December 20, 2017

Dear Colleagues,

The 2016 election in the United States cast into sharp relief an array of issues that engage the political science community in our role as teachers, researchers and practitioners. As we all examine the implications of the 2016 election, we must remain at the forefront of understanding, and engaging the public on, the future of our country. As APSA Council members and leaders, therefore, we would like to share with you an overview of APSA activities that affirm our core mission and support our members in their work.

**Academic Freedom**
Support for academic freedom and freedom of expression have been central tenets of the Association’s governing documents for over 60 years. The Association has long advanced its commitment to these values through advocacy, such as public statements and letters on behalf of political scientists at risk as a consequence of exercising their rights to academic freedom and freedom of expression, both internationally and within the United States. We plan to continue to defend these core values through the efforts of APSA staff, the APSA Committee on Professional Ethics, Rights and Freedoms, other leading disciplinary associations, the AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition, and Scholars at Risk.

**Diversity and Inclusion**
Support and promotion of diversity and inclusion throughout the discipline is a central component of the mission and goals of the Association. Longstanding diversity and inclusion programs and initiatives, including the Ralph Bunche Summer Institute (now in its 30th year), the Minority Fellowship Program (now in its 48th year), the Minority Student Recruitment Program, the Fund for Latino Scholarship, the mentoring program, and the status committees, provide content to our commitment to these values. A spate of recent hate-based incidents, including on college campuses, threatens these values of diversity and inclusion. We will continue to work assiduously to incorporate diversity and inclusion in the APSA’s strategic plan, governance and programming. In addition, we will deepen our ongoing partnerships with our members, other disciplinary associations, and similar organizations in social science and STEM fields that share our commitment to diversity and inclusive participation. The Association is also committed to the free exchange of a wide variety of ideas and perspectives, including across international borders. APSA has worked through our international programs to support international exchange in teaching, research and study and we will continue to foster this type of engagement.

**Advocacy for the Discipline**
The Association is a vigorous advocate for federal funding for political science through agencies such as the National Science Foundation and National Endowment for the Humanities, and the
Fulbright-Hays/Title VI programs. Our advocacy activities include regular meetings with policymakers to inform them about the importance of the discipline; letters and statements to members of Congress in support of political science; informing our members of legislative developments affecting political science and issuing advocacy alerts at critical junctures; participation in Capitol Hill advocacy days for the social sciences and humanities; and providing an array of resources to support political scientists in grassroots activities. We work with a variety of groups and coalitions to carry out a multi-pronged strategy that supports political science within broader social science, humanities, and science campaigns. These include the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), the National Humanities Alliance, and the Coalition for International Education. APSA staff have also created a specific advocacy strategy that calls attention to the unique strengths of the political science discipline in advancing our understanding of politics and democracy as well as our key role in teaching civics and the responsibilities of an informed citizenry. Further, we will continue to advance the fact-based research and important theoretical insights of political scientists around the world, and support innovation and professional development in pedagogy.

**Public Engagement**

Political scientists are committed to sharing knowledge of politics and governance with the public. Our public engagement program includes online tips and resources for engagement, information on APSA’s unique communications training workshops, and an experts database that connects members with the media. We also provide resources for the media and resources for the public, including materials for teachers, videos on our YouTube channel, and daily content on our companion website PSNow. We encourage all members to express their views in the public arena, communicate their research findings, and facilitate deliberation about the norms of democracy, representation, and liberal democratic rights.

We invite you to take part in initiatives to expand our activities and impact, and to review the APSA Task Force Report on public engagement, “Let’s Be Heard,” for more information on how we can best enable our discipline’s diverse voices to promote democratic deliberation and activity.

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We remain committed to supporting you through these activities as well as other programs of the APSA. The Association draws its strength from its membership, and from our members’ capacity to teach, study and communicate their different perspectives, research findings, and forms of political expertise. We welcome your reactions; please contact us with any questions or suggestions.

David A. Lake, APSA President
Kathleen Thelen, APSA President-Elect
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