

## APT Conference 2007 Participant Comments

Participants in the APT Conference 2007 at The University of Western Ontario, 11–14 October 2007, were sent e-mail invitations to complete a Survey Monkey questionnaire concerning their impressions of the conference. A total of 53 participants submitted comments, though not all answered every question. The materials below were downloaded from the Survey Monkey response summary and then edited and reformatted for posting on the APT Gateway website.<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Which sessions did you attend?

Session Number and Name	Attended*
P.1. PLENARY WORKSHOP: US – Canadian Relations	11.3%
P.2. BREAKFAST ROUNDTABLE: Technology and Teaching Political Theory	32.1%
I.A. Revolutionary Theory / Theorists of Revolution	28.3%
I.B. Politics of Memory	18.9%
I.C. Comedy, Tragedy, Parody	11.3%
II.A. Alternative Democratic Institutions	22.6%
II.B. Sovereign States and Dutiful Citizens	15.1%
II.C. Human Nature, Human Virtue	9.4%
II.D. Postcolonialism and Political Theory	18.9%
II.E. History and Politics	11.3%
III.A. Property	26.4%
III.B. Weberian Themes	1.9%
III.C. Global Democracy	37.7%
III.D. The Literary and Cinematic Political	5.7%
P.3. PLENARY SESSION: Minority (Group) Rights in the Modern Liberal Democratic State	49.1%
IV.A. Contemporary Engagements with the Enlightenment	30.2%
IV.B. Bodies, Real and Monstrous	20.8%
IV.C. Beyond Daniel Bell's <i>Beyond Liberal Democracy</i>	13.2%
IV.D. Intersubjectivity and Liberalism	17.0%
V.A. Critical Theory and the State	24.5%
V.B. Liberalism and Democracy	15.1%
V.C. Religion and Politics	0.0%
V.D. International Relations and Non-State Actors	18.9%
V.E. Friendship and Politics	11.3%
VI.A. Douglass and American Identity	17.0%
VI.B. Liberalism and Law	22.6%
VI.C. Paternal States and Reproduction	7.5%
VI.D. Challenges to Liberalism	28.3%
P.4. PLENARY SESSION: Journal Publishing in Political Theory	41.5%

\* The figures given indicate the percentage of respondents attending a particular session out of a total number of 53 responses. Note: on the survey, panel V.C. was actually omitted from the survey, since we knew that the panel had no audience.

***2. What is your general impression of the quality of the presentations and of the discussion at the sessions you attended?***

1. I found the presentations, discussant comments, and audience participation to be the highest quality I've seen for a political theory conference (or a conference featuring political theory as a component).
2. Two panels -- I.A and VI. C -- had excellent papers. VI.C also had an excellent discussant and fine audience participation. IA's audience participation was also very good. [Panel X's] papers were weak.
3. Very high quality.
4. Generally the quality of the papers was good, and the discussions often quite wonderful. A couple of sessions obviously had one paper that did not quite fit. But, I know that it is very difficult to put together a full program of coherent panels.
5. A good level of interaction between the audience and the presenters. Still too many presenters who read from scripts, but that remains common throughout political science.
6. Excellent.
7. They were uniformly excellent. There is always the problem of last minute cancellations. For one panel I attended, two presenters did not present.
8. Overall, the presentations were strong and the discussions vibrant. The discussions, frankly, are the highlight of the sessions.
9. Quality of presentations was pretty good, but uneven, as one might expect of any conference. However, I believe that there should be some written guidelines for the Q&A sessions after the presentation of papers. A few panelists went on for as long as 5 minutes for every question that they were asked, and, since in one case the panelist had several graduate school friends in the audience-- each of whom asked him a question-- one panelist could wind up dominating the entire presentation. In my opinion the APT should give an informal guideline of 1 or 2 minutes per response in the Q&A session so that this sort of thing doesn't happen. A panelist can always say to a questioner that she or he will be happy to discuss the matter further after the panel, and in fact that sort of response can lead to very fruitful, continued conversations. I would also like to see a bit more diversity of ideologies. I happen to be a liberal democrat, but am friendly with some more conservative theorists, including (gasp) one or two mild Straussians, and I felt that there was a somewhat hostile atmosphere for conservatives and Straussians. At one panel a commentator dismissed Straussianism out of hand, and at a breakfast discussion I heard two people who are involved with APT matters state that certain points of view should not be welcomed as foci for panels. To me, a liberal, nothing could be more illiberal. I hope that APT will make a practice of extending an olive branch to all ideological and interpretive approaches in order to be a real "big tent" for good political theory rather than a haven for particular points of view.
10. Outstanding!

