

VOX POP Newsletter

of Political Organizations and Parties

An official section of the American Political Science Association
Produced by the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics, The University of Akron.

THEME – CAMPAIGN CONDUCT

Improving Campaign Conduct: Ethics, Consultants, and Elections

*James A. Thurber, American University; Candice J. Nelson, American University;
Robin Kolodny, Temple University, and David A. Dulio, American University.*

At the Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies Campaign Management Institute at American University, we are working to understand and explain the campaign practices of political consultants. We are also attempting to improve campaign ethics through our research. Our efforts, funded by The Pew Chairtable Trusts, have included frank and confidential discussions with consultants about their profession, lengthy surveys with a large number of consultants, public focus group forums, academic conferences, and programmatic work with the American Association of Political Consultants (AAPC), the professional association of political consultants. Two edited volumes will be available mid-March from the Brookings Institution Press (*Campaign Warriors: Political Consultants in Elections* <http://www.brook.edu/press/books/campaign-warriors> and *Crowded Airwaves: Campaign Advertising in Elections* http://www.brook.edu/press/books/crowded_airwaves.htm), and *The Battle for Congress: Candidates, Campaign Consultants, and Voters* coming this fall. In addition, we have produced three video documentaries showcasing consultants in elections. One Discusses the issue of campaign ethics head on (and is accompanied by a study guide) and the other includes case studies highlighting the role of consultants in two 1998 congressional races, Capps vs. Bordonaro (CA-22nd) and Moore vs. Snowbarger (KS-3rd). Details on how to obtain these videos are found at the end of this article.

As our work focuses on the role of political consultants and how to improve campaign conduct, we would like to share some of our findings about consultant views of ethics in campaigns. As we complete the 2000 cam-

paign cycle, we are reminded yet again that political consultants play an enormous role in elections. While political consultants prepare their candidates for the remaining primaries and general elections, it is a good time to focus on the norms and rules of the game consultants and candidates are playing. Last summer, we administered, with the help of Yankelovich partners, a national survey of senior campaign consultants that included 505 thirty minute interviews. We wish to report on several questions about the ethical practices of consultants in campaigns from our survey.

In 1978, the American Association of Political Consultants (AAPC - the industry's professional organization) created its code of ethics to serve as a set of general guidelines for campaign consultants. All AAPC members pledge to uphold this code as a condition of membership (see page 3 for reprint of AAPC's code). In our survey of political consultants, we asked what consultants thought of the AAPC code, the rules of the cam-

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paign game, and the ethics of political consulting generally.

We asked specifically whether there should be a code of ethics for the consulting industry and found overwhelming support for the idea. A resounding 69.5% said there should be, 20.0% said there should not, and 6.7% volunteered that such a code already exists through AAPC. When prompted, almost three quarters (73.5%) of the respondents were familiar with the AAPC code, while 25.7% were not. Although three quarters of the respondents were familiar with the code, many fewer (only about 40%) reported being AAPC members. This helps to explain the answer consultants gave to the question of whether or not the AAPC code has had any effect on the behavior of political consultants. When given four options (a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, none at all) only 16% said the code has a great deal or a fair amount of influence on consultant behavior. Unfortunately, this means that most of the campaign consulting profession, about 84%, said the AAPC code is weak and has been largely ineffective. Our informal discussions with consultants reveal that consultants believe the AAPC code to be too vague and too general. As a result, consultants most likely find the AAPC code easy to ignore; there seems to be no incentive to enforce compliance among members.

The sense that the AAPC code has not mattered is puzzling in light of the response consultants had to the question "Should a professional organization be able to censure those who violate a code of ethics for campaign professionals or not?" Sixty one percent said yes. This leads us to ask several questions about the consulting industry today: Why are so few consultants members of AAPC? Why do consultants feel the current code of ethics is ineffective? What can be done about it?

