

State Politics and Policy

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State Politics Home

Annual State Politics Conferences

State Politics and Policy Quarterly

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Section News

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State Politics and Policy Section Newsletter August, 2004

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From the Section President

As some of you know, I've recently moved. After many very happy years at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, I've flown off to the [University of Leiden](#) in the Netherlands. Being at Leiden provides an interesting perspective from which to contemplate American state politics. I am continually surprised, for example, by how my new colleagues' deep and highly nuanced understanding of American national politics is typically coupled with very limited knowledge of the American states. They all can place California, New York, Florida, and Texas on the map. But many are hard pressed to say just where North Carolina might be. My astonishment reflects to a considerable degree, of course, my own parochial interests in the American states. I am only now, for example, sorting out the Dutch provinces of Gelderland, Zeeland, and Limburg. One useful clue is that Noord and Zuid Holland hold the same relationship to each other as do North and South Dakota! It is a bit unnerving, however, to find that Noord Brabant is not similarly balanced by a Zuid Brabant.

Still, interest in the American states is growing here, perhaps as a result of the Florida voting debacle during the 2000 presidential election. My Dutch students and colleagues have begun to realize that this episode only illustrated a more enduring truth about US politics - one can't really understand American national politics without understanding the states. The next step, however, is to get them interested in the states in their own right as an important and independent locus of American politics and, more generally, as a superb research setting for studying politics and public policy. Fifty states sure beat twelve provinces when it comes to doing science. By the same token, however, fifty American states, twelve Dutch provinces, twenty-six Swiss cantons, and so on could provide us even more observations and levels of analysis to study. There is simply no good reason why we should leave the study of sub-national politics to our comparative colleagues. And focusing more on the comparative study of subnational politics would also provide you a good excuse to visit me in Leiden.

Turning to convention news, Melinda Gann Hall of Michigan State University has done a superb job of preparing our Section's six panels for the upcoming APSA Conference in Chicago. I hope that you will all attend two, three, or more of these panels. And please remember that the number of panels we are allocated next year depends to a considerable degree on how well our panels are attended this year. These panels are a vital collective good that we all benefit from. I don't think that you would be a member of the Section unless you believed this to be true. But many other scholars who work on state politics and policy are not members of the Section and do not attend our panels. So, please remind them that Mancur Olson did not set out to write a guide to ethics, but was instead describing a challenge to be overcome. Attend some panels, and take some friends with you! More to the point, the panels Melinda has prepared are well worth your time and attention. Assuming that your excellent attendance does indeed lead to an abundance of state politics and policy panels at the 2005 APSA Meeting in Washington, I am pleased to

announce that Don Haider-Markel of the University of Kansas has agreed to represent the Section on the Program Committee. I hope that you will all give him a great deal of work to do organizing the 2005 panels.

The Section's business meeting in Chicago will be held on Thursday, September 2nd at 6PM. Please see the program for the location. New officers will be nominated and elected. Best paper awards will be given. And announcements of past and future activities will be made. More importantly, the business meeting provides an excellent occasion for you to see your state politics and policy colleagues. Our Section holds a reception only on a biannual basis in conjunction with the biannual Outstanding Career Award. We might want to discuss making the reception, if not the Award, an annual event at this business meeting. But until that is done, the business meeting will be the place to see your friends and colleagues. I hope to see you there. But do keep next year's business meeting and reception in mind. Shortly after we leave Chicago, I will appoint committees to consider nominees for best paper awards to be announced at next year's Washington meeting. If you see or hear a good paper at the Chicago meeting, please let me know, and don't be shy about self-nominations. Just as importantly, a committee will be appointed to select the next recipient of the Section's Outstanding Career Award. Please think carefully about nominating a scholar whose work has influenced your research and teaching and that of the subfield of state politics and policy. In my view, we are very fortunate to have more than a few exceptionally deserving candidates among us. Please make sure that they are nominated.