11. As usual, good to great, especially discussions.
12. I thought that the discussion at the plenary session on journals was useful. There were many questions. In general, I'm sorry to say, I did not find the papers very stimulating and the discussants were even less so. I was particularly appalled by one discussant stating simply that she did not like a certain approach (which the author of the paper in question did not take!). The best substantive session I attended was the panel on the Enlightenment (where there was no discussant). Three of the four papers were very good (if I have the right panel, [person X] was among them); and the discussion was lively as well as stimulating of further thought. I don't find myself with time to read before the conference, so I would appreciate your giving paper-presenters a bit more time to state their arguments and perhaps to have ... fewer of them on each panel.
13. Generally the quality of the presentations was high. Some panels were more coherent than others, but some "looseness of fit" is inevitable and not a major problem.
14. For the most part, the papers were quite good, and most stuck to the limits on time. The discussants were, in almost all cases, not terribly helpful and took far more time than they should have, though Craig Hanks (on IV.D) was a model discussant. The audience discussions were, as usually, excellent.
15. Varied widely, although there were a disappointing number of weak papers this year. There were also a number of panels with no shows. However, some panels had lively and interesting discussions.
16. Excellent.
17. Quality of the papers varied quite a bit.
18. Many of the discussions were excellent, especially during the Frederick Douglass panel. The overall paper quality of the panels was very poor. Many of the panels lacked any common theme.
19. Discussion – excellent. Presentation – mixed, but overall very good.
20. Careful, original scholarship and engaging discussions.
21. Excellent!
22. Mixed: some were excellent, others were quite weak..
23. While the quality of the presentations was understandably mixed, the discussions were consistently excellent.
24. I enjoyed the presentations and the discussions were better than I have ever experienced them.
25. Still very strong; still a few weak papers, but probably unavoidable.
26. Generally good; some work was too early. (It seemed to be relatively junior graduate students' pre-prospectus work.)
27. Excellent! I thought that some of the presenters might have done a better job

actually presenting (e.g., not looking down and reading fast), but there was less of that than at other conferences.

28. High. I especially enjoyed the interaction between graduate students and professors.

29. Almost all were better than most conference presentations. Some of them were excellent.

30. Very good.

31. Generally: the papers were interesting and well presented; the discussions, generally substantive and respectful.

32. The overall quality of the papers was much better than at the big political science conventions.

33. Excellent!

34. Variable presentations; very good discussions.

35. Generally strong, but with some occasional weak spots. The panel ... was composed entirely of graduate students, two of whom I didn't think were ready quite yet to be presenting at a conference. Normally no big deal, but to have them both on the same panel was rough.

36. Overall quite good. The atmosphere was very open and conversation following the presentations tended to be the best part of the conference. The discussants were uneven – some very good – others were greener and less adept at pulling the papers together, offer[ing] constructive criticism and stimulating discussion.

37. The quality was high and the presenters seemed to take their responsibilities very seriously.

38. Excellent.

39. Generally, the papers were polished and good, and the discussions were excellent.

40. High, including audience participation.

41. Excellent and engaging!

42. The average level was high, although there were definite exceptions.

43. Excellent discussions, decent to good presentations. I appreciated the fact that all panels were well attended and there was a generally constructive and positive atmosphere, which is quite unusual for conferences.

44. Very strong. Well-organized panels.

45. Very good quality of papers, and engaging discussions. Q&A stuck to the paper topics and were relevant and well-informed.

46. All quite good. Excellent discussions everywhere. Though the [X] panel was poor. Poor papers, poor discussant, poor everything.