Low membership figures for AAPC (only forty percent of the respondents in our survey belong to the professional organization) prompts us to ask about the professionalization of the consulting industry. More than half of the approximately 5,000 full-time campaign consultants have not joined the AAPC, but seem to be well aware of its code of conduct, as revealed in our survey. Many professions, like physicians, lawyers, engineers, and architects, have associations with codes of ethics, norms, even the licensing of those who practice the trade. An example from the campaign world is the American Council of Survey Researchers (a professional organization to which some campaign pollsters belong) that has a code of ethics and censuring practices. They have enforced their code of ethics by censuring pollsters for administering push polls. Other professions disseminate information to members, hold conferences, publish guidelines, and censure or monitor the practices in the profes-

sion. Why does the AAPC attract less than half of the campaign professionals? The answer likely has more to do with the consulting industry than with the AAPC. There are no requirements for becoming a consultant other than the ability to attract clients. Anyone can call themselves a campaign consultant and start a business. No professional licensing, certification, educational degree status or previous experience is required. Indeed, campaign consulting is a free market enterprise with few barriers to entry. There is a wide diversity of membership within the sub-specialties of political consulting, thus making it difficult to license the professionals. When we asked about membership in AAPC, the results by sub-specialty were:

Are you a member of the AAPC?	Yes	No
General Campaign Consultants	44.2%	54.6%
Pollsters	31.1%	64.9%
Media Consultants	50.6%	48.2%
Direct Mail Specialists	48.6%	48.6%
Fundraisers	21.9%	78.1%

Interestingly, pollsters and fundraisers are the least likely to belong to AAPC (most likely because of their membership in the Council of American Survey Research). However, there is no difference in pollsters' awareness of the AAPC code from other sub specialties (75% were aware; 25% were not) though there was with fund-raisers (a 50%-50% awareness, meaning a significantly larger number were aware of the code than were themselves members of AAPC). We can infer that pollsters and fundraisers think that the ethical practices that ought to be regulated do not apply to them. Perhaps that is because their efforts are not meant to sway voters directly in the same way that the work of media consultants, direct mail consultants, and general consultants does. There is some support for this idea when we asked consultants to tell us if their clients were exclusively political in nature or a mix of political and commercial clients. The overall sample showed a heavy mix, with 78% claiming both commercial and political candidates, but only 22% claiming exclusively political clients. When controlled for sub-specialty, pollsters were the least likely to have exclusively political clients (only 11% claimed this). However, nature of clientele does not perfectly explain why consultants don't join the AAPC, as only 15.9% of media consultants claimed to have exclusively political clients while the others (general consultants, direct mail, and fund-raising consultants) claimed 25% of their business was exclusively political.

The survey of political consultants is just one of many several areas of research and education conducted by the Improving Campaign Conduct project at American University. In the coming weeks, we will hold public fo-

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rums and conferences with consultants, journalists, and academics at The Ray C. Bliss Institute (University of Akron) (March 17), at the University of Florida (March 17), at the Institute for Governmental Studies at the University of California at Berkeley (April 10), at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. (March 28 and April 26), at The Robert Dole Center (University of Kansas) (May 1), at the Union League of Philadelphia (April 12), and at American University (February 2, March 8, and April 8). We will sponsor a special award dinner on May 8 in Washington, D.C. to honor eight consultants for their outstanding lifetime contributions to the profession. In late March, we will administer, with Yankelovich Partners, a national survey of eligible voters to measure attitudes about campaign practices that may be used in the 2000 election. We have also undertaken several in-depth case studies in order to better understand the ethical dilemmas in campaigning. Our web site to inform you of the project and its related activities is: www.american.edu/campaignconduct. The site will also tell you how to obtain copies of our videos, manuals, and publications. We encourage you to visit the site often as new activities are added frequently.

AAPC Code of Professional Ethics

- I will not indulge in any activity that would corrupt or degrade the practice of political campaigning.
- I will treat my colleagues and clients with respect and never intentionally injure their professional or personal reputations.
- I will respect the confidence of my clients and not reveal confidential or privileged information obtained during our professional relationship.
- I will use no appeal to voters that is based on racism, sexism, religious intolerance or any form of unlawful discrimination and will condemn those who use such practices. In turn, I will work for equal voting rights and privileges for all citizens.
- I will refrain from false or misleading attacks on an opponent or a member of his or her family and will do everything in my power to prevent others from using such tactics.
- I will document accurately and fully any criticism of an opponent or his or her record.
- I will be honest in my relationship with the news media and candidly answer questions when I have the authority to do so.
- I will use any funds I receive from my clients, or on behalf of my clients, only for those purposes invoiced in writing.
- I will not support any individual or organization that resorts to practices forbidden by this Code.

