

**Political Research Quarterly
2015 Activity Report**

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Jeanette M. Mendez, Co-Editor
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Presented to the Editorial Advisory Board
WPSA Annual Meeting, March 24–26, 2016
San Diego, CA

Overview

On July 1, 2014, *Political Research Quarterly* (PRQ) officially transitioned from Washington State University (WSU) to Oklahoma State University (OSU). PRQ underwent further transition on September 4, 2015 when Jason Maloy, former co-editor and part of the OSU team, resigned his position and Clarissa Hayward (Washington University in St. Louis) and James Scott (Texas Christian University), joined Jeanette Mendez (OSU) as co-editors. The new team retains Jacob Mauslein as Associate Editor and two Editorial Assistants (M.A. students at OSU). Members of the WPSA Executive Council, especially 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, for their support and guidance throughout the transition process.

In line 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. We have aimed to increase PRQ's visibility across under-represented subfields (with respect to PRQ's history). To do this, we first added 10 members to the Editorial Board in an effort to increase the presence of International Relations, Comparative Politics, and Political Theory within PRQ. These members are: Lawrie Balfour, Paul Diehl, Cooper Drury, Mika Lavaque-Manty, Jacob Levy, Scott Mainwaring, Sara Mitchell, Leslie Schwindt-Bayer, Sarah Song, and Anna Stiliz. We also have developed two roundtable panels at the 2016 WPSA meeting to address publishing in PRQ and data transparency for both qualitative and quantitative scholars. In addition, 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. Further, we have made concerted outreach efforts in the field of Political Theory, International Relations and Comparative Politics through our two new co-editors. We each continue to attend specialized conferences gearing our participation toward outreach. For Jeanette Mendez, this was the Southern Political Science Association. James Scott attend the International Studies Association-Midwest conference (November 2015) and the International Studies Association Annual Conference (March 2016). Although Clarissa Hayward was not able to travel fall semester, due to surgery, she will attend the Association for Political Theory conference in fall, 2016. All these outreach efforts were conceived as long-term efforts, and we are hopeful of reporting positive results in the 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 2015 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 political theory 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."

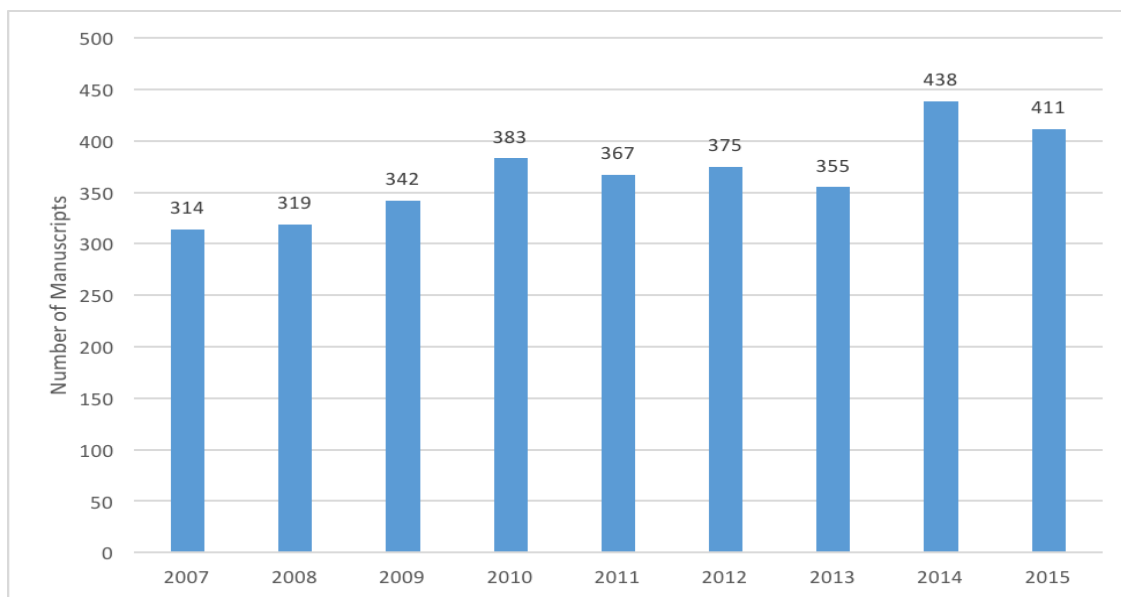
Another aspect of our outreach efforts is the PRQ Editors' Podcast series, which is hosted on the journal's website and linked through other online platforms. Our second podcast, was released in March 2015, featuring Dr. Jeff Smith of the New School for Social Research, on the theme of financial influence vs. constituent pressure in American state legislatures.

