IMPROVING PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE'S VALUE

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Report of the Task Force on
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Overview

Political Science as a corporate entity engages in two principal tasks – the creation of knowledge and the dissemination of knowledge. Creation of knowledge is, at base, a product of the actions of individual scholars and small scholarly groups. Universities have developed an infrastructure to nurture and reward these activities. This infrastructure gives scholars a direct personal stake in the creation of knowledge and rewards them for conveying knowledge to students and to groups of similarly situated colleagues.

Universities offer fewer incentives for effectively engaging broader audiences. This absence of incentives forces many scholars to choose between actions that produce pay raises and promotions and actions that broaden the value of their expertise. At a time when communication technologies allow many kinds of knowledge to be spread, and a time when governments and private citizens are raising important questions about costs at many colleges and universities, many scholars who could provide value to broad audiences lack professional incentives to do so. Indeed, many scholars who do work to make their findings more accessible do so for reasons other than professional advancement.

At the same time, we live in a world where the ability to communicate effectively is an increasingly valuable skill for political scientists to have. One reason is the potential for broad influence that evolving communication technologies allow. Another is competition emanating from these same technologies. Where in previous generations, large institutions (governments, universities, large multimedia corporations) had monopolies, or at least substantial advantages, in distributing important kinds of information to mass audiences, technology has reduced many of these asymmetries. Today, a broad range of people, including children and relatively poor residents of remote areas, can post information that worldwide audiences can see. Even a generation ago, such distribution possibilities were difficult for most people to imagine.

With these changes has come an explosion in the number of sources from which people can obtain information about many topics. One consequence of this competition is that many traditionally focal providers of information have been forced to transform their communication strategies. Most newspapers and magazines, in quests to maintain former levels of influence, have had to radically restructure their business models.

Many of the ways in which political scientists currently communicate– through their teaching, publication in journals, and conference presentations – were developed in less competitive communicative eras. Strategies for presenting information that were once seen as acceptable, in part because there were few other options, are now seen as slow, unengaging and ineffective. Evolving technologies change individual and cultural expectations about what kinds of information should be available and how information should be presented. As a result, people who want to

communicate effectively cannot expect old strategies to have the same effects. To remain relevant, we must adapt. But how?

Universities provide part of the answer. Universities are also experiencing increasing communicative competition. Changing expectations about what information should be publicly available, and the emergence of numerous entities that produce information similar to that produced by universities, are causing widespread questioning of the traditional university model. Universities, in their quests to remain relevant, socially influential, and well-funded, are pursing many new ways of developing knowledge and distributing information. These are innovations that include widespread use of communication technology in research collaborations and in teaching.

We can count on universities to act aggressively to change their communication strategies because it is in their interest to do so. But we cannot count on universities to make the case for political science and the distinct value that it offers to society. University public relations departments' lack a strong motive, or sufficient subject matter expertise, to draw sustained attention to the insights and discoveries of any particular discipline. University communication offices can also be reticent to highlight a discipline that sometimes examines controversial topics.

Since individual political scientists have incentives to focus on their own research agendas, and since universities tend not to highlight the public benefits of political science in their own outreach, there is an opportunity for other individuals and organizations to recognize changes in communicative opportunities and competition and to improve the manner in which the value of political science is conveyed. At this moment, political science's professional associations have an opportunity, and perhaps an obligation to their members, to take the lead in improving perceptions of political science's public value. If not APSA, who will?

This report, commissioned by the American Political Science Association, identifies means by which individual scholars and professional organizations can make political science's insights and discoveries more accessible, more relevant, and more valuable to more people. Our main finding is that there are many ways in which APSA, and similarly situated professional organizations, can help political science communicate its insights to a wide range of diverse constituencies using a dynamic collection of communicative strategies and technologies. At a time when prominent individuals publicly question the value of our discipline, it is imperative to move aggressively and effectively. The moment to act is now.

A task force wrote this report. Its members were asked to evaluate existing practices and to offer new ideas. A common theme in members' contributions to this report is that for political science to convey valuable insights in increasingly competitive communication environments, it must engage people in ways that can attract their interest and help them advance their aspirations. Each of the members of the task force has already accomplished this goal in distinctive ways. In the coming months, we will release the articles written by task force members, and a series of in-depth interviews that we commissioned, to highlight the communicative challenges facing our discipline and to describe a set of innovative and feasible means for meeting these challenges.

The report offers concrete steps that APSA and its members can take to convince more mem-

bers of the public, the media, policy makers, and other researchers that political science has knowledge of substantial social value. This does not mean that our goal is to substitute style for substance. The substance of political science is the strong foundation from which this report builds. Our goal is to help the discipline convert that foundation into presentations that provide great insight to a larger set of audiences and, by doing so, improve the quality of life for people around the world. It is through such activities that the public value of our collective endeavor can be more effectively realized. In sum, the task force proposes multiple ways for Political Science to convey more insights of greater value to more people.

About the Task Force

Each task force member is a social scientist who has sought creative and effective ways to bring actionable and beneficial insights to important constituencies. Some do this through their scholarship. Some do this through their innovative teaching methods. Some have done this by serving in Congress or by holding focal positions within presidential campaigns. Some have their own television programs or are regular contributors to leading newspapers. Some participate in more than one of these activities and do much more to engage broad audiences. Simply following the examples of these individuals would increase our discipline's communicative effectiveness in important ways.

What we asked these individuals to do, however, is more challenging than repeating their pasts. We asked each member to evaluate our discipline's current actions and offer the most constructive advice possible about how to convey our discipline's substantial insight more effectively to more people. This report reflects the substantial energy that every member devoted to the task.

It should be noted that all task force members are serving without compensation. Hence, their situation parallels that of many political scientists – we offered them a choice of whether to continue activities that could directly burnish their individual academic portfolios or whether to pursue activities that can produce a public good of broad potential value that might not be rewarded in the typical university structure. We appreciate that every member of this task force chose to advance the public good.

Task Force Members

Task Force Chair
Arthur Lupia, University of Michigan

Task Force Members
Brian Baird, Former Member of Congress & National Academy of Science Behavioral and Social Science Advisory Board

Adam Berinsky, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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Melissa Harris-Perry, Wake Forest University & MSNBC

Sara Binzer Hobolt, London School of Economics

Jennifer Hochschild, Harvard University & Chair of APSA Publications Planning Ad Hoc Committee

Bruce Jentleson, Duke University, Bridging the Gap

Rose McDermott, Brown University

Diana Mutz, University of Pennsylvania

Brendan Nyhan, Dartmouth College and the *New York Times*

Dan Schnur, University of Southern California & Communications Director 2008 McCain presidential campaign

Daron Shaw, University of Texas

John Sides, George Washington University & the *Monkey Cage*

Rogers Smith, University of Pennsylvania

Carol Swain, Vanderbilt University & bethepeople.tv

Joshua Tucker, New York University & the *Monkey Cage*

Lynn Vavreck, University of California Los Angeles & the *New York Times*

Task Force Advisors
John Aldrich, Duke University and APSA President

Kathleen Hall-Jamieson, University of Pennsylvania & Director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center

Mala Htun, The New School for Social Research & recent APSA task force chair

John Ishiyama, University of North Texas and *APSR* lead editor

Howard Silver, Former Executive Director, COSSA

Kaare Strom, UC San Diego & Chair of APSA Committee on Publications

Staff
Steven Rathgeb Smith, APSA Executive Director

Jennifer Diascro, Senior Director, Program Operations

Liane Piñero-Kluge, Senior Director, Membership and Marketing Operations

Method

The task force worked from the following schedule.

May 2013. Invitations to members.

Summer 2013. A special website was developed using APSA Connect. All members and advisers were invited to join the part of the website devoted to the task force. We used the website to collect reference materials and to coordinate on the topics that each person or small groups would pursue. All drafts, reference materials, and communications were posted to the site.

APSA Annual Meeting 2013. We held three workshops to which all members were invited. In each case, the chair began by giving a 10 minute presentation on the task force's goals and a framework for the group to make progress. Then, task force members pitched, and responded to, ideas about how to improve communicative processes and outcomes in the discipline.

October 1 2013. Each task force member promised to deliver a 10 word version of their proposal.

February 1 2014. Initial drafts of white papers were due. Members were asked to prepare papers of approximately 10 pages in length to describe, develop, and defend proposals for strategies that APSA, similar organizations, or individuals could pursue to increase communicative effectiveness.

March 31 2014. The chair prepared comments and suggested edits on all drafts. All comments were distributed to all task force members so that they could coordinate messages consistent with the drafts and the post-draft comments.

MPSA Annual Meeting 2014. We paired a public session in engagement with a working session of task force members. In the public session, we described the challenges of public engagement and invited members of the Task Force, APSA leadership and others to offer proposals and feedback. At the workshop, participants offered advice about individual contributions and discussed strategies to make proposals more incentive-compatible and valuable for political scientists and their audiences.

June 1, 2014. Revised white papers were due.

June 2014. The chair conducted a search of free-lance reporters for the purpose of conducting in-depth interviews with a number of task force members. After a series of

inquiries and interviews, the chair hired Steve Freiss, who has written for *Time*, *Politico*, and many other outlets to conduct the interviews. The interviews were completed in the month of June.

August 2014. We delivered a final version of task force report to the APSA council. APSA Annual Meeting 2014. The task force presented its recommendations and solicited participant views at two panels at the annual meeting. One panel focused on developing new opportunities for political scientists to communicate insights and findings of great value to a broad set of audiences. Another panel focused on how to create incentives for more effective public engagement.

After the APSA meeting, we planned to approach several outlets about publishing the series of white papers and interviews that form the basis of this report. At the time of this writing, our preferred outlet is *PS: Political Science and Politics*. Its readership is broad within our discipline and there is a consensus on the task force that this readership is the audience that could make the best use of the content. While we would also welcome the opportunity to feature the content in *Perspectives on Politics* or the *APSR*, we believe that the content of the reports is different than those venues typically publish. If we cannot publish the materials in an APSA-based venue, then we will seek publication with a major university press.

