

# **Report of the APSA Elections Review Committee on APSA Election Procedures**

April, 2002

## **Introduction**

Our committee was appointed by APSA president Robert Jervis to consider the whether the APSA should amend the process by which it selects its officers. The current process is specified by Article V of the APSA constitution and appears in full as Appendix A in this report. It provides for a six-member nominating committee (each incoming APSA president appoints three members to two-year terms) charged with proposing a slate of nominees, one for each office, that reflects the diversity of the APSA membership. If no additional candidates are proposed, the slate is elected by voice vote at the annual business meeting. A minimum of 10 members may propose additional candidates for any or all offices, in which case the whole membership is eligible to vote in an election via mail ballot after the business meeting. There has not been a contested election since 1979.

Some members of the Association believe that, for a variety of reasons, the APSA should always have competitive elections and have proposed changing the process to one that guarantees competition by requiring the nomination of two or more candidates for some or all of the Association's offices. Our committee's charge was to review as broadly as possible the issues raised by both the current process and proposed alternatives and, on the basis of that review, to make recommendations as to what, if any, changes in selection process are warranted. Our report and recommendations are not meant to be definitive or final but rather to be the starting point for wider discussion by the APSA Council and members as we consider potentially far-reaching changes in how we do our collective business.

In preparing this report, we solicited APSA members for their ideas, insights, experiences, and views regarding the selection process, and we were impressed by the many thoughtful responses and creative ideas we received from our colleagues. Most of the points we present here were drawn directly from, or inspired by, their comments and observations. We also compiled information on the diversity of the leadership chosen under the current system and on how other professional academic organizations select their officers. We refer to our findings in the body of this report, but more complete information on what we learned appears in Appendix B and Appendix C.

The report has three main parts. In the first part, we present arguments for and against mandatory electoral competition for APSA offices as they relate to general considerations of democracy, elitism, representation and diversity, accountability, participation, the quality of leadership, and other matters. In the second part, we review the range of proposals that we received for alternatives to the status quo if the APSA does decide to move toward mandatory competition. Finally, we offer our own recommendations for improving the selection process.

## I. APSA Members' Arguments For and Against Mandatory Competition for APSA Offices

In soliciting the views of our members, we discovered a wide variety of positions on the desirability and rationale for current and potentially different electoral systems. Here we summarize the best of the arguments for and against change, focusing on justifications such as democratic practices, representation, participation, accountability, leadership quality, the importance of perceptions, and the experience of other organizations. Because we want our report to reflect the wide ranging sets of views that the committee heard and discussed, our summaries borrow liberally from the actual wording of comments submitted to us by members.

### A. Democracy

The questions here are fundamental: Is the APSA the kind of organization that, to be consistent with the values of the discipline it represents, must be democratic? Or is it the kind of organization that is kept responsive primarily by the ability of members to leave if they become dissatisfied? Must the APSA have mandatory competition to be democratic? Or is it already sufficiently democratic because its leadership positions are open to competitive elections if even a few members are dissatisfied with the official nominees?

#### *For mandatory competition:*

Political scientists celebrate democracy as the only legitimate form of government for nations, parties, labor unions, and many other political entities; political scientists should therefore use democratic means to govern their own professional organization. Democracy is also necessary because the APSA runs a kind of closed shop; academic political scientists need to belong to demonstrate their professionalism, at least until they receive tenure. Competitive elections are the essence of democracy; therefore, APSA should be arranged so that its officers are always selected by competitive elections.

#### *For the status quo:*

The APSA is not a polity; it does not exercise coercive authority, and it does not run a closed shop. It is a voluntary professional organization that attracts and retains its members by delivering services they value. One need not be a member to attend annual meetings or publish in its journals; anyone with access to an academic library can read its publications. Exit is always an option, a variety of other regional or field-based associations can and do compete with APSA for membership and participation. Thus neither normative nor practical considerations require its leaders to be chosen in mandatory competitive elections.

*For mandatory competition:*

As currently constituted, the APSA's selection process is undemocratic, resembling that for Pope or general secretary of the CPSU or middle-eastern dictators.

*For the status quo:*

The comparison is not apt. The APSA's rules already permit free democratic elections if anyone wants to make it a contest. Current rules allow as few as ten members to nominate additional candidates and guarantee a fair and open election when there are additional nominees; nothing comparable is found in the Vatican, CPSU, or any authoritarian regime.

*For mandatory competition:*

Nominations by petition are not a realistic option; some years ago, the Caucus for New Political Science proposed alternative candidates several times but failed to elect any of its nominees. The current mechanism is obscure, imposing high transaction costs on anyone wanting to organize opposition, and pits insurgents against the establishment, which biases the outcome in favor of the official slate.

*For the status quo:*

The Caucus failed, not because its candidates were nominated by petition, but because they did not have sufficient support within the Association. The bar to challenges is set very low for anyone who cares enough to challenge the official slate; lack of competition in recent years suggests that no one is interested or believes that a compelling case could be made to the membership to elect someone other than the regular nominees. If any dissatisfied faction currently in the Association wants competition, it can run its own candidates and there will be competition.

## B. Elitism

The views expressed on the issue of elitism also reveal fundamental differences in conceptions of what the APSA is or should be.

*For mandatory competition:*

APSA appears to be run by an insular, secretive oligarchy composed of a narrow, self-perpetuating group of insiders. The selection process allows the imposition of a narrow and exclusive view of the discipline. Competitive elections will produce officers representative of the entire Association rather than conforming to some elitist's notion of qualifications. Elections will express the fundamental equality of APSA members and foster a democratic and populist political culture within it.

