

# Political Research Quarterly

## 2021 Activity Report

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## Overview

The 2021 annual report constitutes the final full year of the *Political Research Quarterly (PRQ)* editorial team composed of Seth C. McKee (Editor in Chief, American Politics Field Editor, Oklahoma State University), Toby J. Rider (International Relations Field Editor, Texas Tech University), Frank C. Thames (Comparative Politics and Gender Politics Field Editor, Texas Tech University), Sophia Jordán Wallace (Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration Field Editor, University of Washington) and David Lay Williams (Political Theory and Philosophy Field Editor, DePaul University).

As we certainly expect is true of most other academic journals, the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has posed remarkable challenges. For instance, after passing a milestone of 500 original submissions in 2019, we saw a substantial 12% decline in new submissions during 2020 and another 5.3% decline in 2021. Specifically, in 2021, *PRQ* received 451 original manuscripts. As the global struggle to return to a normal state of affairs persists, we cannot provide any firm expectations regarding the total number of new manuscript submissions for 2022. In short, the new submission volume is not yet back to pre-pandemic levels, and hence passing the 500-manuscript mark again, might be a challenging task this year. Nevertheless, there appears a steady number of submissions (indeed, a slight uptick) in the new calendar year and this pace does make the 500-mark attainable once again.

We remain committed to maintaining the highest standards of academic work published in *PRQ*. In furtherance of this objective, at the start of our tenure we embraced an editorial model that employs a division of labor based on academic specialization. We see it as an optimal means to improve the quality of published work and efficiency in processing manuscripts. Reflecting the increasing quality of work submitted to *PRQ*, in the last couple of years we have reduced the most recent desk rejection rate by over 10 percentage points, which comes in at around 39% in 2021. Relatedly, the percentage of accepted papers is also rising and now stands at 16%.

We are particularly pleased with the growth of articles represented in the areas of *Race and Identity* and *Political Theory*. These fields saw a notable rise in submissions in 2021 and accounted for almost 26% of all submissions. Indeed, the ongoing increase in *Political Theory* articles in the pages of *PRQ* is one of our most important accomplishments, perhaps editorial legacy. Historically, numerous voices in the WPSA have lodged complaints regarding the considerable presence of theorists in the organization and in conference participation and yet there had been a disconnect with the underrepresentation of this political science subfield in *PRQ*.

We continued accumulating papers in our *TRENDS* section, which hosts some of the most cutting-edge recently published papers in the political science discipline. We introduced this feature to the journal at the end of 2018 to draw attention to work that appears particularly novel in speaking to the dynamics of contemporary political phenomena. This collection now contains 16 articles, including two published under the *TRENDS* banner in the March 2022 issue.

