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Editorial

Continuity with Change

As announced in the November/December 2013 issue of PAR, the managing editorship moved from Indiana University to Florida State University (FSU) on January 1, 2014. While this move introduced changes to backroom operations, it has not altered the commitment of the editorial team at both Indiana and FSU to assemble the finest issue every two months and to provide the very best service to PAR’s authors and reviewers.

Despite a steep learning curve, the transition to FSU has been smooth because of the sure direction and assistance from Editor in Chief James L. Perry and his staff at Indiana. Over recent weeks, I have come to truly appreciate the exceptional insight and tireless work of my predecessor, Michael McGuire. The training, assistance, and feedback provided by Michael and his editorial assistant, Rachel Fyall, who will stay on board through spring, has been integral to this transition. The FSU managing editor team—Editorial Assistant Kate Wassel, Associate Managing Editor Portia Diño-so, and myself—will strive to match the high standards of quality control and attention to customer service to authors and reviewers that Michael set.

These changes should go unnoticed to authors and reviewers. PAR continues to use Editorial Manager software to manage and track manuscripts, authors, and reviewers (http://www.editorialmanager.com/par). Guidelines for submissions can be found at the publisher’s Web site, Wiley Online (http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/ISSN%291540-6210). Following these guidelines carefully will ensure timely processing of your paper.

The primary operational goal of PAR continues to be minimizing the elapsed time between an initial manuscript submission, an editorial decision, and, if the paper is accepted, publication. This criterion is important in how we assess our own performance. In 2013, under Michael McGuire’s leadership, the performance of the PAR editorial team was stellar in this regard.

Over the last year, PAR has received 389 new submissions and 149 revised manuscripts through Editorial Manager. The average time to an initial editorial decision on a new submission was 28 days, including those papers that were rejected without review. The average time to an “accept” or “revise” decision was approximately 60 days when we include only those papers sent out for review. Going forward, we plan to continue this short cycle from submission to editorial decision as a service to authors and readers.

The most significant factor in making a timely editorial decision is the amount of time it takes for a reviewer to complete a review assignment. Reviewers are asked to complete their reviews within 30 days. Ensuring that reviewers keep their commitment is important for us and for our authors. In 2013, two-thirds of PAR reviewers delivered their reviews on time or early. Our process for selecting reviewers is meticulous, but we are not infallible. We always select content area specialists and strive to make sure some, if not all, of the reviewers possess expertise in the specific research methods and analytic tools applied in the manuscript. Recruiting at least one reviewer for each manuscript from outside the traditional public administration fields also breaks down silos between disciplines and promotes and links the scholarship published in PAR to larger audiences.

The quantity and variety of scholarship published in PAR this past year is impressive. The six regular issues include 61 research articles, and the special issue on health care reform added 11 more. In 2013, PAR also published four Theory to Practice articles (Donald P. Moynihan, editor), a Public Administration and the Disciplines feature (Bradley E. Wright, editor), two Administrative Profiles (Anne M. Khademian, editor), 15 Perspectives, 41 commentaries on articles, and 34 book reviews (Rogan Kersh and Sonia M. Ospina, editors).

PAR remains highly selective. Not including special issues, PAR’s acceptance rate for 2013 was approximately 15 percent, which is in line with other first-rate academic journals such as the American Journal of Political Science and the Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory. The rate at which newly submitted manuscripts are declined with comments from the managing editor, but not sent out for external review, has remained at about 40 percent of all submissions. The primary reasons for not sending
a manuscript out to reviewers are that the paper does not advance
our knowledge of public administration and/or does not provide an
opportunity for scholars and practitioners to build on and broaden
their existing frameworks and perspectives. Thus, our final decisions
often come down to considerations such as the fit of the manuscript
with PAR’s readership and editorial breadth, as well as the low pros-
pect that the manuscript will proceed to publication in PAR. We ask
authors to take great care in preparing a manuscript for submission.
High-quality writing is expected; the blind peer-review process will
not be used for submissions that appear to be rough drafts or poorly
written papers.

Ultimately, the editors aspire for Public Administration Review to be
renowned as the place where readers find the very best research in
the field and authors can disseminate their work to the largest pos-
sible audience, having the greatest impacts on theory and practice.
PAR’s 2012 ISI Journal Citation Reports five-year Impact Factor is
1.546. In citation metrics provided by Google Scholar, which some
consider a more robust measure of the impact and influence of a
professional journal, PAR is the number-two-ranked journal in the
Public Policy and Administration category. With 1 million down-
loads per year and the largest number of total citations in public
administration, PAR remains the leader in public administration.

We want to continue to enhance PAR’s visibility and influence in
coming years while celebrating PAR’s seventy-fifth anniversary in
2015. You can be a part of this by accepting review invitations and
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ship in public administration. Our team will take it from there.
We pledge to do our best to ensure timely review and publication
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—Richard Feiock, Managing Editor

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