Finally, you will recall that we adopted a dual fee structure for membership in the State Politics and Policy Section at last year's meeting in Philadelphia. Faculty dues were raised while providing an automatic subscription for [*State Politics and Policy Quarterly*](#). Graduate students can receive the same great deal on *SPPQ*, but are not required to subscribe as part of their dues of the Section. As near as we can tell, the dual fee structure has had little or no negative impact on our membership and may have had a solid positive impact. From 1994 thru 1998, the State Politics and Policy Section averaged 398 members. Over 1999-2000, membership averaged 424. Last year, when we started the dual fee structure, the section had 445 members. And as of the August 2, 2004 report, membership had increased to 492. As we had hoped, it seems that a lot of *SPPQ* subscribers became members of the Section. This is good news for the Section, good news for *SPPQ*, and good news for the study of state politics and policy. Ron Weber, as former Section President, and Chris Mooney, as *SPPQ* Editor, again deserve our thanks for taking the initiative on the fee proposal at last year's meeting.

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Paper Award Winners Announced

Several awards will be given out at the Section meeting at APSA this year. Remember, as you attend panels this year, keep your eyes open for papers to nominate for next year's awards!

The award for the Best Graduate Student Paper given on a Section panel at the 2003 APSA meeting goes to Nick Theobald of Texas A&M for his paper, "Bilingual Education: Cause or Cure?"

The third annual *SPPQ* award for the Best Paper given on the topic of State Politics

and Policy given at any professional meeting in 2003 has been won by Craig Volden of Ohio State University for his paper, "States as Policy Laboratories: Experimenting with the Children's Health Program." Volden's paper was presented at the 2003 APSA meeting. In previous years, this award was presented at the Section Business meeting at APSA. However, this year, the award was presented at the Annual State Politics Conference held in Akron, Ohio.

Finally, we also give an award for the Best Paper given on a section panel at the 2003 APSA. However, you are going to have to wait for the conference to find out who the winner is!

Congratulations to all of our award winners! Also, thanks to the selection committees for their hard work.

Panels/Events at the 2004 APSA

Section Meeting: The annual Section meeting will be held Thursday, September 2nd at 6:00 p.m. Please check your Official Program for the location of the meeting.

APSA Panels: During the upcoming Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association in Chicago, the State Politics and Policy Section will be sponsoring or co-sponsoring a total of six panels and four individual posters. APSA allocated only four panels to the Section, but we were able to increase our panels to six by arranging co-sponsorships. During the 2004 Meeting, the Section will be co-sponsoring panels with the Elections and Voting Behavior Section (one panel), Legislative Studies Section (one panel), and Public Policy Section (2 panels).

Overall, the State Politics and Policy Section received a total of 113 paper proposals. By including four papers on each panel and by scheduling just two papers that were submitted only to our co-sponsors, we were able to accept 22 of these 113 proposals. While our rejection rate is significant, the intense competition for places on the program means that the papers are sure to be excellent and intellectually stimulating. A distinguished list of chairs and discussants adds to the high quality of the Section's offerings.

Please plan to attend the panels sponsored by the State Politics and Policy Section. From a scientific perspective, the panels are outstanding. From a practical standpoint, attendance determines the Section's panel allocation for the next annual meeting. And, as I can attest from this year's experience, the APSA denies requests for additional space on the program, regardless of such considerations as submission volume and section size. So, please try to attend these panels. Web links to the [APSA preliminary program](#) for the panels are listed below.

29-1 [Parties and Interest Groups in State Policy Making](#)

29-2 [The Politics of Term Limits](#)

29-3 [Direct Democracy in the States](#)

29-4 [Explaining State Policy Choices](#)

29-5 [Electoral Politics in the American States](#)

29-6 [Institutions in State Politics](#)

Thanks, and See you in Chicago!

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Fourth Annual State Politics Conference at Kent State a Big Success

The Fourth Annual State Politics Conference was held April 30-May 1 in Akron, Ohio.

The conference was hosted by Kent State University. The complete [2004 Conference web site](#) provides more information, including [links to many of the papers](#) that were presented. The meeting was very well attended, the facilities were wonderful, and whole event was a great success. The conference ran in conjunction with the [Conference on Term Limits](#) hosted by the Ray Bliss Institute at the University of Akron.

We all should give a great big "Thank-You" and "Job Well Done" to the conference hosts, Caroline Tolbert and Karen Mossberger. They had a tough act to follow after the 2003 conference in Tucson, but they did a great job. They kept the bar set high for future conferences and demonstrated again that these events are very helpful in fostering state politics research as well as a sense of community among state politics scholars.

