

# American Political Science Review Editorial Report: Executive Summary (Fall 2024)

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Editor's note: This report is adapted from the full report presented to the APSR Editorial Board in October 2023. Scan to read the full report online!

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *American Political Science Review* is the flagship journal of the American Political Science Association. The Feminist Collective editorial team began our editorship on June 1, 2020, with six guiding principles: ensuring editorial transparency; implementing checks and balances in editorial decision-making; a commitment to research ethics; a promise to pursue substantive, representational, and methodological diversity; active engagement with the APSA membership; and modernizing communications while expanding our outreach to broad audiences.

During our term as editors, we worked to maintain and improve the quality and integrity of the *American Political Science Review*, while broadening its readership, relevance, and contributor pool and expanding its commitment to research ethics.

We sought to expand our readership through our social media strategies, which include tweeting and publishing blog posts with published authors. These efforts paid off, as is evident in the major jump in Journal Impact Factor (JIF) that we experienced since our team took over (from 4.18 in 2019 to 5.9 in 2024). Since 2019, we tripled our median Altmetric attention scores. These measures are only one way of evaluating success, but they nevertheless speak to the viability of our social media strategies.

- We substantially increased our Open Access articles so that by 2024, 93% of our published articles were available through Open Access.
- Our submissions increased by 40% in the first year of our term; it dipped briefly in 2020-21 due to Covid-19 but we subsequently returned to rates comparable to those of our first year.
- Our overall acceptance rate stands at 7.1%, a rate almost 2% higher than our prior team.
- The percentage of desk rejects stands at 47%, and the percentage of papers rejected after peer review stood at 42.7%.
- We reduced the median days from submission to first in-

itation for peer review from 13 (prior team) to 11; from submission to reject after peer review from 84 (prior team) to 77; and from submission to invitation to revise after peer review from 129.5 (prior team) to 91. Our median days from submission to desk reject stood at 10, which is longer than the 6 days of the prior team, due to our policy of requiring at least two editors to sign off on a desk reject. As noted above, our submission rates throughout our editorial term were substantially higher than those of earlier teams.

- Our team committed to using the entire page allocation of the journal. In 2023 we published 1,492 pages of content and 99 manuscripts, which was nearly double that of recent editorial teams.

The proportion of accepted articles that focused on Race, Ethnicity and Politics was the largest reported by the four most recent teams. The proportion of accepted manuscripts in International Relations increased from those of the prior team. In terms of methodology, we saw the biggest increases in articles that employed qualitative case studies, critical or poststructuralist approaches, and ethnography, which is consistent with our vision for the journal. Our team saw modest increases in the submission and acceptance of articles by people of color and people identifying as women.

## THE TEAM

Our editorial team included 12 women with broad past editorial experience, methodological expertise, and a background in every subfield of the discipline. Our team was also diverse along lines of class background, race, ethnicity, and sexuality, and several of us bring research expertise in these areas to the table. On our team, every editor was an equal member. There was no single "lead" editor, and no one person defined the journal's direction. We designated two co-Lead Editors who oversaw the smooth running of the journal and ensured that no manuscripts fell through the cracks. One of these co-Leads changed every six months. Our overlapping terms ensured continuity, while bringing fresh energy and new eyes to the lead position every six months.

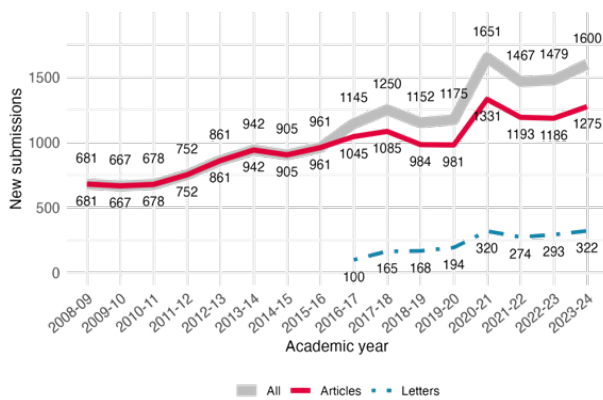
Our Editorial Board of 112 distinguished scholars represented significant substantive (e.g., field and subfield), methodological, and representational (e.g., different types of institutions and different gender and racial identities) diversity.

