

STATE POLITICS & POLICY QUARTERLY

The Official Journal of the State Politics and Policy Organized Section of the
American Political Science Association

TO: Members, State Politics and Policy section, APSA
FROM: Chris Mooney, Editor
RE: Proposal to link section dues and *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* subscription
DATE: August 12, 2003

State Politics and Policy Quarterly has been the official journal of the State Politics and Policy organized section of the American Political Science Association since SPPQ began publishing in March 2001. Currently, this relationship is non-financial, as neither the journal nor the section provide funds to the other party. After close consultation with the SPPQ editorial board and others with experience in section governance and journal management, I believe that it would be advantageous to both the section and the journal for the section to increase its membership dues to provide each member with a subscription to SPPQ. In this memo, I describe how this could be done and discuss the potential impact on the section, its members, and SPPQ.

Proposal

- Starting in 2004 for the 2005 calendar year, the State Politics and Policy section raises its annual dues to \$27 per year.
 - Current section dues are \$7 per year, of which \$3 is retained by APSA and \$4 is remitted to the section.
- The section remits \$20 per member to SPPQ. In return, SPPQ supplies all members with a year's subscription to the journal.
 - This keeps the section's portion of the dues the same (\$4), and it gives SPPQ the minimum that can reasonably be charged for a subscription (\$20).
- This arrangement could be set up as a four-year pilot program, to be revisited by the section in 2007. This would give the journal and the section 2.5 years of experience to evaluate the arrangement and still allow the 18 months or so it would take to end it smoothly, if necessary.
 - These long time lags for beginning and ending this arrangement are needed due to the time it takes APSA membership forms to be changed, the yearlong nature of section membership, and the fact that the section only meets once per year to make decisions.
 - Four years is probably the minimum time needed to give this arrangement a fair trial, given the volatility of section membership rates. Also, this would coincide with the likely timeframe of the contractual arrangements between SPPQ and its new publisher.

Potential Impacts

On the Section

Potential benefits:

- Increased membership by providing a valued selective benefit (see below)
- Enhanced sense of community and commonality among members as they read their common journal
- Enhanced intellectual interaction, integration, and cohesiveness of the state politics research and teaching community, leading to greater progress on the state politics research agenda

Potential drawbacks:

- Loss of membership due to increase in dues (see below)
 - Loss of graduate student members
 - Loss of marginal members with memberships in related sections

On Section Members

Potential benefits:

- Cheaper subscription to SPPQ (currently, section member rate is \$32 per year)
- Convenience of subscribing and joining the section at the same time

Potential drawbacks:

- Being required to subscribe to a journal he/she does not want in order to be a section member

On SPPQ

Potential benefits:

- Increased readership and submissions
- Increased subscriber base
 - Currently, only 67 out of 445 section members subscribe to SPPQ
- Increased library subscriptions as more readers request their libraries to do so
- Useful in negotiations on a new publisher contract for 2005 and beyond (RFP to be sent to potential publishers in September 2003)
- Increased readership and use will reduce the time it takes to be picked up by Thompson ISI for the Social Science Citation Index

Potential drawbacks:

- Loss of revenue from cheap membership subscriptions

Impact on Section Membership: The Political Methodology/*Political Analysis* Experience

Clearly, the most important issue raised for the section by the proposed arrangement is its impact on section membership. While it is an open question whether such an

arrangement would increase or decrease membership, there is one APSA section and journal with a similar arrangement to which we can look for tentative answers.

In 1999, the Political Methodology section began bundling its membership dues with a subscription to its journal, *Political Analysis*. Their current membership/subscription rate is \$25 per year, the highest of any APSA section, but it is also the only section that provides its members with a journal. The Political Methodology section officers and the editor of *Political Analysis* report that this arrangement has been entirely successful, both for the section and the journal.

In particular, consider the potential impact of this arrangement on the Political Methodology section's membership rate. Even though these rates fluctuate fairly dramatically for every section from year to year, Political Methodology's membership has increased notably since it started bundling *Political Analysis* with its dues. Its membership rose from a mean of 555.2 members in 1994-98 to a mean of 793.0 in 1999-2002, for a 42.8% increase. In comparison, the State Politics and Policy section's membership had means of 398.4 members in 1994-98 and 424.0 in 1999-2002, for a 6.4% increase. This was slightly below the 8.6% average increase for all section memberships across these two periods (see the attached table for these figures for each of the 30 APSA sections active during this entire period). Indeed, the Political Methodology section had the second highest rate of growth between these two periods of all APSA sections. Only two very new sections with low starting membership levels (the Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy and Undergraduate Education sections) had even as much as half the rate of growth as the Political Methodology section. Thus, while this simple analysis certainly does not prove that bundling the Political Methodology sections' dues with *Political Analysis* caused that section's membership to increase, it does suggest that at least this bundling did not cause its membership to decrease.

Summary

I believe that bundling the State Politics and Policy section dues with a subscription to SPPQ would be of overall benefit to the section, its members, and the journal. It is another logical step in the progress that the section is making in developing a strong, self-conscious political science sub-field, along with the founding of SPPQ and the annual state politics conferences. Of course, I am sensitive to the fact that this is a rather bold move. I look forward to discussing this further at the annual section meeting in Philadelphia.

**Table 1: APSA Organized Section Average
Membership Change between 1994-98 and 1999-2000**

Section	Average membership: 1994-98	Average membership: 1999-2000	Change in average membership
Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy	279.8	401.0	43.3%
Political Methodology	555.2	793.0	42.8%
Undergraduate Education	259.6	366.3	41.1%
Political & History	550.8	669.5	21.6%
Foundations of Political Theory	540.0	651.8	20.7%
Elections/Electoral Behavior	602.0	726.5	20.7%
Religion & Politics	404.8	486.3	20.1%
Conflict Resolution	283.4	338.5	19.4%
Comparative Politics	1,297.2	1,511.8	16.5%
New Political Science	266.6	309.5	16.1%
Political Psychology	318.4	369.0	15.9%
Women & Politics	559.8	623.0	11.3%
Representation & Electoral Systems	331.6	365.5	10.2%
ALL SECTION MEMBERSHIPS	14,199.8	15,419.30	8.6%
Law & Courts	755.0	808.8	7.1%
Political Communications	384.6	410.3	6.7%
State Politics and Policy	398.4	424.0	6.4%
Federalism and IGR	377.2	394.8	4.7%
Political Organizations	551.8	577.3	4.6%
Legislative Studies	606.6	632.3	4.2%
Politics & Literature	263.8	272.5	3.3%
Presidency	403.4	407.3	1.0%
Science, Technology & Environment	319.2	314.5	-1.5%
Urban Politics	405.0	394.8	-2.5%
Western Europe	425.6	412.3	-3.1%
International Security	473.8	455.3	-3.9%
Information Technology and Politics	247.4	233.3	-5.7%
Political Economy	663.8	621.3	-6.4%
Public Administration	628.6	562.0	-10.6%
Transformational Politics	248.2	218.0	-12.2%
Public Policy	798.2	669.5	-16.1%