Task Force Recommendations

1. APSA should hire a high-level staff person as Outreach Director and reconstitute an Outreach Committee.

2. APSA should commit to a greater program of stakeholder engagement.

3. APSA should develop a video library.

4. APSA should develop a Speaker's Bureau.

5. APSA should have a visible and effective communications-training program.

6. APSA should hire one or more dedicated science writers.

7. APSA and its organized sections should create awards and other incentives to recognize effective outreach.

8. APSA should add new and dynamic electronic journals.

9. APSA journals should allow authors to trigger temporary ungating of newsworthy content.

10. Quality cannot be sacrificed. APSA should internally reorganize peer-review management processes to produce high-quality output more efficiently. This idea includes reviewer incentive systems and voluntary sharing of reviews across journals.

11. Go on offense. Many people don't know what political science is. APSA should make a series of brief, high quality videos on this topic.

12. Rethink the communicative value of conference presentations. Consider altering submitter incentives, panel formats, and the use of technology to improve and expand interaction.

Recommendations in Detail

1. APSA should hire a high-level staff person as Outreach Director and reconstitute an Outreach Committee.

To be effective and efficient in an increasingly competitive communication environment, it is important to have staff that has the time and expertise required to oversee, facilitate, and evaluate high-impact communicative endeavors. The Outreach Director will be charged with implementing and coordinating APSA's Outreach Efforts.

The Outreach Director should be knowledgeable about the practice and diversity of political science. The Outreach Director should have contact with APSA staff, journal editors and staff, conference coordinators, leaders of programs such as the Congressional Fellows Program, and other endeavors for the purpose of helping these individuals more effectively turn APSA members' rich intellectual content into high-value communicative products. The Outreach Director will be responsible for coordinating and organizing the activities of staff that produce such content.

A key part of the Director's job will be evaluation. The Director is expected to demonstrate the extent to which various attempts to engage important constituents produces desired pedagogical outcomes. The Director will also be responsible for preparing semi-annual reports for Council Meetings that not only provide information about APSA's outreach activities, but also provides a series of metrics that will allow APSA staff, its Council, and its membership to evaluate the relative effectiveness of APSA's various communicative endeavors.

It is our belief that a dedicated Outreach Director can and should be charged with implementing all but the e-journal and peer review recommendations that we have made. Such coordination could help APSA and our discipline more effectively manage what many task force members see as a critical challenge: helping a broader population understand what political science is and how it can provide great value to a range of social endeavors. A number of the task force members see APSA as having a unique opportunity to reframe such conversations.

APSA needs a broader and more effective communicative infrastructure. Elements of such an infrastructure are described in greater detail in our subsequent recommendations. Such infrastructure would offer scholars new and unique opportunities to legitimate, publicize, and amplify the valuable and diverse expertise of APSA members. This infracture would help many constituencies make better decisions and give people new reasons to see APSA membership as valuable. With these goals in mind, our hope is that the Outreach Director will be able to establish for APSA an improved set of practices that will help convert the efforts and wisdom of its members into information and outcomes of great value to diverse audiences.

The task force further recommends that the Outreach Director communicate regularly with a reconstituted Outreach Committee. Several task force members have drawn our attention to the work of other committees that APSA has assembled on topics such as outreach and publication. Some members were hesitant to join our task force because they believe that APSA had largely or entirely ignored the work of previous engagement-oriented committees. (It should be said that the presence of new leadership and enthusiastic staff at APSA helped us recruit high quality members at such moments.)

To minimize the likelihood that this task force's work meet a similar fate, we propose reconstituting a standing Outreach Committee whose job is to meet regularly with the Outreach Director and to serve as a liaison between APSA's outreach efforts and APSA members. This committee does not replace the Committee on Civic Education and Engagement, which focuses much of its attention on K12 education. We are requesting a committee with a different emphasis. The new committee would be dedicated to helping the Director develop, deliver and evaluate APSA's communicative products. This committee would coordinate with Outreach staff on reports to the members. To convert good intentions into better outcomes, an Outreach Director and a standing Outreach Committee, or similar institutional commitment, increases the likelihood of helping APSA communicate more information more effectively to more constituencies.

2. APSA should commit to a greater program of stakeholder engagement.

APSA provides many valuable services for its members. APSA staff is skillful and the organization as a whole provides conferences that members enjoy attending, journals that members read, journals to which members want to contribute, opportunities to connect with colleagues in organized sections, and endeavors such as the Congressional Fellowship program that provide valuable learning opportunities. Yet, there is a strong consensus in the task force that scholars are unnecessarily detached from many audiences that want to know more about political science. This includes policymakers, the press, community organizations, and many public and private sector interests. The consensus extended to the proposition that APSA could and should play a more constructive role in bringing scholars and stakeholders together in mutually beneficial ways.

The task force papers and interviews contain several proposals for APSA-centered stakeholder engagement. Regarding the press, for example, changes in scale economies for media organizations mean that many people who are now writing stories for high-visibility outlets are less experienced and have less institutional support than did their predecessors. Where major media organizations once stocked multiple foreign bureaus with support staff and office space, and where they once gave reporters the latitude to integrate into the societies and cultures on which they were writing, reporting is now increasingly produced remotely — far from the places where news is happening, with minimal institutional support, and by free-lancers.

There is an opportunity to increase political science's value and visibility by having APSA develop resources to help this new breed of reporter. While we suggest a number of programs that can supplement such activities below, it is also our experience that engaging stakeholders directly can be a powerful way to learn about their needs, revise their stereotypes about us, and build the types of trust relationships that can benefit stakeholders and APSA members.

In stakeholder engagement is the potential for APSA to act as an "amplifier" for its members. With its Washington location and contacts (existing and potential) with other professional organizations, APSA has a unique ability to bring experts on any number of subjects in contact with people and groups who can benefit from this expertise. One model for such an endeavor is Bridging the Gap. Bridging the Gap develops several complementary programs that bring foreign policy decision makers in close contact with experts in their areas of interest. The National Academy of Science is undertaking similar activities. Last year, they held an event inside the US Capitol building demonstrating how social science saves the government money. The focus was on real applications of social science that make government actions more effective and efficient. Several task force members made presentations at this event, which was attended by over 75 Congressional staff. The task force would like to see APSA do more to link its members to new audiences.

Melissa Harris-Perry, a Wake Forest political scientist with a twice-weekly program on MS-NBC talked extensively to our group about developing relationships with "the translators." Events where members of the press, particularly young and ambitious members, can get to know experts in fields of their interest. Such events can help scholars and reporters develop

relationships that lead to articles more informed by political science and can help scholars better understand how to present their insights in more accessible ways.

We believe that APSA-led stakeholder engagement can provide a large benefit to APSA's many constituencies. All engagement endeavors need not be the same size or scale as the CFP to be effective. One-day workshops, if sufficiently well-organized, can establish or reinforce important relationships. Our main request is that APSA commit to developing expertise within the organization to identify and execute high-value stakeholder engagement on a regular basis.

Greater stakeholder engagement can also help political science in public debates about its value and about whether the federal government should fund it at NSF. While some stakeholders from outside of our discipline argued for continued support, the range of actors doing so is not as broad as it could or should have been. Great Britain provides a helpful analogue to our situation. There, all of the sciences and humanities are facing similar pressures. There university and departmental funding is increasingly tied to evaluations of public impact. Sara Hobolt, of the London School of Economics, described to the task force how many universities in the UK are developing new stakeholder engagement strategies as a way to increase and document the public benefit of government funded research enterprises as a means of demonstrating their public value.

Establishing an infrastructure where we build relationships with stakeholders, learn about their needs, and find ways to bring the tremendous talent of our membership to better meet these needs, can be broadly beneficial. By amplifying and extending our insights APSA can raise the profile of, and appreciation for, the entire discipline.

3. APSA should develop a video library.

The task force believes that APSA can and should find ways to amplify the work being done by its members in the areas of research, teaching, and public service. We propose two communication programs that will help APSA provide such value to broad and diverse audiences: a video library and a speakers' bureau. Each of these programs will make the insights of APSA members more accessible to more people.

APSA's Video Library features a user-friendly interface that allows visitors to search videos by their content, by speaker, by length and by other desirable attributes. The video library will contain high quality videos that relate political science to a wide range of social and pedagogical concerns.

The ability to post short-form videos online has transformed many communicative domains. From homemade videos becoming worldwide sensations to the Khan Academy and similar educational endeavors, people are using short form videos to increase the vibrancy of many different kinds of information transmission. The Khan Academy, for example, is an educational website that contains 4,000 micro-lectures on a range of science topics and has been viewed close to a quarter-of-a-billion times.

With such successes in mind, the APSA Video Library should include a section called APSA Classroom Video Sources – a set of videos designed to assist teachers at all levels. These videos can be developed at the Teaching and Learning Conference and designed through collaborations with political science teachers and education professionals. They can also include videos prepared by other individuals and organizations that either speak directly to improving teaching effectiveness or include actual materials prepared for classroom use.

The Video Library should contain high quality presentations on substantive topics. These presentations can be developed in-house or submitted by other individuals and organizations. For media and private citizens, the library should feature high quality TED-like public talks on a number of issues. Select conference presentations can also be prepared for the site.

Another possible section for the Video Library is the V-PSR – Video Political Science Review. This site would feature 3-5 minute video abstracts of papers published in the *American Political Science Review*, *Perspectives on Politics*, *PS: Political Science and Politics* and any other APSA publications that emerge. A video abstract introduces a question, highlights its relevance, and describes a means by which new insight is brought to the question. Key findings and implications are put into an accessible and captivating visual format. Such abstracts can be compiled on the APSA website or made a regular part of articles published by APSA. APSA could release such videos simultaneously with the articles to which they are attached. In this domain, production value affects the extent to which viewers will be drawn to the content. Therefore, evaluation of impact is critical to understanding the situations in which such efforts constitute effective investments of time and money. Our task force urges APSA to consider video-fueled strategies that can expand the audience for political science research.

Administratively, the Outreach Director would coordinate this effort. The Outreach Director

would work with science writers (described below) on scripts and staging for the videos. In all cases, the originating author would retain full editorial rights. Journal editors would suggest articles for this treatment, and an article's inclusion of the series would require the consent of all authors. A related idea is to add to this archive video abstracts of older classic articles from APSA publications. Here, teams of younger scholars could energetically convey the result and its relevance to broader or modern audiences.