*For the status quo:*

First, the officers and council are a diverse group, not a narrow elite. Beyond that, scholarship is not populist enterprise; APSA is not a populist organization. APSA is a professional association of the kind that is always led by its most prominent and successful members. Officers, particularly presidents and vice presidents, should be distinguished scholars enjoying elite status within the profession. The current selection method has consistently delivered distinguished, high-quality nominees representing the best the profession has to offer. And in recent years it has also offered a diverse group of council and officers (see below).

### C. Representation

Please see Appendix B for data on diversity of recent APSA officers.

*For mandatory competition:*

Slating and lack of competition makes for homogeneity of political science orientation and alienation on the part of dissidents and permanent minorities. Some factions and interests are underrepresented among current nominees. Elections are needed to get more diversity in terms of methodologies, regions, type of institution, gender, and race.

*For the status quo:*

The current slating system has produced balanced, diverse representation; nominations are distributed carefully according to subfield, approach, regions, type and size of institution, gender, age and race. (See appendix B) Mandatory competitive elections are unlikely to produce as much diversity and may produce much less, depending on the system chosen.

*For mandatory competition:*

The basis of representation was not always specified by advocates of mandatory competition and would depend partly on the kind of election system chosen (see the next section of this report). The possibilities mentioned range from completely open nominations that would lead to competition among whatever spontaneous factional groupings arose, to structured competition between sets of candidates carefully paired to assure diversity on various dimensions. It might produce candidates competing on the basis of alternative visions of APSA's future, competition among representatives of subfields or approaches, or competition among regional associations.

*For the status quo:*

No one has identified the divisions among Association members that require competition in the choice of officers. There is no authentic basis for such competition, and it would be bad for the Association if there were. Efforts to routinize competition would be artificial and apolitical. They would create rather than manage conflicts within the Association, leading to fragmentation and hostility. Competition could lead to intellectually debilitating fights for dominance between schools of thought, forcing people to take sides, with careers and tenure decisions at stake.

If it did not foster factional fighting, mandatory competition would produce popularity contests that would be determined by name recognition, leading to even greater overrepresentation of elite departments. Popularity contests would produce hurt feelings and alienate the losers.

#### D. Accountability

*For mandatory competition:*

Competitive elections will increase responsiveness and accountability. ASPA needs a competitive process where candidates debate one another and face general elections that hold them accountable to the electorate. Without mandatory competitive elections, APSA is immune to changes of direction initiated by the membership.

*For the status quo:*

Competitive elections hold officers accountable only when reelection is an option, which no one has advocated and which would raise a host of other problems. Without the equivalent of political parties, for which no authentic basis exists, elections would provide no policy direction. The APSA is subject to market accountability—the exit option—and, as such, has shown itself to be flexible and highly responsive to members unhappy with one or another aspect of the status quo, including the choice of officers.

#### E. Participation

*For mandatory competition:*

The current system discourages members outside the leadership clique from getting involved. Mandatory competitive elections will promote civic engagement by inviting wider participation in governing the APSA; elections will foster greater interest and involvement among members, revitalizing the Association.

*For the status quo:*

Current system is freely open to participation; the Association offers numerous opportunities for members who want to be active. Voting participation in comparable organizations that require multiple nominees sometimes falls below 10 percent. Incentives for rational ignorance and rational abstention would affect even political scientists. Mandatory competition would discourage participation by those members who, win or lose, would not relish engaging in popularity or prestige contests with their peers.

#### F. The Quality of Leadership

*For mandatory competition:*

Leading scholars would still be selected; leaders would be more responsive and more representative of membership. They will be more interested in performing services service than in enjoying honors. Leaders would be more likely to focus on constructive criticisms of the Association's management.

*For the status quo:*

It is difficult enough to recruit good candidates for Association offices even without making them compete. The presidency in particular is a big job that is worth it only because of the honor involved. Offices would lose their appeal to distinguished members if they had to compete for it with other similarly distinguished scholars. Some former APSA presidents have indicated that they would have declined to compete with esteemed friends and colleagues. Services of the losers in contests for this and other offices would be lost; the Association would be effectively rejecting the services of half its leading members every year.

#### G. Perceptions

*For mandatory competition:*

Symbolism is important. Regardless of reality, some members believe that the Association is governed by a clique of unresponsive insiders. The same people, or same kinds of people would most likely be chosen as leaders under mandatory competition, but their selection would be perceive as fairer and more legitimate. Competitive elections would offer an expressive outlet to members who are unhappy with the Association on various grounds.

*For the status quo:*

The perception that the leadership of the Association is unresponsive and unrepresentative is incorrect; the way to deal with incorrect perceptions is to provide information to correct them, not to cater to them. Some members are evidently unaware that any 10 members can nominate additional candidates, prompting a mail-ballot election in which all members were eligible to vote. The solution is to publicize this option more widely.

Unless competition is rigged to guarantee at least as much diversity as the current system produces, members may wind up feeling even less connected to leaders. Elections decided by factional mobilization would leave the losers alienated.

#### H. Experiences of Other Associations

*For mandatory competition:*

Other major professional associations choose officers through competitive elections without major difficulty (see Appendix C). Members like having a choice. Elected leaders see service as a responsibility, not an honor, so provide more effective service. Competitive elections open associations to a much wider range of views and encourage more people to participate. Younger members feel more involved. The embarrassment of the losers is more than offset by the advantages of a more open, responsive organization.