Overall, we believe that PRQ's influence within the discipline remains steady and significant at the end of both transitions (from WSU to OSU and then among editors in September 2015).

Manuscript Submissions

PRQ received 411 original submissions in 2015. The total for the year was near a record high for the journal, slightly lower than 2014, but far above the average from 2007-2013. The data reported below for manuscript submissions include field breakdowns, processing times, and decision ratios. In addition to 411 original submissions, we report data for 110 revised manuscript submissions in these sections.

Figure 1. Original Manuscript Submissions, 2007-2015



2015 saw a slight decline in manuscripts compared to 2014 but still has a higher higher volume compared to 2013 and earlier. Already in 2016, we see a steady number of submissions. We expect to remain at or around 400 submissions this year. Given the constraints on space within the journal, 400 submissions is a good goal to maintain. This number keeps our rejection rate on par with top journals, between 10-15%. A sizable increase above this would mean an even lower acceptance rate.

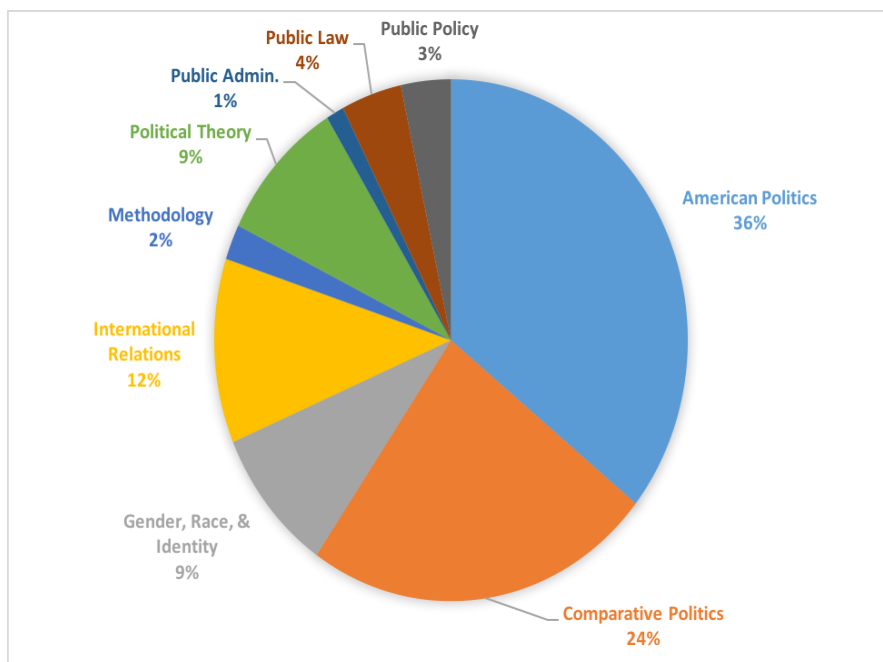
PRQ uses nine primary field categories for classifying manuscripts and reviewers. These are:

- 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 2 (below) presents the breakdown of original submissions by the nine primary fields for 2015.

Figure 2. Original Manuscript Submissions by Primary Subfield, 2015



Overall, these numbers are quite similar to 2014; however, we did see an increase of submissions in International Relations (5% increase) and Political Theory (2% increase). We believe these are a reflection of efforts of both OSU editorial teams to increase under-represented subfields, including Theory, IR and Comparative Politics. Comparative Politics did see a 2% decline, which is an issue we are aware of and are addressing through our outreach efforts.

