Political Research Quarterly
2014 Activity Report

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<u>A. Overview</u>

On July 1, 2014, *Political Research Quarterly* (PRQ) officially transitioned from Washington State University (WSU) to Oklahoma State University (OSU). The former co-editors, Amy G. Mazur and Cornell W. Clayton, did an excellent job of increasing the journal's influence in the discipline, and the new co-editors, Jason Maloy and Jeanette Mendez, have embarked on new initiatives to build on that success. The transition was facilitated by the conscientious assistance of the entire WSU editorial staff. Members of the WPSA Executive Council, especially President Victoria Farrar-Myers, Vice-President Louis DeSipio, Executive Director Richard Clucas, and Associate Director Elsa J. Favila, have been extremely helpful. We would also like to thank Mark Button at the University of Utah, as well as the staff at SAGE Publications, particularly Danielle Bath, Ayan Dhar, Leah Fargotstein, Tzveta Mihaylov, Jesse Soll, and Jennifer Stephenson, for their support and guidance throughout the transition process.

The new OSU team features, besides the two co-editors, one Associate Editor and two Editorial Assistants. The Associate Editor is Jacob Mauslein, a recent graduate of the Ph.D. program in Security Studies at Kansas State University and currently a Visiting Assistant Professor at OSU. His duties include formal processing of new submissions (including checks on formatting, anonymity, and plagiarism), aiding the co-editors with initial evaluations of new submissions, conducting routine correspondence with authors and reviewers, and facilitating the production process for accepted manuscripts. He has also been instrumental in developing and implementing new policies on data availability (described further below). The Editorial Assistants, Baylee Butler and Julianna Muskrat, are M.A. students in Political Science at OSU. Their duties include aiding the co-editors in the selection of reviewers for specific manuscripts, as well as gathering more general information on authors, reviewers, and journals for the co-editors' use.

We installed a new editorial board with 37 members on July 1; most of the previous 58 members had served continuously under the WSU team since 2006. (The names of all board members who served in 2014 are recognized in Appendix A, below.) Since the tables of contents for both the September and December issues of 2014 were virtually complete when the WSU team's term expired, the printed journal continued to display their staff's and board members' names in those two issues. Names of the new editorial team and board first appeared in print in the March 2015 issue.

The journal's masthead in 2015 also reflects a handful of policy changes and clarifications. The most significant change involves data availability; two minor clarifications involve the journal's mission and its double-blind process. These changes and others are explained in Section B below.

In tune with WPSA's emphasis on scholarly diversity and pluralism, we have begun taking steps to raise the journal's profile among scholars across various fields of study. These and other outreach efforts, including strengthening the intellectual ties between WPSA and PRQ and enhancing the journal's social-media presence, are explained in Section C below.

Data on manuscript submissions, processing times, and decision ratios are presented in Sections D, E, and F below. Reviewer awards are announced in Section G.

We believe that PRQ's influence within the discipline remains steady and significant at the end of this transitional year. (Data on Impact Factor for 2013, the most recent year available, are discussed in Section H.) As we stated in our application for the editorship, our goal is to raise PRQ to an elite level among generalist journals of political science, in terms of the caliber of scholarship published. Our hunch is that the discipline of political science may have room for a "Big Four," not just a "Big Three." If that is the case, PRQ has the potential to reshape the landscape of English-language publishing in the study of politics and power.

B. Journal Policies

Toward the end of 2014 we developed new policies on data availability and added new language to the PRQ masthead and website clarifying the journal's generalist mission and its double-blind process.

Many academic venues for political research are interested in promoting the value of research transparency, PRQ among them. Recently within the discipline, prompted by the APSA working group on Data Access and Research Transparency (DART), new procedures have been adopted to increase the availability of data and the replicability of research. PRQ is now contributing to this effort by requiring authors of accepted papers to make the data on which their publications are based available online for public access. Our authors have the choice of posting their data on personal websites or in public repositories such as the Harvard Dataverse Network, or else storing their datasets on SAGE Publication's servers. In the latter case, links to the data are posted alongside the digital version of the article as well as printed in the hard-copy journal. Associate Editor Mauslein is overseeing the implementation of this policy on research transparency, and PRQ authors have been extremely supportive and co-operative.

