

Political Research Quarterly

2018 Activity Report

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Toby J. Rider, International Relations Field Editor

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Overview

In 2018, *Political Research Quarterly* (*PRQ*) underwent the transition of editorial teams. Co-editors Clarissa Hayward (Washington University in St. Louis), Jeanette Mendez (Oklahoma State University), and James Scott (Texas Christian University), along with Associate Editor, Jacob Mauslein were replaced by Seth C. McKee (Editor in Chief, American Politics Field Editor, Texas Tech 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).

On several occasions, we have stressed our appreciation of the previous editorial team, who made sure we inherited a journal whose house was already in order. We are committed to maintaining the highest standards of academic work published in *PRQ*. As we have emphasized in *A Note from the Editors* published in the December 2018 issue of *PRQ*, we believe that an optimal means to improve the quality of published work and efficiency in processing manuscripts is through an editorial model with informational economies of scale. Therefore, we embraced an editorial model that employs a division of labor based on academic specialization. In addition, upon accepting our editorship, we made the decision to overhaul the editorial advisory board. Members of the editorial advisory board in 2018 are listed at the end of this report.

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, at the end of 2018 we introduced a new section to the journal called *TRENDS*. We have added this component to the journal to draw attention to work that appears particularly novel in speaking to the dynamics of contemporary political phenomena.

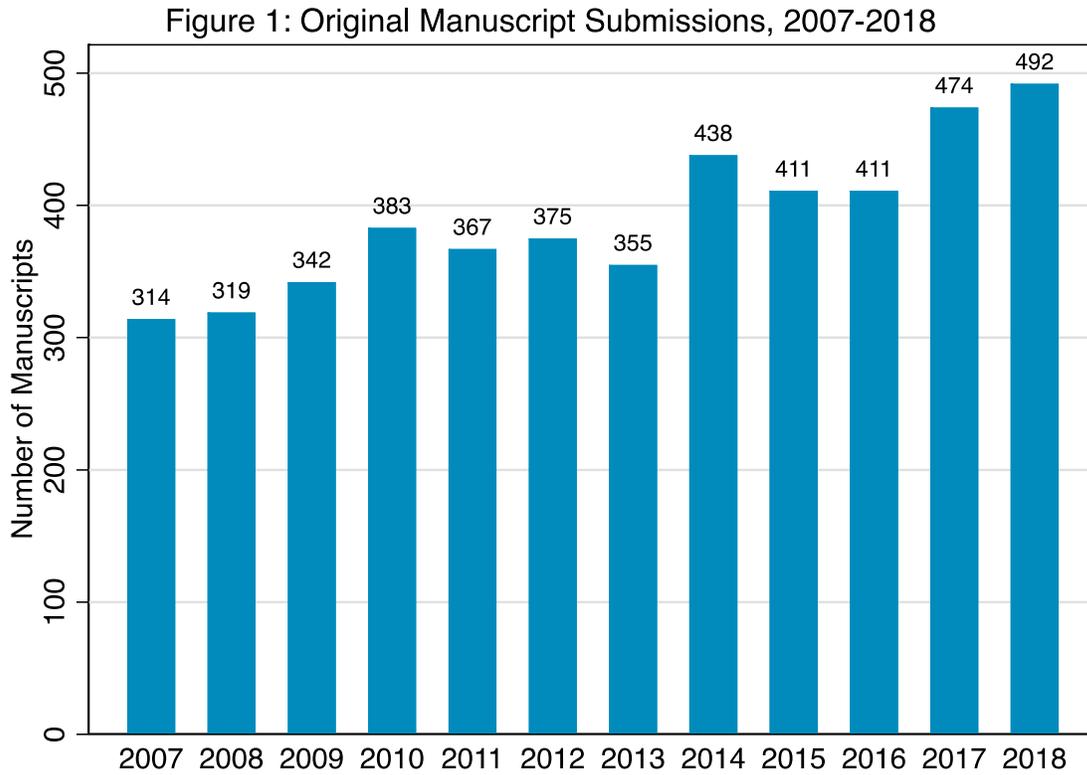
We are also making efforts to further increase *PRQ*'s academic and public visibility. To further this objective, we have chosen to have more content available to readers on the journal's homepage; including archived annual reports dating back to 2010 and lists of outstanding reviewers. In addition, 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 have also enhanced our communication through Twitter. Finally, we are maintaining a vibrant reception at the WPSA annual conference, the American Political Science Association (APSA) annual meeting, and hosting the *PRQ* editorial board meeting at the APSA.