*For the status quo:*

APSA has flourished while some other organizations have been rent asunder by internal divisions. Associations with competitive elections have more difficulty getting people to run; leading scholars often decline to compete with their peers. In some associations, the presidency has become seriously devalued. Offices are politicized and factionalism is encouraged. Sometimes competitive elections are a sham, as everyone knows who the winner will be. Voting participation is often very low. Every year, excellent candidates lose and are never willing to run again; unsuccessful candidates are often very hurt by perceived rejection of membership and withdraw from active participation in the organization.

## **II. If Elections Are Held, How Should They Be Conducted?**

Those favoring a change offer a myriad of different suggestions for reorganizing the nomination and election process. We have considered many different options for change focusing on the particular offices, the nominating process, and the various election processes.

## A. What Offices Should Be Subject to Election?

### *Status quo:*

President-Elect, Vice President (3), Secretary, Treasurer, and Council (16) are subject to election; the President-Elect automatically becomes president in the following year without another vote. Council members and Treasurer serve two-year terms, with half the Council members elected each year, all other officers serve one-year terms. A nominating committee proposes a slate including one candidate for each open position; if no additional candidates are proposed, then the slate is elected at the Annual Business Meeting.

### *Proposed alternatives:*

Each of these alternatives was proposed by at least one of the APSA members who submitted their views on the selection process; they are listed very roughly in order of their distance from the status quo, greatest to least.

1. Every position, including Council, officers, nominating committee (if there is one), APSR editor and editorial board.
2. Council, officers, nominating committee, but not APSR editor or board.
3. Council and President, but not Secretary or Treasurer.
4. President and Council, reduced to 12 members serving three year terms. Eliminate office of Vice President; Secretary and Treasurer to be appointed; have President Elect, President, Past President, and Past-Past President serve on Council.
5. President only, plus elected nominating committee.
6. President and vice presidents only.
7. All offices except President.
8. All offices except Treasurer
8. All offices except President, with Council selecting the President.
9. Elected Council, other officers and nominating committee appointed by Council.
10. Elected Council, officers appointed by Council for administrative, not policy making tasks (legislative supremacy).

11. Elected Council only, otherwise, as now.
12. Elect some, but not all of the Council members.
13. Elect nominating committee only, otherwise as now.

## B. Nominations

### *Status quo:*

The President appoints, “with the advice and consent of the Council . . . and with due regard to geographical distribution and the fields of professional interest, three members to a Nominating Committee of six, to serve for two-year terms. . . . The Committee may canvass the membership directly or indirectly for suggestions, and shall submit to the next Annual Business Meeting one nomination for each elective office to be filled. . . . These nominations shall be announced to the membership . . . well in advance of the Annual Meeting. Additional nominations, sponsored by at least 10 members of the Association, may be offered from the floor at the Annual Business Meeting, upon 24 hours advance notice to the Secretary”

### *Proposed alternatives:*

1. No nominating committee; open nominations from individuals and groups, including self-nominations.
2. No nominating committee; by petition of at least 10 members for all offices.
3. No nominating committee; by petition of 2 percent of APSA membership.
4. By anyone, but with nominating committee to select additional candidates if not enough are nominated.
5. Several “not so formal” nominating committees.
6. Membership polled for core interests or views, with top choices of sizeable segments becoming official caucuses [number unspecified]. A “self-selected” nominating committee from each caucus would be permitted to nominate three candidates distributed in any fashion across offices, plus as many as they elected in the latest election.
7. By organized sections.
8. By regional associations or “functional groups.”

9. By nominating committee selecting two candidates for each executive position and 50% over the total of seats for council members; additional nominations by petition of 100 members.
10. By an elected nominating committee chosen from representatives from the organized sections, two or more candidates for each position, with no distributional criteria for nominations.
11. By an elected nominating committee chosen by a vote of Association members from nominees submitted by the organized sections, charged with developing balanced tickets, as now, but with two candidates for each position matched to guarantee diversity; additional candidates by petition.
12. By nominating committee appointed as now and instructed to develop balanced tickets, naming two candidates for each position matched to guarantee diversity.
13. By a nominating committee increased to nine, chosen at random from the Council, three members each year for three-year terms, instructed as now to develop balanced tickets naming one candidate for each office.
14. By a nominating committee increased to nine, with three year terms, six to be chosen jointly by the President, Council, and other officers, instructed as now to develop balanced tickets naming one candidate for each office.

### C. Distributional Criteria for Nominees

#### *Status quo:*

The nominating committee is to be appointed “with due regard to geographical distribution and the fields of professional interest.” The committee is urged to distribute nominations among fields of study, major approaches, geographic region, type of institution, type of career, demographic and identity group constituencies, and special competencies. It is also formally encouraged “to avoid choosing a candidate of the same gender as President for more than two years in a row.”

#### *Proposed alternatives:*

1. No special effort to ensure diversity.
2. By subfield, no other criteria
3. Encourage diversity, but do not privilege gender as the primary category for president.
4. If current categories maintained, award nominations in proportion to their representation in the Association.

5. Nominees must be academics at four-year institutions who have “published at least one scholarly monograph or a series of important and still cited articles.”
6. Broaden categories defining diversity.

#### D. Distributional Criteria for Offices

##### *Status quo:*

Same as for nominees, as there is one nominee for each office.