New language about the journal's generalist mission reflects the two main criteria that we announced in our application for the editorship in 2013: "A manuscript that respects PRQ's generalist mission and readership will attempt to contribute knowledge and insights that engage readers across multiple fields of political research, or that constitute an exceptional contribution within a specialized field." In July we immediately added similar language to our routine correspondence to authors and reviewers, simply as a reminder of intuitive and widely shared assumptions about the role of generalist journals in the discipline. Subsequently we added this language to the masthead and website.

New language about anonymity in the review process is intended to reflect intuitive and widely shared assumptions about the double-blind procedure employed by PRQ and most other peer-reviewed journals in political science: "The principle of anonymity requires that authors and reviewers alike should not deliberately make their identities public during the review process, or in anticipation of a review process soon to be underway." This language was designed to affirm the basic goals of double-blind review without penalizing incidental

breaches of anonymity which sometimes occur in the course of scholarly communication.

Minor changes to submission guidelines also took effect on July 1. We changed the maximum length of submitted manuscripts from 35 pages to 9,000 words; assuming an average of 250 words per double-spaced page, this reflects a slight increase in the maximum. We continue to count all text (including tables, notes, and lists of references but not graphics or appendices) toward this limit. We also changed the word limit for the abstract from 150 to 200 words.

C. Outreach Efforts

WPSA has placed a historic and distinctive emphasis on scholarly diversity and pluralism, and we take the promotion of those values as a key part of our job as co-editors of PRQ. American Politics has been and continues to be the most prominent field of specialization for PRQ's authors and reviewers. Members of the new editorial board have been enlisted to promote the journal informally among colleagues in Comparative Politics and International Relations, where (anecdotally) space for high-quality and impactful research is extraordinarily tight among a handful of elite generalist and specialist journals. We have made deliberate efforts to add new names to the journal's database of invited reviewers, in these and other fields, which can have knock-on effects in attracting new authors. Above all, we have made concerted outreach efforts in the field of Political Theory, in which WPSA occupies a unique status as a forum for innovative work. Outside PRQ's normal circuit of the APSA and WPSA annual meetings, one of the co-editors personally attended the annual meeting of the Association for Political Theory, a field-specific conference where PRQ sponsored a reception in October 2014. All these outreach efforts were conceived as long-term efforts, and we are hopeful of reporting positive results in future.

Reflecting the strong bond between WPSA and PRQ, winners of the seven paper awards for each annual meeting of WPSA receive an expedited review process (i.e. an automatic "Revise and Resubmit" invitation) in PRQ. In addition to continuing this practice, we informally reached out to authors of dozens of other papers at WPSA 2014 to ask them to consider PRQ as a potential venue for publication. We see this kind of outreach as a way to accentuate the notion that the conference can be a stepping-stone to publication after a rigorous peer-review process. We are pleased to report that one paper that was presented at WPSA 2014 has already appeared in PRQ's pages as a published article (in the March 2015 issue): Farid Abdel-Nour, "Irreconcilable Narratives and Overlapping Consensus: The Jewish State and the Palestinian Right of Return."

Another aspect of our social-media strategy is the PRQ Editors' Podcast series, which is hosted on the journal's website and linked through other online platforms. Our first podcast, released in the wake of the 2014 mid-term elections in the United States, took voter-identification laws as its theme and featured Dr. Rene Rocha of the University of Iowa (author of an article on that topic in the September 2014 issue of the journal). Online views of Dr. Rocha's article, as well as of an advance (Online First) copy of a related article that appeared in the March 2015 issue, increased significantly after the release of the podcast. We plan to continue this series with an emphasis on authors of recent and forthcoming

work. Our second podcast has just been released in March 2015, featuring Dr. Jeff Smith of the New School for Social Research, on the theme of financial influence vs. constituent pressure in American state legislatures.