Manuscript Submissions

For a second year in a row, *PRQ* received a record-breaking number of original¹ submissions. In 2018, 492 original manuscripts were submitted to the journal. Given the journal's page limits, we are now in the envious position of being even more selective with respect to what we deem as

¹ *Original* refers to only new manuscripts. It excludes all manuscripts that were resubmitted after reviews.

worthy of being sent out for peer review. At the time of writing this report in the month of March, we have already received well over 100 new submissions. We are on pace to receive roughly 510 to 550 new submissions in 2019. Indeed, given the steady rate of submissions, it is very doubtful that we fail to crack 500 new submissions for the first time – an impressive milestone for the journal.



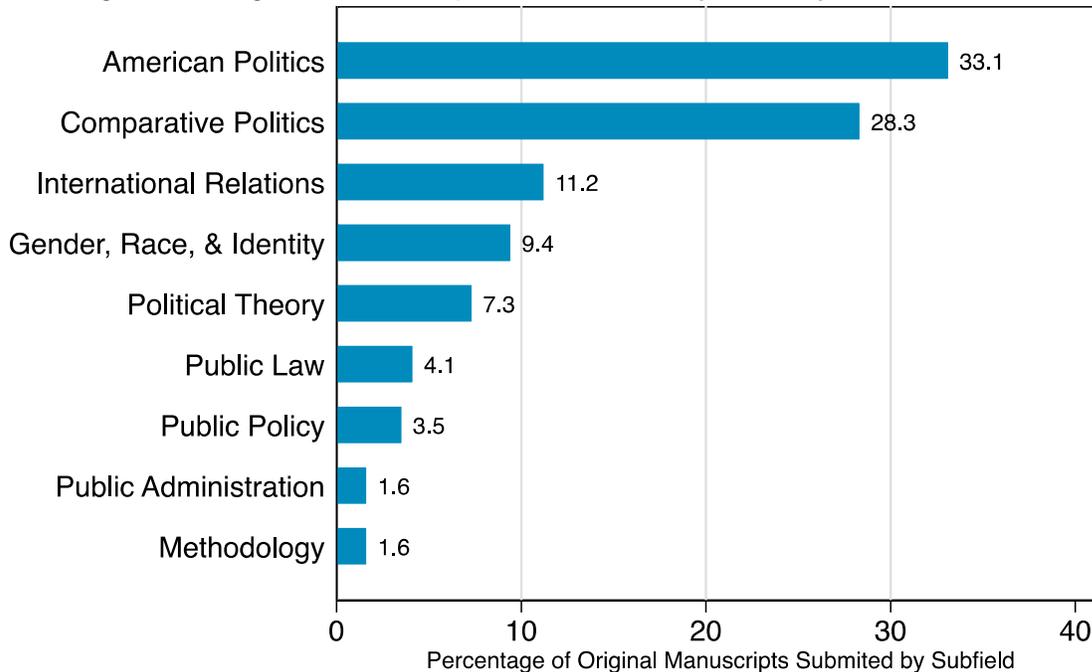
The current editorial team has made a change in primary field categories that are used to classify manuscripts and reviewers. The previous category of *Gender, Race, and Identity* was split into two: (1) *Gender* and (2) *Race and Identity*. This alteration was enacted because of the division of editorial labor; since we have different editors processing *Gender* submissions from those manuscripts falling primarily into the *Race and Identity* category.

Therefore, the currently used list of categories consist of:

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

Since the category *Gender, Race, and Identity* was split into two in the middle of the year (not long after the editorial transition was completed), in this activity report we will use the combined category for displaying data, but starting in 2019, submission rates and other statistics will be reported for both categories separately. Accordingly, Figure 2 presents the breakdown of original submissions in 2018 by the nine primary fields valid in 2017.

Figure 2: Original Manuscript Submissions by Primary Subfield, 2018



Number of submitted original manuscripts:
 American Politics - 163, Comparative Politics - 139, International Relations - 55, Gender, Race, & Identity - 46, Political Theory - 36, Public Law - 8, Public Policy - 17, Public Administration - 8, Methodology - 8.