**SUBMISSIONS, EDITORIAL DECISIONS, AND OTHER DATA**

**OVERVIEW OF SUBMISSIONS DATA**

APSR’s submissions had been trending upward until 2020-21 and then declined somewhat in 2021-22 due to the effects of Covid. They immediately started to increase again in 2022. Some of the initial increase may have also been due to an initial interest in the new Editorial Team, as is often the case when a new team begins its tenure. Even with the drop in submissions, we experienced an overall increase in submissions when compared with prior teams. The number of manuscripts submitted as letters, a format introduced in 2016, substantially increased from 168 in 2018-19 to 320 in 2020-21 and dipped briefly due to Covid effects. It then continued to increase back to 316 in 2023-24.

**Figure 1. New article and letter annual submissions, 2008-2024 academic years**



**TURNAROUND TIMES**

Our turnaround times are comparable to or better than those of prior teams (Table 1).

**Table 1. Submissions, decisions, and turnaround times, 2008-2024**

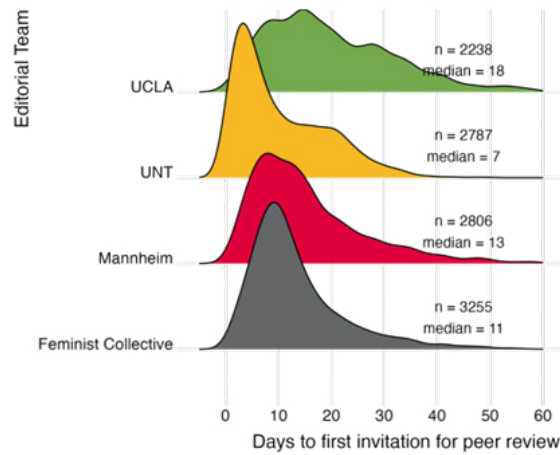
	UCLA	UNT	Mannheim	Feminist Collective
Median days to reject without peer review	14	4	6	10
Median days to first invitation for peer review	18	7	13	11
Median days to reject after 1st round peer review	81	62	84	77
Median days to first R&R/accept after 1st round peer review	132	92	130	91

Figure 2 through Figure 5 plot the distribution of turnaround days for new manuscripts.

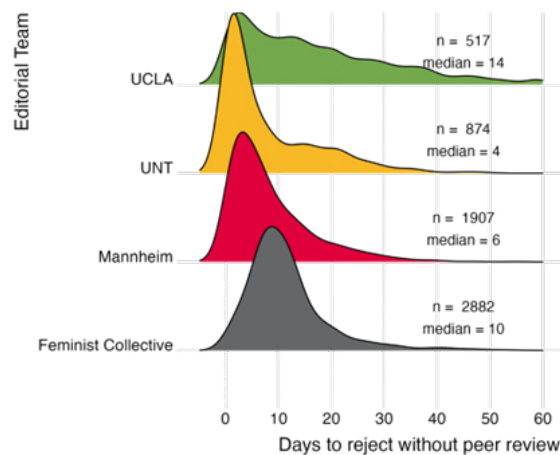
**SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS AND DECISIONS**

Our team invited, on average, one more reviewer per manuscript (6.3 vs. 5.1) than the previous team, which is consistent with our lower reviewer completion rate (47.5% vs. 56.9%). We attribute these differences to the challenges of the pandemic and its lingering impact. Compared to prior teams, we had a

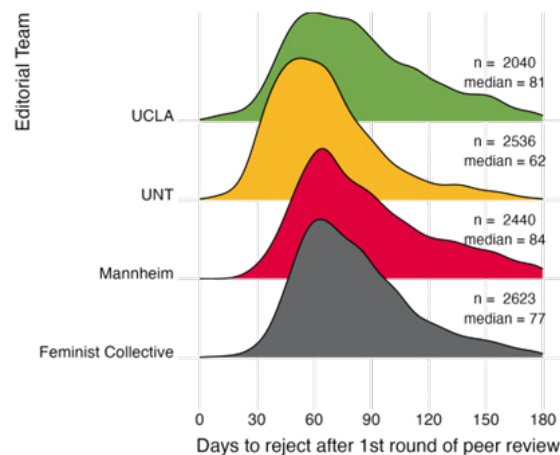
**Figure 2. Days from initial submission to under review by editorial team, 2008-2024**