A key component of the library is quality and length. For the library to draw and sustain an audience, image, sound and presentation quality must be professional quality. Developing such a library could make the APSA website the "go to" destination for teachers, citizens, and media organizations who want accessible and dynamic presentations of political science's valuable insights and practices. A template for the video library is Climate Central's video component. The task force chair worked on the design and strategy for this website. Many classrooms, media organizations and civic groups now turn to Climate Central's video library to improve their understanding of, and ability to convey, important information about the topic. A number of task force members believe that APSA has the potential to create a similar product that can bring needed insights to important constituencies. There are multiple ways to evaluate quality. Users of the site and stakeholders should be queried. Like journal articles, the videos should be peer-reviewed for presentational quality before being posted.

4. APSA should develop a Speaker's Bureau.

A parallel proposal is APSA's Speakers Bureau. Contributions by John Sides and Rogers Smith describe variations of this idea. The basic idea is for APSA to develop the capacity to match high quality speakers to a wide range of organizations who want to bring expertise to their gathering. Whether the topic is historical, about educational pedagogy, about a particular domestic political issue, or an event happening on the other side of the planet, APSA can develop a database and a means for these groups to contact experts who can bring high quality information to a range of valuable civic endeavors.

A critical challenge for any such effort is quality control. In one version of the speakers' bureau, APSA's involvement is minimal. It develops a database of experts and uses this information to provide referrals to interested parties. Its involvement stops there. Rogers Smith's version of the proposal goes further. It is an APSA branded project with quality control and oversight. Here, APSA plays a more active role in screening potential speakers and clients. An emphasis is placed on effective presentation skills and an ability to manage Q&A sessions in a constructive and professional manner. APSA would make decisions about the kinds of events to which it would, and would not, send speakers.

Together, these proposals can address at least four challenges facing our discipline:

> • The wider public does not seem to view political science as a useful resource for a better understanding of politics or as an aid to solving public problems

> • There is a demand among the public for initiatives that promote and build public debates that are inclusive of different viewpoints and that present them in a courteous, thoughtful and informative way

> • To the extent that the American knows what political science is, they know it more as something that is taught at universities rather than something that has more widespread use.

> • Most libraries, museums, and civil groups operate as 'bustling community centres." They take pride in offering the public high-quality educational material or speakers that can address important issues in a civil, accessible, reasonably entertaining, and a manner that is representative of different viewpoints.

Both the APSA Video Library and the APSA Speakers Bureau provide ways for APSA to bring to life for important audiences its members' great work. These activities can provide new benefits for members and organizations that affiliate with APSA.

Of such enterprises, Rogers Smith has argued that "Over time, public perceptions of political science might improve if political scientists came to be regarded in many locales throughout the country as convenient, cooperative sources of interesting, informative, and diverse perspectives on important public matters." To the extent that the Video Library and Speakers Bureau help APSA establish a "track record" or reputation for being a reliable source for high-quality and

accessible presentations of political science research, teaching, and public service, they can add value to the APSA brand, to membership in the organization while increasing public understanding of political science.

If APSA's Outreach Director is coordinating these efforts, it will be easier for them to coordinate with stakeholders and social media who can benefit from these programs. To the extent that APSA members are featured in these enterprises, these programs can increase the value of membership as well. They can allow APSA to offer services that their colleges and universities will not. Indeed, if APSA does not pursue these programs, it is difficult to imagine who will. Yet the benefit to members, diverse constituencies, and the general public is likely to be substantial.

John Sides' contribution to this Task Force report describes large audiences that we do not serve well. These audiences include civics teachers, Political Science PhDs who work in policy or the private sector rather than academia, and political science undergraduates who then go on to contribute to society in diverse ways. The task force recommends greater commitment to learning about the types of products these audiences might want from us, whether and how APSA and individual members can serve these needs effectively, and whether APSA can generate new opportunities for potential consumers and producers of such content. The AAAS is contemplating such a move, with products that offer value to "citizen scientists" and a new low-price membership level for a potentially large audience that would be interested in having better access to dynamic and effective science-based tools. Does APSA have parallel opportunities?

5. APSA should have a visible and measurably effective communication training program.

Political scientists are trained to do many valuable things. They are trained to collect data and observations and to analyze a wide range of materials. Like other social scientists, political scientists are trained to produce deductions, inferences and demonstrations of a range of important phenomena. A less common, or at least less formal, part of our training is in effective communication. Many scholars learn presentational skills by informal means or by trial-and-error. To the extent that there are rewards for effective communication in our discipline, they often accrue to individuals who can master speaking to relatively small audiences of like-minded individuals.

Many political scientists would value opportunities to improve their communicative effectiveness and efficiency. This is especially true for younger scholars, scholars who seek to be heard in increasingly competitive communicative environments, and scholars who seek to broaden their audiences by writing for other disciplines, non-academics or the media.

In various ways, nearly all task force members have proposed that APSA increase its commitment to communication training. This increase can manifest as instructional materials on the website and increased training opportunities at every conference. On the website, APSA could feature a section for teachers offering advice for improved delivery. For young scholars, it could feature short videos on effective writing – with videos tailored to meet the diverse needs of scholars who study certain areas using particular methods. APSA could also include short videos and tutorials for how to speak to different kinds of media organizations. For younger scholars interested in communicative effectiveness, APSA could establish a Peer Mentors program. For this program, small groups of similarly situated young faculty could be paired with leading practitioners for a lunchtime gathering at an annual meeting. If a number of such meetings could be held at the same time and paired with a keynote address on effective communication, the event could be especially influential.

A template for this type of commitment exists at the American Association for the Advancement of Science. While this organization is known for publishing *Science*, which by many measures is the most influential scientific journal in the world, it also engages in continuing, visible and effective communication programs. These programs feature advice by leading scholars and communication professionals. Multiple sessions on the topic are now offered at every AAAS Annual Meeting and are amongst the most-well attended events on the program. In 2013, a task force member appeared on one such panel that was attended by over 800 persons. A similar event held at the Annual Meeting of the American Evaluation Association drew over 1500 participants.

In multiple fields of study, effective communication skills are increasingly seen as a very valuable way to establish a presence in competitive communicative environments. APSA has a unique opportunity to tailor such training to political science's distinctive needs.

With such an emphasis, we believe, APSA can help its members and outside constituents better answer questions such as: How do political scientists go about being the people to whom reporters and analysts turn, and turn first? What skills and opportunities can APSA and other organizations offer to scholars so that they are better positioned to have an impact such as that of Steve Levitt or Dan Ariely? Are there ways to persuade broader audiences that political science creates knowledge of such value? The Monkey Cage's position at *The Washington Post* and the addition of Task Force members Brendan Nyhan and Lynn Vavreck as *New York Times* columnists suggests a demand in high-traffic outlets for the type of content that political scientists can provide. APSA and similarly situated organizations are in a position where, by improving communication training, and facilitating high-quality video presentations of members' work, they can simultaneously increase the value proposition associated with APSA membership, help to provide iconic images that can strengthen the "political science" brand in the public sphere, and provide content that makes more political science insights and discoveries more accessible and more meaningful to more people.

6. APSA should hire one or more dedicated Science Writers.

The Science Writer(s) will report to the Outreach Director. The Science Writer's primary responsibility is to scour APSA publications and conferences for newsworthy content and then work with authors and other staff to create cogent and timely press releases or similar products. The science writers can also write scripts for internally-produced videos and can participate in advance work for the Speakers Bureau described above.

An ideal candidate for the job will have an understanding of what political science is, the value of its methodological diversity, and the topical range of its inquiries. The candidate will also understand the importance of teaching and public service within the discipline and will cultivate opportunities to use these efforts as the basis of communicative products that can benefit still broader audiences.

The Science Writer(s) can also be responsible for preparing a quarterly "public engagement spotlight" to appear in *PS* or in a visible place on the website. This spotlight would demonstrate an example of how political science is producing visible and concrete benefits in classrooms and communities or to broader institutions or populations.

7. APSA and its organized sections should create awards and other incentives to recognize effective outreach.

A number of task force members examined the relationship between tenure, promotion, and the ability to develop a body of work that contains both scientifically defensible findings and publicly accessible and valuable materials. Many scholars want to both conduct valuable analyses and convey them to audiences that can make good use of the information. Many younger scholars not only have advanced research skills but are also comfortable writing short and accessible summaries of their arguments for various electronic communication mediums such as blogs. Yet a number of scholars believe that seeking to engage in both kinds of activities prior to a tenure review will hurt their chances for promotion.

The task force places a strong emphasis on conducting research in a manner that is legitimate from a scientific perspective. Yet, given the ongoing questions about political science's public value and the need of colleges, universities, and funding agencies to defend investments in the discipline, increasing the number of scholars who can effectively articulate their findings to broader populations can benefit not just the scholars in question, but the discipline as a whole.

For this reason, it is important to develop opportunities and incentives for making implications of high quality work publicly accessible. The proposals listed above, such as greater stakeholder engagement, a speakers' bureau, a video library, and an Outreach Director can increase the number of outreach opportunities. But incentives are also needed.

One idea is to provide fellowships for scholars who seek to engage more effectively. Khalilah Brown-Dean proposes a *Public Voices Fellowship*. This fellowship shares attributes of the Congressional Fellows Program and provides training and funding for members to engage in public scholarship. Participants in this program would then serve as public ambassadors for the profession, and as peer mentors for other members newly entering the public sphere. A working template for this proposal exists as Demos' *Emerging Voices Initiative* (www.demos.org/fellows).

A number of task force members, including some of our more junior members (Khalilah Brown-Dean, Cheryl Boudreau, Brendan Nyhan, and Victoria DeFrancesco Soto) have proposed that APSA and its organized sections establish annual awards for effective public engagement. Boudreau's and Brown-Dean's contributions focus our attention on the significant disincentives facing junior scholars who seek to engage broader audiences. Each shows how such disincentives can have lasting effects – as scholars who do not learn how to communicate effectively with broader audiences when young may find fewer opportunities to learn these skills later in their careers (as other responsibilities expand). Each, in a different way, sees APSA support, through organized section-based awards for effective engagement with some of these awards focused on junior scholars, as a way of encouraging more effective participation. An appeal of supporting such activities at the section-level is that it allows scholarly communities that emphasize certain topics or methods to encourage more effective engagement while staying true to their knowledge base and source of legitimacy. To the extent that promotion and tenure committees see such awards as quality signals, these awards provide a means for incentivizing effective engagement.