In order to capture more accurately the substance of manuscripts in future reports, since July 2014 we allow more than one field to be counted per manuscript. Counting more than one field per manuscript (the “open count” method) fits the stated goal of our editorial application by 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 a difficult choice between fields when submitting their manuscript.

Table 1 (below) presents all-fields data for 2015. 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 1. Original Manuscripts using “Open Count” Method, 2015

Manuscript Type	Primary Field	Secondary Field	Total Fields	Percentage of all Manuscripts
American Politics	147	41	188	45.74%
Comparative Politics	98	24	122	29.68%
Gender, Race, & Identity	37	24	61	14.84%
International Relations	47	17	64	15.57%
Methodology	9	13	22	5.35%
Political Theory	37	13	50	12.17%
Public Administration	5	5	10	2.43%
Public Law	17	5	22	5.35%
Public Policy	14	26	40	9.73%
<i>Summary</i>	<i>411</i>	<i>168</i>	<i>579</i>	<i>140.86%</i>

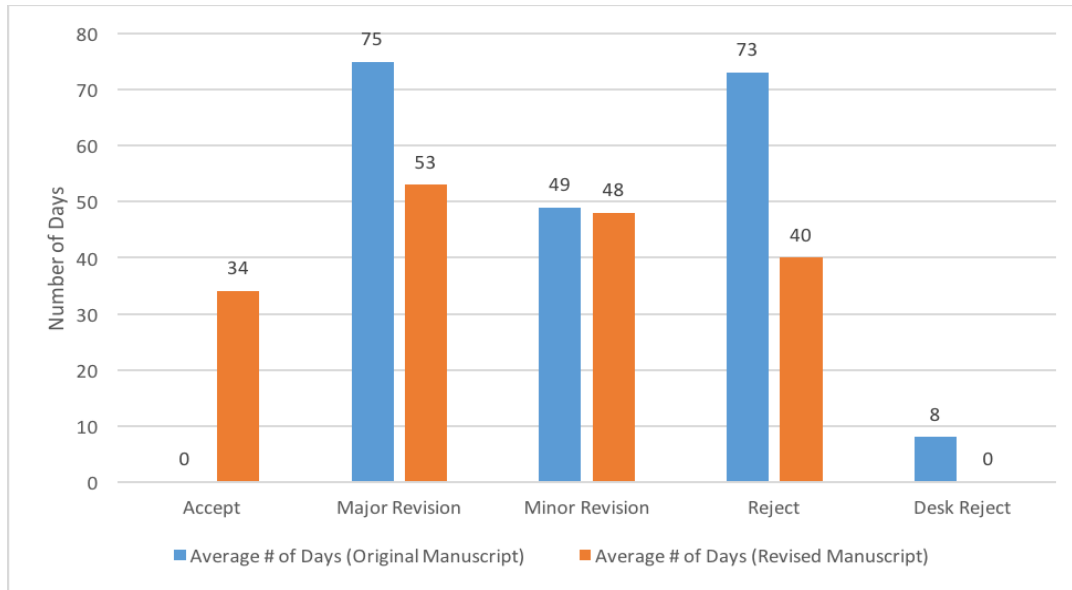
These data show that, on average, nearly one new submission out of two in 2015 made a substantial appeal to more than one field (hence the ratio of all fields to the number of manuscripts adds up to over 140%). Unsurprisingly, each field’s percentage share is higher than with the single-count method, reflecting the reality that around half of submitted manuscripts do hold substantive interest for more than one field.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge that PRQ receives and accepts submissions from around the world. In 2015, while 76.6% of new submissions came from the United States, 2.9% came from the United Kingdom, and between 1% and 1.7% came from each of Australia, Canada, Sweden, Germany, Denmark, Israel, and Japan. (For more details, see the 2016 SAGE publisher’s report.)

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 for original submissions. The average time in review for revised manuscripts is 43.8 days. Figure 3 (below) provides data on the average number of days between manuscript submission and editorial decisions for both original and revised manuscripts.