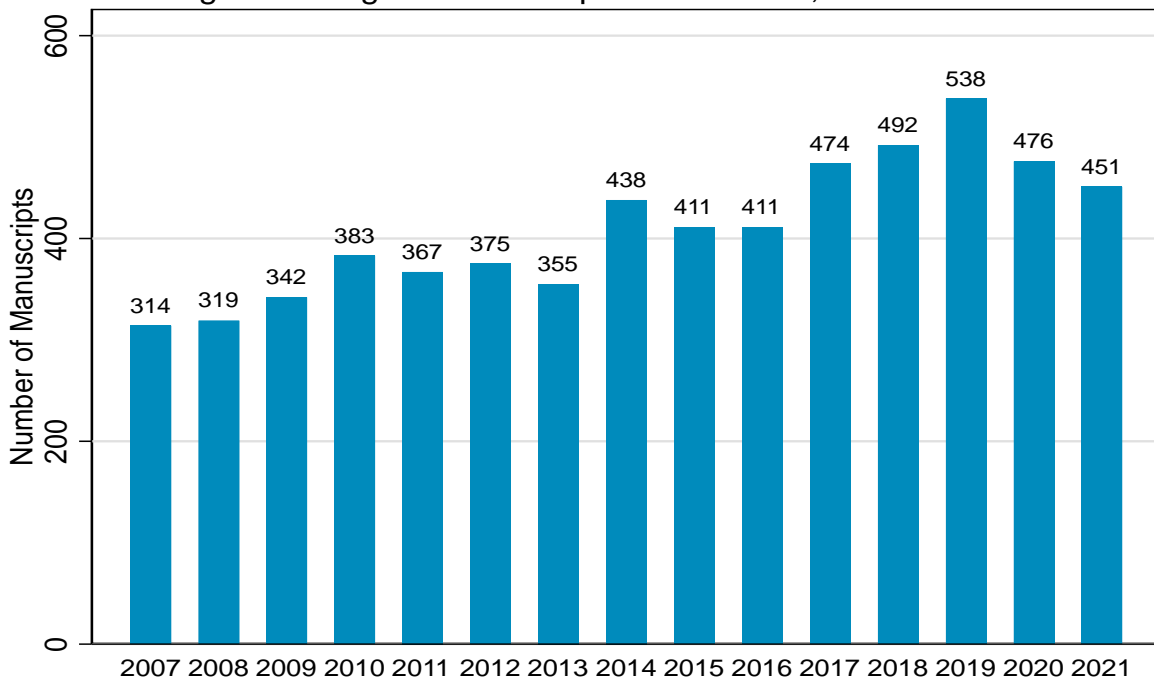
Once again, we want to emphasize our commitment to efficient communication with authors and reviewers. It should be expected that you will hear from us no later than two days, and usually

within twenty-four hours, from the time of your inquiry. In addition, we keep making efforts to further increase *PRQ*'s academic and public visibility. We continue to recognize award-winning articles, host article symposiums, and make use of podcasts to further the reach and impact of our authors. We also consistently use Twitter to promote research published at *PRQ* (over 2,000 followers on *PRQ*'s Twitter site). Finally, if and when the novel coronavirus pandemic subsides, we will once again offer a vibrant reception at the WPSA annual conference and host the *PRQ* editorial board meeting at the American Political Science Association (APSA) conference.

### Manuscript Submissions

In 2021 original<sup>1</sup> submissions declined by 5.3% (Figure 1). It is the second year in a row that we observe a declining number of papers sent to *PRQ*. While we remain concerned about a dip in submissions, we also believe that it is the consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic slowing researchers' productivity. Sight unseen, for the same reason, we suspect other leading political science journals also experienced a short-term drop in original manuscript submissions. On the other side of the ledger, we can attest to the fact that during the pandemic there has been a notable reluctance to accept reviewer invitations. Hence, it is the worst of both worlds; a reduction in scholarly productivity and a decline in the willingness to review papers.

