

ATLANTIC PROVINCES POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

APPSA Constitution Committee

Proposals for the future structure of APPSA

October 2018

Mandate of the APPSA Constitution Committee

At the annual general meeting of the 2017 APPSA conference, held at the Université de Moncton, a series of motions that concerned the future structure of APPSA and its relation to other political science associations were passed.¹ As part of these motions an APPSA Constitution Committee was constituted in order to explore possible changes to the association. The members selected for this committee were: Gabriel Arsenault (Université de Moncton), Erin Crandall (Acadia University), Jamie Gillies (St. Thomas University), Scarlett Kelly (Dalhousie University), and J.P. Lewis (University of New Brunswick, Saint John).

APPSA Consultations

In order to better understand the views of APPSA stakeholders, the Constitution Committee designed and administered an online survey.² Questions focused on potential reforms to the structure and administration of APPSA and were a mix of multiple choice and open-ended. The invitation to participate in the survey was sent to 120 individuals via email. Two emails were sent out – an initial invitation in March 2018 and a follow-up reminder in May. The pool of potential survey respondents was drawn principally from participants from the previous three APPSA conferences. There was a total of 29 respondents, approximately a 24% response rate. Twenty-four respondents (83%) identified as a full-time faculty member at a university in Atlantic Canada. Other respondents included part-time or limited-term faculty members at a university in Atlantic Canada (2), an independent researcher (1), a graduate student (1), and post-doctoral fellow (1). The high proportion of respondents who are faculty members at a university in Atlantic Canada suggests that the survey is reflective of the views of those most likely to attend conferences and participate in the administration of APPSA in the future.

¹ Motions are included as Appendix A

² Survey questions are included as Appendix B.

Summary of Survey Results

A majority of respondents supported reforms to more formalize APPSA's structure. That said, comments provided by many respondents indicated a desire to maintain a fairly flexible organization that does not place a heavy burden on any future APPSA executive. A summary of the survey results follows.

The criteria for APPSA membership is not formalized. However, the general practice seems to be that APPSA members are those who register and attend an APPSA conference. A majority of respondents (55%) supported formalizing this criterion for APPSA membership. To the question of who should qualify to vote on APPSA business, a significant majority (86%) supported giving this power to APPSA members. Respondents had more varied views on the threshold for quorum needed to make binding decisions at APPSA meetings; however, a significant plurality (43%) supported a threshold of 10 APPSA members who represent a minimum of five universities from Atlantic Canada.

Part of the Constitution Committee's mandate was to explore the viability of a permanent financial structure for APPSA. In conversations at the 2017 APPSA conference, the issue of a dedicated bank account was a noted point of interest. To the question of whether APPSA should explore registering for non-profit status and open a bank account for the main purpose of supporting the annual conference, a majority (58.6%) supported APPSA going through the process of opening a bank account. However, there was also a sizeable number who indicated (34.5%) they "don't know". This suggests that some respondents want to know more about the administrative burden that goes along with a bank account before moving forward on this item.

Another potential reform is to have an institution in Atlantic Canada volunteer to oversee the general administration of APPSA. To the question, "If a volunteer is identified, should a host institution in Atlantic Canada be responsible for continued general administration of APPSA, provided that responsibilities as prescribed by the Association's constitution and executive committee are met?", a significant majority (62%) responded in the affirmative. Two respondents noted an interest in having the institution rotate every few years if this host-role was established.

Another potential reform to more formalize APPSA's structure is a constitutionally established executive committee. As part of the survey, a potential executive committee structure was presented as an example. The proposed structure was:

1. Past President (Last conference host)
2. President (Current conference host)
3. Vice President (Future – next year's – conference host)
4. Member-at-large
5. Member-at-large (possible rep. from outside of Atlantic Canada)
6. Member-at-large (possible graduate student rep.)
7. Secretary/Treasurer (three-year term)
8. Webmaster/knowledge manager (three-year term)

A majority of respondents supported this proposed structure, with a number of respondents offering additional comments. Four respondents noted that there did not seem to be an obvious rationale to have a designated member from outside of Atlantic Canada. Several respondents also noted that the size of the proposed executive committee may be unnecessarily large given the desire to remain a nimble and relatively informal organization. One respondent observed that the structure of the executive committee will also be affected by Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) requirements if APPSA were to transition to non-profit organization status. A number of respondents also noted in different parts of the survey the importance of stating clearly the roles of the executive members in any future constitution. Given this feedback, it seems advisable that any future executive committee be clearly defined in the constitution, not have a designated member from outside of Atlantic Canada, and that its structure follows CRA requirements for non-profit organizations (if this status is adopted by APPSA).

