

PRESIDENCY RESEARCH GROUP NEWSLETTER



Volume IV, Number 1

Fall 1981

PRG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President: Thomas Cronin, Colorado College

Vice President: Stephen Wayne, George Washington

Secretary-Treasurer: Martha Kumar, Towson State

Program Director: Norman Thomas, University of Cincinnati

Newsletter Editor: George Edwards, Texas A&M

PRG STEERING COMMITTEE

Harry Bailey, Temple

James D. Barber, Duke

Dom Bonafede, National Journal

Louis Fisher, Congressional Research Service

Alexander George, Stanford

Erwin Hargrove, Vanderbilt

Bruce Miroff, SUNY-Albany

Richard Neustadt, Harvard

Francis Rourke, Johns Hopkins

Lester Seligman, Illinois

Philippa Strum, Brooklyn College

Aaron Wildavsky, UC-Berkeley

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues:

The Presidency Research Group is now in its third year. We are grateful for your support. We are pleased with our growth and initial success in achieving our objectives. Very simply, they are:

1. to arrange for additional panels at the American Political Science Association annual meetings—panels that treat presidency research, the teaching of the presidency, and common methodological problems in studying the presidency and kindred chief executives.
2. to provide a newsletter that can highlight new research and related matters of interest to those who write and teach about the presidency and similar executive institutions
3. to promote a network, through our mailing list and annual meeting, of persons interested in presidency research.

We have also arranged panels at our professional meetings for roundtable discussions of on-going research and reflections by members of present and former White House staffs. In the future, we may organize occasional panels at regional political science meetings. We are exploring also the possibility of holding a two or three day retreat/conference on new frontiers of presidency research. We have also had a task force explore the possibility of year-long presidential internships for presidency scholars.

We welcome your suggestions and ideas. Our budget is minimal, but our willingness to entertain new ideas is nearly limitless. We intend to continue doing well what we have already undertaken. Plainly, we are not interested in new ventures merely for the sake of novelty or expansionism.

We are in debt to Lester Seligman, our immediate past president, for leading us through the past year and to Frank Rourke for organizing a splendid set of panels at the recent New York City APSA meeting.

Thomas E. Cronin
Colorado College

PRG NEWS

Please note that the last page of the newsletter is a library order form for the newsletter. Please send the form to your library and ask that it subscribe to the newsletter. The more subscriptions we have, the better the newsletter can be—without increasing its price. In addition, please encourage your colleagues who are interested in the presidency and executive politics to subscribe by sending a check for \$3.00 to our Secretary-Treasurer, Professor

Martha Kumar, Department of Political Science, Towson State University, Towson, Maryland 21204.

The Spring 1982 issue of the newsletter will contain several articles on teaching the presidency. One way to aid in this effort is to send your course syllabus to Professor Kumar at the address given above. The initial reaction to this request was excellent, but we want to have as complete a set of syllabi as possible.

Professor Norman Thomas of the University of Cincinnati is the program chair for the PRG panels at the 1982 American Political Science Association annual meeting in Denver. Anyone desiring to contribute ideas for panels or wishing to participate on panels should write him at the Department of Political Science, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio 45221 as soon as possible.

Professor Lee Sigelman of the University of Kentucky and new editor of the American Politics Quarterly has asked that I announce that he encourages the submission of manuscripts on the presidency to the APQ.

Congressional Studies has been renamed Congress and the Presidency. Editorial focus is being expanded to include scholarly articles, research notes, review articles, and book reviews on the presidency, Congress, the interactions between these two institutions, and national policymaking in general. All articles and research notes will be refereed by outside scholars and experts as well as by the editors. The new editors are Professor Jeff Fishel and Susan Webb Hammond of American University. The Review and Book Editor is Roger H. Davidson, Senior Specialist in American Government at the Congressional Research Service. Scholars and others are encouraged to submit articles and re-

search notes to the editors, and to contact Dr. Davidson or the editors with suggestions about potential review essays or comparative book reviews.

Subscription rates for 1981-82 are: \$10.00 for individuals; \$12.00 for institutions. The journal is published twice each year, in Winter and Summer editions, and expects to become a quarterly. Inquiries regarding the journal should be sent to Dr. Jeff Fishel at: School of Government and Public Administration, Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies, The American University, Washington, D.C. 20016. Calls will be taken at (202) 686-2378.

THE MARSHMALLOW OF LEADERSHIP

by

Bert A. Rockman
University of Pittsburgh

The motivating question behind this brief essay is a starkly simply one: What difference does skill make? Specifically, what difference does the skill of leadership make? Indeed, what is leadership? As enticing as these questions are, I have no comprehensive answers to bestow in the space of a few pages, but space is not the real problem at all. The real problem is that behind the principal motivating question and its derivatives lies much of what we want to know about politicians and the political system and about individual contributions to the success of collective entities. How can we deal analytically with this endlessly fascinating but persistently perplexing dilemma?

To try to answer the question of what difference skill makes requires us to break down the question into its separable parts. First, we need to know in what respect leadership skills are reputed to make a difference. What are the goals and purposes of their exercise? In other words, we need to know something about a leader's preference schedule, even though the theorists of disjointed incrementalism tell us this is likely to be in a continuous state of revision. Secondly, we need to separate circumstances from skill and trace

back outcome from intent. This is clearly easier said than done. Thirdly, we need to know something about the effects of leadership--the relationship between politics and policy. A president's success with Congress is, in this regard, presumably a path to a goal, but not the goal. The surgical precision of these parts, however, looks better in the operating manual than on the operating table. To mix my metaphors, once bitten into through empirical work, the question of leadership, like a marshmallow, is soft and spongy and remarkably resistant to fine slices.

In the romantic or monistic view, leadership is shaped in hard crucibles and put to stern tests. Leadership is an "it" that, however vaguely characterized, is presumed to attach to the leader. In this view, worthy leaders shape change. Thus, leaders who are deemed worthy by those in the business of so deeming, ipso facto, engage in leadership. But leadership skills are conditional, in fact, and conditions, as Lyndon Johnson discovered, are frequently fleeting.

To return, however, to the issues of leadership that have been specified, they can be described as having to do respectively with objectives, causality, and effects. Taking them in order, the first requires us to link a leader's agenda to his political strategies and tactics, There are two aspects to this of some interest. The first is obviously that not all leaders want to do the same things or are equally dependent upon others for what they want. In a forthcoming essay, Charles O. Jones comments upon the styles of four recent presidents in dealing with Congress. The two Democrats (Johnson and Carter) each wanted much from Congress, whereas Nixon, he notes, basically wanted to be a foreign minister, thus requiring relatively little of Congress. Presumably strategies need to be in accord with goals, and Carter's failing was that while he wanted much from Congress, he wanted little to do with Congress--a strategy better suited to Nixon's agenda. On the other hand, Carter's distance from