Figure 1: Original Manuscript Submissions, 2007-2021



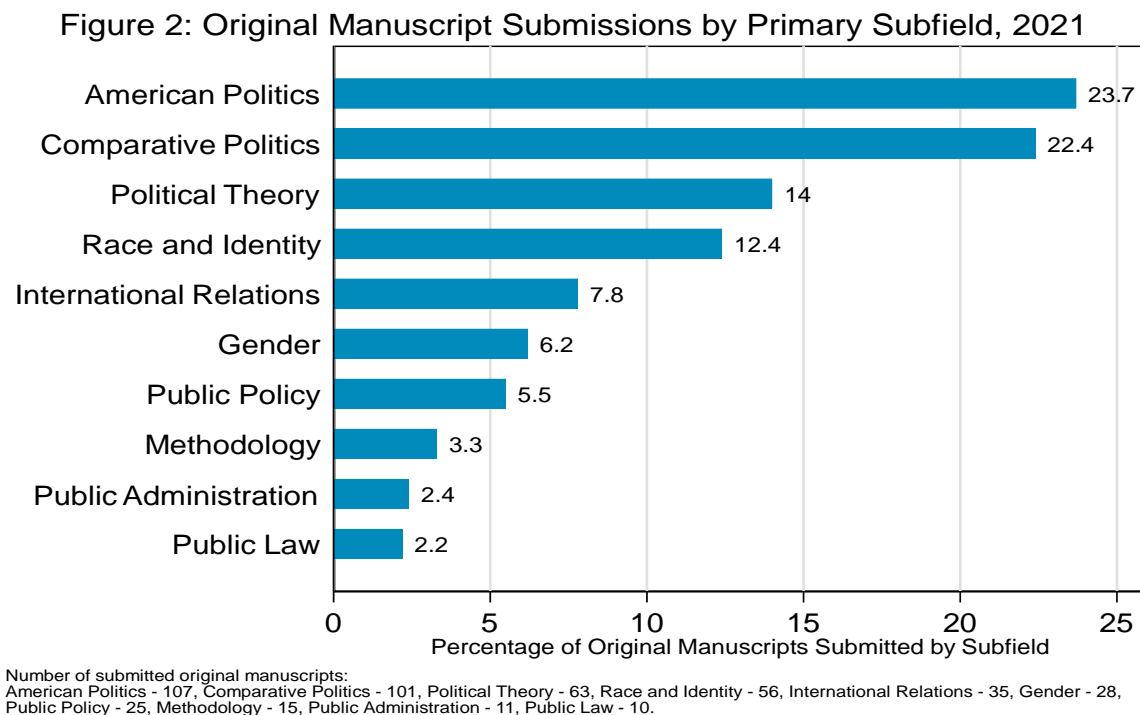
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<sup>1</sup> *Original* refers to only new manuscripts and thus excludes all manuscripts that were resubmitted after reviews.

*PRQ* currently uses the following primary field categories to classify manuscripts and reviewers:

- American Politics
- Comparative Politics
- Gender
- Race and Identity
- International Relations
- Methodology
- Political Theory
- Public Administration
- Public Policy
- Public Law

Accordingly, Figure 2 presents the breakdown of original submissions in 2021.



Based on the descriptive statistics provided in Figure 2, *PRQ* remains a journal heavily represented by the *American Politics* and *Comparative Politics* subfields. Together these fields constituted 46% of all original submissions (compared to 51% in 2020). In 2020 the proportion of manuscripts in the *American Politics* subfield decreased from around 27%, to about 24% in 2021. The number of submissions decreased from 130 in 2020 to 107 in 2021. The proportion of submissions in the *Comparative Politics* subfield declined slightly from around 24% in 2020 to about 22% in 2021. Number of submitted *Comparative Politics* manuscripts decreased from 113 to 101.

By comparison, we are pleased with the increasing number of submissions in the *Political Theory* field. In 2021 it accounted for 14% of all new submissions, up from 10.5% in 2020. Number of submitted *Political Theory* manuscripts increased from 50 in 2020 to 63 in 2021. A similarly impressive increase is observed in the *Race and Identity* field, which received 56 new manuscripts in 2021, up from 47 new submissions in 2020. *Race and Identity* received over 12% of the total submissions in 2021 (up from about 10% in 2020).

In 2021 we observed sharp declines for submissions in *International Relations* and *Gender* fields. Number of new submissions in the *International Relations* field declined from 46 in 2020, to 35 in 2021. *International Relations* accounted for 7.8% of all new submissions (down from 9.7% in 2020). Number of new submissions in the *Gender* field declined from 47 in 2020 to 28 in 2021. *Gender* submissions accounted for 6.2% of all new submissions in 2021 (down from around 10% in 2020).

Finally, we would like to emphasize that while *PRQ* receives most of its submissions from the United States, we also receive many manuscripts from around the world. In 2021, 63% (282 manuscripts) of all original submissions came from the United States. During this same period, *PRQ* received 17 manuscripts from the UK, 13 from China, 11 from Turkey, 10 from Israel. Together, scholars from these countries accounted for about 11.3% of total original (new) submissions. Also, between 5 and 9 submissions came from Germany, Italy, South Korea, Australia, Canada, Poland, Spain, and Sweden. In the aggregate, these countries accounted for approximately another 12.4% of total original submissions in 2021.