D. Manuscript Submissions

PRQ received 438 new submissions in 2014, including 224 from July to December. The total for the year was a record high for the journal. (A total of 18 additional manuscripts were also sent to us through the SAGEtrack online system but were subsequently withdrawn because of formatting problems.)

The data reported below for manuscript submissions include field breakdowns; processing times are reported in Section E, and decision ratios in Section F. In addition to 438 new submissions, we report data for 58 revised manuscript submissions in these sections.

PRQ uses nine primary field categories for classifying manuscripts and reviewers. These include:
      American Politics
      Comparative Politics
      Gender, Race, and Identity
      International Relations
      Methodology
      Political Theory
      Public Administration
      Public Policy
      Public Law

When authors submit their research in the SAGEtrack online system, they are asked to select one of these categories as a primary field that best represents the nature of their research. Figure 1 (below) presents the breakdown of original submissions by the nine primary fields for 2014.

Figure 1.

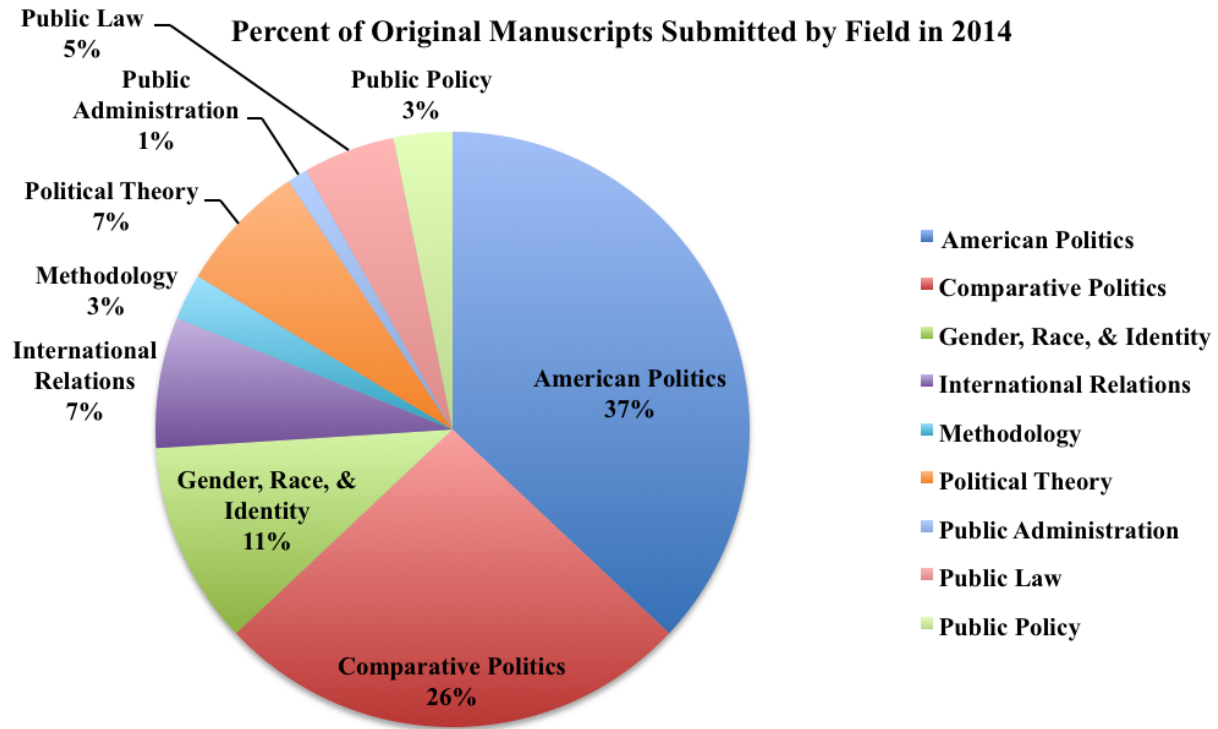Percent of Original Manuscripts Submitted by Field in 2014

Table 1 (below) differentiates the primary-field breakdown between the first and second halves of the year. (The OSU team was responsible for manuscripts submitted on June 30 and afterward.)