Based on the descriptive statistics provided in Figure 2, *PRQ* remains a journal dominated by *American Politics* and *Comparative Politics* subfields. The proportion of submissions in the *Comparative Politics* subfield increased by around 7 percentage points as compared to 2017. Meanwhile, the proportion of manuscripts in the *American Politics* subfield declined from around 37% in 2017, to 33% in 2018. We are pleased with the steady stream of manuscripts for *International Relations* (up 1.2 points from last year) and the *Gender, Race, and Identity* subfields (down a hair from 10% to 9.4%, but essentially constant). Regarding the new stand-alone *Gender* category, this area is likely to experience an uptick in submissions since we have issued a call for papers that examine women running in the 2018 midterm elections (the deadline is 5/31/19). More than 20% of all submissions now flow into these two important subfields (*Gender* and *Race and Identity*). The one area of notable decline is in *Political Theory*, with a reduction from 11 to 7 percent of new submissions. Like the previous editorial team, ours also includes a *Political Theory* editor and therefore we will keep close track of the number of submissions in this important subfield in the coming year.

Finally, we would like to emphasize that while *PRQ* receives most of its submissions from the United States, we also receive manuscripts from around the world. In 2018, 67% (330 manuscripts) of all original submissions came from the United States. During this same period, *PRQ* received 16 manuscripts from the United Kingdom, 15 from Germany and 10 from Canada. Together, scholars from these countries accounted for more than 8% of total submissions. Between 5 and 9 submissions came from China, Australia, Israel, the Netherlands, Turkey, Denmark, Iran, and Taiwan. In the aggregate, these countries accounted for more than 10% of total new submissions in 2018.

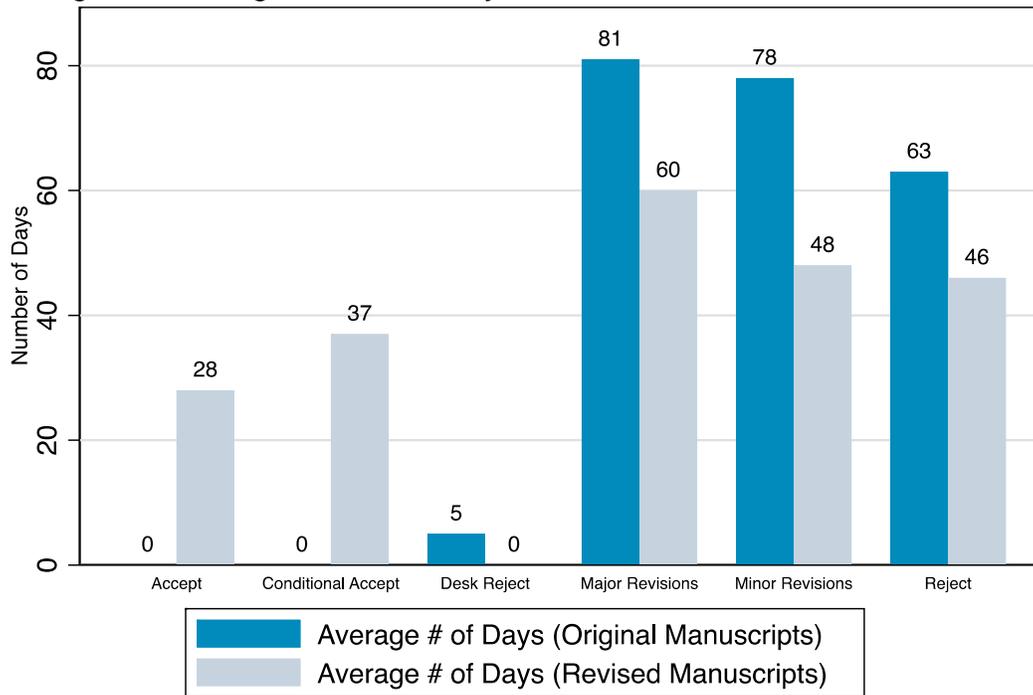
Processing Times

As mentioned, the current editorial team employs a division of labor based on academic specialization. We expect this model to improve efficiency and reduce manuscript processing time in the forthcoming years. Figure 3 provides data on the average number of days between manuscript submission and editorial decisions for both original and revised manuscripts.