**Figure 3. Days from initial submission to desk reject by editorial team, 2008-2024**



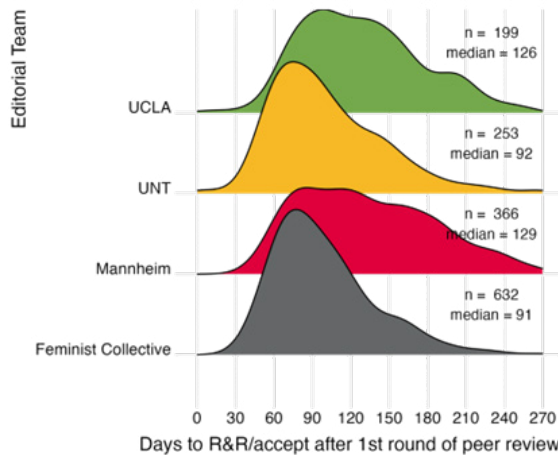
**Figure 4. Days from initial submission to reject after peer review by editorial team, 2008-2024**



similar number of average reviews per decision (3.0).

Our overall acceptance rate stood at 7.1%, a rate higher than our predecessor teams, which ranged from 4.7% to 5.2%. The percentage of desk rejects reached 47.0%, and the percentage of papers rejected after the first round of peer review stood at 42.7%.

**Figure 5. Days from initial submission to revise after peer review by editorial team, 2008-2024**



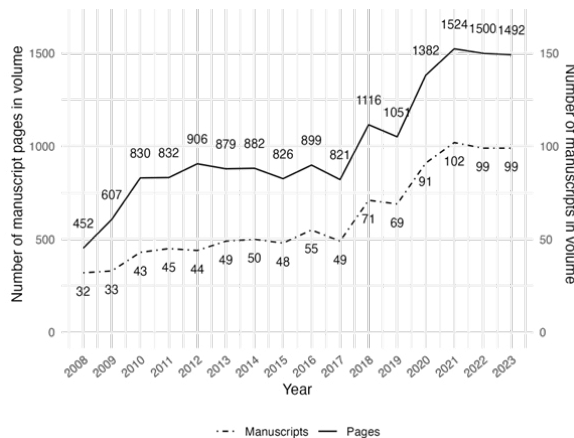
**Table 2. Reviewers, all new manuscripts with initial decisions, 2008-2024**

	UCLA	UNT	Mannheim	Feminist Collective
Mean reviews invited/manuscript	5.2	6.3	5.1	6.3
Mean reviews completed/manuscript	2.7	3.0	2.9	3.0
Percent of total invited that completed	51.9%	48.0%	56.9%	47.5%

**OVERALL NUMBER OF PAGES AND MANUSCRIPTS**

Our team committed to using the entire page allocation of the journal. In the first volume entirely managed by our team, we published 1,524 pages or 102 manuscripts of research content, which is nearly double that of recent editorial teams. In 2023, we maintained this page usage, publishing 1,492 pages of content and 99 manuscripts.

**Figure 6. Number of pages and manuscripts in each volume of the APSR, 2008-2024**



**SUBMISSIONS AND ACCEPTANCES BY SUBFIELD AND METHOD**

Acceptances are coded according to the team making the final decision, which may not be the same team as at the time of submission. Further, not all submissions reported for our team in these tables had a final decision before the end of our term. As a result, tables of submissions and accepted manuscripts do not refer to the same set of manuscripts and should not be used to calculate acceptance “rates”, which could be highly misleading.