##### *Proposed alternatives:*

1. No special effort to ensure diversity.
2. Reserved council seats for particular constituencies (institution type, fields)
3. By subfield, with selection by organized sections.
4. By subfield, with presidency rotated among four subfields (IR, American, Comparative, Theory) over a four year cycle.
5. By region.
6. “Federal” or “Consociational” system that ensures rotation of presidency and division of offices among specialties, subfields, methodologies, and epistemologies.
7. Quota proportional representation for council (J.S. Mill) (representational basis not specified).
8. More liberal arts college faculty, a graduate ABD member, ex officio representative from the National Association of Political Science

#### E. Voting System

##### *Status quo:*

“Each contested election, except . . . for the President-Elect, shall be determined by a plurality of those voting on the particular office; if the number of nominees for the set of vice-presidencies or for Council membership exceeds the number of offices constitutionally to be filled, all such nominees shall appear on the mail ballot, members shall be entitled to vote for a number equal to the number of offices in the set, and the nominees ranking highest in the poll, in a number equal to the number of offices, shall be declared elected. The President-Elect shall be chosen by the above method only if there

are two and only two nominees for the office. Should there be three or more nominees for President-Elect, ballots for that office shall be so designed as to enable members to designate their rank-ordered preferences by placing numbers beside the names of the nominees ("1" for first preference, "2" for second preference, and so on for each nominee). If no nominee receives at least fifty-percent-plus-one of the first preferences, other preferences shall be added from the first-preference ballots of each eliminated nominee according to the standard method of the alternative vote system, which shall be prescribed by the Council in advance of nominations, until one nominee receives at least fifty-percent-plus-one of the aggregated preferences and is declared the winner.

*Proposed alternatives:*

1. Cumulative voting (PR)
2. Preference voting if more than two candidates
3. Runoff if less than 50 percent or 40 percent
4. Approval voting if more than three candidates
5. Single non-transferable vote.
7. Quota based proportional representation.

F. Balloting Method:

*Status quo:*

If there is a contested election, “the Executive Director shall distribute ballots within thirty (30) days following the Annual Business Meeting and under such other conditions as the Council may prescribe, and he or she shall count only ballots returned within thirty (30) days following distribution.” Mail ballots have been used in past contests.

*Proposed alternatives:*

1. Web-based, on-line voting
2. Mail ballots with CVs and candidate statements.

### **III. Recommendations**

We unanimously recommend that the APSA *not* formally mandate competing candidates for APSA officers and Council. Although individually we put different weights on different considerations, each of us is persuaded by a review of the arguments that have been offered for and against adopting mandatory competition that the prospective costs clearly outweigh the prospective benefits for the Association and its members. However, we also recommend some changes in the nomination process to ensure the kind of broad and thoughtful input we believe desirable.

### Rejecting Mandatory Competition

The most compelling reasons offered for moving to mandatory competition are broadly normative: When it comes to governing, most political scientists have a strong bias in favor of democracy and its formal practices. Legitimate authority derives from consent, and elections are necessary to assure that consent has really been given. The arguments in favor of democracy outlined in our presentation of arguments for moving to mandatory competition are therefore not to be taken lightly. Nor do we doubt that the Association's members could design a system formalizing competitive elections that would be practical and manageable (although the competing alternatives certainly would and should inspire a lot of lively discussion). Nonetheless, we think that more would be lost than gained for the Association if it were to take this step.

First, we note that important democratic protections already exist within the APSA's constitution. Any ten or more members may nominate competitors to the official nominees for any or all elective offices, and a fair election, using a mail ballot so that all members can easily participate, will automatically take place. Thus any group within the Association that is unhappy with the official nominees and believes that its views are shared by other members has easy recourse to the ballot box. The advent of email has made coordinating such challenges inexpensive and relatively easy. This provision encourages nominating committees to compose slates of candidates who are broadly acceptable to the membership, and if a nominating committee fails to do so, APSA members should not hesitate to use it.

This brings us to the second reason we advise against mandating competitive slates. The current system has succeeded in producing a diverse, broadly representative set of officers (see Appendix B of this report). In recent years, great care has been taken not only to make each year's nominees as representative of the Association's various components as possible, but also to be sure that offices are distributed over time in a way that reflects its intellectual and demographic diversity. Colleagues who have served on the nominating committee have persuaded us that this is a complex and challenging task. It is difficult to imagine an at-large election system that could regularly produce the diversity of our past and current councils. The only kind of competitive electoral process that would assure an equally diverse leadership would be one in which pairs of competing candidates were carefully matched by category, in effect twinning the current slates. Aside from the additional burden on the nominating committee, such a procedure would provide a choice only between similar alternatives and would not make the process appear any less oligarchic.

The alternative of restricting specific offices to members from specific categories in specific years would not be helpful in dealing with this problem, because the number of dimensions along which diversity can be measured is large, and any formal specification would inevitably privilege some dimensions and slight others.

Any system of mandatory competition that does not constrain choices quite severely is likely to reduce the diversity of the APSA's leadership. The less constraint, the greater the danger that an unrepresentative leadership will be chosen. Minorities, defined demographically, intellectually, by gender or sexual orientation, institutionally, or by any other criterion, might find it harder to win representation. Our colleagues who advocate mandatory competition because they want the Association to be more inclusive and representative would, we think, be disappointed by the results if the APSA were to adopt any system that did not duplicate current distributive efforts. Many seem unaware of how responsive the current selection process has been to demands by groups that have felt excluded for a chance to participate in the governance of the Association.