On this point, universities are also in a changing communicative environment. Their job is to convey valuable information. They find actionable insight valuable and are increasingly looking for ways to remain communicative leaders in increasingly competitive informational environments. While professional associations lack the kind of leverage that would cause university tenure and promotion committees to alter their evaluative standards, APSA and its organized sections can send strong signals that we recognize and value effective outreach. Universities who see such endeavors as advancing their mission would have incentives to look favorably upon such awards at tenure and promotion time.

As stated above, we think that it is very important that any such awards not be seen as rewarding style without substance. As Lynn Vavreck, who writes for both university presses and the New York Times, has argued "What I worry about is sending the signal to young professors… that you can build a career by having a collection of miscellaneous, small findings, and that what you should be doing to get fast publication is to be looking for small questions where you can make an impact right now. In the long term, that's bad for the discipline…"

With such concerns in mind, our goal is to focus awards and other incentives on people who are doing teaching, research, and public service using methods that are legitimate from a political science perspective (with the understanding that political science's diverse research communities view legitimacy in different ways) and who are effectively employing strategies that convey the value of their work to broader audiences. A model for such awards may be found in the new evaluative metrics being developed in the United Kingdom. As mentioned above, these metrics are increasingly influential in university funding decisions. A criterion for public engagement to be counted in a department's value metric is that it can be linked to research activities. In other words, a voting scholar who gets media coverage for her writing or appearances speaking about elections can earn credit for her department and university. The same scholar discussing a different hobby or avocation does not earn such credit. Similarly, awards committees can state as a requirement for consideration, that the engagement be based on the research or pedagogical interests of their sections.

8. APSA should add new and dynamic electronic journals.

Most political scientists have a love-hate relationship with its journals. On the positive side, journals offer a source of publicity and legitimacy for scholars who publish in them. Journals have the potential to expose their readers to the research that they might not otherwise encounter. Journal review systems offer peer review services that can help scholars understand the types of insights and presentations that others are seeking. For younger scholars, publishing in major journals has an additional benefit -- it is a form of accreditation. Success at journal publishing is often a positive factor in tenure and other promotion decisions.

The journals also draw many complaints. At Political Science's top journals, acceptance rates are low – often below ten percent. Many journals have very slow turnaround times for reviews. A common result is that the temporal gap between when an article is first submitted to a journal and when it is published can be several years in length. Such delays slow information transmission. They also provide perverse incentives for junior scholars. Junior scholars who are doing high-quality work can find themselves choosing to send their work to low-traffic outlets as a way to increase the likelihood of getting published rather than writing for and sending the work to venues that attract broader readership.

Should the journals be changed? With respect to the current practices and business models of our leading journals, it is arguable that they once constituted an optimal solution for scholarly communication. Before the internet, faxes, and the removal of government regulated pricing of long-distance telephone calls and domestic airfares, quarterly journals provided a cost effective way for scholars to learn about the work of geographically dispersed others. The world is different now. Technological advances affect communicative opportunities, competition, and outcomes. As innovative communicative venues arise, communicative expectations can change. Evolving communication technologies can cause fast and dramatic shifts in peoples' beliefs about the best and most effective ways to obtain important information (Lupia and Sin 2003, Lupia and Philpot 2005). When communication technologies and opportunities change, formerly successful communicative mediums can become slow and plodding by comparison. These changes have led to the failure of many formerly focal magazines and newspapers, as well as the rapid descent of Blockbuster Video.

In increasingly competitive communicative domains, thousands of stimuli compete for every individual's attention. If we in political science do not recognize this competition and adapt to it, we should not be surprised when others pay less attention to our work than we might want. As one example, many of our potential audiences inside and outside of the academy ignore our leading journals because they do not see them as an effective way to obtain the kinds of information that they value.

We asked the task force to examine ways of running journals that better leverage evolving technologies and adapt to changing communicative expectations while preserving the beneficial attributes of current journal models. Task force members have reported on a number of alternate ways of thinking about journal management as well as building more effective relationships between journals and more dynamic venues such as blogs. Our task force includes

some of the most prominent political science bloggers, each of whom have very creative ideas about how to better engage broader audiences (see, e.g., Brendan Nyhan and John Sides, 2011 "How Political Science Can Help Journalism (and Still Let Journalists Be Journalists)" The Forum DOI: 10.2202/1540-8884.1426).

The traditional academic journal models are being affected by changing communication technologies and expectations in many ways. Some publishers have increased the number of venues in which published materials can be seen (e.g., creating electronic parallels to print publications). Others have created new ways to communicate scholarly work (e.g., combining short accessible articles with links to extended online appendices). Others, with the support of professional associations, have created new journals.

One of our task force members, Adam Berinsky, reported on the value of e-journals to our discipline. Many scientific communities are developing electronic-based journal formats that are more dynamic and accessible than existing print-based journals. E-journals allow text to be more fully integrated with video, simulations, and other dynamic content. E-journals can also be linked directly to real-time discussion utilities, which can allow groups of interested individuals around the world to hold e-seminars about journal content. For these and other reasons, dynamic e-journals can be used to convey information more effectively than even electronic versions of traditional print-based journals.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in 2014 announced a major new initiative in this direction. The AAAS produces Science, the most cited and read US based science journal. In a February 14 *Science* editorial, Editor-in-Chief Marcia McNutt and AAAS CEO Alan Leshner discussed an important challenge that motivated the AAAS to move aggressively into the e-journal domain:

> "The research enterprise has grown dramatically in the past few decades in the number of high-quality practitioners and results, but the capacity for *Science* to accommodate those works in our journal has not kept pace. Its editors turn away papers that are potentially important, well written, of broad interest, and technically well executed. Although other journals provide publishing venues for more papers, many authors still desire to be published in *Science*, a journal known for its selectivity, high standards, rapid publication, and high visibility."

The AAAS is adapting to this new reality, by launching a new digital-only journal called *Science Advances*. *Science Advances* will publish more articles more quickly than it ever has before while also implementing an editorial model that maintains *Science*'s high standards.

Political scientists are also examining such options. For several years, Berinsky has worked with other scholars and multiple APSA committees on one such idea. His contribution to the task force report conveys this and other ideas in the e-journal space. APSA itself has been debating whether or not it wants to enter this space. APSA's Committee on Publications, building on Berinsky's proposal, presented to the APSA Council a more developed version in 2013 (https://www.apsanet.org/media/PDFs/Publications/Publications%20CommitteeReport_e-Journal.pdf). Unfortunately, the Council did not move forward with either e-journal proposal. In the

meantime, other political scientists (with the aid of Sage Publications) have decided to move ahead on their own. *Research and Politics* (http://www.uk.sagepub.com/researchandpolitics/#.Uy3kH_ldVz6)

> "provides a venue for scholars to communicate rapidly and succinctly important new insights to the broadest possible audience while maintaining the highest standards of quality control. To meet this goal *Research & Politics* publishes short, accessible articles that present novel findings or insights, or fresh views on current disputes or classic papers. The Journal is published online only and uses an open access model to enhance readership and impact. Articles are published simultaneously with technical research reports and appendices, with an emphasis on the highest standards of research ethics and, where applicable, replicability."

It remains possible that APSA can acquire a focal leadership position in the e-journal space, given its relative visibility in the discipline. However, as other organizations develop dynamic new ways to convey important information through e-journals, APSA's window of opportunity for relevance in this space will not remain open for long. E-journals are occupying an increasingly central position in scientific communication. Professional organizations that do not pursue effective strategies in e-journal space are likely to be left behind in increasingly competitive battles for scholarly and public attention. Their potential for speed and presentational flexibility means that they can be organized in ways that provide valuable information to diverse audiences. In this sense, they complement existing journals and can be used to drive greater traffic to them.

In the domain of journals that have paper-based origins, our sister organizations in economics and psychology have sought other innovations. Instead of publishing a single quarterly journal such as the *APSR*, they are serving their members diverse interests by adding a range of subfield journals. One question that this report raises is whether APSA should follow suit. In other words, can APSA provide more value to its members and to more public audiences by altering or expanding its offerings? One possible way forward is to augment the quarterly *APSR*, *PS*, and *Perspectives* offerings with a more diverse set of electronic-first offerings in multiple fields. Possible candidates for such offerings include outlets that focus on teaching pedagogies, outlets that focus on longer-form articles, such as the 60 to 100 page articles that populate prestigious law journals. There are also opportunities to develop outlets that better serve major subfields, that encourage certain kinds of interdisciplinarity, that focus on concepts such as intersectionality, or on particular levels of government or regions of the world. We recommend that APSA seek information from its sister organizations about how the value of such services are measured, whether they have brought communicative outcomes of greater value to broader audiences, and how these organizations have provided these services cost effectively. The APSA brand has great potential to facilitate new and rich kinds of communication. Technology makes such outcomes easier to achieve. We encourage APSA to pursue journal reforms that deliver more information to more people.

For years to come, traditional journals will maintain an important role in scientific communication. The process by which articles are evaluated and improved is not without criticism but does provide substantial value added to scientific communication. But the business

models for these journals reflect the communicative capacities and expectations of a now distant era. Readers who want insights about topics are not prepared to wait years to find the information they want, and given the larger number of people who can write about any given topic, have less desire to wade through jargon-laden explanations of important phenomena. So the task force recommends that APSA be more diverse in its journal offerings. The *APSR*'s mission should not change, nor should that of *Perspectives on Politics*. But these two offerings can and should be complemented by electronic and dynamic communicative outlets that are dedicated to quality while also reflecting changing opportunities and challenges of an increasingly competitive communicative environment.

9. APSA journals should allow authors to trigger temporary ungating of newsworthy content.

Changes in communication technologies allow more and different kinds of people to post politics-related content online. The increasing number of political bloggers and columnists is one example. While the bloggers and columnists vary in their quality, there is a noticeable increase in the number of such persons who want to incorporate political science research into their products. *The Washington Post*'s acquisition of the Monkey Cage, the *New York Times*' hiring of Brendan Nyhan and Lynn Vavreck as regular contributors, and Thomas Edsall's numerous long-form articles that are built from academic research are examples of a leading edge of broadly accessible political science writing. As a discipline, we can benefit when skilled communicators take the time to understand our methods and finding. If recent trends continue, we could see many more writers employ similar methods to convey important points to large, non-academic audiences.