Fifth Annual State Politics Conference Headed to Michigan State

The Fifth Annual State Politics Conference will be hosted by the [Political Science Department at Michigan State](#) and the [School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan](#). The conference is scheduled for May 13-14, 2005. More information can be found at the online at the [2005 Conference web site](#). Paper proposals for the conference are due November 1st, 2004. Additional information on paper proposals is included in the official [Call for Proposals](#). Contact [Saundra Schneider](#) if you need any further information.

Sixth Annual State Politics Conference Set for Texas Tech

In November of 2003, the Conference Coordinating Committee received two outstanding proposals to host the 2005 annual conference: one from Michigan State/Michigan and one from Texas Tech. The committee hated the idea of turning one down, so we explored other options. It turned out that Texas Tech was able to defer hosting the conference until 2006. However, to secure funds from a generous donor, they needed a commitment from us for the 2006 meeting. Given these circumstances, the Coordinating Committee agreed unanimously to endorse Texas Tech's bid to host the 2006 meeting. So, mark your calendars now for a trip to Lubbock -- I'm told we should expect a wonderful conference and world class barbeque!

Report on State Politics and Policy Quarterly

2004 finds [SPPQ](#) in fine shape. We have published a very strong set of articles in the past year, and more are scheduled for the coming issues. Check out the [Tables of Contents](#) for the details. I am continually impressed by the quality of scholarship being done on state politics these days. It is something in which we can all take pride.

Of special note in the coming year is an issue devoted to "Electoral Redistricting," guest edited by Michael McDonald of George Mason University. This will be the Winter 2004 issue (4:4), shipping about December 1.

There were two major developments regarding SPPQ this past year:

- After a rigorous nationwide search, [Donald Haider-Markel](#) of the University of Kansas was appointed to serve as the Associate Editor of [SPPQ](#) as of July 1, 2004. Don took over from Kevin Smith of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln who did a wonderful job as the Founding Associate Editor. Don's duties include editing and developing The Practical Researcher section of [SPPQ](#) and maintaining the [SPPQ Data Resource web site](#). Don is also starting an exciting new project developing a

directory of political scientists who are willing to serve as informal resources for scholars and journalists needing some background on a given state's politics and government. The goal is to have at least one such "local expert" for each state. Those interesting in serving as such a resource for a particular state should contact Don. More announcements regarding this directory will be forthcoming from him.

- At last year's annual meeting in Philadelphia, the State Politics and Policy section voted to raise its dues substantially to provide each regular member with a subscription to *SPPQ*. This show of faith and support for the journal was deeply gratifying for those of us involved with *SPPQ*, especially with the potential for the increased dues discouraging marginally interested members from renewing their memberships. In a sense, the section bet the farm on *SPPQ*. As it has turned out, that bet has paid off. Since implementing this arrangement on November 3, 2004, the section membership has actually increased from 445 to 470 members. This arrangement will be good for the section, by solidifying and expanding its membership, for the journal, by increasing its readership and subscription base, and the field, by encouraging and developing top-quality, visible scholarship. We are looking forward to a long and happy marriage between the journal and the section.

Other *SPPQ* points of note include:

- We have two new editorial assistants coming on board this summer—Denise Howard, a graduate student in English at the University of Illinois at Springfield, and Mahalley D. Allen, a graduate student in Political Science at the University of Kansas (and an *SPPQ* author). Welcome Denise and Mahalley!
- *SPPQ* has published a call for papers for a special issue entitled "The Impacts of State Legislative Terms Limits," to be published in 2006. The deadline for submissions is February 1, 2005.
- As of August 16, I will be stepping down as the director of the Institute for Legislative Studies at the University of Illinois at Springfield. The ILS was instrumental in the founding of *SPPQ*, and it will continue to house the journal's business office. I will continue to teach in the Political Studies Department at UIS, but I am also taking a half-time position with the Institute of Government and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois. The IGPA is very excited to support *SPPQ* by housing the editorial office, and we at *SPPQ* are very appreciative of the support.

Please continue to read *SPPQ* and submit your best scholarship for consideration. *SPPQ* is only as good as the scholarship submitted to it, and it is in all of our best interest to see this journal continue to prosper.

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