**Table 3. New submissions by subfield (or section) and editorial team, 2008-2024**

Subfield of submission	UCLA	UNT	Mannheim	Feminist Collective
American Politics	638 (23.0%)	725 (19.8%)	888 (18.8%)	1,233 (19.9%)
Comparative Politics	770 (27.7%)	1,142 (31.1%)	1,431 (30.3%)	1,912 (30.9%)
Formal Theory	193 (6.9%)	183 (5.0%)	264 (5.6%)	232 (3.7%)
International Relations	460 (16.6%)	616 (16.8%)	675 (14.3%)	872 (14.1%)
Methodology	96 (3.5%)	111 (3.0%)	197 (4.2%)	245 (4.0%)
Normative Political Theory	448 (16.1%)	565 (15.4%)	681 (14.4%)	857 (13.8%)
Other	82 (3.0%)	187 (5.1%)	407 (8.6%)	483 (7.8%)
Race, Ethnicity, & Politics	91 (3.3%)	140 (3.8%)	179 (3.8%)	363 (5.9%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,778 (100.0%)</b>	<b>3,669 (100.0%)</b>	<b>4,722 (100.0%)</b>	<b>6,197 (100.0%)</b>

Note: Section category chosen by the corresponding author. The table includes all new submissions from 07/01/2008 to 05/31/2024.

We note that the proportion of accepted articles that focus on Race, Ethnicity and Politics, 6.6%, is the largest reported by the four most recent teams. The proportion of accepted manuscripts in International Relations increased from those of the Mannheim team and returned to levels comparable to that of the UCLA team.

**Table 4. Accepted manuscripts by subfield (or section) and editorial team, 2008-2024**

Subfield of submission	UCLA	UNT	Mannheim	Feminist Collective
American Politics	27 (22.3%)	39 (17.9%)	55 (20.4%)	125 (24.1%)
Comparative Politics	41 (33.9%)	82 (37.6%)	100 (37.2%)	175 (33.8%)
Formal Theory	11 (9.1%)	5 (2.3%)	28 (10.4%)	15 (2.9%)
International Relations	11 (9.1%)	25 (11.5%)	16 (5.9%)	50 (9.7%)
Methodology	2 (1.7%)	8 (3.7%)	12 (4.5%)	22 (4.2%)
Normative Political Theory	25 (20.7%)	54 (24.8%)	42 (15.6%)	81 (15.6%)
Other	2 (1.7%)	1 (0.5%)	7 (2.6%)	16 (3.1%)
Race, Ethnicity, & Politics	2 (1.7%)	4 (1.8%)	9 (3.3%)	34 (6.6%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>121 (100.0%)</b>	<b>218 (100.0%)</b>	<b>269 (100.0%)</b>	<b>518 (100.0%)</b>

Note: Section category chosen by the corresponding author. Manuscripts with final decisions between 07/01/2008 and 05/31/2024. Excludes manuscripts currently under review and may include manuscripts originally submitted under a previous editorial team.

**PRIMARY METHODOLOGY OF MANUSCRIPT ACCORDING TO CORRESPONDING AUTHOR**

**Table 5. New submissions by method and editorial team, 2018-2024**

Methodology	Mannheim	Feminist Collective
Case study/Small N	151 (5.0%)	258 (6.0%)
Critical Theory/Poststructuralist	45 (1.5%)	105 (1.8%)
Ethnographic	15 (0.5%)	46 (0.8%)
Experimental (lab, survey, or field)	476 (15.8%)	1,212 (20.4%)
Formal	261 (8.7%)	319 (5.4%)
Interpretive	233 (7.7%)	455 (7.7%)
Normative	239 (7.9%)	519 (8.7%)
Statistical-Observational	1,592 (52.9%)	2,921 (49.2%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,012 (100.0%)</b>	<b>5,935 (100.0%)</b>

Note: Primary methodology chosen by the corresponding author. Includes new submissions from 01/01/2018 to 05/31/2024, excluding those with missing values.

Looking at the proportion of accepted articles using specific approaches (Table 6), we see that the biggest increases come in the proportion of articles that employ qualitative case studies, critical or poststructuralist approaches, and ethnography, which is consistent with our vision for the journal. We also saw modest increases in experimental work. While there were some decreases in the relative proportions of accepted articles using formal modeling and statistical analyses, the raw numbers of accepted manuscripts using statistical analysis increased and remained large.