SPECIAL INTERESTS:

Campaigns & Elections: Contemporary Case Studies

*Michael A. Bailey, Ronald A. Faucheux,
Paul S. Herrnson, & Clyde Wilcox, eds.*

(Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2000)
Reviewed by Rick Farmer, University of Akron

Political pros often discuss strategy and tactics at 2 a.m., few other hours in a campaign day are calm enough for thoughtful reflection. What do they talk about in those wee hours of the morning? *Campaigns & Elections: Contemporary Case Studies* takes the reader behind the scenes of a variety of successful political campaigns seeking lessons about contemporary politics. It demonstrates the uncertainty that campaigns face and the judgments they must make. The book also provides a framework for understanding these judgements, making it far more than a collection of campaign war stories.

Bailey's collection is stylistically different from the usual *Campaigns and Elections* faire. The magazine is a great trade publication for political professionals. However, the articles often focus on a few specific "how to" points and do not provide the theoretical framework required for political science courses. *C&Es Road to Victory 2000* is an extensive collection of such articles. *Contemporary Case Studies* rises to the next level successfully combing theory and practice in one very interesting volume.

The opening chapter develops a useful framework for understanding elections at all levels. This framework enables the reader to recognize broad forces and idiosyncratic factors in the case studies. The case studies are engaging, putting names and faces on abstract themes that are often scrawled on a classroom blackboard. The framework and the cases each complement and inform the other.

For example, the authors argue that the major issues of our time seldom decide elections and cite several reasons. 1) Candidates of both parties tend to take similar positions on the issues. 2) Candidates tend to emphasize local interest over the great issues of the day. 3) Governors, state legislators, congressmen, and elected officials single handedly have little control over major national affairs. They argue that issues do not become important in a race until those issues are tied directly to voters' lives. Citizens are most interested in what they perceive will affect them directly. The case studies then illustrate these points, providing faces, personalities, locations, and political context to bring the concepts to life. Other lessons learned in this book are: the relative importance of message and money, the power and limits of incumbency, how parties assist campaigns in a candi-

**Call for Papers
State Politics and Policy Quarterly**

It is with great enthusiasm that I am announcing the launch of *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*, the official journal of the State Politics and Policy organized section of the American Political Science Association. As we have long known, the states provide an exceptional venue for developing and testing general propositions of many aspects of political behavior and policy making. It is the mission of SPPQ to provide a leadership role in developing, integrating, and sustaining the study of politics in the U.S. states in the 21st century. Volume 1, Issue 1 of SPPQ will be published in March 2001.

Our biggest need at the moment is for high quality manuscripts to review for publication. SPPQ will succeed in its mission only if state politics scholars make it their outlet of choice for their best manuscripts. I am looking for papers that are theoretically driven, clearly written, cogently argued, and empirically sound. And I am always open to discussing the appropriateness of a manuscript with an author before he or she submits it.

The other thing that SPPQ needs to survive is subscribers. If you do research or teach in the area of state politics, please consider a subscription for yourself. And certainly every college and university library ought to have SPPQ on its shelves from Issue 1. By publishing SPPQ out of the Illinois Legislative Studies Center here at the University of Illinois at Springfield, we are able to keep subscription costs very low without sacrificing the quality of the printed journal. And note on the enclosed subscription form that we have special rates for charter subscribers, State Politics, and Policy section members and students.

Be there at the creation! Submit and subscribe. Thanks for your support of this exciting new venture. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

For more information contact:

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**Political Organizations and Parties
Committees, 1999-2000**

POP/Party Politics Awards

Marie Hojnacki, Chair, Penn State University

Jack Pitney, Claremont McKenna

Anne Bennett, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Eldersveld Award (Career Achievement)

Robert Harmel, Chair, Texas A & M

Burdett Loomis, University of Kansas

Marjorie Hershey, Indiana University

Emerging Scholar Award

Marian Lief Palley, Chair, University of Delaware

Ron Shaiko, American University

John Gerring, Boston University

Nominating Committee

John Coleman, Chair, University of Wisconsin

Beth Leech, Rutgers University

David Farrell, University of Manchester

Leon Epstein Award (Best Book)

William Mayer, Chair, Northeastern University

John Clark, Western Michigan University

Christine Day, University of New Orleans

Susan Scarrow, University of Houston

Laura Woliver, University of South Carolina

Jack Walker Award (Best Article)

Anna Harvey, Chair, New York University

Scott Ainsworth, University of Georgia

Judson Jeffries, Purdue University

Kevin Hula, Loyola College

Elizabeth Gerber, University of California, San Diego

POP Program Chair,

APSA Annual Conference, 2001

Anna Costain, University of Colorado

SPECIAL INTEREST

NEW WEBSITE: "Responsible Two-Party System" Report 50th Anniversary

"Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System," the celebrated and controversial report of the American Political Science Association's Committee on Political Parties, issued a frontal assault on the suitability of American political parties for a modern, activist state.