The patterns of submission by primary field do not reflect any major changes between the WSU and OSU regimes, in our judgment. For example, though the proportion of submissions in American Politics rose by 6.6%, submissions in Gender, Race, & Identity fell by 4.2% while submissions in Public Law fell by 2.9%. Our experience indicates that most submissions in these latter two categories are empirical studies of politics in the United States (i.e. most GRI and PL papers could have been submitted as AP papers without misrepresenting their contents). Therefore it seems more likely that these numbers reflect a shift in authors' field-identifications of their manuscripts than a shift in the substance of the manuscripts themselves. All other changes in primary fields between the first and second halves of the calendar year were of a magnitude of less than two percent.

Table 1. Newly submitted manuscripts in 2014.

Manuscript Type	# of Manuscripts (Jan 1 – Jun 29)	Percentage of Manuscripts (Jan 1 – Jun 29)	# of Manuscripts (Jun 30 – Dec 31)	Percentage of Manuscripts (Jun 30 – Dec 31)
American Politics	72	33.6%	90	40.2%
Comparative Politics	54	25.2%	60	26.8%
Gender, Race, & Identity	28	13.1%	20	8.9%
International Relations	16	7.5%	15	6.7%
Methodology	7	3.3%	4	1.8%
Political Theory	13	6.1%	18	8.0%
Public Administration	3	1.4%	2	0.9%
Public Law	14	6.5%	8	3.6%
Public Policy	7	3.3%	7	3.1%
Summary	214	100.0%	224	100.0%

In order to capture more accurately the substance of manuscripts in future reports, we have made two changes in collecting and presenting fields data: allowing more than one field to be counted per manuscript and recoding manuscript fields in exceptional cases. Counting more than one field per manuscript (the "open count" method) fits the stated goal of our application for the editorship of encouraging research that straddles or crosses subfield boundaries. It also may give a truer picture of the contents of manuscripts than counting only the single self-identified field (the "single count" method), which sometimes forces authors to make an essentially arbitrary choice among more than one field when submitting their manuscript. Recoding manuscript fields in a minority of cases seems advisable in light of the possibility that, when selecting from among around 50 secondary fields, some authors may be unaware that the nine primary fields are among the choices there. Most of our recodes have in fact involved adding a field when it seemed in our judgment genuinely to reflect the contents and concerns of a manuscript.

Table 2 (below) presents all-fields data for July through December only. These open-count numbers are not strictly comparable with the single-count data presented above, but they will provide a baseline for comparison in future annual reports. There are three categories of interest: original submissions, revised submissions, and printed articles. The open-count method is designed to reflect the reader's perspective more realistically: what percentage of all manuscripts may strongly appeal to readers interested in any given field?

Table 2. New manuscripts from June 30 to Dec. 31, 2014; "open count" method.