Many nascent and existing communication efforts could be made more credible, reliable, and (in some cases) viable if their authors were allowed to use recently published peer reviewed articles as source materials and if their audiences could inspect the peer reviewed research themselves. Yet most research of this kind is locked behind paywalls. For reporters, citizens, and other interested persons, these paywalls can be very expensive to scale, and many decide to do without the peer-reviewed research. A number of task force members have recommended that APSA journals establish a mechanism that allows fast and easy temporary ungating for newsworthy content. Task force members John Sides, Brendan Nyhan, and Joshua Tucker (each of whom publishes high profile peer review articles and books as well as regular blog posts for leading newspapers) ask APSA "Create an easy way to temporarily ungate any APSA journal article about which a blogger is writing." They "discourage the idea of certifying existing blogs as "official", but ask APSA to "work with publishers to secure ungating." If ungating can be done in a way that gives peer reviewed research more exposure and conveys the value of such work to broader audiences, these changes could drive increased traffic to APSA websites and lead to increased appreciation of the value of APSA members' diverse intellectual products.

At the same time, we recognize the changing financial pressures on publishers. We know that there are compelling reasons for professional associations and publishers to store some content behind paid firewalls.

In academic venues and the public sphere, there are growing questions about the ethics associated with storing results of government funded work behind publishers' pay walls. Changing technology and associated changes in communicative expectations are fueling the conversation. There are numerous sources of quickly available information. Many sources provide information at no or little cost to the user. This is in contrast to most academic journals who often charge hundreds or thousands of dollars per year for access. To the extent that current paywalls inhibit public access to political science insights they may inhibit attempts to increase the public value of political science's insights and discoveries.

Prior to the mid-1970s, alternatives to highly-priced academic journals were few in number.

Even paper-based copies of articles or books were far more expensive to produce and circulate than is the case today. Asking individuals and institutions to pay for the processes involved in creating, printing, and distributing journals would have been the only way for publishers to produce journals without going broke.

Today there is interest in other pricing models. The AAAS and Sage e-journals mentioned above are adopting open source pricing models. In other words, authors whose articles are accepted pay to have them prepared for publication. The resulting publications are then free to everyone. While this pricing model eliminates the current style of firewall, not all people who produce insights and discoveries that can be of value to others are in a position to pay the costs often associated with open source journals. Across the sciences, publishers are trying different pricing structures that will allow them to generate a suitable return for their efforts while also producing the best available content.

Professional associations face a related challenge. Many leading academic journals, such as the *APSR,* are bundled with membership fees. The fees are an important source of revenue and access to content currently behind firewalls is a strong incentive for individuals to pay the fees. If association journals move to an open source model, individuals will no longer need to pay the association to clear the firewalls. Such changes would challenge many professional associations to develop new ways of providing value to their members. If APSA develops an e-journal and adopts an open source pricing mechanism, it can use membership as a factor in the pricing structure (e.g., offering lower publication prices for members in addition to any need-based tiering that it might develop).

We believe that if managed effectively, a voluntary and easy-to-use temporary ungating trigger can increase interest in APSA members' work, drive traffic to publishers and offers APSA another way to provide value while enhancing public engagement.

10. Quality cannot be sacrificed. APSA should internally reorganize peer-review management processes to produce high-quality output more efficiently. This idea includes reviewer incentives systems and voluntary sharing of reviews across journals.

APSA and similarly situated professional associations operate in a fast-changing communicative environment. These changes mean that standing still is not a viable option for remaining visible and relevant in scholarly communication or communicating more effectively with broader audiences. An expansive number of entities are providing information about topics relevant to political science. For APSA and its members to be focal parts of this conversation, its journal products must have attributes that match or surpass its desired audiences' evolving expectations. APSA journals must provide fast, relevant, and accessible representations of political science's extensive knowledge base.

Quality control is a hallmark of academic research. As APSA ventures into new kinds of communicative products, there will remain a strong desire to maintain quality control. For peer-reviewed research, this means increasing demands on reviewers. Whether APSA acts affirmatively to provide greater incentives for reviewers or not, the increasing number of outlets for scholarly reviewing are producing reviewer fatigue and falling response rates.

As we seek to draw greater attention to the valuable work done by political scientists, we must work to promote its legitimacy and value. The task force recommends that APSA act affirmatively to protect and enhance the quality of its peer review process. Two different reviewer incentive systems have been described – one each by Diana Mutz and Brendan Nyhan. The basic premise of each system is that a scholar earns credits for submitting timely and informative reviews of articles submitted for publication. These credits can then be used when submitting one's own work. In Mutz's proposal, the credits become a requirement to submitting to a journal. In Nyhan's proposal, the credits can be used in a two-track system where one track produces faster turnaround. Both systems allow credits to be transferrable across journals – so that a scholar who reviews for *Perspectives* can use credits for the *APSR* and vice versa. Each proposal also describes the benefits of expanding the set of journals that participate in the reviewer incentive system. If, say, 20 journals were to coordinate on such a system, the system would provide greater flexibility on where credits are earned and spent.

Today, many scholars are overwhelmed by requests to review and declining response rates pose a threat to the quality of peer review. To support the increased volume of communication that our other proposals will create, we recommend that APSA build a supplementary system to support peer review quality. Since our discipline has repeatedly voiced objections to paying reviewers and imposing submission fees to fund the payments, reviewer incentives systems may provide a more effective means of obtaining high quality reviews without introducing disadvantages to people who would not be able to pay. The proposed systems not only provide an incentive system for scholars to enhance the quality and accessibility of one another's' work but also allows journal editors to better coordinate when seeking valuable advice.

A related idea from Nyhan involves "referee report rolldowns." As Nyhan describes, "One

impediment to the rapid dissemination of knowledge from political science is the serial nature of the journal submission process. In many cases, it can take 6-12 months or more to receive reviews back from an initial submission to a journal. If that submission is declined, authors must resubmit to a new journal and start the process over again, which can frequently result in duplication of effort by reviewers and unnecessary delays for authors. One way to improve the efficiency of this process would be for APSA to offer authors the option of having their submissions to the *APSR* and the resulting reviews to be forwarded to other APSA or affiliated section journals. Many publications are declined at highly selective journals like the *APSR* with reviews that indicate that the paper should move forward to publication at a field journal. By allowing authors the option to redirect the manuscript and reviews to such a journal directly (a process that should be possible in online publishing systems), authors would be able to move their papers toward print more quickly while reducing the burden on scholars who often review a manuscript two or more times during the journal submission process. The American Economic Association has already implemented such a system for the *American Economic Review* and its affiliated field journals. Authors are provided the option to forward referee reports and correspondence from the *AER* to *AEJ* editors. While APSA does not publish field journals, many of its affiliated sections do (e.g., *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *Political Analysis*, and *Political Behavior*). The association should consider proposing such a rolldown policy for those journals and explore partnerships with other field journals."

Task force members who are concerned about maintaining and building the integrity of political science research at the same time that we seek to bring it to new audiences, proposed other journal management changes. Brendan Nyhan's contribution to this report provides a series of proposals that can increase the credibility of political science research. These proposals are designed to mitigate against publication bias (a focus on statistically significant claims over claims with greater substantive importance) and to increase replication capacity (which is often useful for understanding whether a specific result generalizes to other cases). Specifically, Nyhan proposes:

> • **Pre-accepted articles** – "Articles would be accepted in principle after a first-stage review to prevent editors and reviewers from backing out of publishing an article due to a null or mixed finding. The authors would then conduct the study and populate the results section based on a prespecified analysis plan." To incentivize scholars to use this format, *APSR* or other journals could offer to fast-track the review process or publishing the articles as the lead in each issue.

> • **Results-blind peer review** – "Reviewers would have to assess the theory and research design of a manuscript and make an initial decision without access to the statistical findings, which would be initially withheld." To avoid adverse selection, journals could randomize which manuscripts would go through this process.

> • **Post-publication replication audits** – "Every APSA journal should… require authors of quantitative studies to provide a full replication archive before publication. …[A] mandatory journal replication policy would improve the incentives for scholars to engage in careful and systematic research practices."

These proposals can help political science improve the quality and meaning of the information that it provides to others. Through effective and forward-looking changes to peer review processes, journal editors can help APSA make more content more accessible to more people while also using our reviewer pool to make the content more valuable to those who access this information.

11. Go on offense. Many people don't know what political science is. APSA should make a series of brief, high quality videos on this topic.

Political science often occupies an uncomfortable place in the public sphere. As recent events in Washington remind us, partisan participants in policy and government are not obligated to give political science much deference, even if political scientists have valuable expertise and seek to convey it in a non-partisan manner.

While we can debate the merits of divergent public arguments about the value of individual political science studies, or the discipline as a whole, what we cannot debate is that we operate in politicized environments. The value conflicts and power struggles that often accompany political decision making also influence the manner in which our work is received and evaluated. Some entrepreneurs will have an incentive to exaggerate the true content of a political science finding. Others will have an incentive to cast the entire discipline in unfavorable terms.

With such pressures in mind, this recommendation follows comments made by a wide range of task force members. A shared view is that most people outside of our discipline do not know what political science is. For many people, including constituencies that can benefit from our insights, this lack of awareness is unfortunate – for us and for them. One of our task force members, Brian Baird a social science PhD who served in Congress for 12 years, put matters bluntly. He argued that political scientists need to "embrace the legitimacy" of the questioning of the public value of our research, and then use our own discipline's insights to improve how we communicate that value. He, along with a number of other members of Congress with whom task force members have interacted, has noticed political science's limitations in this domain. Baird describes this situation as "a little bit like watching your boxing instructor get knocked out in a bar fight."

So this proposal entails playing more offense, rather than strictly being defensive when others raise questions about political science or its value. The videos would distinguish political science from politics as it is practiced and from commentary about politics that is not legitimated by scientific norms and practices. The videos would be short and of high production quality. They would offer examples of how political science benefits students, communities, institutions, and nations. Individual videos could highlight classroom training, and real-world applications. Individually and collectively, these videos would send a message that APSA and its members are a resource for a better world. If individual scholars or institutions made similarly themed videos, the APSA Video Library (proposed above) could include them as well. Production quality would be of paramount importance.