### Processing Times

The current editorial team employs a division of labor based on academic specialization. This model has already improved efficiency and reduced manuscript processing times in some stages. Figure 3 provides data on the average number of days between manuscript submission and editorial decisions for both original and revised manuscripts.

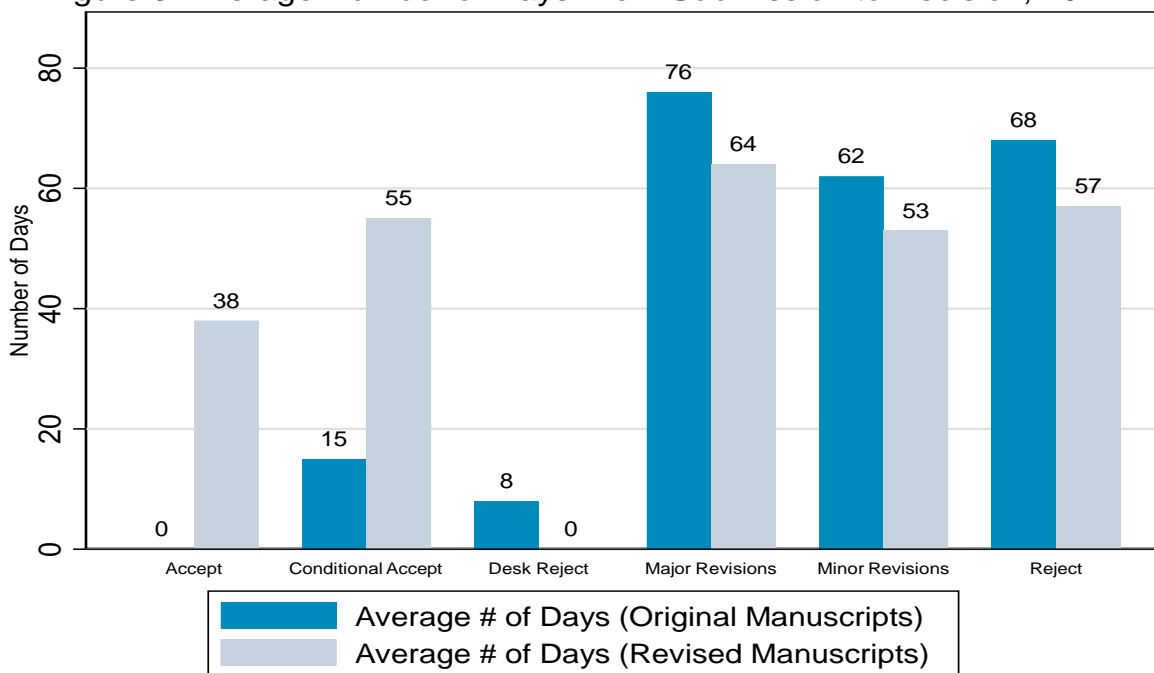
In 2021, the average processing time for desk rejected manuscripts was 8 days. The average processing time for all original manuscripts undergoing external review was 68 days in the case of rejections, and between 62 (minor revisions) and 76 (major revisions) days when authors are invited to make revisions.

Our time to decision for revised manuscripts that are accepted was 38 days and 55 days for conditionally accepted manuscripts. Our time to decision for major revisions was 64 days, minor revisions was 53 days, and rejection was 57 days.

Our editorial team is committed to trimming manuscript processing time upon initial submission by being selective regarding papers considered worthy of peer review. In addition, when a manuscript is sent out for review, we are of course to a heavy degree, at the mercy of reviewers submitting timely reviews. Therefore, we closely monitor all reviewers who are over 30 days late in submitting their reviews and contact them directly to encourage submission of their report. When we are not able to make a decision on a manuscript after 60 days due to an overdue report,

we either use the existing reviews or reach out to editorial board members or find new reviewers to judge the manuscript in a timely fashion.