**3. What is your evaluation of the conference? Specifically, what do you think about:**

**A) The program -- the panels, plenary sessions, breaks and meals, and book exhibit; and**

**B) The organization and logistics of the conference, including the facilities and accommodations at the Spencer Centre?**

1. The program was excellent. I really like the idea of this being a selective conference, as well as the idea of mixing up approaches and the stages of the participants' careers. The pace is a little hectic, but I really enjoyed the conference. Breaks and meals were nice; the food was very good. The facilities and accommodations were very nice. It was a little hard to find the front desk the night I arrived, though.

2. I very much liked the format—a limited number of panels, lots of time for discussion. The plenary session was a good idea, but perhaps a roundtable might be easier to digest after a long day of attending panels. Logistics were excellent, though some of the rooms were not ideal for panels. The facility overall was great, and it is really important and valuable to have everyone staying and eating together.

3. Great panels, great conference center, the accommodations were not fantastic, but they were good enough.

4. A) Very well done; B) again, the logistics were terrific.

5. It was a very nice facility. The food, book exhibit, atmosphere were all wonderful. I think we have the organization of the panels and breaks down now. There is time to work and time to discuss and time to socialize. It is why this is the conference I really try to attend every year.

6. A & B, both excellent.

7. A) I thought the scheduling and the variety of the program was very good. A few of the panels might have been better structured so that the papers were more complementary, but perhaps this is an unavoidable challenge/problem of any conference. Meals and the break services were outstanding. B) On the whole, I thought the conference accommodations were tremendous, and the organization was slick (by virtue of it being at the biz school?). Maybe could have been more consistent on room sizes for panels: some were auditorium-like chambers while others were small seminar rooms where there was barely enough room for all the audience.

8. The book exhibit was very interesting, but limited. The conference organization and facilities/accommodations were excellent. The venue was a bit inconvenient to reach from the states.

9. This was a beautifully organized conference. I felt I was able to concentrate a high level of intellectual engagement and social networking into a short two-day period (which was important to me, given the busy time of the semester). The food and lodging

was great, and the break snacks were critical for giving me quick energy for the next session.

10. A) All things considered it was all very good. Here is one thought, though, which is related to something that I wrote about in my previous response: I happen to know some of the people who were involved with the proposal for an "author meets critic" session on [the work of a prominent conservative scholar]. One of my very progressive friends was going to be an extremely critical critic on the panel. But it was turned down. The rationale that was given, as I understand it, was that APT doesn't do "author meets critic" roundtables, and had no way of processing the application. [*Note: This perception is incorrect. See endnote 2 for reflections on the issues raised here. -Executive Co-Directors.*<sup>2</sup>] But at the conference, much to my dismay, I saw a panel that was essentially an "author meets critics" roundtable on Daniel Bell's *Beyond Liberal Democracy*. Apparently the conference *can* process proposals for such panels. When I spoke about this issue to a few people connected with APT I was appalled by the response. Two people stated that authors such as [conservative scholar X] essentially have the "wrong" views and that, while some books could perhaps be discussed at APT, "not *that* book." I do not for a moment think that all or even most of the APT officers or organizers hold such views. But I was appalled nonetheless. In my opinion, APT should strive to reach out to a broad swath of political theorists and should strive for a balance between graduate student attendees, professors, and also a few "star" professors (which I will never be). Meeting and talking with very well known theorists can be very good for graduate students and beginning professors. It's a great way of extending one's circle of connections and expanding one's views. I was dismayed that three or four very fine professors did not end up coming to APT because their [scholar X] panel was turned down. But, leaving [scholar X] aside, these other professors would have been a great addition to the discussion and connecting that took place at the conference. All I can say is that I hope that APT will find a way to accommodate such proposals in the future. B) The accommodations and organization were great. I do wish that we could have more actual contact with a college or university; as nice as the conference hall was, we could have been at a Sheraton for the entire time. We didn't get any sense of being connected to a community of learning, and I regret that.

11. As always, it was a very good conference. I liked the Spencer Centre and thought that the conference was very well organized.

