide some forms of preparation.

Preparing for Professional Careers

Though graduate training occurs primarily in large research universities, a great many attractive jobs are available in small public and private colleges, public comprehensive universities, and community colleges. Many political science Ph.D.s find exciting employment outside academia as well. Though here, too, departmental responses can legitimately vary, all graduate programs should seek to prepare their students for the greatest range of job opportunities they can.

The APSA currently participates in an interdisciplinary Preparing Future Faculty program (PFF), described on the Association website, that is exploring new ways that departments can provide appropriate preparation for today's academic job market. That program's principles rightly stress preparing students not only for research but also for teaching and service within academic communities. They call for departments to create formal mentoring systems for teaching and professional

development, which can include workshops or elective courses on teaching and course development, along with individual faculty mentoring of teaching assistants. Such systems should include discussion of the varying demands of different institutional settings, such as the emphasis on interdisciplinary teaching in many small colleges and in interdisciplinary programs with hiring powers; the varying emphases on teaching, research and service as grounds for promotion that junior faculty encounter in different settings; issues of professional ethics; and the differing challenges presented by the diverse class, educational, gender, racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds of students at various types of institutions. Professional development programs should also include fostering student awareness of emerging uses of new technologies in both teaching and service work.

Beyond these PFF recommendations, we believe that departments should assist graduate students in preparing job talks and application materials for a variety of types of institutions. They should also work with institutional career planning and placement centers whenever possible to develop workshops and advisory systems that can help students seeking non-academic careers. Departments with small graduate programs also might work with larger ones to initiate workshops and short courses offered to graduate students at the APSA's annual meeting, as has occurred in the past. Topics can include learning to teach, preparation for the job market, concerns of minority scholars, and much more. The APSA annual meeting can also be an occasion for graduate studies directors to meet to discuss common concerns, including minority scholar identification, recruiting, and mentoring. Similar sessions can be undertaken as part of regional meetings.

Though departments must decide for themselves whether and how their curriculum should be structured to assist students not seeking academic jobs, it is also desirable to encourage broader faculty acceptance that business, government, and nonprofit careers can be appropriate goals for Ph.D. students.

The Need to Study Ourselves: Career Paths in Graduate School and Beyond

In our deliberations, the Committee often found ourselves asking questions about the career paths of political scientists. How does dissertation support affect initial job placement? Do faculty at liberal arts colleges often move to research universities? How do the experiences of racial, religious, and economic minority, LGBT, and female assistant professors differ from those of males from traditionally privileged backgrounds? How do they differ from each other? Unfortunately, though speculation about each of these questions abounds, none of the answers is reliably known.

The Association is in an excellent position to study its own members and learn the answers to these and many other questions that arise in the course of APSA business. We believe that studying ourselves in this way would pay for itself. Put the other way, making Association recommendations and policy in a state of self-ignorance is an expensive way to proceed.

Thus the Committee recommends that the American Political Science Association begin a panel study of the careers of political scientists. Designing such a study is a job for specialists, and we make no pretense of doing so here. However, we recommend that scholars at all stages be included in the sample, from graduate school on. An initial survey of demographic and career information, supplemented by occasional attitudinal studies, would pay immediate dividends. Then as the years passed and longitudinal data became available, the profession could stop guessing about how we live and which policy changes work effectively.

We recognize that a survey of this kind will cost APSA some money. We also recognize that special efforts will have to be made to keep information confidential and to prevent the identification of individual scholars from the data in the surveys. But these are familiar problems from surveys of other small populations, and they have well tested and effective solutions well known to survey professionals. Thus, while there are many details to be worked out and approved by the Association in consultation with those administering the survey, we believe that the project is feasible, ethical, and eminently worthwhile. We urge the Association to consider it.

Conclusion

The challenges of providing adequate graduate education in political science today are more daunting than ever before, but they are not insurmountable. Political scientists share some vital commitments. We believe that politics matters. We seek to identify and illuminate truly important political topics. And we try to do so as rigorously and honestly as we can, while recognizing that many kinds of knowledge, methods, and perspectives are necessary for the discipline as whole to study politics well. If, whatever their distinctive strengths and specializations, all graduate programs seek to make students aware of all of the different types of training and assistance available, in their department and beyond; if they support students materially and intellectually in the pursuit of all forms of training most pertinent to the students' own interests; and if throughout their graduate training activities, departments and graduate student mentors seek to communicate these shared commitments, then much can be accomplished.

No department can now do the job alone. Yet through individual and collaborative efforts guided by our shared professional commitments, the discipline of political science as a whole can provide an appropriately broad, accessible array of graduate training. Only this combination of dedication, cooperation, and mutual respect will suffice to educate the next generation of political scientists fully, responsibly, and effectively.

References

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