In 2018, the average processing time for desk rejected manuscripts was 5 days (down from 8 days in 2017), while the average processing time for all original manuscripts receiving external review was 63 days in the case of rejections, and around 80 days when authors are invited to make revisions. Our time of decision for revised manuscripts that are accepted was 28 days (down from 40 days in 2017). Our time to decision for major revisions was 60 days, minor revisions was 48 days, and rejection was 46 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 the review. When we are unable to make a decision about 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, 2018



In 2018, we have made efforts to reduce an excessive backlog of papers accepted for publication. Currently (as of March 2019), we have about a two and a half issue backlog. Thus, manuscripts accepted today (in March) will be published in the December 2019 issue. We are currently accepting manuscripts at a rate that precludes us from generating an additional backlog. Once manuscripts have been uploaded by journal staff to SAGE for copy editing, 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 well in advance of the designated printed issue.

Manuscript Decisions

Up to March 21, 2019 the *PRQ* editorial teams made 646 decisions on manuscripts submitted since the start of 2018, and out of these, 486 decisions were made on original submissions and 158 on reviewed articles. The overall acceptance rate for manuscripts submitted in 2018 was 15.9%. There is no question this acceptance rate is currently declining since our editorial team has taken over, and part of the reason why this rate is up from 14 percent in 2017 is because during the transition there was a slight increase in manuscripts approved for publication before our editorship commenced (we merely shepherded these papers to the production stage). Table 2 provides a breakdown of the decisions made for original submissions received in 2018, and Table 3 does the same for revised submissions.

Table 2. Decision for Original Submissions, 2018

Manuscript decision	Number of Manuscripts	Percentage of Manuscripts
Desk Reject	210	43.2%
Reject	194	39.9%
Minor Revisions	7	1.5%
Major Revisions	75	15.4%
<i>Summary</i>	<i>486</i>	<i>100%</i>

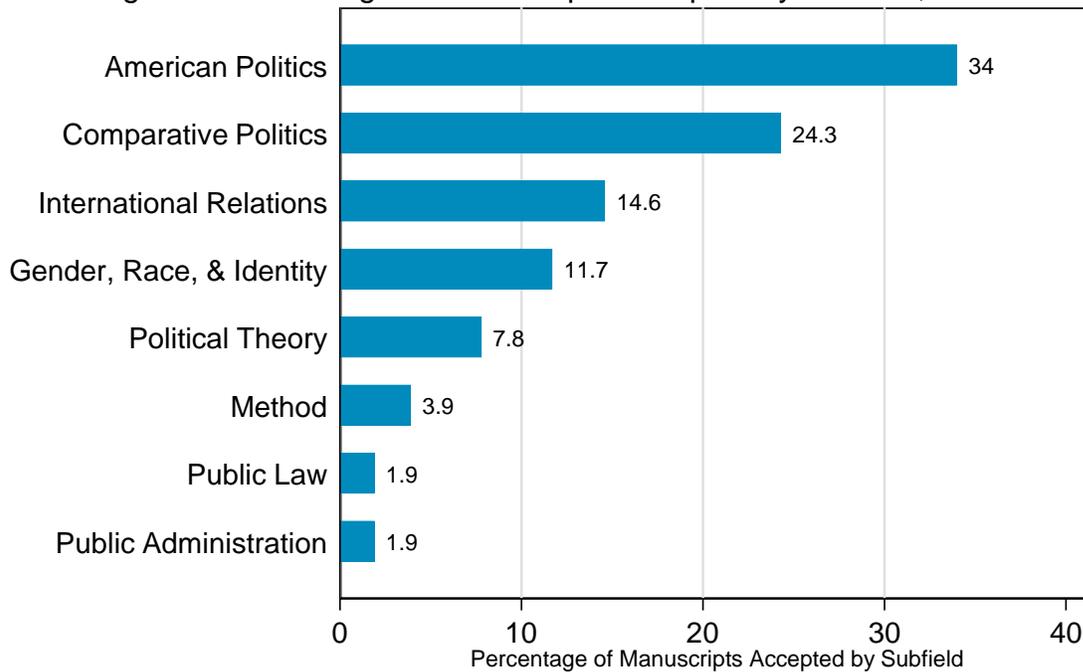
Table 3. Decision for Revised Submissions, 2018

Manuscript decision	Number of Manuscripts	Percentage of Manuscripts
Accept	103	65.2%
Minor Revisions	23	14.5%
Major Revisions	21	13.3%
Reject	11	7.0%
<i>Summary</i>	<i>158</i>	<i>100%</i>