12. A) The Program Committee did a great job.

13. It was the best conference I've ever attended. The program was fantastic, and the organization and logistics were nearly flawless

14. Great facilities, great program, great discussion. I really like that many of the same people come every year so that you get to know people and catch up on their work at the meeting. I also think people do a great job (in general) presenting the papers; i.e., that they take the presentation guidelines seriously and don't read.

15. Lovely location.

16. I LOVED this conference, in part because I got a chance to meet and talk political theory with people who I didn't already know. I thought the organization of the conference—small size, meals included, communal tables for meals and snacks area—really contributed to this.

17. Well organized; food was great. I hope Wesleyan can match it. I found the center itself a little off-putting, but it certainly worked.

18. A) The panels had quite good papers. The meals were very good. B) Facilities were fine. It was a little isolated from the city, but that might actually be a good thing in some ways.

19. A) Excellent. I especially appreciated having a full two hours for panels. B) Excellent. Free Internet was much appreciated. Would have been nice to be closer to town and places to go during breaks

20. A. The program was well conceived. It is desirable to keep the number of panels at each time relatively small so as to maximize attendance at the panels. In theory, I like the idea of assembling panels that bring together scholars from very divergent methodological orientations, though in practice it can be hard to follow work in traditions with which one is unfamiliar. B. The Spencer Centre was wonderful; the accommodations were fair to good, but the meeting rooms, the meals, and between-session snacks were outstanding.

21. A) Program was good—lots of choices, many approaches represented. Like having meals together and coffee breaks. B) Everything was great!

22. Great schedule, not relentless. Liked the accommodations and great food.

23. Breaks & meals are terrific. Well timed and attended—makes for regular, informal get-togethers that foster acquaintances and conversation. Book exhibit is small, but always has a good selection to peruse. Facilities and accommodations at the Spencer Centre were very good, and the meals were excellent.

24. (I was on the Program Committee, so I'll recuse myself on the program question.) The food was awesome, the conference center itself very nice. I didn't mind the location, but it was apparently harder for people who had to fly.

25. The book exhibit I could take or leave. The panels were for the most part well structured, though at times I thought the Program Committee was stretching to get papers together under one theme. I would not do another panel around a single book with the author present again (Bell); it was too much a critique of the book and not the issues the book purported to raise or the topics it addressed. The facilities were good, apart from the rooms, which varied from good (the smaller seminar rooms) to weak (the larger classrooms). We should try to have smaller and more intimate settings for the panels, and let the rooms be a bit crowded if they have to be. The food was good. It would be nicer to find facilities that are a bit closer to the center of the town where the conference is at, or at least within easy walking distance of restaurants and cafes and bars.

26. Excellent.

27. A) Program itself was generally thoughtful and well designed. The Spencer Centre facilities were very nice, but the location was quite remote and too far from other options for Thursday and Saturday night dinners.

28. The program was great, as always. Lots of opportunity to meet and get to know people. But, it was a bit ridiculous to have it in the middle of nowhere. It cost an arm and a leg from my research budget to get there, and then in the middle of nowhere the hotel cost as much as if it were in a city. I ended up going beyond my research budget, and paying a ton out of pocket.

29. This was my first time at APT, and I had the most generous and helpful interactions I have ever had at any conference. The program was interesting and engaging (although perhaps a bit heavy on the Arendt inspired papers—more methodological diversity would be even better). The logistics were wonderful.

30. The panels were generally well put together on paper, although there were some that didn't pan out at the conference because of no shows. I like the principle of mixing ranks (i.e., graduate students, junior and senior faculty), but in one case a panel was all graduate students (due to a no show). Some of the commentators were not particularly effective. I liked the plenary sessions and thought it was nice to have these events with the whole conference. Meals and breaks were excellent

31. I enjoyed the plenary session I attended, [and] the meals were great. The commonality of the latter is one of my favorite aspects of the conference. The Spencer Centre was a very nice facility, with fine food and a friendly, competent staff. I loved being able to just walk down the hall to the panels. However, Western Ontario is a tough sell. I knew several people who didn't attend because it was too out of the way and others who attended complained about the drive or the expense of flying into London.