A third reason we recommend against adopting mandatory competition is that (fortunately, as of now) we can discern no authentic endogenous basis for it. The Association's members diverge on numerous dimensions, but existing cleavages tend to be crosscutting rather than mutually reinforcing. Differences in intellectual style cut across differences in area of specialization. These divisions in turn cut across differences in region or type of institution. We think that this is healthy for the Association. Were its membership to coalesce into a small number of coherent, opposing factions, it would be open to the kind of debilitating conflicts that have beset other academic and professional associations. The current selection process would not prevent such developments—any faction is free to nominate and campaign for its own slate of officers—but we think it unwise to introduce artificial conflicts that might, over time, generate the real thing. It is important to remember that the APSA is a voluntary association, not a polity; exit is an option, and breaking up is not all that hard to do. We believe it would be damaging both intellectually and politically to the entire profession if the APSA's election processes inspired losing factions to redirect their energies into other, more narrowly conceived professional societies.

From the messages we have received, there appears to be broad if not universal agreement that the APSA should be led by its most accomplished members. Thus a fourth reason we opposed mandatory competition for APSA offices is that it would discourage participation by some of our most distinguished colleagues. Some past presidents have told us they would have declined to take part in contrived contests against esteemed colleagues, particularly when no real differences of principle or policy divided them. Mandatory competition would also involve the public rejection of half or more of those who did agree to compete, discouraging at least some from further involvement in the Association's governance.

We considered it significant that APSA members who contacted us expressed virtually no dissatisfaction with the actual slates of officers the current system has produced. We share the view that the APSA has enjoyed distinguished, yet intellectually

and demographically diverse leadership under the current system, and we see a greater prospect for erosion than for enhancement of this tradition of excellence if the Association were to adopt mandatory competition.

Finally, we observe that the experience of similar organizations that have adopted mandatory competition has by no means been uniformly positive. For some associations, mandatory competition works well, but others have experienced very low turnout, political factionalization, widespread withdrawal from participation in association activities, humiliated and alienated losers, and cynicism about the quality of the winners. Low participation sometimes allows narrow, highly mobilized factions to prevail, reducing the diversity of representation. While the APSA might be able to avoid such problems, there is some real risk that it will not, adding to our conviction that the potential downside of moving to mandatory competition clearly exceeds the potential benefits.

In sum, the current election system has provided the Association with distinguished and broadly representative leadership. It does not foster artificial conflict, but does provide for competitive elections if even a few members want to offer alternatives to the official nominees. Thus we recommend that the current practice of having a single slate of nominees proposed by a nominating committee, but open to alternative candidates or slates by petition, should be retained.

### Reforming the Nominating Process

We do, however, think that the nominating process itself could be improved in several ways.

The selection of nominating committee members by APSA presidents (with the consent of the Council) may create the perception of a closed, self-perpetuating nominating process. We have considered several alternatives for opening up the process and relieving the President of this particular burden.

One memo submitted to the committee proposed having a 12-member nominating committee elected by Association members from a slate on which each organized section placed one or two nominees (depending on its size) selected by whatever method the section chose. While some of us were intrigued by the idea, we concluded that the sections were not a good basis for representation. The sections are not meant to be representative; they are self-initiated groups, quite variable in size (currently the range is 145 to 1550 members, with a mean of about 500 and a standard deviation of about 250) and scope, with fluctuating and overlapping memberships. Their own internal decision making processes vary widely in transparency and participation. Making them part of the nomination process would institutionalize groupings that ought to be allowed to arise, expand, contract, or disappear as the interests of APSA members evolve.

We could discover no alternative divisions on which to base representation on a nominating committee that would not require an arbitrary and artificial categorization of

APSA members. We did find, however, that the APSA's Council has been consistently and broadly representative of its membership. Council members are also knowledgeable about APSA governance and its many challenges. A nominating committee composed of a subset of present or former Council members could thus provide the breadth of representation and the knowledge of Association business that we believe essential for a nominating committee.

To ensure fair representation, we propose having nominating committee members chosen from the Council (excluding ex-officio members) by lot, three per year. (We also considered the possibility of choosing the nominating committee partially by lot from Council and partially by presidential appointment, and some committee members preferred this option; the exact selection process should be the subject of further discussion.). We also propose expanding the terms of service to three years and thus the size of the committee to nine members. A larger committee, while possibly a bit more cumbersome, would provide wider representation. The three year term would deepen the institutional memory, which colleagues who have served on the committee have told us would be beneficial. The committee should be chaired by a member who has already served on it for at least one year.

We also recommend that the process of recommending candidates to the nominating committee be formalized so that all APSA members have a clear idea of how and when to propose candidates. As it is now, recommendations arrive in a variety of forms, from simple letters with no documentation to elaborate files with considerable documentation. We recommend that, drawing on the advice of current and former nominating committee members, a clear set of procedures be established for receiving and processing candidate recommendations. The process should be widely publicized to Association members (through *PS* and the APSA's website) in a timely fashion. It should ensure that at least a minimal level of documentation is presented for every candidate for nomination, and that documentation should be available for review by nominating committee members well in advance of their meeting.