Manuscript Type	primary field	secondary field	total fields	percentage of all manuscripts
American Politics	92	29	121	54.02%
Comparative Politics	60	14	74	33.04%
Gender, Race, & Identity	20	17	37	16.52%
International Relations	15	6	21	9.38%
Methodology	4	9	13	5.80%
Political Theory	18	8	26	11.61%
Public Administration	2	9	11	4.91%
Public Law	7	8	15	6.70%
Public Policy	6	12	18	8.05%
Summary	224	112	336	150.00%

These data show that, on average, one new submission out of two in the second half of 2014 made a substantial appeal to more than one field (hence the ratio of all fields to the number of manuscripts adds up to 150%). Unsurprisingly, each field's percentage share is higher than with the single-count method, reflecting the reality that around half of submitted manuscripts do hold substantive interest for more than one field. American Politics sees the greatest percentage jump from the single count to the open count, from around 40% to around 54%, respectively. Our interpretation of this data is that, for readers who specialize in American Politics, 54% of newly submitted manuscripts hold the potential for a strong and substantive appeal; the numbers for the rest of the fields reflect a similar, reader-centered logic.

A brief snapshot of the March 2015 issue (the first issue whose table of contents was under the OSU team's control) shows how the open-count method can also be used to reflect the published contents of the journal. Table 3 (below) shows that from 15 articles we can identify 15 primary fields and 22 total fields.

Table 3. Published articles in the March 2015 issue.

Manuscript Type	primary field	secondary field	total fields	percentage of all manuscripts
American Politics	6	1	7	46.67%
Comparative Politics	3	2	5	33.33%
Gender, Race, & Identity	2	1	3	20.00%
International Relations	1	1	2	13.33%
Methodology	1	0	1	6.67%
Political Theory	2	0	2	13.33%
Public Administration	0	0	0	0.00%
Public Law	0	1	1	6.67%
Public Policy	0	1	1	6.67%
Summary	15	7	22	146.67%

Finally, we would like to acknowledge that PRQ receives and accepts submissions from around the world. In 2014, while 75% of new submissions came from the United States, 4% came from the United Kingdom, and between 1 and 2% came from each of Canada, South Korea, Netherlands, Turkey, Italy, Japan, and Spain. (For more details, see the 2015 SAGE publisher's report, p. 14.)

E. Processing Times

Both editorial teams have maintained a streamlined review process to ensure timely decisions on manuscripts. The average time in review at the journal, from submission to first decision, remains slightly under two months. Figure 2 (below) provides data on the average number of days between submission and decision for both original and revised manuscripts.

Figure 2.

Average Number of Days from Submission to Decision - 2014
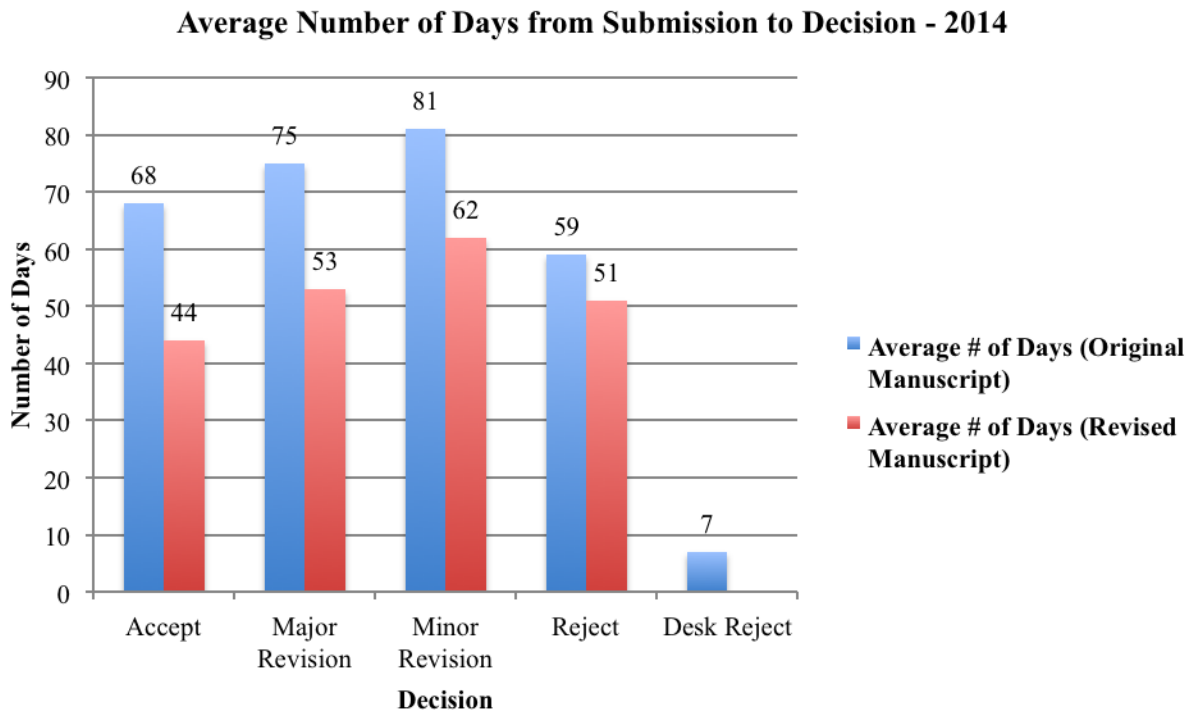
From July through December, the average processing time for all manuscripts receiving external review (73% of all submissions) was 70.58 days, while the average time for desk-rejected manuscripts (27% of all submissions) was 6.85 days. (Because the WSU team did not distinguish between rejections after full review and desk-rejections, data for desk-rejections are unavailable before June 30.)