Figure 3: Average Number of Days From Submission to Decision, 2021



Currently (as of March 2022), we have less than a four-issue backlog. Thus, manuscripts accepted today (in March) will be published in the March 2023 issue. We are currently accepting manuscripts at a rate that precludes us from generating an excessive backlog. Once manuscripts have been uploaded by journal staff to SAGE for copyediting, they typically appear on SAGE’s Online First platform within four to six weeks. As a result, although it may take several months for an article to appear in print, the digital version is available for researchers to access and to cite long in advance of the designated printed issue. However, given the extant backlog, we have requested an additional 250 printed annual pages from SAGE. Our request was approved and in 2021, the page limit per volume increased from 1000 to 1250. This development will help to address the backlog issue in the future.

### Manuscript Decisions

Up to March 6, 2022, the *PRQ* editorial team made 583 decisions on manuscripts submitted During 2021, and out of these, 438 decisions were made on original submissions and 145 on reviewed articles. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the decisions made for original submissions received in 2021, and Table 2 does the same for revised submissions. It is worth mentioning that the desk rejection rate decreased from 40.8% in 2020 to 38.6% in 2021. The overall acceptance rate for manuscripts submitted in 2021 was around 16% (up from 14% in 2020).

**Table 1. Decision for Original Submissions, 2021**

<b>Manuscript decision</b>	<b>Number of Manuscripts</b>	<b>Percentage of Manuscripts</b>
Desk Reject	169	38.6%
Reject	180	41.1%
Minor Revisions	8	1.8%
Major Revisions	80	18.3%
Conditional Acceptance	1	0.2%
<i>Summary</i>	<i>438</i>	<i>100%</i>

**Table 2. Decision for Revised Submissions, 2021**

<b>Manuscript decision</b>	<b>Number of Manuscripts</b>	<b>Percentage of Manuscripts</b>
Accept	94	64.8%
Conditional Acceptance	11	7.6%
Minor Revisions	21	6.9%
Major Revisions	10	14.5%
Reject	9	6.2%
<i>Summary</i>	<i>145</i>	<i>100%</i>

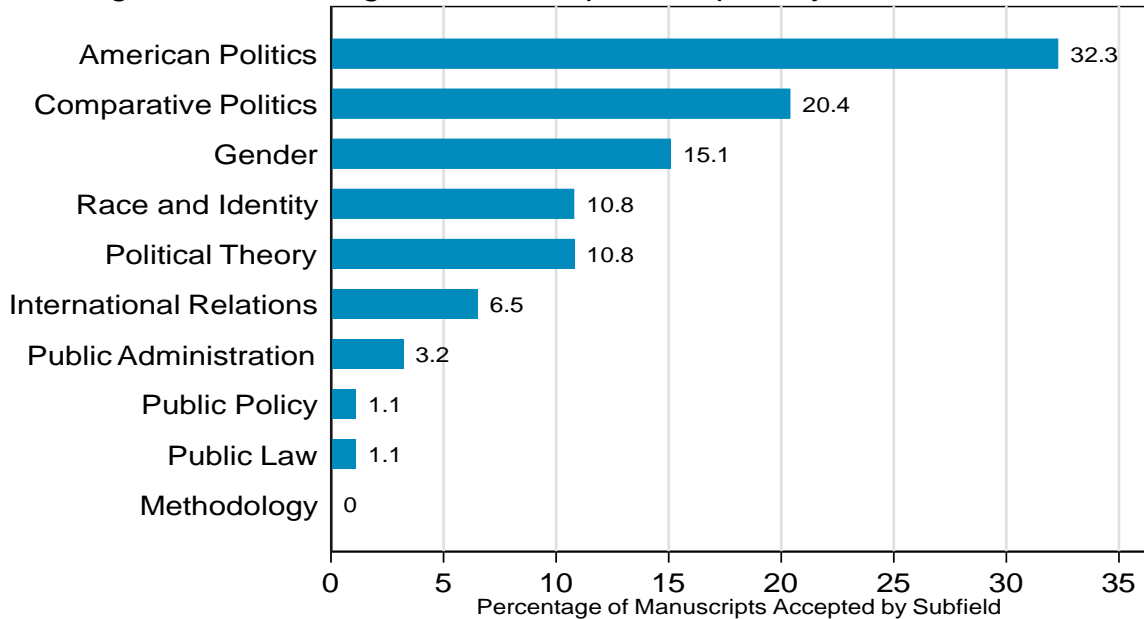
Figure 4 shows the distribution of articles accepted in 2021 by field. In 2021 most manuscripts were accepted in the *American Politics* field at 32.3% (for comparison, it was 36.9% for manuscripts accepted in 2020), followed by *Comparative Politics*, which accounted for 20.4% of all accepted articles (21.4% in 2020).