Constitution Committee Recommendations

Motion 1: APPSA Membership and Qualifications to Vote at APPSA General Meetings

That an APPSA member is a person who registers for and attends that year's annual conference. APPSA members who attend the general meeting at the annual conference are eligible to vote.

Motion 2: Quorum at APPSA General Meetings

That in order for APPSA members to make binding decisions at a general meeting, a minimum of ten APPSA members who represent a minimum of five universities from Atlantic Canada must be present.

Motion 3: Institutional Host for APPSA

That the Constitution Committee conduct a search for an institution in Atlantic Canada to act as an administrative host for APPSA. If an appropriate host institution is identified, the executive committee will deliver their recommendation to APPSA members no later than September 2019. APPSA members will vote on whether to adopt the host institution at the 2019 annual general meeting.

Motion 4: APPSA Registering as a Non-Profit Organization

That APPSA endorses in principle its intention to register as a non-profit organization for 2020.

Motion 5: Dedicated APPSA Bank Account

That an APPSA bank account be created should APPSA register as a non-profit organization.

Motion 6: Executive Committee Membership

That the APPSA Executive Committee be composed of the members noted below, with the caveat that adjustments to the Committee's structure can be made in order to comply with CRA requirements should APPSA seek non-profit status.

1. Past President (Last conference host)
2. President (Current conference host)
3. Vice President (Future – next year’s – conference host)
4. Member-at-large
5. Member-at-large (possible graduate student rep.)
6. Secretary/Treasurer (three-year term)
7. Webmaster/knowledge manager (three-year term)

Motion 7: APPSA Executive Committee Election

That members of the Executive Committee be elected at the 2019 APPSA general meeting.

Motion 8: APPSA Constitution

That the Constitution Committee draft an APPSA constitution that reflects the motions passed at the 2018 APPSA general meeting. The draft constitution should be circulated to APPSA members no later than September 2019 and voted on at the 2019 APPSA general meeting.

APPENDIX A

Issue	Motions for the 2017 APPSA Annual Meeting
<p>APPSA lacks a clear governance structure and permanent executive</p>	<p>Motion #1: Be it resolved that an APPSA constitutional committee be formed with the authority to create an association constitution that shall be in effect after broad consultation with Atlantic provinces' political science departments and which shall report no later than December 2017. This should include exploring whether a host institution in an Atlantic province should be responsible for general administration of APPSA and exploring the viability of a permanent financial structure.</p> <p>Motion #2: Be it resolved that the APPSA constitutional committee shall cease to exist as of January 1, 2018 and its members shall fill executive positions on an interim basis until October 2018.</p> <p>Motion #3: Be it resolved that the APPSA constitution shall be subject to ratification at the October 2018 meeting of APPSA at which time a permanent executive shall be elected.</p>
<p>APPSA lacks connectivity with other regional associations and the CPSA</p>	<p>Motion #4: Be it resolved that the APPSA interim executive should initiate conversation with other regional associations about approaching the CPSA to create <i>ex officio</i> positions on the CPSA board of directors for elected presidents of the four regional associations. (note: to offset this a lower number of general directors on the CPSA board could be considered)</p> <p>Motion #5: Be it resolved that the APPSA interim executive should ask the CPSA to immediately, meaningfully and permanently profile the regional associations on the CPSA website.</p>
<p>The <i>CPSR</i> lacks infrastructure and institutional support; there is no involvement of the CPSA in the <i>CPSR</i>; only the Quebec association has a role in the <i>CJPS</i></p>	<p>Motion #6: Be it resolved that the APPSA interim executive should initiate conversation with the editorial team of the <i>CPSR</i>, and then the regional associations, to explore the viability of a formal connection between the <i>CPSR</i> and the CPSA in order to improve institutional supports while preserving the <i>CPSR</i>'s purpose. This might result in a joint application for a SSHRC Connection Grant being submitted.</p>