Political science and its professional organizations can take concrete actions to improve our public engagement. We can learn more about what our audiences want from us and, in the process, increase their appreciation of us. To communicate more effectively, we need not dumb down what we do but we do need to work harder to translate our discoveries into insights that resonate with the people who we seek to serve (Lupia 2013).

Congressman Baird was the task force member who most forcefully articulated the value to

political science of a video series that plays offense. To improve communication to policymakers and the public, Baird proposed that political scientists:

- "Recognize that challenging the legitimacy… of elected representatives to question where funding goes is a fool's errand."

- "Apply their own insight into how they approach this problem."

- "Do some serious self-reflection on exactly what we're doing with the people's money, and where the value proposition is for that."

Baird contends that a video campaign that illustrates the concrete value of political science will encourage us to more effectively confront the problem of how to translate our research into real-world value and application, which is "very hard for social scientists, partly because of the nature of the discipline and also because they're not trained to think this way… But, we'll never solve that problem if people don't recognize that it's a valid question."

12. Rethink the communicative value of conference presentations. Consider altering submitter incentives, panel formats, and the use of technology to improve and expand interaction.

Conferences provide venues for scholars to communicate with one another and, potentially, broader audiences. Many of political science's conferences provide valuable networking opportunities for individuals who are seeking mentoring, collaborators, or jobs. Yet the marquee events at most conferences are the presentations. Panels, roundtables, and keynote addresses are amongst the more common formats for communicating ideas, insights, and discoveries at conferences.

So there is no doubt that conferences provide potentially valuable opportunities for scholars to communicate relevant and innovative ideas to important audiences. In many cases, however, conference presentations are of poor quality. Many, if not most, presentations at major conferences are hastily arranged. In addition, a substantial number of listed conference presenters at larger conferences fail to appear. Young scholars coming to our conferences for the first time or visitors from outside of the discipline see poor quality presentations and a pattern of "no-shows." What impressions of political science do they take with them? Many **learn that high quality presentations are not expected.** Do young scholars come to regard effective presentations as unimportant to the discipline? Indeed, it appears that some have come to see a lack of preparation as a badge of honor rather than a missed opportunity to provide value to others. And what of our visitors? Can we blame them for not taking us seriously when they can't understand what our work means to them or when we don't appear to care about offering content of value to others?

Moreover, it is not clear that our professional organizations have sought ways to convert the considerable talent that gathers at its conferences into information that broader populations can access. Our professional association has offered little to no support for improving or evaluating the quality of presentations. Were such improvements to be made, we would also face the fact that media presence at political science conferences remains minimal. Many participants who might have interesting things to say to broader audiences or to media members have no training and little incentive to speak to those audiences in ways that the latter regard as effective. When members of our discipline ask one another why the discipline does not get more attention or respect, one answer may lie in the fact that when thousands of political scientists gather in a major American city, the event is seldom seen as worth covering – even by organizations that focus on science or politics.

We can and should do better. Professional associations in other disciplines use their conferences as a basis for communicating with broader audiences. The American Association for the Advancement of Science, which is arguably a larger and far more complex organization than any professional association in political science, uses its Annual Meeting not just to provide scientists with opportunities to communicate with one another, but it also uses those occasions to create venues where broader audiences and the media can learn about the special value of scientific activities. When thousands of political scientists are gathered in one place, it is our collective fault if broader audiences see nothing of value in the event. By rethinking the communicative value of its conferences, APSA has an opportunity to produce more value for more people.

We asked the task force to use its various experiences with different audiences to offer concrete proposals about plausible steps that our professional organizations can take to convert our gatherings into content of greater and broader value. Bruce Jentleson's contribution to this task force report describes activities of this kind that a project called Bridging the Gap has developed. These activities both train scholars to communicate more effectively with broader audiences and give them opportunities to do so.

How can we improve the quality of conference presentations – so that they not only provide greater value to other political scientists, but also have the potential to inform broader audiences? While today's conference presentations are often of work-in-progress, such attributes need not imply presentation quality. Many presenters appear not to put much effort into crafting a presentation that provides as much value as possible to those in attendance. **Indeed, many presentations leave audiences with the impression that political scientists are not serious about making the content of their work relevant to other people.** We can do better.

In graduate school and as faculty, young political scientists are rarely trained in how to effectively present their work to broader audiences. To the extent that any scholars seek such outcomes, they are expected to develop relevant skills on their own. In some cases, scholars who learn how to make more accessible presentations are labelled as "selling out" or as acting in ways that are contrary to optimal development as a scholar. There is no doubt that "selling out" and spending time on activities other than research design and analysis can be detrimental to the production of credible and valuable insights and discoveries. But the fact that it can do so does not mean that it always does. The contributions to this task force by Cheryl Boudreau, Khalilah Brown-Dean, Rose McDermott and Carol Swain each articulate such concerns in distinct but important ways. We can do better and each of these contributions offers means for doing so.

Universities in the United States are starting to have more detailed conversations about how more effective public engagement should be correlated with greater rewards within the academy. Universities in Great Britain are having a similar conversation. The contribution to this report by Sara Hobolt describes important aspects of the British experience.

Driving the British version are national assessments of faculty that affect visible departmental rankings and real funding decisions. These assessments assign numerical value to various kinds of public service and compare them to more traditional kinds of scholarly activity. In the evolving evaluative metric, effective public engagement has significant weight. Conversations about NSF funding are trending towards similar objectives. For years, "broader impacts" has been one of two focal evaluative criteria. More recent conversations have sought to extend these evaluative criteria so that legislators and citizens can obtain greater clarity about the types of activities tax dollars are supporting. Conferences are an opportunity to provide vivid concrete demonstrations of the public value of political science. Improving the quality of information transmitted at these gatherings is one step in influencing larger conversations about the value of political science teaching and research.

We ask APSA to examine how changing conference participants' incentives can increase presentation quality. A number of task force members have examined how other organizations use application deadlines and full paper requirements to increase the quality and value of

conference-based presentations. Today, our largest conferences close application deadlines far in advance of the conference. The typical application, moreover, requires only an abstract rather than something approaching a finished paper. While this set of procedures offers advantages to those who can state new ideas in a brief written format, it is far from clear that these procedures are the best way to achieve informative, high-quality conference presentations (many scholars also believe that such formats discriminate against conference applicants who are not already well-established or at a high-prestige institution). **Numerous other professional associations require something akin to finished papers, or at least well-developed précis.**

We ask APSA to consider whether alternative ways of conceiving of conference panels can help us produce more informative presentations. One alternative to consider **is a conference with a more diverse and dynamic set of panel formats.** Consider, for example, a conference organized around showcase panels, workshop panels, and posters. Workshop panels would be much like the typical panel at our current major conferences. They would entail brief presentations of work in progress. Poster sessions would provide a venue for person-to-person presentations of research at various stages.

Showcase panels would feature high-quality presentation of recently published work. Today, there is more research published in more areas than any person can possibly read. Showcase panels can introduce conference attendees to newly published work and combine that opportunity with the ability to glean additional information from the author.

The Empire Series concept, launched by the Midwest Political Science Association in 2014, is an example of this concept and is a product of this kind of argument. In an empire series lecture, there is a 30-minute presentation followed by a 15-30 minute Q&A. For reasons stated below, there is no discussant. The requirements for being on such a panel would be evidence of the speaker's ability to offer a high-quality presentation to a diverse audience. For the Empire Series, a committee was assembled to collect and review video evidence of potential speakers' presentational style and effectiveness. This factor was, along with the quality of the work, used to select the first set of Empire Series speakers. Unfortunately, the MPSA made no effort to publicize this endeavor outside of the MPSA membership. As a result, the broader attention that the event was meant to generate did not have a chance to materialize. If APSA includes higher profile events into its programming it should also develop effective outreach campaigns so that the intended audiences learn about the events in advance.

Whether or not such a structure is adopted, the task force can also consider other ways of improving the conference experience for attendees. Consider, for example, the common format of having a discussant provide commentary on one or more conference papers during a panel. ***Of what value are such discussants to the audience?*** In many cases, discussants offer advice in public that (a) could have been conveyed just as effectively to the author in private and (b) is largely inaccessible to most of the audience. This latter outcome occurs when the audience has not read the paper, the author's presentation does not convey the paper's content well, and the discussant focuses his or her comment on attributes of the project that are only in the largely-unread paper. In such instances, much of what the discussant says is of no value to the audience. When neither the paper presenter nor the discussant thinks about their presentations in terms of what content would provide the greatest value for the audience, the time taken by the

discussant prevents the audience from obtaining insights of value.

Other professional associations employ other formats. Some associations have discussants present the papers and have the author's respond in the context of a Q&A with the audience. Some associations have panels with no discussants. Few of our conferences have looked into how to integrate technology into real-time author-audience interactions. Technologies exist that would allow, say, a panel chair to take questions via Twitter and to ask those questions throughout the panel. Task force members have given talks at such conferences in other disciplines. While my experiences in such contexts are of mixed quality, we are open to the idea that there are ways to use such technologies to enhance the conference experience. Other technologies would allow a dynamic messaging feed to be visible to all members of an audience, so during a panel presentation or Q&A the audience could see what others are thinking. We encourage APSA and similarly situated organizations to pursue how parallel organizations are using such technologies and to learn more about the conditions under which they might help us communicate political science more effectively.

We also ask APSA to consider an increased role for video at conference presentations. Right now, our major conferences record few conference activities. Other organizations put much more of their conference content online in video format. It may be that political scientists are missing out on ways to effectively communicate their work by underutilizing conference-related videos. While professional associations may be concerned about declining conference attendance following a decision to place conference video content online, it is also possible that such content can increase interest in the association and perhaps serve as a revenue source for the association. APSA could sell a video-pass to select streams of conference activity or it could label some video content as "premium" and put it behind a membership firewall as a way to increase the value of association membership.

