

# Communications

## Letters to the Editor

### To the Editor:

In Nancy Ranney's review of Association annual meetings over the past 20 years, there is a mistake in Table 8, the "Top Ten" Institutions. Columbia has been left out of the overall summary. She has had 204 panelists, and, consequently, should be ranked sixth, after Berkeley. Sorry about that Stanford, but, as a Columbia Ph.D., when it comes to elitism, I can be as elitist as the next.

Trowbridge H. Ford  
College of the Holy Cross

### To the Editor:

At an ICPSR meeting a while back, Rick Hofferbert asked why political scientists, during meetings spent so much time on questions of constitutional policy and so little on substantive policy.

I found this observation interesting, since it fit with my own observations of such gatherings and with a dean's comment of several years ago that our department's meetings were unlike those of other departments.

I pondered Hofferbert's question that evening at a cocktail party. As the evening began, I formed a tentative hypothesis. By the end of the evening the hypothesis had become a law. It even looked like a law the next morning.

Inasmuch as social science laws are rare, and inasmuch as I value intellectual continuity and the integration of old work with new, I chose to name my new law in a way that gave proper credit to two other social science laws: the law of anticipated reaction and the iron law of oligarchy. My law is, therefore, called the law of anticipated oligarchy. It asserts that political scientists, sensitive to questions of power and hierarchy within organizations because of their training, tend to treat any issue of substantive policy primarily in terms of its organizational and power distribution consequences. Substantive policy proposals are therefore treated less in terms of their manifest content and more in terms of the manner in which these proposals might portend incipient oligarchy within the organization.

I am only too aware of the narrow data base upon which this law is based. There is, however, an undeniable charm in asserting a law in a data vacuum, and to that I have succumbed, in the

hope that others might carry on the important work of validation.

Phillip L. Gianos  
California State University,  
Fullerton

### To the Editor:

In response to Professor Robert S. Friedman's perceptive article on nonacademic careers (Winter 1977), I would like to suggest the need for more joint-degree programs—combining a B.A., M.A., or Ph.D. in Political Science with such a discipline as Agricultural Economics or Public Health. Based on my own personal experience of job-hunting and working for government and private business, I am convinced that such a joint-degree would be both quite marketable and academically meaningful. For example, many firms and agencies are eager to hire statisticians, but they are especially interested in those with the political sophistication, analytical skills, research and writing ability, and perhaps foreign language training that a good political scientist might be expected to have. But someone with just a degree in political science (even if it goes under the label of "public administration" or "policy science") will not qualify.

The mechanics of joint-degree programs will of course have to be carefully worked out: courses, examinations, dissertations or theses, etc. There are undoubtedly useful precedents in this regard. What is necessary is a broad-minded approach on the part of both students and faculty—a recognition that the marriage of disciplines is mutually beneficial as well as pragmatic.

Herbert H. Werlin, Ph.D.  
Westinghouse Health Systems  
Columbia, Maryland

### To the Editor:

I am writing the chapter on "Social Science and Energy" for Volume 3 of the *Annual Review of Energy*. I would appreciate it if *PS* readers interested in this area could let me know of their interest and work in this area.

Denton E. Morrison  
Department of Sociology  
Michigan State University

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