	<p>Motion #7: Be it resolved that at the 2018 APPSA meeting, and provided that institutional supports are in place including support from the CPSA, the APPSA executive should formally address the viability of the Atlantic region taking its turn managing the <i>CPSR</i>.</p>
<p>Items emerging from APPSA + reconciling matters in “Journal Publishing and Marketing in an Age of Digital Media, Open Access and Impact Factors”</p>	<p>Motion #8: Be it resolved that a CPSA director from the Atlantic region should, at the earliest opportunity, move at a meeting of the CPSA board that a task force be created to look into problems confronting journals in Canadian political science (see <i>Canadian Journal of Political Science</i> 50,1: 77-95)</p>

APPENDIX B

Atlantic Provinces Political Science Association Constitution Survey

At the 2017 Atlantic Provinces Political Science Association (APPSA) business meeting, a series of motions were passed that tasked a group of volunteers (the "APPSA Constitution Committee") to investigate what changes to APPSA, if any, should be pursued. The objective of this brief survey is to receive feedback from members of APPSA and other interested persons on what form these potential changes should take. The feedback received from this survey will be used by the committee to help formulate its recommendations.

MEMBERSHIP

The criteria for APPSA membership is not formalized. However, the general practice seems to be that APPSA members are those who register and attend an APPSA conference. Who should qualify as a member?

- a. An individual who attends the conference and pays the conference fee should be a member for the upcoming year
- b. Individuals who contact the APPSA executive and ask to become a member
- c. Other

VOTING

Who should qualify to vote on association business?

- a. Members of APPSA who attend the APPSA business meeting
- b. Members of APPSA and non-members who attend the APPSA business meeting
- c. Other

In order to make binding decisions, what should quorum be at APPSA business meetings?

- a. 10 APPSA members
- b. 20 APPSA members
- c. 10 APPSA members who represent a minimum of 5 universities from Atlantic Canada
- d. 20 APPSA members who represent a minimum of 5 universities from Atlantic Canada
- e. Other

FINANCES & ADMINISTRATION

Part of the Constitution Committee's mandate is to explore the viability of a permanent financial structure for APPSA. In conversations at the 2017 APPSA conference, the issue of a dedicated bank account was a noted point of interest. Should APPSA explore registering for non-profit status and open a bank account for the main purpose of supporting the annual conference?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

If a volunteer is identified, should a host institution in Atlantic Canada be responsible for continued general administration of APPSA, provided that responsibilities as prescribed by the Association's constitution and executive committee are met?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

Please let us know about any additional thoughts or suggestions you may have concerning the finances and administration of APPSA.

GOVERNANCE

The Constitution Committee has discussed what an APPSA Executive Committee might look like should a more formalized structure be pursued. For the purposes of soliciting feedback, we have included a suggested structure for the APPSA executive. Position terms would end/begin at the APPSA conference business meeting. Please let us know what you think the APPSA Executive Committee should look like.

Possible Composition of Executive

1. Past President (Last conference host)
2. President (Current conference host)
3. Vice President (Future – following year – conference host)
4. Member-at-large
5. Member-at-large (possible rep. from outside of Atlantic Canada)
6. Member-at-large (possible student rep.)
7. Secretary (three-year term)
8. Web master/knowledge manager (three-year term)

Should designated members of the APPSA Executive Committee act as the nominating committee responsible for recruiting members to fill the other positions?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

Should the members-at-large serve a three-year term?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

Should an individual be able to occupy more than one executive position at a time?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

RESPONDENT INFORMATION

We would like to know a few things about you. Please note that all responses are anonymous.

Are you:

- a. A full-time faculty member at a university in Atlantic Canada
- b. A full-time faculty member at a university outside of Atlantic Canada
- c. A part-time or limited-term faculty member at a university in Atlantic Canada
- d. A part-time or limited-term faculty member at a university outside of Atlantic Canada
- e. A graduate student at a university in Atlantic Canada
- f. A graduate student at a university outside of Atlantic Canada
- g. An independent researcher
- h. Other

Have you attended an APPSA conference in the last three years?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

Do you plan to attend an APPSA conference within the next three years? (Memorial University [2018], Acadia University [2019], St. Francis Xavier University [2020])

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Maybe

How many APPSA conferences do you estimate you've attended?

- a. 0
- b. 1-3
- c. 4-8
- d. More than 8