**Table 6. Accepted manuscripts by methodology and editorial team, 2018-2024**

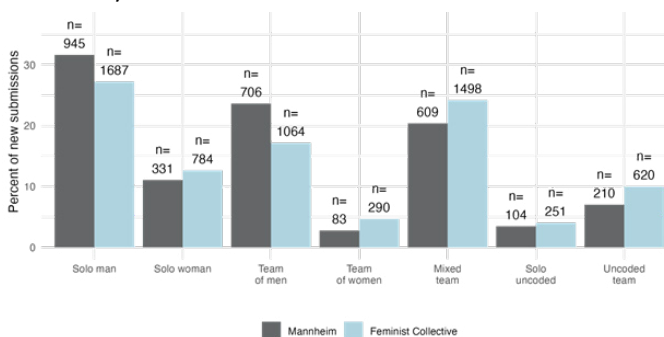
Methodology	Mannheim	Feminist Collective
Case study/Small N	2 (1.0%)	22 (4.3%)
Critical Theory/Poststructuralist	0 (0.0%)	12 (2.4%)
Ethnographic	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.4%)
Experimental (lab, survey, or field)	35 (17.9%)	109 (21.4%)
Formal	24 (12.3%)	17 (3.3%)
Interpretive	12 (6.2%)	41 (8.0%)
Normative	10 (5.1%)	37 (7.3%)
Statistical-Observational	112 (57.4%)	270 (52.9%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>195 (100.0%)</b>	<b>510 (100.0%)</b>

Note: Methodology was chosen by the corresponding author. Manuscripts with final decisions through 05/31/2024. Excludes manuscripts submitted before 01/01/2018, those with missing methodology indicator, and those currently under review. May include manuscripts originally submitted under a previous editorial team.

**DEMOGRAPHICS: AUTHORS**

Comparing our team with the Mannheim team, we note a healthy increase in submissions for solo scholars of color, teams of scholars of color, and teams with at least one member identifying as a scholar of color.

**Table 7. New submissions by author gender(s) and editorial team, 2018-2024**

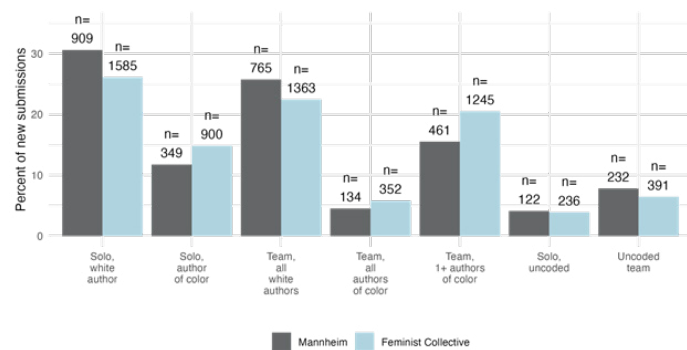


Note: Excludes submissions before January 1, 2018, when submission questionnaire was implemented.

**MEASURES OF IMPACT**

A journal's impact factor (JIF) is the average number of citations in a given year to an article published in the last two years. It is calculated by dividing the number of citations to all articles in the two-year window by the total number of articles published in that period. In the 2020 JIF calculations, the *Journal Citation Reports* began including online early access content not yet included in a volume in the calculation of the numerator, boosting the JIF of most journals by adding more content with citations to

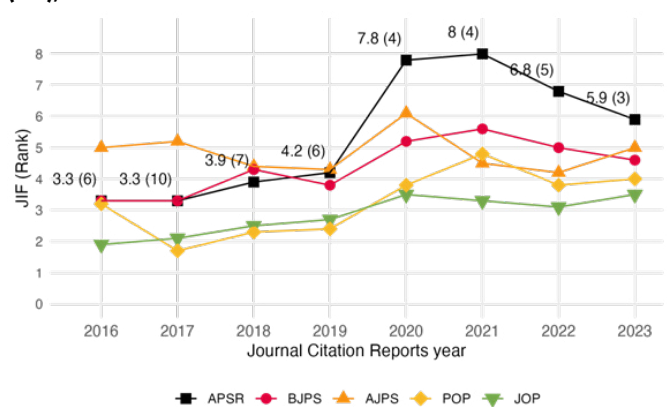
**Table 8. New Submissions by author race and ethnicity and editorial team, 2018-2024**



items published in 2019 and 2018. During the transition period (2020-2021), the calculation of the JIF was temporarily biased if a journal was disproportionately cited in online content. JIF calculations from 2022 onward included online and early access content in both the numerator (e.g., total citations in 2022) and denominator (e.g., count of items published in 2020 or 2021).