32. A) Great; B) very nice, although perhaps rather inconvenient to get to for those who couldn't drive.

33. The meals were very good. The building was fine, but the location [left] something to be desired. It was difficult to go out, since the centre was in the middle of a field. I think you try to squeeze in too many papers. I don't think that they or the comments on them were as interesting or substantive as I would have liked. The book exhibit is minimal, but okay for a small conference. The common meals add a great deal of collegiality to the experience.

34. The program was very good. The plenary session on Minority Rights was excellent. The food was wonderful. The Spencer Centre was fine, but a bit too removed from town. The book exhibit was very good—it is useful to have political theory books of different presses gathered in one place.

35. Excellent organization. I do think it good if there are some places within closer walking distance, but lack of such did keep more of us together at the conference. The facilities, otherwise, were great!

36. This conference was really well organized, a pleasure to attend.

37. This was one of the best conferences that I have attended—from the food, to the spirit of collegiality, to the quality of the panels, it was all great.

38. Plenaries were all good, but all under-attended (save the publishing one). Should still do them, trying to make them attractive, even if [they] fail occasionally. Facilities were very nice, but expensive, which meant some folks, especially graduate students, came late or went home early.

39. I liked the general organization of the conference. The food was excellent, and the book exhibit was surprisingly rich and interesting. My only complaint is that London, Ontario, was to hell and gone. I think the trip was a major pain to just about all attendees.

40. A) the program was good though I think it could be expanded a little bit in terms of

numbers without sacrificing the intimacy of the event. B) Excellent. The facility was great and the food was first class. Overall it was quite a bargain (which helps keep it accessible to graduate students).

41. The program was very good and interesting. I appreciated the fact that there were a lot of breaks and plenty of time for discussion and mingling with other people. The meals were great and the principle of shared meals is in my view a great success. The book exhibit was mediocre. Organization and logistics of the conference were good, except that in the future, the organizing committee should make sure to book a venue where it is possible to book twin rooms. This was a rather annoying part of the logistics—that the Spencer Centre refuses to offer twin rooms in order to maximize their profit margins.

42. Everything was very well organized. I think the committees did an absolutely fantastic job. The accommodations were terrific and the logistics were as well. A big round of applause to everyone who managed that. I did think one advantage of Indiana was that we were on campus; it made it feel more like an academic event.

43. A) Great program and sessions; meals and breaks were excellent. I did not spend time at the book exhibit. B) Facilities and accommodations were fantastic. However, as much as I love the APT as a conference, I will not return if it either costs more than \$300 for a ticket, or requires a two-hour drive from an airport (I drove from Detroit).

44. A) Program was well organized, lots of interesting panels, lots of variety, papers were put together in appropriate and interesting ways (with a few exceptions); B) logistics, organization and accommodations were very good, but it was expensive to fly to London.

45. The plenary session on book publishing was good. [Another one] was ridiculous. Most of the papers on the panels were poor, as I noted before. On the other hand, it wasn't that much worse than APSA. Perhaps, a little less star-studded. Everything else about the conference was excellent.