Figure 3. Average Number of Days from Submission to Decision, 2015



In 2015, the average processing time for all original manuscripts receiving external review (79.4% of all submissions) was 66 days, while the average time for desk-rejected manuscripts (20.6% of all submissions) was 7.8 days. Compared to 2014, we lowered the time of decision for revised manuscripts that are accepted from 44 days to 34 days. Our time to decision for major revisions remained the same. For minor revisions (which is actually a smaller percentage of our revise and resubmits offers), we also decreased time of decision from 81 days to 49 days for original manuscripts and 62 days to 48 days for revised manuscripts. We also saw a decline in time to decision for rejections of revised manuscripts (from 51 days to 40 days), though we did increase the time to decision in rejecting original manuscripts (59 days to 73 days). Our desk reject time frame is the same. We do not think 73 days is too long for a rejected manuscript- as the goal is to keep all decisions under 3 months. That said, we are at the mercy of reviewers submitting timely reviews. We have closely monitored all reviewers who are over 30 days in submitting their reviews and we contact them directly to encourage submission of the review. Additionally, when manuscripts have no decision at or around 60 days due to an overdue score, we make a decision to either use the existing reviews or reach out to editorial board members who have been able to review manuscripts in timely fashion.

We have maintained the trend established by the WSU team in 2013 of eliminating an excessive backlog. Currently, we have a 1 issue backlog. Thus manuscripts accepted today (March 2016) will

be published in the September 2016 (not the June 2016 issue). 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.

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 a 13-percent rate in 2015. The acceptance rate is now comparable to other top-ranked journals in the discipline. The acceptance rate was lower in 2014 (9% as a result of an increase in submissions that year). Given journal space and the need to balance a backlog from acceptance to publication, an acceptance rate between 10-15% is appropriate.

Table 2 provides a breakdown of the decisions made in 2015 for original submissions, and Table 3 does the same for revised submissions.

Table 2. Decisions for Original Submissions, 2015.

Manuscript Type	# of Manuscripts	Percentage of Manuscripts
Under Review	12	2.92%
Minor Revision	6	1.46%
Major Revision	90	21.90%
Reject	221	53.77%
Desk Reject	82	19.95%
<i>Summary</i>	<i>411</i>	<i>100%</i>

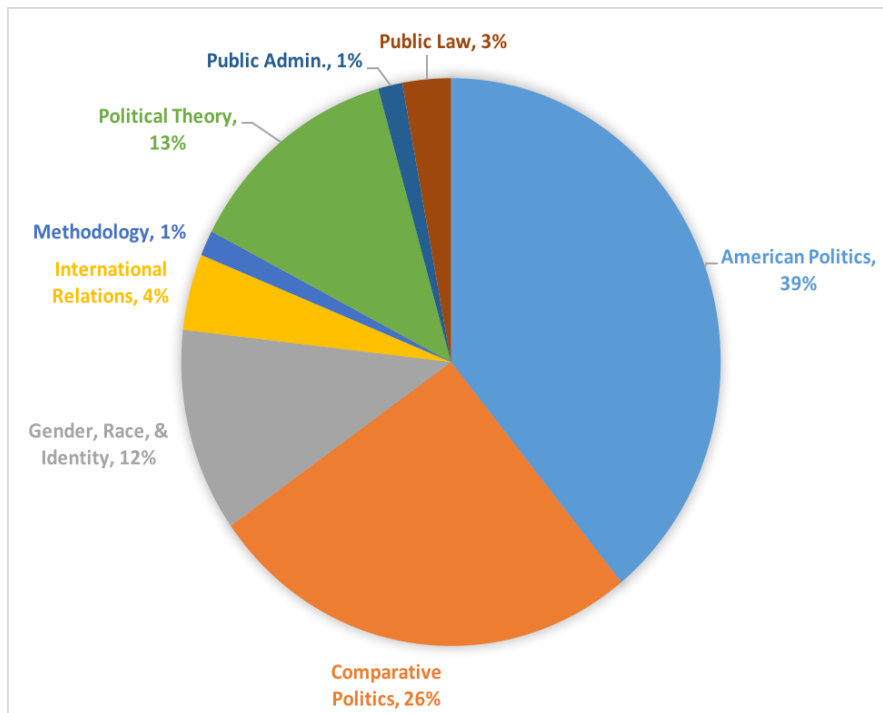
Table 3. Decisions for Revised Submissions, 2015