Figure 4 shows the distribution of articles accepted in 2018 by field. The trend in acceptance rates is highly similar to article submission trends demonstrated in Figure 2. Most manuscripts were accepted in the *American Politics* field – 34% (for comparison, it was 43% for accepted manuscripts that were submitted in 2017), followed by *Comparative Politics*, which accounted for 24% of all accepted articles (22% in 2017). We are satisfied with the growing proportion of accepted manuscripts in *International Relations*. Specifically, for accepted manuscripts that were submitted in 2017, the *International Relations* subfield accounted for only 7%; in 2018, its share of accepted manuscripts more than doubled, to 14.6%. We believe that this pattern is indicative of the increasing quality of submitted manuscripts in this major area of the political science discipline.

As for the *Gender, Race, and Identity* category, acceptance went up from 10% to 11.7% of all accepted manuscripts in 2018. We would like to show increases in the categories of fewer submissions but this is not an easy task, given the much lower rate of original submissions in these areas. Once again, we are somewhat concerned about the decline in the share of accepted *Political Theory* manuscripts (from 11% in 2017 to 7.8% in 2018), and we will closely monitor this.

Figure 4: Percentage of Manuscripts Accepted by Subfield, 2018



Number of accepted manuscripts:
American Politics - 35, Comparative Politics - 25, International Relations - 15, Gender, Race, & Identity - 12, Political Theory - 8, Methodology - 4,
Public Law - 2, Public Administration - 2.

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 2018 are (in alphabetical order):

Alexa Bankert	<i>University of Georgia</i>
William Bendix	<i>Keene State College</i>
Jesse Crosson	<i>University of Michigan</i>
Caitlin Davies	<i>Stony Brook University</i>
Adam Enders	<i>University of Louisville</i>
Peter Hanson	<i>Grinnell College</i>
Michael Henderson	<i>Louisiana State University</i>
William Hicks	<i>Appalachian State University</i>
Dan Hopkins	<i>University of Pennsylvania</i>
Chryl Laird	<i>Bowdoin College</i>
Jason MacDonald	<i>West Virginia University</i>
Wendy Martinek	<i>State University of New York, Binghamton</i>
Mark McKenzie	<i>Texas Tech University</i>
Jamila Michener	<i>Cornell University</i>
Efrén Pérez	<i>University of California, Los Angeles</i>
Jordan Ragusa	<i>College of Charleston</i>
Tyler Reny	<i>University of California, Los Angeles</i>
Beth Rosenson	<i>University of Florida</i>
Timothy Waligore	<i>Pace University</i>
Jennifer Wolak	<i>University of Colorado Boulder</i>

Journal Impact

We are very pleased with the growing influence of *PRQ*. In fact, 2017 was a record setting year with regard to most of the important metrics (see Table 4). 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, but 2017 marked a particularly steep increase (close to 50%) in the impact factor, which rose to 1.523 (as compared to 1.043 in 2016). The five-year impact factor rose to 1.988. *PRQ*'s ranking among other political science journals (by impact factor) also increased by 18 positions to 65 out of 169. In 2017, citations rose by 17% to 2818. In terms of total citations, *PRQ* ranks 27 out of 169 political science journals.

Table 4. PRQ Impact Factor, 2007-2017

Year	Total Cites	Impact Factor	5-Year Impact Factor	Journal Ranking (by Impact Factor)
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	58/157
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

Source: Journal Citation Report 2018

Appendix A

PRQ EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD - 2018

Brooke Ackerly	<i>Vanderbilt University</i>
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 Missouri</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>
Elisabeth Ellis	<i>University of Otago</i>
Jennifer Fitzgerald	<i>University of Colorado</i>
Megan Ming Francis	<i>University of Washington</i>
Danny Hayes	<i>George Washington University</i>
Clarissa Hayward	<i>Washington University in St. Louis</i>
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>
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>
Elizabeth Markovitz	<i>Mount Holyoke College</i>
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>Texas A&M University</i>
Ian Ostrander	<i>Michigan State University</i>
Erica Owen	<i>University of Pittsburgh</i>
Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz	<i>University of Rhode Island</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>University of Colorado Boulder</i>
Antoine Yoshinaka	<i>University of Buffalo</i>
Amy Yuen	<i>Middlebury College</i>
Chris Zepeda-Millán	<i>University of California, Los Angeles</i>