There is at present no Council policy concerning whether the committee can nominate candidates whose names have not been submitted by the membership; we recommend that the committee be explicitly given this authority so that it can retain the flexibility needed to construct diverse slates of nominees. Such nominations should be documented and submitted in advance of the committee's meetings in the same manner as nominations from APSA members.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

To reiterate what we wrote in the introduction, our report and recommendations are not meant to close but to open a wider discussion among the APSA Council and members as we consider potentially far-reaching changes in how we govern ourselves. We hope that our work provokes further analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of adopting mandatory competition. We hope that APSA members who belong to other

professional associations will share their views on how well or poorly alternative selection processes work. Finally, we hope that colleagues who remain convinced that mandatory competition is essential consider a wide range of alternatives to the present system, taking care to think through the details of alternative proposals with an eye to how they might affect the character of the Association and the relationships among its members.

Respectfully submitted,

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## **Appendix A: Current Procedure for Selecting APSA Officers**

### Article V: Elective Officers

1. The elective officers, except the President, shall be chosen by vote of the members of the Association attending the Annual Business Meeting, a quorum being present, provided that whenever there is a contest for any elected office or offices such elections shall be conducted by mail ballot of the entire individual membership. In the latter event the Executive Director shall distribute ballots within thirty (30) days following the Annual Business Meeting and under such other conditions as the Council may prescribe, and he or she shall count only ballots returned within thirty (30) days following distribution; each contested election, except as specified below for the President-Elect, shall be determined by a plurality of those voting on the particular office; if the number of nominees for the set of vice-presidencies or for Council membership exceeds the number of offices constitutionally to be filled, all such nominees shall appear on the mail ballot, members shall be entitled to vote for a number equal to the number of offices in the set, and the nominees ranking highest in the poll, in a number equal to the number of offices, shall be declared elected. The President-Elect shall be chosen by the above method only if there are two and only two nominees for the office. Should there be three or more nominees for President-Elect, ballots for that office shall be so designed as to enable members to designate their rank-ordered preferences by placing numbers beside the names of the nominees ("1" for first preference, "2" for second preference, and so on for each nominee). If no nominee receives at least fifty-percent-plus-one of the first preferences, other preferences shall be added from the first-preference ballots of each eliminated nominee according to the standard method of the alternative vote system, which shall be prescribed by the Council in advance of nominations, until one nominee receives at least fifty-percent-plus-one of the aggregated preferences and is declared the winner. The President-Elect shall automatically succeed to the office of President upon the completion of the President's term, or upon the occurrence of one of the contingencies provided for in section 3 of this article. The terms of elective officers, except members of the Council and the Treasurer, shall extend for one year measured from the end of the program of the Annual Meeting, except that an officer's term shall in no event expire until his or her successor assumes office. The terms of members of the Council shall extend for two years, similarly calculated, and one-half shall expire each year. The term of the Treasurer shall also extend for two years, similarly calculated.

2. After each annual meeting the President shall appoint with the advice and consent of the Council and with due regard to geographical distribution and the fields of professional interest, three members to a Nominating Committee of six, to serve for two-year terms; and he or she shall designate the chair. The Committee may canvass the membership directly or indirectly for suggestions, and shall submit to the next Annual Business Meeting one nomination for each elective office to be filled, except the Presidency. These nominations shall be announced to the membership, by any convenient means, well in advance of the Annual Meeting. Additional nominations, sponsored by at least 10 members of the Association, may be offered from the floor at the Annual Business Meeting, upon 24 hours advance notice to the Secretary.

3. In case of death, resignation, or inability of the President to perform the duties of his or her office, the President-Elect shall immediately succeed him or her and shall be President for the remainder of the term unless that is less than four months, in which case he or she shall serve out the unexpired term and one additional year. In case of an interim vacancy in the office of President-Elect, the Nominating Committee shall forthwith proceed to nominate and the Council shall elect a new President-Elect to serve until the end of the next Annual Meeting. Actions to fill a vacancy may in case of need be taken by mail, telegraph, or telephone, without a meeting. At the next Annual Business Meeting the Association shall confirm the Council's action by electing the President-Elect to the office of President or instead may elect another member as President, or may take such other action as in its discretion the situation may require, to the end that there shall be in office at all times both a President and a President-Elect. The Council may fill any interim vacancy in its elective membership until the end of the next Annual Meeting.

4. The elective officers, except the Secretary and the Treasurer, shall be ineligible to succeed themselves in office. After a lapse of two years, a former member of the Council may be elected to another term.

5. Nominations for the office of Treasurer should be from among members of the Association who, at the time of nomination, are serving as members of the Council or who have completed service during the preceding year.

## Appendix B Diversity of APSA Officers

Many proponents of both the status quo and of switching to some form of institutionalized competition consider it important to select APSA officers who are representative of the diverse categories of political scientists that belong to the Association. Current nominating committees are enjoined to select slates that represent different fields of study, major approaches, geographic regions, types of institution, types of career, and demographic and identity groups. We have been able to gather information about the distribution of officers, including program chairs and members of the nominating committee, for the 1996-2002 period along some of these dimensions. The information is summarized the results in Figure B1, "Demographics of APSA Members and Officers, 1996-2002."

Figure B1 suggests the following:

1. At least during the past six years, nominating committees have successfully reached out to some formerly underrepresented groups; women, African-Americans, and Latinas/os are overrepresented among APSA officers.
2. The distribution of offices by major subfield is reasonably proportional, with modest overrepresentation of American politics and political theory, equally modest underrepresentation of comparative politics and international relations.
3. Regionally, the Northeast and especially the West Coast are overrepresented, while the Mid Atlantic and South are underrepresented.
4. We do not have membership data on the other dimensions in this chart, but it seems clear that large, Ph.D. granting institutions are substantially overrepresented.
5. Private institutions are probably overrepresented, and non-academics underrepresented.