We are very pleased with the share of accepted manuscripts in the *Gender and Race and Identity* fields. Together they accounted for around 26% of all accepted manuscripts (versus 17.8% in 2020; 24 manuscripts accepted in 2021, compared to 15 accepted in 2020). This growth in the share of published manuscripts for these fields is indicative of the rising quality of manuscripts submitted in both areas.

The proportion of accepted manuscripts in *International Relations* increased from 4.8% in 2020 to 6.5% in 2021. In 2021, 6 manuscripts were accepted compared to 4 manuscripts in 2020. However, we are still concerned about this field. For instance, in 2018 *International Relations* accounted for 14.6% of all accepted manuscripts. We are not entirely sure what is behind the

steep decline in accepted papers in this area, and hence it is something needing closer monitoring. Nevertheless, there are numerous *International Relations* journals and therefore *PRQ* may be getting lost in the shuffle, but this trend is real, notable, and needs to be halted.

Figure 4: Percentage of Manuscripts Accepted by Subfield, 2021



Number of accepted manuscripts:  
 American Politics - 30, Comparative Politics - 19, Gender - 14, Race and Identity - 10, Political Theory - 10, International Relations - 6,  
 Public Administration - 3, Public Law - 1, Public Policy - 1, Methodology - 0.

### Reviewer Awards

To thank *PRQ* reviewers for their time and effort, SAGE continues to offer 60 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 free one-year subscription to *PRQ*. The Editor in Chief will also send a message of recognition to each top reviewer's department chair.



The Top 20 for 2021 are (in alphabetical order):

Nancy Arrington	<i>California Polytechnic State University</i>
Adrian Blau	<i>King's College London</i>
Daniel Bowen	<i>The College of New Jersey</i>
Marijke Breuning	<i>University of North Texas</i>
Danielle Charette	<i>University of Virginia</i>
Jared Clemons	<i>Duke University</i>
Alison Craig	<i>University of Texas at Austin</i>
Thomas Däubler	<i>Universität Mannheim</i>
Hanne Fjelde	<i>Uppsala University</i>
Roland Imhoff	<i>Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz</i>
Benjamin Kantack	<i>Lycoming College</i>
Shanna Kirschner	<i>Allegheny College</i>
Nazita Lajevardi	<i>Michigan State University</i>
Jonathan Mummolo	<i>Princeton University</i>
Davin Phoenix	<i>University of California Irvine</i>
Amy Pond	<i>Technical University of Munich</i>
Hannah Walker	<i>University of Texas at Austin</i>
Artemus Ward	<i>Northern Illinois University</i>
John Warner	<i>Kansas State University</i>
Joseph Young	<i>American University</i>

## Journal Impact

We are pleased with growing influence of *PRQ*. In 2020 most of the important metrics kept improving (see Table 3). The Journal Citation Report (JCR) Impact Factor is one commonly used measure of the impact of academic journals. *PRQ* has seen steady growth in this measure over time, with a steep increase in 2017. In 2020, the 2-year impact factor skyrocketed to 2.556 (as compared to 1.362 in 2019). Regarding the more important 5-year impact factor, it keeps increasing and rose to 3.443 in 2020 (from 2.287 in 2019). *PRQ*'s ranking among other political science journals (by 2-year impact factor) was 64 out of 182 journals. In 2020, citations rose by 45% to 5025. In terms of total citations, *PRQ* ranks 23 out of 182 political science journals.

