

Support for two-Year College Faculty in Political Science

Sara Parker, Chabot College

As of yet, I don't believe that there has been work done with NSF based funding specifically for the discipline of Political Science. I look forward to the opportunity to advance this goal.

The main organization in Political Science, the American Political Science Association (APSA), appears to have done less than other disciplinary organizations to support community college faculty and/or integrate CC faculty into the Association. This concern has been raised to the organization directly in the past and was recently discussed on a regional APSA conference panel.

About a decade ago, APSA created an annual Teaching and Learning Conference. This is a great conference that promotes the sharing of pedagogical techniques. The separation of the teaching and learning conference from the more academic-oriented annual and regional conferences may have had the (perhaps unintended) consequence of distancing Community College faculty, who attend the TLC conference in greater numbers, while research institution faculty attend the annual and regional conferences.

One thing that APSA does well is to provide online teaching resources to faculty: http://www.apsanet.org/content_3842.cfm?navID=536 Although not aimed specifically at Community College faculty, I have used the resources often and find them very helpful. I appreciate that there is a reduced membership ("Associate Member") rate for community college faculty.

I would like to see more opportunities for the inclusion of community college faculty at the annual APSA conference and at regional conferences. Here are some examples of the types of integration that could take place:

- Offering brief refresher or update courses at annual and regional meetings, either during the conference or in pre-conference sessions. Funding (possibly through a competitive process) would make participation feasible for CC faculty.
- Dedicating a web presence to CC faculty on the APSA website.
- Institutionally supporting the development and upkeep of a community college faculty network.
- Support and encouragement of initiatives that establish 4-year college/university outreach programs with 2-year colleges.

Community college faculty often lack funding and institutional incentive needed to remain current in their field. CC professional development tends to focus on broader pedagogy topics rather than discipline specific content. CC faculty members are motivated to stay up to date in their field but community colleges are often unable to support discipline-based professional

development or funding. Furthermore, community college instructors in political science teach courses across the discipline, which amplifies the difficulty of remaining current with the literature in any number of specialized sub-fields.

A concerted effort of greater inclusion, under the leadership of APSA, would improve the quality of political science teaching across the U.S., improve the quality of political science pedagogical research, and create a more collaborative atmosphere within the discipline for CC faculty.

Additionally, improved support of community college faculty would contribute to greater diversity within our discipline, and equity in academia. Community colleges disproportionately serve minority populations; outreach to community college political scientists is outreach to the undergraduate institutions where young people choose their future educational and career paths, and decide on a major.