Manuscript Type	# of Manuscripts	Percentage of Manuscripts
Under Review	2	1.82%
Major/Minor Revision	30	27.27%
Accept	69	62.73%
Reject	9	8.18%
<i>Summary</i>	<i>110</i>	<i>100%</i>

In terms of original submissions, we have a rejection rate (including desk-rejections) of around 75%. This is about 7% lower than 2014. Among revised manuscript, less than 10% are rejected, over 60% are accepted and 27% are offered a second round of revisions. We can compare this to two time points in 2014. In the first half of 2014, under Amy Mazur and Cornell Clayton, the acceptance rate on revisions was 87%. However, we are consistent with the second half of 2014, under Jason Maloy and Jeanette Mendez. In our opinion, these decisions are a strong reflection of the reviews we receive, and we are increasingly seeing reviewers after a revise and resubmit, suggest additional revisions that warrant a second round of revisions.

Figure 4 shows the distribution of articles accepted in 2015 by substantive fields. American Politics constitutes the most accepted area (39%), followed by Comparative Politics (26%) and Gender, Race, & Identity (12%). We note that as we increase submissions in under-represented subfields, we hope acceptance of more of these articles will be a by-product.

Figure 4. Percent of Manuscripts Accepted by Field, 2015



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 cash 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 2015 are (in alphabetical

order):

Lawrence Baum, *The Ohio State University*
Lindsay Benstead, *Portland State University*
Thomas Carsey, *University of North Carolina*
Michael Delli Carpini, *University of Pennsylvania*
Grant Ferguson, *Texas Christian University*
Rebekah Herrick, *Oklahoma State University*
Nathan Jensen, *George Washington University*
Matthew Levendusky, *University of Pennsylvania*
Eric MacGilvray, *Ohio State University*
Christopher Mann, *Skidmore College*
Tetsuya Matsubayashi, *Osaka University*
Jayme Neiman, *University of Northern Iowa*
David Nickerson, *University of Notre Dame*
Timothy Nokken, *Texas Tech University*
Ryan Saylor, *University of Tulsa*
Mary Volcansek, *Texas Christian University*
Lena Wangnerud, *University of Gothenburg*
David Wiens, *University of California, San Diego*
Alan Wiseman, *Vanderbilt University*
Christopher Witko, *University of South Carolina*

Journal Impact

The Journal Citation Report (JCR) Impact Factor is among the most visible ways to measure the quality and impact of academic journals. PRQ has seen steady growth in this measure, with a slight decline in 2013. The 2014 impact factor shows an increase again to 1.149. The impact in 2014 looks good, with the current impact factor and a record high impact factor among the 5-year average (1.561, compared to 1.46 in 2014, 1.281 in 2013 and 1.298 in 2012). Further, PRQ is ranked 47 out of 161 political science journals. This places PRQ in the top 30% of all political science journals (compared to 37% in 2014). In addition, in 2014, citations rose by almost 300,

which is another record high.

Table 4. 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	1.460	58/157
2014	1831	1.149	1.561	47/161

Appendix A

PRQ EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD – 2015

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Dorothy Daley	<i>University of Kansas</i>
Lisa Disch	<i>University of Michigan</i>
Miriam Elman	<i>Syracuse University</i>
Richard Fox	<i>Loyola Marymount University</i>
Lisa Garcia-Bedolla	<i>University of California, Berkeley</i>
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Jean Garrison	<i>University of Wyoming</i>
Erik Herron	<i>West Virginia University</i>
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David Leal	<i>University of Texas, Austin</i>
Fabrice Lehoucq	<i>University of North Carolina, Greensboro</i>
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Jeannie Morefield	<i>Whitman College</i>
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