By July 2013, the WSU team had succeeded in reducing the backlog of accepted and forthcoming articles to around six months. As of the March 2015 issue, the OSU team has all but eliminated the backlog. We are now operating within the standard time until printed publication, at around three months, for newly accepted manuscripts. For an accepted manuscript that undergoes two rounds of review (original submission plus one round of revisions), that means that the time from initial submission to final publication is typically equal to seven months plus however long the author may take for revisions.

F. Manuscript Decisions

Consistent with the journal's growing quality and prestige, the acceptance rate has declined over the past seven years, from an 18-percent acceptance rate in 2006 to an 11-percent rate in 2014. The acceptance rate is now comparable to other top-ranked journals in the discipline.

Table 4 (below) provides a breakdown of the decisions made by each of the editorial teams for original submissions.

Table 4. Decisions for new submissions in 2014.

Manuscript Type	# of Manuscripts (Jan 1 – Jun 29)	Percentage of Manuscripts (Jan 1 – Jun 29)	# of Manuscripts (Jun 30 – Dec 31)	Percentage of Manuscripts (Jun 30 – Dec 31)
Accept	1	0.5%	0	0.0%
Minor Revision	0	0.0%	3	1.3%
Major Revision	31	14.5%	38	17.0%
Reject	181	84.6%	118	52.7%
Desk Reject	0	0.0%	61	27.2%
Withdrawn	1	0.5%	0	0.0%
Summary	*214*	*100%*	*224*	*100%*

Table 5 (below) provides the same data for revised as opposed to new submissions.

Table 5. Decisions for revised submissions in 2014.

Manuscript Type	# of Manuscripts (Jan 1 – Jun 29)	Percentage of Manuscripts (Jan 1 – Jun 29)	# of Manuscripts (Jun 30 – Dec 31)	Percentage of Manuscripts (Jun 30 – Dec 31)
In Progress	0	0.0%	1	3.7%
Accept	27	87.1%	17	63.0%
Minor/Major Revision	3	9.7%	7	25.9%
Reject	1	3.2%	2	7.4%
Summary	*31*	*100%*	*27*	*100%*

Figure 3 (below) shows the distribution of articles accepted in 2014 by substantive fields. American Politics constitutes the most accepted area (36%), followed closely by Gender, Race, & Identity (31%) and Comparative Politics (18%). Other accepted manuscripts fall into the fields of International Relations (5%), Political Theory and Public Law (both 4%) and Public Policy (2%).

Figure 3.