**4. Concerning the Business Meeting:**

**A) Did you attend the Business Meeting?**

**B) If not, were you interested in attending?**

**C) Are there any ways we could make the Business Meeting better or more accessible?**

1. I wasn't really interested.

2. A) Yes. B) N/A. C) No, it is well advertised and keeping it early means you can attend without losing the entire day.

3. Excellent. Thoughtful discussion about the letter.

4. A) No.

5. A) No. B) Somewhat; I made arrangements to visit family instead. C) No comment.
6. A) No.
7. A) No. B) This was my first APT meeting. I am more interested in APT now that I've attended this conference so I will probably make an effort to attend next year. C) Timing? Make it after the dinner?
8. A) No. B) Yes, but I had to catch a flight. C) If flights are infrequent to/from the conference, members may have flight constraints on Sunday and thus be unable to attend the business meeting.
9. No.
10. I would have attended save for a flight that had me leaving town very early.
11. A) No. B) Yes. C) I didn't realize it was upstairs as opposed to the dining room (my fault), but I think a breakfast meeting might be easier, especially with so many people rushing off to catch planes.
12. A) No. B) Yes. C) Have it a bit later or an evening prior to the end of the conference.
13. Yes.
14. I couldn't attend even though I was interested in participating.
15. I was interested in attending, but got caught up in an interesting theoretical discussion instead!
16. I didn't attend the business meeting, but had an insane (early) flight out of London.
17. Yes, I attended the business meeting. I am a first-time participant in this conference, and I found the business meeting very helpful in understanding the APT's general approach to selecting papers, etc.
18. I did not attend the business meeting: I had to make an early flight on Sunday.
19. I didn't attend the meeting. I wasn't very interested.
20. I attended the business meeting and was glad I did. I wonder if holding the business meeting on Friday or Saturday sometime before or after the panels might yield a larger turnout?
21. I was interested, but I had to leave on Saturday afternoon. I suspect that having the meeting as the only event on Sunday decreases attendance, as people have to begin making their way home. It might be good to have the business meeting during breakfast on the second day, as a way to get more people involved.
22. I did not attend because of an early flight. I might be interested in attending it in the future—yet I think it was very accessible.
23. Did not attend—early flight.

24. A) I was interested in attending but could not do so as I needed to fly home on Saturday afternoon.
25. A) No. B) Yes, but I had a schedule conflict. C) No.
26. I would have gone but had to leave on Saturday evening this year.
27. I was unable to attend the business meeting.
28. No. No.
29. Yes, I attended the business meeting. I found it very informative. My only comment is that if it is again held in the morning of the final day, make it a breakfast meeting.
30. A) Unfortunately, no.
31. Attended the business meeting. Unless we move the meeting to an earlier day (i.e., not Sunday morning), low attendance will always be a problem.
32. Went to [the] business meeting; thought it was fine. Not much we can do on this.
33. No, I had to leave to get back at 5 am. I wish I could have gone. If it had been first night, I could have made it, but since it took ten hours of plane travel, I could not dally before departing.
34. A) No. B) Yes. C) Put it at the end of the panels on the second day, where the session on publishing was this year. That publishing session was in such demand that people would have found a way to attend even if it were in the morning over breakfast.
35. No.
36. A) No. N) Need[ed] to get back to work. C) Have it during the regular conference schedule.
37. No. Not particularly.
38. I can never make the business meeting because travel back to my home campus is so problematic—no matter where we are. I would like to be more active in the APT organization.
39. Yes, I attended the business meeting.
40. N/A.
41. No. Possibly interested, but timing was not good for me.
42. A) No. B) Yes, but I couldn't stay another night. C) It should not require an extra night's day.
43. NO.

**5. Are there any other suggestions that you would like to make for improving future conferences?**

1. I wonder if papers should have a page length? Probably nothing much more can be done about flaky presenters who don't show up at the last minute, etc.
2. Perhaps you want to keep the participants at the conference very young. I certainly felt my age! There were very, very few senior scholars attending.
3. It would be nice to have a panel devoted to some of the new books and authors of the year. We approximate this in some roundtables.
4. I've stated them already. Many congratulations for all of the hard work that's already been contributed and for all of the great results that have already been evinced.
5. None aside from those already mentioned above.
6. I understand the different roles of discussant and chair, and I know that having these roles sometimes helps people justify using research or travel funds. But I wonder whether we really need two people for two roles; couldn't we combine them and save the coordinators the trouble of having to find so many people?
7. I don't know how to raise the quality of the papers. I don't know how they were selected. Perhaps, involving more people in their selection would help.
8. I realize sponsorship is very important for these meetings, and that determines a lot about where they are held. But out of the way places are typically expensive to get to, and this might make it difficult for some colleagues to attend.
9. No! This was really a perfect, intimate, and friendly conference. Keep it up!
10. Might consider accepting proposals for panels as well as discrete papers; consider various ways to put papers together so they aren't mismatched.
11. Maybe a plenary session on trends in the subfield or the role of political theory in political science.
12. You might want to make the presentations themselves slightly longer. Would it make sense to have different commentators on each paper? This could set each paper apart from the others. It may have been that the panels I attended were very good and so it seemed that there almost wasn't enough time for the presentations / comments / discussion. Three per panel instead of four?
13. I understand the desire to keep the group together and avoid distractions, but it might help to organize one good (voluntary) "group trip" to some local attraction.
14. What frustrated me was the number of cancellations and of people not attending. This may have something to do with the fact that airfares to the conferences were quite expensive. To address the issue of late cancellations, I would propose that the conference fee be paid earlier (e.g., like at APSA, where participants must pay the conference fee in order to be listed on the program) and that there be a strict no-refunds policy for the conference fee.