We have also discussed how our sister organizations **incentivize scholars to participate in poster sessions.** Today, poster sessions are seen by many scholars in political science as a booby prize. To reinforce this perception, attendance at panel sessions is often sparse. In many other professional associations, poster sessions are a focal point and a venue in which large amounts of effective communication occur. Some conferences are organized to minimize competition between poster sessions and keynote events. One possibility for political science to consider is devoting part of one day exclusively to poster presentations – a strategy that could influence norms and ease coordination – two challenges that may be inhibiting the effectiveness of our poster sessions today. Given the unique types of feedback that scholars can receive at poster sessions, APSA and similarly situated organizations should examine the types of incentives that induce people to make better posters and audiences to flock to poster rooms in greater numbers. If properly organized, such experiences may also help presenters learn how to engage effectively under a broader set of circumstances and to a more diverse set of audiences.

Summaries of Reports and Interviews Prepared for the Task Force

These summaries were prepared by Arthur Lupia, Logan Casey, and Dumitru Minzarari

Journals and Blogs

J1. Adam Berinsky "A New and Dynamic Outlet for Communicating Innovative Political Science Research"
Action Item for APSA: Develop e-journals. They can be faster and more accessible.

J2. Diana Mutz "Incentivizing the Manuscript Review System via REX"
Action Item for APSA: Support a reviewer exchange market. There are more demands on reviewers which inhibits important forms of scholarly communication. In the REX market, scholars get credits for offering reviewers and need to spend them to have your article reviewed.

J3. Brendan Nyhan, John Sides, Joshua Tucker "APSA as Amplifier"
Action Item for APSA:

• Seek to amplify voices already in the discipline and create incentives to encourage more effective outreach and innovative communication strategies amongst members.

• Support efforts that make it easier for bloggers to ungate research. When a story breaks, journals and professional associations can benefit from the attention. Ungating academic articles, even for a brief period can benefit the public as well as the people who produced the article.

• Provide training and resources for more effective communication.

• Create awards for effective engagement and subsidize section-based efforts to do so.

• Related idea: Can APSA encourage members who speak publicly to identify as "political scientists"? Often speakers have other labels such as "foreign policy expert" or "elections expert."

J4. Brendan Nyhan "A Proposal for Journal Reforms"
Action Item for APSA: The proposal seeks to improve the credibility of published work. If we are going to get better at communicating, it will help to have better support for the claims that we make.

- Mitigate publication bias through pre-accepted articles and results-blind peer review – in either case, reviews are based on theory, design, and impact rather than regression coefficients.

- Replication audits. Hire graduate students to demonstrate that published results are replicable.

- Proposes an incentive system for reviewers: do reviews, get credits, use credits to get expedited reviews

- Allow journals to share reviews of a given paper.

- Triple-blind reviewing: not even the editor sees the author's name.

Outreach - Strategies for Serving New Audiences

O1. Bruce Jentleson – Bridging the Gap
Action Item for APSA: The BtG initiative has developed a number of programs that train people in more effective engagement and offers them opportunities to work with policymakers. This program contains several templates worth considering.

O2. John Sides "Engaging Political Science Alumni Networks"
Action Item for APSA: Commit to providing value to populations who are familiar with political science but not academics. This includes PhDs who work outside the academy, political science majors who work in government, community college instructors, and high school civics teachers. They are an untapped audience and a potential source of support.

O3. Rogers Smith "Creating a Speakers and Classroom Resources Program"
Action Item for APSA:

- Create a program to help libraries, museums, community organizations, and teachers find political science speakers and classroom resources articulating different perspectives on important issues in engaging fashion.

- Use these events as the basis of a video library that a wide range of audiences can use for their own purposes.

- Hire a dedicated staff person who could oversee outreach and be responsible for soliciting and reporting effectiveness evaluations.

O4. Carol Swain – Punditry, Politics, and Academia
Action Item for APSA and scholars: Carol Swain has succeeded in various forms of public engagement. Recently she started her own television program to bring political science insights to audiences and perspectives that most scholarly activities do not serve well. Her example provides inspiration and a template for reaching other underserved audiences. She focuses on problems associated with political correctness and a lack of political and ideological diversity in the discipline. She argues that efforts to suppress ideologically diverse dialogue reduce our discipline's value and credibility in many instances.

Incentives and Opportunities for Improved Engagement

E1. Cheryl Boudreau "Seen but not Heard: Engaging Junior Scholars in Efforts to Make Political Science More Relevant"

Action Item for APSA: Junior scholars are often discouraged from doing outreach. It is not rewarded in many tenure and promotion proceedings and can also have negative reputational effects in some subfields.

- Establish awards for junior people who do effective outreach. Related idea: subsidize section-specific programs of this kind.

- Sponsor roundtables featuring effective presentations that could draw media attention. Encourage skilled junior people to be focal in such events.

- Create engagement fellowships paralleling the congressional fellowship program.

- Run a survey. Gather systematic evidence of junior and other scholars' perceptions of the costs and benefits of various forms of outreach. Use data as a basis for subsequent action.

E2. Khalilah Brown-Dean "Emphasizing the Scholar in Public Scholarship"

Action Item for APSA:

- Create the *Public Voices Scholarship*. Provides support and incentives for scholars to more effectively engage.

- Scholars from historically underrepresented groups face additional challenges in this domain. Programs can increase their value by offering concrete means to counter such challenges.

- Collect data on the types of presentations non-academic groups would want political science to hear.

- Hold presentations about public engagement. Sessions with role models can be particularly effective.

- Sponsor TED-like events across the country to offer information on topics of regional or national importance.

E3. James Druckman "Communicating Policy Relevant Science"

Action item for scholars: This article draws from multiple fields to show why policymakers may resist or mischaracterize policy-relevant research. It offers researchers a number of suggestions for making their work more likely to gain decision makers' attention and respect.

E4. Sara Hobolt. "Assessing and Maximizing the Impact of the Social Sciences"

Action Item for APSA and Scholars. In the UK, university funding depends, in part, on national assessments. Recent assessments have placed greater weight on the social and economic impact of research. Hobolt describes the metrics that have evolved and raises questions about whether and how we can do something similar.

E5. Jennifer Hochschild. "Reflections on Improving Public Perceptions of Political Science's Value."

Hochschild discusses the Task Force's stated goal of identifying the "means by which individual scholars and professional organizations can make political science's insights and discoveries more accessible, more relevant, and more valuable to more people" She finds all three characteristics desirable but not without concern. For example, Hochschild calls our attention to being overly concerned with relevance, because there are many scholars whose work "is difficult to make relevant to political actors or most citizens, in part because the need for precision in order to take advantage of sophisticated techniques often entails a narrow substantive focus." As for access, she raises concerns about how the ideas proposed throughout the Task Force report highlight strategies and skills most available among younger, junior scholars, while the control of disciplinary and institutional resources rests with the older, senior scholars. The Task Force's endeavor, therefore, may prompt a mixed reaction to the Task Force's recommendations.

E6. Rose McDermott: Learning to Communicate Better with the Press and Public

Action Item for scholars: Few if any of us receive training on how to speak to reporters or large audiences. This contribution describes the incentives, challenges, and opportunities at hand in such domains and offers advice about how to get your point across while staying true to the content of your research.

In-Depth Interviews

From each interview, I have selected a statement that reflects its focal argument for more effective engagement.

V1. Brian Baird

To improve communication to policymakers and the public, political scientists should:

> 1: "Recognize that challenging the legitimacy… of elected representatives to question where funding goes is a fool's errand."

> 2: "Apply their own insight into how they approach this problem."

> 3: "Do some serious self-reflection on exactly what we're doing with the people's money, and where the value proposition is for that."

V2. Melissa Harris-Perry

While the media believes that economists and former political staffers "carry great and inherent weight" and expertise, "[p]eople do not understand what it is that political scientists know" or have to offer. To address this, MHP suggests:

> 1: "finding the ambassadors and building a relationship with the translators" – identify the political scientists who have relevant things to say about current/anticipated news cycles, and actively offer those people to the media: "If you want an expert, call X."

2: "We, as a discipline, need to actively pitch a media A-team" – identify a variety of key targets across different forms of media (print, electronic, TV/broadcast, social) and get our voices there. Concrete goals with a concrete team working on them.

V3. Dan Schnur

• To get practitioners to see the value of our work, "we need to make more of an effort to show them that we respect theirs."

• "The trick is finding a way to present the value of the information without sounding condescending" or partisan.

• However, there will always be people who don't want to hear what our research or data shows, so we cannot focus on not offending/upsetting people, but rather establishing a track record of credible work and building respect over time.

V4. Daron Shaw

• Political science has contributed many tools and concepts to the practice of politics, but they become conventional wisdom and the "point of origin gets lost." We do a poor job of claiming ownership.

• There are strong incentives not to get involved in researching certain issues, such as voter ID laws, because of the public attention and skepticism of the researcher's political agenda. "But at the edges in a battleground state, this kind of applied knowledge, where it's a point or two, I think it's a real distinct possibility, and the intersection between academia and practical politics is really amazing."

V5. Victoria DeFrancesco Soto

APSA needs to help build a bridge connecting political researchers and political practitioners. It should:

• Help members move away from penalizing engagement and move towards a reward system --- change the incentive structure.

• Coordinate get-to-know-yous and roundtables with political analysts, consultants, et al.

• Offering a database where journalists, political analysts, practitioners can turn for expert advice or commentary.

V6. Lynn Vavreck

Vavreck contends "that it is not any scientist's job to make the results of their scientific work accessible to a layperson." However, given that the discipline relies on public support, this is a place where APSA and universities can be doing more to help. Doing scientific research is a very different skill than being able to articulate the value of that research in plain English. To this end, Vavreck makes several proposals, including:

• APSA ought to have a science writer on staff who can quickly read someone's peer reviewed publications, understand why it's relevant and also complicated, and be able to turn it into a press release / whatever is needed at that moment.

• Collect these short summaries/reviews, sort them topically, make them available on APSA's webpage so that media and others could find expert research quickly.

• Use e-journals for publishing results that are timely but not paradigm-changing.

Ongoing Challenges and Opportunities

Note: This is an updated version of the original charge. It has two sections.

The first section is a component slightly revised version of the initial charge for the Task Force. We have modified parts of the original charge to reflect task force activities. The original charge listed topics for force members to pursue. Many of the topics were pursued and developed in very effective ways. Those pursuits became recommendations and are featured in the recommendations that you have just read.