APSA's Organized Section on Political Organizations and Parties, in conjunction with APSA, is coordinating a series of workshops, panels, and publications to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the report.

Workshops and panels at the 2000 APSA Annual meeting in Washington, D.C., will assess the report, its legacy, and the status of American parties at the turn of the century.

Visit <http://www.polisci.wisc.edu/~party> for updates, conference paper drafts, downloads of the report and commentaries on the report, and other news related to the anniversary events.

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Fulbright Offers Lecturing / Research Grants in 130 Countries

The Fulbright Scholar Program's annual competition opens March 1 for lecturing and research grants in some 130 countries.

Opportunities are open not only to college and university faculty and administrators, but also to professionals from the business community and governments, as well as to artists, journalists, lawyers, independent scholars and many others.

Grants are available to faculty and administrators from two-year, four-year, and graduate institutions.

Fulbright awards vary from two months to an academic year or longer. While foreign language skills are needed in some countries, most lecturing assignments are in English. Some 80 percent of the awards are for lecturing.

Application deadlines for 2001-2002 grants are:

***May 1, 2000**, for Fulbright distinguished chairs awards in Europe, Canada and Russia

***August 1, 2000**, for Fulbright lecturing and research grants worldwide

***November 1, 2000**, for spring/summer seminars in Germany, Korea, and Japan for international education and academic administrators, as well as for the summer German studies seminar.

For more information, contact:

Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES)
3007 Tilden Street, NW, Suite 5L
Washington, D.C. 20008-3009
Telephone: (202) 686-7877
Email: apprequest@cies.iie.org

As of early March, information and an application will also be available on the Web at www.cies.org.

TOWARD A MORE RESPONSIBLE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM: Fifty Years Later

50th Anniversary Commemoration of the APSA Responsible Parties Report

We are pleased to announce the POP program to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the APSA "Responsible Parties" report at the 2000 APSA meeting in Washington, D.C. This program includes the traditional POP workshop on the Wednesday before the official meeting begins as well as special panels and workshops as part of the regular APSA program.

All POP members, colleagues, and friends are cordially invited to attend the workshop and other events.

For more information on the commemoration, see our website www.polisci.wisc.edu/~party.

POP WORKSHOP: Wednesday, August 30, 2000

1:30 - 3:00 **Panel I: Party Responsibility and National Politics**

Chair: Paul S. Herrnson,
University of Maryland-College Park

Paper: "A Persistent Quest: Reflections on Responsible Parties"
Leon D. Epstein,
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Discussants: Joseph Schelesinger,
Michigan State University
Donald Fowler,
Fowler Communication, Inc.
Paul Beck,
Ohio State University

3:00 - 3:30 Coffee Break

3:30 - 5:00 **Panel II: Party Responsibility and National Government**

Chair: John J. Coleman,
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Paper: "Presidential Leadership in the Government of Parties"
Charles O. Jones,
University of Wisconsin-Madison

"The Dream Fulfilled? Congressional Parties 50 Years After the APSA Report"
Barbara Sinclair, University of California, Los Angeles

Discussants: John K. White, Catholic University
E.J. Dionne, *Washington Post*
Gerald Pomper, Rutgers University

5:00 - 6:00 Reception

**Events on the Regular APSA Program:
RETROSPECTIVE ON
"TOWARD A MORE RESPONSIBLE
TWO-PARTY SYSTEM"**

Chair: David R. Mayhew, Yale University
Abstract: 2000 is the 50th Anniversary of the Publication of 1950 APSA Report "Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System." This roundtable is a retrospective on the writing and impact of the report. The participants are distinguished students and observers of American political parties, most of whom knew the members of the Committee on Political Parties who authored the report. This roundtable promises to be a lively and informative discussion of one of the hallmark reports of American political science.

**CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN
POLITICAL PARTIES**

Chair: Paul S. Herrnson, University of Maryland, College Park
Abstract: As part of the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the publication of 1950 APSA Report "Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System," the Political Organizations and Parties (POP) section of the APSA recruited a group of party scholars to discuss the changes in the American party system since the publication of the report. This roundtable promises to be a lively and informative discussion of contemporary parties and the concept of party responsibility.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES IN
COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

Chair: Susan Scarrow, University of Houston
Abstract: The 1950 APSA Report "Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System" was inspired in part by the political parties in parliamentary systems, especially the United Kingdom and Canada. In turn, the Report has influenced the comparative study of political parties in all manners of the political system. This panel considers the concept of party responsibility in comparative perspective in the contemporary period, including a look at the causes of party cohesion around the world, party responsibility in presidential and parliamentary systems, and the contemporary experience in the United Kingdom and Canada.

Times and participants will be available when the APSA program is finalized.

**Coping with Term Limits:
Ohio and the Nation
April 12-13, 2000
Columbus, Ohio**

In the year 2000, five states face the effects of term limits. These states join six others that have experience term limits in 1996 and 1998. The goal of the conference is to move beyond simple case studies and focus on the observable/measurable effects of term limits on state legislatures across the country. Each state's experience is different, but some common themes are emerging. The conference will bring together political practitioners and scholars from around the country to discuss the likely impact of legislative term limits.

PROGRAM: Wednesday, April 12, 2000

LOCATION: Ohio Statehouse

11:30 a.m. Conference Registration

12:30 p.m. Welcome

1:00 p.m. PANEL 1: **Coping with Term Limits:
The Experience of Other States**

2:30 p.m. Break

2:45 p.m. PANEL 2: **Coping with Term Limits:
What's Ahead for Ohio**

4:15 p.m. Break

4:30 p.m. PANEL 3: **Coping with Term Limits:
Views from the Leadership**

5:30 p.m. Reception

6:15 p.m. Dinner

6:45 p.m. Keynote Address

PROGRAM: Thursday, April 13, 2000

LOCATION: Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts

8:00 a.m. Conference Registration

8:30 a.m. PANEL 1: **Coping with Term Limits:
Comparing Careers & Competition**

10:00 a.m. Break

10:30 a.m. PANEL 2: **Coping with Term Limits:
Comparing Leadership and Legislative Activities**

12:00 p.m. LUNCH—Assessing Term Limits Movement

1:45 p.m. PANEL 3: **Coping with Term Limits:
Comparing Representation and Linkages**

For registration and travel information contact:

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Campaigns & Elections: Contemporary Case Studies

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date centered era, and how strategy and tactics are used to put a candidate over the top.

The 18 case studies span a useful range, while maintaining a good balance. They include U.S. Senate, U.S. House, governors, a mayor, and reference; Republican victories; and all years from 1994 to 1998. Together they demonstrate the similarities and differences between campaigning state wide and campaigning in a local area.

Contemporary Case Studies has several academic uses. As an introduction to nuts and bolts campaigning, it could be used in a course that discusses campaign techniques, strategy, and tactics. It provides an excellent behind the scenes look at campaigns. This is more than just 20/20 hindsight, it is an explanation of why certain decisions were made at specific times. To stimulate a discussion of campaigns and voting the book could be used in a broader course. The first chapter is an excellent review of basic principles of voting behavior. This is the kind of book that lends itself well to having the instructor provide the overview, then asking students in the class to make brief presentations about the case studies.

Political professionals will also enjoy reading the book. It covers what did and did not work in a variety of circumstances. The uncertain dynamic of give and take between campaigns is revealed. Mistakes, success, and the criteria used to make judgments are described. These case studies take the reader inside the campaign strategy.

Some general readers, most political junkies, will also find *Contemporary Case Studies* interesting. The colorful personalities of both candidates and professions, the shifting coalitions and innovative tactics of the battle and the issues and rhetoric of the campaign are all the kind of inside baseball fodder of popular news oriented talk shows. Those audiences will enjoy reading this anthology.

Several of the case studies are written by a member of the winning campaign team. These kitchen cabinet perspectives are very informative and helpful for understanding how the campaigns unfolded. However, campaign professionals always say they learn more when they lose than when they win. It would be very interesting to read what the losers thought were the lessons of these campaigns.



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