15. I'd urge us to look for a less remote location. Travel to the conference was simply too expensive for attendees without—and even those with!—ample research budgets. I'd happily have paid an additional \$100–\$200 in registration fees for a more central location so as to avoid a \$500 flight.

16. I know that this is a continuing conversation, but somehow APT needs to figure out how to be inclusive of graduate students while also maintaining the high quality of panels. The [X] panel consisted mainly of graduate students, and two of the papers were highly problematic. People came a long way for this conference. They deserved better panels than that.

17. I hope you keep the policy of making the papers available beforehand. I think this improves the discussions significantly.

18. Attracting more senior scholars would be a plus.

19. Nope—it's really the best conference that I have attended. If anything, I would say to definitely keep the meals included and keep the small size. I also thought that the length of the sessions was good in terms of allowing for discussion. I loved the idea of the group run, even though I didn't quite motivate to do it.

20. Perhaps slightly bigger. Perhaps less liberal theory.

21. I'm not sure how, but we need to do a better job recruiting able discussants for all the panels. My sense is that in more than one case the discussants were not particularly helpful to the presenters, nor did they lend much to the general discussion.

22. Nothing that isn't in Lisa's report [*that is, Program Committee Chair Elizabeth Ellis*].

23. This is hard. It would be nice to keep it small. But it would also be nice to have a way to have a few more people participate. Maybe have one more day, and not everyone would stay all three days????

**6F. Would you be interested in participating in future conferences?  
(Note: the positive answers come in two forms because some people register simply to attend the conference..)**

Response	Percentage
Definitely yes – but only if I were on the program.	60.8%
Definitely yes – even if I were not on the program.	25.5%
Probably yes – but only if I were on the program.	2.0%
Probably yes – even if I were not on the program.	5.9%
Possibly – but only if I were on the program.	3.9%
Possibly – even if I were not on the program.	0.0%
Probably not.	2.0%
Definitely not.	0.0%
No opinion.	0.0%

**7. Have you made use of the conference paper archive, or did you try to access it? If so, when did you first access or attempt to access the archive?**

Response	Percentage
Yes - before or during the conference.	66.0%
Yes - after the conference.	16.0%
No - I haven't used the archive, but I intend to use it.	10.0%
No - I haven't used the archive, and I don't intend to.	8.0%

**8. What do you think of the pre-circulation and archiving requirement? Should future conferences require pre-circulation and/or archiving?**

1. Pre-circulation is extremely useful. I used it two years ago; this year I didn't have time. I don't think you should count on everyone's reading the papers for all panels before they arrive at the conference. I think you should allow each paper give a bit more time to present.
2. It is a great idea, but I rarely can read papers before I attend panels. This is just a time constraint from my end. But I do go back to read papers I either missed or listened to and thought significant for my own research.
3. If pre-circulation helps improve the quality of papers, I think it is a good idea.
4. Good idea.
5. It is very good, and the requirement should stay in place.
6. YES.
7. Excellent. I think it enhanced participation quality. Yes, I think future conferences should continue the practice
8. Yes.
9. Yes, we should require pre-circulation and archiving.
10. The pre-circulation requirement is excellent and should be retained. I don't know whether people could be induced to respond in some brief, written way prior to the conference (in truth, I would find it hard to do)—but more communication and more interaction with the papers earlier is always better.
11. I loved having a deadline to have my paper done, and I loved having early access to my co-panelists' papers, as well. This requirement should definitely remain in the future.