The explanation for distributional inequalities in items 3-5 appears straightforward: Scholarly distinction has been a significant criterion for nomination, and distinguished scholars tend to cluster in top-rated research-oriented departments. Of the APSA officers in this data set, 71 percent of the presidents, 62 percent of the executive officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer), and 45 percent of all officers were from departments ranked among the top 20 in the National Research Council survey of doctorate programs a few years ago. Such departments are relatively more common in the Northeast and West Coast, relative less common the mid-Atlantic or South. They are also more commonly found in large universities and private universities.

For those who favor a more egalitarian, populist APSA, this situation will be disturbing. For those who believe the association is best led by its most distinguished scholars, and that its offices confer professional honor as much as authority, it is as it should be, although some may want to expand the criteria for distinction to include more of the outstanding teachers and mentors at liberal arts colleges and other non-Ph.D. granting institutions.

## **Appendix C: Procedures of Other Professional Organizations**

Drawing on an informal survey conducted by APSA staff and on comments we received from APSA members about their own experiences, we assembled information on the procedures that other professional organizations employ to select officers. The information is summarized in Table C1. Our survey was neither systematic nor comprehensive, but it does offer a sense of the range selection processes, and reactions to them, that APSA members should be aware of in thinking about altering our own procedures.

The survey shows that participants have both positive and negative things to say about the consequences of competitive elections in those associations where they are mandatory. Our very limited sampling cannot, of course, tell us how widespread any of the sentiments expressed are within these associations. We hope that, as we consider possible changes APSA procedures, Association members active in other professional organizations will share their experiences, good and bad, with alternative electoral procedures. Their observations should provide a much richer and more comprehensive information base than we have been able to assemble here and should be an important part of the conversation.

**Table C1: Election Procedures and Experiences of Other Professional Associations**

<b>Association</b>	<b>Type of Election</b>	<b>Participation</b>	<b>Comments from Association Members and Staff</b>
American Academy of Religion	Contested	7.5%	“AAR runs a contested slate for all generally-elected positions. [V]ery few members vote and we lose an excellent candidate every year by virtue of often 20 votes”
American Anthropological Association	Contested	15-18%	Elects president, Secretary, 12 member Executive Board. Five seats on board are at large, seven set aside for representatives of specific categories (cultural anthropology, linguistic anthropology, archeology, biological anthropology, practicing/professional anthropology, a minority anthropologist, and a student anthropologist). The two candidates for each open seat are nominated by the Executive Board.
American Dialect Society	Uncontested		An uncontested slate “has been our practice since our founding more than a century ago, and no one has suggested that we change it. “
American Folklore Society	Contested		“Having uncontested elections has been discussed in past years, but the move from contested to uncontested elections has been understood by a great many of our members as a move from more to less choice, and so the change hasn't taken place.”
American Philological Association	Contested	20%	“APA does not have uncontested slates. In fact, for Board elections, we require the Nominating Committee to come up with 5 candidates for only two slots. Voters use a preferential balloting system for this election and any other where there is no possibility of a majority on the first round.”
American Philosophical Association	Other		“Since the APA has a divisional structure, with the Board composed of officers from the three divisions, plus a small group of National officers, the Board turns out to be partly elected by contested elections, and partly appointed. This is because two of the three divisions hold elections, while one division uses a nominating committee that simply chooses their officers, who are invariably approved by that division’s executive committee. The national officers are chosen by the rest of the Board in existence at any time a national officer needs to be replaced.”
American Psychological Society	Contested		Elections committee presents a slate of nominees, with attention given to maintaining diversity and balance among officers.
American Society for Aesthetics	Contested		“The ASA offers two or more candidates for each trustee position, two or three for the vice president, who is the president elect after two years as vice president. For the Secretary/Treasurer position there is one candidate on the ballot selected by a search committee and approved by the trustees.”

American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies	Other		“The society receives a slate of officers from the Nominating Committee. The Executive Director enters on the ballot the names proposed for officers of the Society and for elected members of the Executive Board by the Nominating Committee as well as names proposed by valid petition for an elective office other than President and First Vice President (unless the offices are vacant).”
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American Society for Public Administration	Contested		Comment from member: “Although competitive elections are an attractive option, I can tell you from years of experience with the [ASPA] that they work well for the first few year but then the politicking that develops causes its own problems, discouraging the best from seeking leadership posts. Competitive elections will open up the leadership selection process and to that end, it is good. What will happen however, is that candidates will ask their colleagues for endorsements and this progresses to the point that colleagues find themselves having to ‘choose’ sides between friends, openly endorse one friend over another, and so forth—a practice that works well for open society but not well for close professional organizations where careers (and tenure decisions) are at stake.” Member proposes instead an elected nominating committee to do the slating.
American Society for Theatre Research	Contested		“The ASTR has contested elections for all positions – board and officers (with the exception of Secretary and Treasury – we can barely find one person willing to run for each of these offices). We actually went in the reverse direction—from uncontested to contested (about ten years ago). Our membership felt this was more democratic and allowed choice. But . . . this often means the loss of good candidates who are defeated and never agree to run again”
American Sociological Association	Contested	20-25%	The ASA runs a slate for each elected office or elected committee (twice the number of candidates for each opening). There is also a petitioning process. Comment of one member: “Factionalism has been encouraged; those who do not want to function through . . . factions . . . just drop out. And it is often hard to get people to run for high offices. . . [M]any wonderful people are humiliated—going through a year-long election process and losing. This system would almost certainly hurt women in political science very badly—because it would waste good people in fruitless nominations.” Comment of another member with experience in ASA affairs: ASA “system works well. (And is certainly more democratic than ours.)”
Association for Institutional Research	Contested		Conducts competitive elections. A member notes, “[A]n increasing number of people over the past ten years have refused to stand for election after being suggested by the nominating committee. Anecdotally, I would also that I have talked with a number of people who were quite distraught after losing elections. The main reason for refusal and/or feelings following he loss is fear of having their stature in the profession challenged or defeated.”