The 2023 JIF for APSR was 5.9, a significant increase from 4.2 in 2019 (Figure 7). This means that on average, an article appearing in the journal in 2021 or 2022 was cited about 5.9 times by the end of 2023, putting APSR in the top 1% of journals. The APSR's JIF is now higher than several peers that publish research for a general political science audience. It places the APSR among the top three research outlets in political science ranked by Web of Science.

**Figure 7. Journal Citation Reports Journal Impact Factor (JIF), 2016-2023**



Note: American Political Science Review (APSR), British Journal of Political Science (BJPS), American Journal of Political Science (AJPS), Perspectives on Politics (POP), Journal of Politics (JOP)

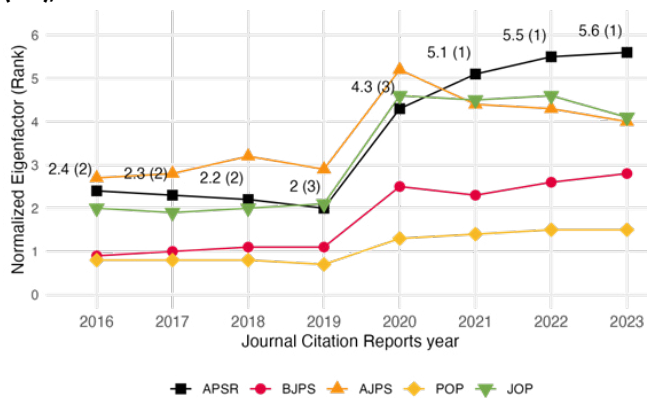
Much, if not most, of the credit for the APSR's current impact metrics goes to previous teams' steadfast stewardships. We also attribute some to the current team's social media presence, which helps drive traffic to the journal's present and past publications.

Another way to measure impact is with the normalized Eigenfactor Score, which is the ratio of number of citations to total number of articles in the past five years and cited in the Web of Science adjusted for the number of journals in the collection. The APSR has almost tripled its Eigenfactor Score since 2019 and is the highest ranked journal in *Journal Citation Reports'* political



science list (Figure 8).

**Figure 8. Journal Citation Reports Journal Impact Factor (JIF), 2016-2023**



Note: American Political Science Review (APSR), British Journal of Political Science (BJPS), American Journal of Political Science (AJPS), Perspectives on Politics (POP), Journal of Politics (JOP)

**CONCLUSION**

In our past four years of stewarding the APSR, this report shows that we met or exceeded most of our goals. We developed and

implemented policies that aimed to promote the principles we articulated in our initial proposal to serve as editors: editorial transparency; editorial checks and balances; a commitment to research ethics; substantive, methodological, and representational diversity; active engagement with the APSA membership; and modernizing the journal’s communications.

We increased the visibility of the journal through our social media outreach. With the help of Cambridge University Press, we substantially increased the number of Open Access articles published. We expanded the substantive and methodological scope of articles, and increased the proportion of accepted articles that focus on Race, Ethnicity and Politics and on gender and politics. We saw increases in the submission and acceptance of articles by people of color and people identifying as women. These and other strategies resulted in measurable JIF and Altmetric Attention Score increases.

Overall, our submissions increased substantially compared with previous teams. Our overall acceptance rate stood at 7.1%, a rate higher than our predecessor teams. We doubled the research content of the journal by doubling our page use. We also managed to maintain reasonable turnaround times for authors despite the challenges posed by the global pandemic. As a cohesive, collaborative, and effective team, we are pleased with what we were able to accomplish and grateful for the opportunity to guide the journal during our term. ■

# BOOKS BY OUR MEMBERS

***The Legacy of Watergate and the Nixon Presidency: Nixon's Curse***

Michael A. Genovese

Palgrave MacMillan

***Nationalized Politics: Evaluating Electoral Politics Across Time***

Jamie L. Carson, Joel Sievert, and Ryan D. Williamson

Oxford University

***Arts, Power, and Politics: Political Storytelling in Paintings, Music, and Movies***

Michael A. Genovese

Lexington Books

***Filming the First: Cinematic Portrayals of Freedom of the Press***

Helen J. Knowles-Gardner, Bruce E. Altschuler, and Brandon T. Metroka

Lexington Books

