



# **The Hidden Curriculum of Conference Submissions**

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*A webinar hosted by the APSA Committee on the Status of Graduate Students in the Profession*

# APSA Committee on the Status of Graduate Students in the Profession



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# American Political Science Association

- Leading organization dedicated to the study of political science, founded in 1903
- Promotes scholarly engagement in the discipline - chiefly through its Annual Meeting conference
- The annual meeting has divisions, which are topical themes
- The organization has sections, which organize political scientists around different research themes and areas
  - Not every division has a section



# APSA Sections (selected)

- Comparative Politics
- Race, Ethnicity, and Politics
- Middle East and North Africa Politics
- Women, Gender, and Politics
- Political Science Education
- Science, Technology, and Environmental Politics (STEP)
- Qualitative and Multi-Method Research (QMMR)

# Types of Submissions

- **Papers**
  - individual projects, typically article-length works in progress
- **Panels**
  - a collection of papers organized around a specific theme
- **Roundtables**
  - facilitated discussion around key themes and topics
- **Posters**
  - visual presentation of key points/findings from research

# Writing an Effective Abstract Submission - Tips & Tricks Pt 1.

- A consensus around short, sweet, and to the point
  - or the 4 c's - complete, concise, clear, and cohesive
- E.g., Dr. Jessica Calarco's 5-sentence abstract
  - S1: What we know
  - S2: What we don't know
  - S3: How you answer that question
  - S4: What you find
  - S5: Why it's important
- **KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE!!**
  - The lit you're engaging with
  - The conference/section you're applying to

# Writing an Effective Abstract Submission - Tips & Tricks Pt 2.

- Be mindful of picking good keywords!
  - Keywords help organize submissions into the appropriate sections
- What about titles?
  - Section/division chairs often see the title & your name first - be sure they're informative!
  - Keywords in the title can be used to quickly grab attention
    - Quirky titles can be fun, but could also detract from how informative your title could be

# What happens to my APSA submission?

- The program is curated by conference program chairs and section/division program chairs
- Each submission needs to select a first priority and second priority division/section (out of the 52 + the conference theme)
  - **Select two!!**
- Tiered review process
  - First priority submissions
  - a few weeks later: Second priority submissions
- Division/section chairs “allocate” panels and submit their list to conference program team who places them on the program
- Possibility that papers on waitlist will still be accepted if others drop out

# Good to know - panels

- Possibility of proposing panels – same process (sponsoring by sections/divisions) applies
  - Benefit because you are making the work of the section/division program chair easier, increasing your chances of ending up on a panel that is relevant to you, creating networking opportunities, and enhancing your CV.
  - If panel rejected, paper /panel might still get selected by another section
  - Panels don't *necessarily* have a higher chance of acceptance (varies by section program chair)
- Make sure the panel description and keywords is 100% fit with [section/division description](#)

# Good to know - panels

- Clearly follow instructions
  - E.g. 4-5 papers, chair, discussant
- How to find like-minded scholars & fitting abstracts?
  - Mailing lists: e.g. [GEP-ED](#), [POLMETH](#), [ESS Forum](#)
  - Social media: e.g. Twitter, BlueSky, LinkedIn
  - Personal contacts/cold-emailing
  - [APSA Connect](#)
  - Usually nice to have mix of junior and senior scholars, but need to be quick to snag seniors because of participation limits

# Good to know- conference extras

- Mini conferences
  - ex: Chinese Politics Mini-Conference, US Law & Courts: Courts & Judging Mini-Conference
- Conference within a conference
  - ex: Subnational climate governance at WPSA
- Pre-conference and short courses
  - ex: Causal Inference and Treatment Effect Estimation Using Stata, Black Politics Dissertation Workshop (Invitation Only)
- Teaching and Learning Conference (TLC)

# Good to know- funding

- Conferences also offer a variety of funding opportunities for graduate students
  - APSA Travel Grant
  - APSA Childcare Grant
  - APSA Section Travel Grants
- These are often **due early** (and sometimes before you know if you are on the program e.g. ISA)

# Good to know – single submissions

- Make the section program chairs' lives easier in other ways
  - Chairs \*want\* to create coherent panels – use the title, abstract and tags to signal higher-order themes
  - [Thread from Anna Meier](#) on this topic
- Look into previous programs to check out what types of panels the section sponsored
- Not sure which section/division you should choose? Find scholars with similar work, see where they were placed
- As with panels, try to ensure section fit w/ keywords

# Good to know - general

- Volunteer to be a chair or discussant!
  - Not that hard (esp. chairing), great for networking, and your CV.
- Alternative options (roundtables, posters, lightning talks)
- Participation limits:
  - Presenting limit: 2
    - you can appear as presenting author on 1 submitted paper
    - you can appear once on a roundtable 1 time as a presenter
  - Things that don't count towards limits:
    - Discussant and chair roles
    - Participation in TLC at APSA
    - Lightning rounds
    - iPosters
    - any papers or panels in Division 10: Political Science Education
    - APSA status committees
    - Theme panels (1 theme panel max; otherwise does not count against presenting limits)

# Other tips and tricks from the panel



Angie Torres-Beltran  
Ph.D. candidate,  
Cornell University



Dr. Elizabeth Koebele  
Chair of APSA's Science,  
Technology, and Environmental  
Politics Section



Dr. Morgan Kaplan  
Senior Policy & Communications  
Lead at Palantir Technologies

# Upcoming Professional Development

- February 2024- National Capital Area Political Science Association (NCAPSA) events
- March 2024 - You're ABD: What Now?  
Organizing your time and workflow for the dissertation
- April 2024- Conducting Fieldwork
- April 2024- Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grants
- May 2024- Navigating the Job Market

# Upcoming Deadlines

## **January 15, 2024:**

- 6th GSIPE Mini-Conference
- Good Authority Fellowship
- uOttawa CIPS Graduate Student Conference
- Applications for Graduate Support Fund OPENS

## **January 17, 2024:**

- APSA 2024 Meeting Proposals Due
- Teaching in the Time of ChatGPT Zoom Panel

## **January 21, 2024:**

- Applications for Graduate Support Fund CLOSES

Contact Us!

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