Association of American Geographers	Contested		“All AAG elections are contested with the exception of that for President. The Vice President is normally the only candidate for President. The nominating committee may, however, name more than one candidate for President if it wishes, and must nominate at least two candidates for other offices.” Additional nominees by petition of at least 50 members.
Association of American Law Schools	Uncontested		“AALS has a nominating committee that nominates only one slate. It has never been contested, but there is a reasonably simple process by which others could be nominated, which must occur at least 60 days before the Annual Meeting. In terms of diversity, AALS has been quite successful. At one point there was only one white male, and four people of color, on a Board of nine people. . . . Diversity is a very important consideration for the nominating committee.”
Association of American Museums	Uncontested		“AAM recently adopted an uncontested slate for board elections after presenting a very compelling argument to the board and membership.”
German Studies Association	Contested		“GSA has a Nominating Committee. It receives suggestions from members in an annual solicitation. However, we know that some people ‘campaign’ and get lots of friends to nominate them. The committee looks for capable and good candidates on its own. . . All posts are contested.”
International Center of Medieval Art	Uncontested		“The ICMA has had an uncontested slate for officers and Directors. We are currently revising our by-laws and we’ll probably move toward a contested slate.”
International Society of Political Psychology	Contested	“tiny”	Elects all officers; nominating committee submits two candidates for each vacancy and is instructed to give thought to interdisciplinary, international, and inter-professional members in selection of candidates. Additional nominees by petition of three percent of current membership. Plurality elections. Very active member comments, “ [L]osing candidates can take the loss rather personally which can affect their continued involvement and it is also much more work for the committee to find candidates, but I personally believe the changed opened the Society to a much wider range of views and encouraged more people to participate.”
International Studies Association	Other		Nominating committee names at least one person for each office. Slates of candidates are presented to the Executive Committee for approval; additional candidates may be nominated by 5 percent of members. In an uncontested election, at least 20 percent must cast a vote; if not, voting is repeated, and if 20 percent is still not achieved, a new slate of candidates must be provided by the nominating committee.
Latin American Studies Association	Contested		Competition for all offices, two candidates nominated for each open position by a nominating committee appointed by the Council, additional candidates by petition. A member notes: “Elections contest in this way have brought several benefits for LASA. The association’s democratic and populist political culture has been served. Elected leaders have . . . proven to be energetic, viewing the presidency or council membership as a major professional responsibility, not as a honor for earlier scholarship. . . . Latin Americanists have not found that contested elections by brought them two

			potential disadvantages: a tendency for the naming of candidates who are weaker in scholarly attainments than under the APSA's "near-cooptation" system, nor political fragmentation linked with losing candidates."
Law and Society Association	Contested	27%	Sixteen Candidates for eight Council positions; members reminded on ballot of goal of a diverse Council, "with due regard to geography, fields of professional interest, major approaches, type of institution, type of career, demographic characteristics, etc." Does elect fairly diverse council, losers less alienated than in two-person contests.
Linguistic Society of America	Other		Single nominee for Vice President/President Elect and two nominees for other offices. Additional nominations by petition from 10 members at least four months before Annual Meeting.
Middle East Studies Association	Contested		"MESA has contested elections. It sometimes take a while to get agreement from enough potential candidates for a full slate, but MESA remains committed to the process now in place." An APSA member notes, "I have sometimes been frustrated by the candidates presented for election and the results of the election, but I find the procedures to be legitimate and fair. The same cannot be said now of the APSA's procedures."

National Communication Association	Contested		<p>"The officers' election is contested, with a formal Nominating Committee preparing a slate consisting of two or more nominees for the office of Vice President (advances to the office of President). The board chairs are nominated by a Committee on Committees, which nominates only one candidate for each vacant position. The Legislative Council may nominate additional persons, but seldom does. We have been and continue to be successful in achieving diversity in the non-contested positions. We have not been successful in having diverse officers, save for reasonable gender balance over the past 10 years. Over the years, having multiple candidates for president has created a rather significant campaign. Candidates routinely travel to our four regional conventions, conventions of related associations, engage in direct mail efforts, etc. The obvious result is a 'winner' and a 'loser' each year.</p> <p>The unsuccessful candidate is often very hurt by the perceived rejection by the membership and frequently withdraws from active participation for a few years. NCA has discussed a return to a single candidate for president, as we had prior to 1970, but the idea never leaves committee. The general feeling is that we cannot 'return' from democracy nor take the choice away from the members."</p>
National Council of Teachers	Contested		NCTE offers a slate of two candidates for every position except for the presidential rotation. There we

of English			have three candidates.
Sixteenth Century Studies Conference	Uncontested		“Sixteenth Century Studies Conference has uncontested elections for board and officers. There is a nominating committee that recruits candidates. . . . [I]nstructions to the committee have stressed the need for diversity in terms of gender, discipline, and US/Canada. Overall, we have done well in that area.”

**Figure B1. Demographics of APSA Members and Officers, 1996-2002**