Percent of Manuscripts Accepted by Field in 2014

- American Politics
- Comparative Politics
- Gender, Race, & Identity
- International Relations
- Political Theory
- Public Law
- Public Policy

American Politics 36%
Comparative Politics 18%
Gender, Race, & Identity 31%
International Relations 5%
Political Theory 4%
Public Law 4%
Public Policy 2%
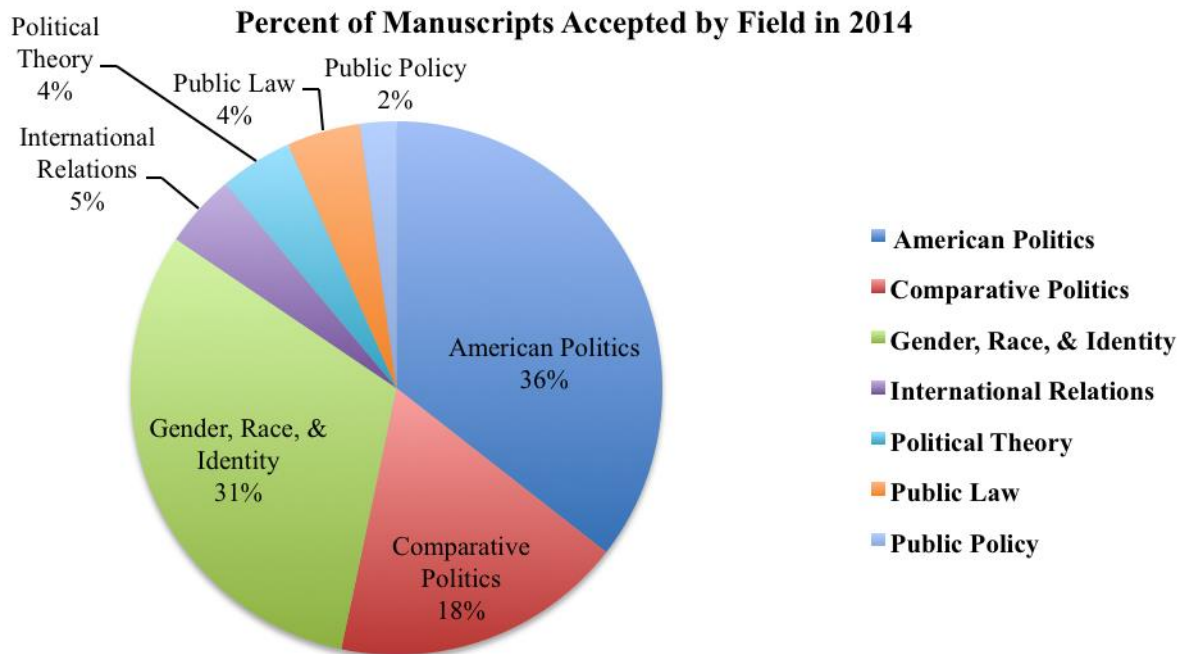
G. Reviewer Awards

To thank PRQ reviewers for their time and effort, Sage also continues to offer 30 days of free access to all titles on the SAGE Journals Online First platform, as well as a 25% discount on SAGE books.

Following PRQ custom, we annually recognize our Top 20 Reviewers, each of whom receives a $60 voucher redeemable with SAGE Publications. The co-editors also send a message of recognition to the department head of each reviewer. The Top 20 for 2014 are (in alphabetical order):

Christopher Alcantara	Wilfrid Laurier University
Gizem Arikan	Yasar University (Turkey)
Manny Avalos	University of North Carolina, Wilmington
Nicholas Bauroth	North Dakota State University
Jeb Barnes	University of Southern California
Nadia Brown	Purdue University
Edward Burmila	Bradley University
Nicholas Carnes	Duke University
Jamie Carson	University of Georgia
Sabri Ciftci	Kansas State University
Eric Heberlig	University of North Carolina, Charlotte
Devin Joshi	University of Denver