**Table 3. *PRQ* Impact Factor, 2007-2020**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Cites</b>	<b>Impact Factor</b>	<b>5-Year Impact Factor</b>	<b>Journal Ranking (by Impact Factor)</b>
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	1.460	58/157
2014	1831	1.149	1.561	47/161
2015	1956	1.116	1.539	59/163
2016	2406	1.053	1.816	83/165
2017	2818	1.523	1.988	65/169
2018	3089	1.581	2.050	75/176
2019	3460	1.362	2.287	92/181
2020	5025	2.556	3.443	64/182

*Source:* Journal Citation Report 2020

Appendix A

**PRQ EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD - 2021**

Sarah Anderson	<i>University of California, Santa Barbara</i>
Sarah F. Anzia	<i>University of California at Berkeley</i>
Antoine Banks	<i>University of Maryland</i>
Tiffany Barnes	<i>University of Kentucky</i>
Andrea Benjamin	<i>University of Oklahoma</i>
Richard Boyd	<i>Georgetown University</i>
Royce Carroll	<i>University of Essex</i>
Jason Casellas	<i>University of Houston</i>
Cornell W. Clayton	<i>Washington State University</i>
Bridget Coggins	<i>University of California, Santa Barbara</i>
Michael H. Crespin	<i>University of Oklahoma</i>
Mary G. Dietz	<i>Northwestern University</i>
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Erik Herron	<i>West Virginia University</i>
Mirya Holman	<i>Tulane University</i>
Mala Htun	<i>University of New Mexico</i>
Michele Keunzi	<i>University of Nevada, Las Vegas</i>
Ari Kohen	<i>University of Nebraska</i>
Suzanne M. Leland	<i>University of North Carolina, Charlotte</i>
Amanda Licht	<i>Binghamton University</i>
Gregory Love	<i>University of Mississippi</i>
Frank Lovett	<i>Washington University in St Louis</i>
Robert Lupton	<i>University of Connecticut</i>
Tofigh Maboudi	<i>Loyola University Chicago</i>
Anthony J. Madonna	<i>University of Georgia</i>
J.S. Maloy	<i>University of Louisiana</i>
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Jonathan Marks	<i>Ursinus College</i>
Angie Maxwell	<i>University of Arkansas</i>
Amy G. Mazur	<i>Washington State University</i>
Michael McKoy	<i>Wheaton College</i>
Jeanette Mendez	<i>Oklahoma State University</i>
Jamila Michener	<i>Cornell University</i>
Michael Minta	<i>University of Minnesota</i>
Diana O'Brien	<i>Rice University</i>
Ian Ostrander	<i>Michigan State University</i>
Erica Owen	<i>University of Pittsburgh</i>
Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz	<i>University of Maryland</i>

Efrén Pérez	<i>University of California, Los Angeles</i>
Kelly Rader	<i>Yale University</i>
Jordan Ragusa	<i>College of Charleston</i>
Ora John Reuter	<i>University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee</i>
Emily Hencken Ritter	<i>Vanderbilt University</i>
James M. Scott	<i>Texas Christian University</i>
Paru Shah	<i>University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee</i>
Yael Shomer	<i>Tel-Aviv University</i>
Shane Singh	<i>University of Georgia</i>
Zeynep Somer-Topcu	<i>University of Texas at Austin</i>
Dara Strolovich	<i>Princeton University</i>
Sharece Thrower	<i>Vanderbilt University</i>
Alvin Tillery	<i>Northwestern University</i>
Susan H. Whiting	<i>University of Washington</i>
Jennifer Wolak	<i>Michigan State University</i>
Antoine Yoshinaka	<i>University of Buffalo</i>
Amy Yuen	<i>Middlebury College</i>
Chris Zepeda-Millán	<i>University of California, Los Angeles</i>