The second section pertains to related topics that the task force discussed, but did not have sufficient time or resources to pursue. For these topics, the task force does not offer formal recommendations action beyond those listed above. We do believe that a number of the ideas merit further discussion and action.

1. The Task Force's Charge

Political scientists are working on numerous projects with substantial potential to benefit society. The public value of this work depends on the effectiveness with which its implications are conveyed to diverse audiences – including students, policymakers, and the public. Many APSA members believe that the association can and should do more to convey the public value of political science and should do more to support members who wish to do the same.

To the extent that APSA has attempted to improve its communicative effectiveness, it is often perceived as having done so sporadically or ineffectively. Such sentiments were common during the era of "the Coburn amendment" that placed special restrictions on political science grants at the National Science Foundation. Such perceptions fueled a growing recognition that our scholars and professional organizations have substantial untapped potential for improving how they provide insights of value to others (see, e.g., http://aaas.confex.com/aaas/2013/webprogram/Symposium174.html and http://www.nasonline.org/programs/sackler-colloquia/completed_colloquia/science-communication.html).

Our experience with APSA has been that individual staff members are highly motivated to serve the association and its members. At the same time, individual staff members often have no special expertise in developing communicative strategies that effectively convey important information to broad audiences. In recent years, there has been increased recognition of these challenges within APSA. Staff changes and the creation of a number of committees on outreach, publications, and the APSA website signal increase attention to improve what various audiences

can learn from APSA members. Despite the fact that these efforts can complement one another in quests to improve communicative effectiveness, they did not appear to be well coordinated. Leaders of several of these committees report little or no sustained follow-through by the association.

While many members and APSA staff voice support for improved communication and more expansive engagement, at the time this task force was commissioned, APSA had not committed to systematic evaluations of the effectiveness of current or planned communicative activities. Without tangible accurate evidence, it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of its current communicative activities. Without such evidence, plans for new publications, websites and so on may not produce desired engagement outcomes.

With doubts about the discipline's future being raised in visible venues, and with knowledge of the highly valuable work that is being done, but not communicated effectively, this report seeks to enhance the discipline's ability to provide greater value to a broad set of public audiences. This mission includes:

> • examining current and possible incentives that affect how political scientists and professional organizations convey insights that can benefit others.

> • learning more about what our current and potential audiences want from us.

> • the aggressive pursuit of strategies and infrastructure that will help political scientists more effectively deliver content that can improve others' lives.

Taking these steps is necessary for broadening and deepening appreciation of political science's public value.

With such goals in mind, we must guard against complacency when looking for ways to engage important publics more effectively. Many other organizations, when examining their communicative effectiveness, often fall back on premature self-congratulation instead of actively pursuing available and more effective alternatives (Alan R. Andreasen, *Social Marketing in the 21st Century*, Jossey-Bass, 1995). We do not want to repeat such mistakes. APSA and other organizations devote resources to journals, conferences, websites because they believe them to be effective means of communication. If we want to claim to be an organization that provides knowledge of real value to diverse constituencies, we should rigorously and continuously evaluate the validity of those beliefs.

At the same time, we understand that proposing significant changes to entities such as journals and conferences will be controversial. This is why it is important to state that our purpose is not to ignore or underappreciate the substantial efforts that have been made on the discipline's behalf. Our goal, instead, is to make these kinds of efforts more valuable to more people. Indeed, we have asked the task force to recognize different perspectives within in the discipline and use knowledge of these dynamics to inform how APSA should pursue and evaluate various communicative strategies.

In sum, the task force seeks to help APSA, its members, and similarly situated organizations

more effectively attract the attention, and affect the beliefs, feelings, and knowledge of, important audiences in ways that improve their lives. With such an understanding, political science can produce communication that is more memorable, more meaningful and more valuable to more audiences.

2. Legitimacy and Evaluation

LEGITIMACY

A sober view of the social sciences will reveal that a good portion of its work is not politically or ideologically neutral. There are many recent examples of social scientific research that treat conservatism as a pathology and polarization as something that needs to be cured. Of course, all such claims are debatable. Conclusions of this kind are infused with ideological assertions and cannot be defended as strictly neutral statements. Moreover, every empirical study of the political leanings of American social scientists shows that they tend to be more sympathetic to contemporary liberal than conservative viewpoints. Given the partisan imbalance within many sectors of the academy, we should not be surprised when people who do not share liberal viewpoints question the validity and value of social science research as a whole.

Our task force does not re-litigate partisan debates that are occurring elsewhere. But we have asked our ideologically and culturally diverse group to clarify how the politicized environments in which we work as scholars, and the politicized environments in which our work is interpreted, affect public perceptions of the value of political science. This report contains important examples of ways that scholars have built and maintained credibility in high-value and ideologically-diverse or heavily conservative communicative environments (see, for example, the contribution to this report by Carol Swain). Experimental research and case studies on this topic clarify not just how to describe political science in ways that are more likely to be meaningful to important audiences, but also steps that individuals and organizations can take to build and maintain their credibility in circumstances where political entrepreneurs will try to mischaracterize the work. Information from basic research, applied research, and case studies on the dynamics of credibility, belief change, and persuasion can be helpful in showing how scholars can both stay true to the content of their work while presenting it in more effective ways. (Lupia A (2013) Communicating Science in Politicized Environments. Proceedings of the National Academy of Science 110: 14048-14054.)

A commonly proposed strategy to augment and strengthen public views of the discipline's contributions is to convey the broader impacts of specific research agendas more effectively. One handicap that the social sciences often have is that after one of our findings becomes widely known and used, people come to believe that they have "known it all along." In behavioral economics, a well-known example of this phenomenon pertains to switching employee retirement plan participation from "opt-in" to "opt-out." A decade ago, most employers gave their employees the option to opt-into voluntary contributions to tax-privileged retirement accounts. In some cases, employers matched employee contributions. Research showed, however, that many people chose not to opt-in at a young age and regretted this decision later in life. The same research suggested that many more people would participate if the default option were participation in the program and not contributing required opting-out, then participation rates would

increase substantially. Many companies have made this switch and the predictions have held true. Many workers now have better retirement prospects as a result. While many people now consider opt-out plans "common sense" it is easy to demonstrate that (a) such sensibility did not exist until recently and (b) the spread of such sense followed the publication and effective dissemination of social science research.

Task force members have identified circumstances where political science research has improved the performance of individuals, companies, or countries. Examples include how recent GOTV field experiments have affected campaign strategies, how political science research influenced military strategies under General Petraeus (who holds a PhD in our discipline). Task force members have also identified examples where political science findings were not applied and where application of these insights would have improved outcomes. Jamie Druckman's recent work on how to describe new technologies to the public provides one example of such research (Druckman JN, Bolsen T (2011) Framing, motivated reasoning, and opinions about emerging technologies. J Comm 61: 658-688.)

This report contains a number of proposals for communicating this and similar information more effectively. In so doing, APSA and its members can offer a broader understanding of political science's content and value. While political science, by the fact of its subject matter, will still continue to produce findings that make government officials and some members of the public uncomfortable, a greater understanding of the value of the approach can help broader populations balance that discomfort with the knowledge that the pursuit (generally considered) can provide meaningful value to many people.

EVALUATION

As the National Academy of Sciences has recently emphasized, scholars often do not present what they know in optimal ways (http://www.nasonline.org/programs/sackler-colloquia/upcoming-colloquia/science-communication.html). A common problem is that expert communities need to develop novel theoretical frameworks and unusual language to effectively communicate complex and novel phenomena. Problems occur when experts are asked to describe their discoveries to broader audiences. Language and concepts that the experts regard as vital are included in presentation. Audiences see the presentation as needlessly abstract and as failing to "get to the point" or speak to their own needs and aspirations. A common outcome is that audiences ignore most or all of such presentations and funders are left wondering why.

There is a better way forward. An increasing number of research projects in fields such as health, biology, and climate change are working with social scientists to develop and evaluate more effective communication strategies. The objective of these collaborations is to stay true to the underlying research and convey it in terms that are directly relevant to, and actionable by, high-value audiences. These efforts are broadly interdisciplinary. They involve experiments and surveys that help researchers identify what audiences want to know, what types of presentations make the project's main lessons most memorable and salient, and what communicative strategies are most likely to convert knowledge to action.

While this task force did not have the resources to conduct their own comprehensive evalua-

tions, its members have shaped scholarly and lay understandings of communication and persuasion in politicized environments. They use innovative techniques to produce credible measures of what the public knows, how it thinks, and the conditions under which it is willing to change its mind about a range of important topics (see, for example, the use of such insights in the contributions by James Druckman and Rose McDermott). Amongst the insights that the work produces is clarity on what it is about different types of presentations that can cause the public to have new thoughts and feelings about important but controversial studies. Their work shows how the effects of presentations vary across different segments of the population. This work shows how to stay true to a scientific argument while conveying information in a ways to which audiences can relate. It shows the importance of understanding an audience's core values and finding ways to increase communicative success by describing our findings with respect to that audience's values and aspirations. Their work is not about how to "dumb down" political science to reach the public, it is about how to "smarten up" about how to present political science in ways that will make its content more relevant and meaningful to audiences who can act upon it.

In general, evaluation of a communicative strategy entails defining a clear and measurable set of communicative and educational goals at the outset and developing means of measuring audience recall, knowledge changes, and the production of new competences. One upside of approaching evaluation in this way is especially salient given our need to communicate important ideas to broad and diverse international audiences. It is well established that historical and cultural differences affect how people interpret and process information. These differences affect communicative phenomena as elementary as which analogies are most effective in conveying complex ideas and in the types of evidence that are perceived as credible. The methodological and professional diversity of our task force will give us means to better understand, measure, and effectively address how we can better engage the diverse segments of the public by learning more about the correspondence between what they want and what we do.

A greater emphasis on understanding the current and possible future impacts of our work is essential to the discipline's continuing relevance and public support. Political science is not an entitlement. It is an endeavor that must continually demonstrate its value if it wants others to support it.

The task force believes that many of the activities listed in this report leverage APSA's comparative advantages in ways that a number of its current activities do not. If APSA wants to improve the public's perceptions of the discipline, then it must be willing to consider the relative value of all of its communication related endeavors. If new projects can provide greater value to the discipline then APSA's current activities, then the leadership and membership ought to consider devoting more resources and expertise to these activities.

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