Vladimir Kogan   Ohio State University
Eric Loepp   University of Pittsburgh
Juan Micozzi   Instituto Tecnologico Autonomo de Mexico
Francisco Pedraza   Texas A&M University
Patricia Strach   University at Albany, SUNY
Robert P. Taylor   University of Vermont
Christopher Witko   University of South Carolina
Matthew Wright   American University

H. Journal Impact

Among a variety of ways of assessing the quality and impact of academic journals, the Journal Citation Report (JCR) Impact Factor is the most visible. The WSU team oversaw a period of steady growth in this measure, from 0.47 in 2006 to 0.99 in 2013 (the most recent year measured); the number of total annual citations of PRQ articles rose over the same period from 501 to 1550 (see Table 5). Over the same period, the number of journals and the volume of journal articles in political science has grown across the board. Compared to other journals in the discipline, PRQ rose from the bottom half of the JCR rankings (46 out of 85 for 2006, and 56 out of 93 for 2007) to the top 40% (58 out of 156 for 2013), after peaking in the top third in 2010 (40 out of 141).

Table 5. PRQ Impact Factor data since 2006.

	Total Cites	Impact Factor	5- Year Impact Factor	Journal Ranking (by Impact Factor)
2006	501	0.468		46/85
2007	636	0.486	0.902	56/93
2008	887	0.75	1.294	39/99
2009	963	0.915	1.219	36/112
2010	1187	1.018	1.249	40/141
2011	1189	0.921	1.298	45/149
2012	1323	1.044	1.281	48/157
2013	1550	0.985	1.46	58/156

Leaving aside larger theoretical and methodological issues, at least two operational cautions are in order when interpreting Impact Factor data (see also the 2015 SAGE publisher's report, p. 24). First, the overall measure is calculated in proportion to the number of articles in a journal, so that an increased citation count for the journal as a whole does not necessarily increase the Impact Factor. PRQ is one of the most voluminous journals (in raw count of articles) in political science. That number was 74 in 2013 and is due to rise to 80 in 2014. Among the 57 higher-ranked journals in 2013, only three (*Journal of Politics*, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, and *Electoral Studies*) published more articles. Second, only citations of articles from the previous two calendar years are

reflected in the Impact Factor, which puts a premium on early (online) availability on PRQ's end (where the production staff at SAGE Publications are very helpful and proficient) and rapid turnaround to publication on the citing articles' end.

For 2015, we can project a modest decrease in the total number of articles published in PRQ, down from 80 (in 2014) to between 60 and 70. The four issues in 2014 featured a relatively large number of mini-symposia which contributed 28 of the 80 total articles for the year. Since the IF score for any given year only counts citations of a journal's articles from the previous two years, PRQ's IF score for 2014 will be based on citations of articles published in 2012 and 2013.

<u>Appendix A</u>

PRQ EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD – Jan 2014 thru June 2014

Todd Landman	*University of Essex*
David Leal	*University of Texas, Austin*
Fabrice Lehoucq	*University of North Carolina, Greensboro*
Pei-te Lien	*University of California, Santa Barbara*
Ian Lustick	*University of Pennsylvania*
Amy Mazur	*Washington State University*
John McCormick	*University of Chicago*
Anthony McGann	*University of Strathclyde*
Jeannie Morefield	*Whitman College*
Cary Nederman	*Texas A&M University*
Ido Oren	*University of Florida*
Richard Pacelle	*University of Tennessee*
David Redlawsk	*Rutgers University*
Dan Reiter	*Emory University*
Kira Sanbonmatsu	*Rutgers University*
David Schlosberg	*University of Sydney*
Tracy Sulkin	*University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*
Cameron Thies	*Arizona State University*
Jessica Trounstine	*University of California, Merced*
Carolyn Warner	*Arizona State University*
David L. Williams	*DePaul University*