12. Yes. Even though I didn't use the archive, it seems like a good idea; it seems like it would facilitate discussion.
13. I do think this is a good idea and helps to ensure that papers get written.
14. I think it is a good idea.
15. Yes, keep the pre-circulation requirement. It really helps in choosing which panels to attend, and it's helpful to be able to go back and find a paper by looking for the panel, if you can't remember someone's name.
16. I like pre-circulating the papers; I think it facilitates discussion during the sessions.
17. I like both requirements. I would retain both in the future.
18. Yes, we really should keep both requirements and enforce them. It is a distinctive feature of APT and in keeping with our mission.
19. Fine to pre-circulate, but the deadline was way too far in advance.
20. Pre-circulation is a must. Archiving is a bit different. Some of the publishing/journal folks told us that if we archive our papers it might hurt our chances of having them published. If that's not true then the matter should be cleared up immediately.
21. I think the pre-circulation is a good idea. It may help with discouraging late papers.
22. Fine. I can't imagine having time to read papers for panels on which I am not participating before the conference, but it's nice to have access to them afterwards.
23. It's alright.
24. Absolutely.
25. I tried to register in order to access the papers but never received a log-on ID.
26. Good—more conferences should do it. But there should also be a requirement to present for only 10 minutes.
27. I like the requirement. I find accessing the archive and figuring out the instructions a bit difficult thought. As an aside—if the APT could find a volunteer to improve the website (both in terms of look and accessibility) it would be a big improvement.
28. I'm not sure. I guess I support it if it encourages people to write better papers. I ended up just sending and receiving papers from people via email.
29. Having access to the papers before and after the conference is a great resource.
30. It's probably a good idea, although I didn't really have time to look at any papers in advance except the ones on my panel.
31. YES!!!!!!
32. It might be helpful to have a slightly earlier deadline for submission to the archive. I know that some discussants received papers the same week as the conference. An

earlier deadline would not necessarily prevent that, but it might prompt some to procrastinate a little bit earlier.

33. I couldn't get on the archive site before the conference, but used it afterward once my log on problems were resolved. It's a good way to circulate papers ahead of time, and I think that this should be required in the future too.

34. This worked great. It was easy for me to access the papers in advance. It greatly enhanced the discussion that the papers were shared in advance. This absolutely should be required. If you can't get your paper in on time, you don't deserve to present.

35. Absolutely!!!!

36. Good idea. Yes, please keep it up.

37. It is a good idea to pre-circulate. I see less value in an archive for conference papers.

38. Good, even if I haven't had the time to utilize this aspect of the conference as of yet.

39. Absolutely yes.

40. I like the archive. But the APT website is strangely complicated to use. I almost always get lost or messed up on it. Can someone with some web skills bring a little more rationality to it?

41. I appreciated the chance to look at the papers before/after the panels. I didn't get the sense that most participants at the panels had read the papers, though.

42. It's a good idea, though in practice, I wonder how many people actually have the time to use it.

43. Pre-circulation: excellent. Archiving: maybe less desirable.

44. Yes to both questions.

***1. Please feel free to add any additional comments or suggestions that you may have here.<sup>3</sup>***

1. I could help on one of the committees in the future, if you need help.

2. Thank you!

3. APT continues to be one of the best conferences out there.

4. This was a great conference, and I'm looking forward to next year!

5. I would consider serving on the Chairs and Discussants Committee. It's fine if you post my comments, provided that they're anonymous. Thanks for organizing this! Overall, it was a great experience.

6. I would be happy to serve again on the committee to select chairs/discussants, esp. if needed. [Name deleted.]

7. Please restrict the previous comments to officers. Feel free to use the following, however, as you like: As a grad student at about the halfway-point of my doctoral studies, and having attended at various points and in various capacities most of the major (and some not so major) Political Science conferences held in the U.S., I can say without equivocation that APT 2006 was far and away the most instructive and the most enjoyable conference I have experienced.

8. I'd be happy to participate in the APT in any capacity (at least in principle, modulo time & effort, etc., etc.). [Name deleted.]

9. I, [Name deleted], would be happy to serve as a chair or discussant at future conferences. My areas of expertise include Rawls, Deleuze, Kant, the Enlightenment.

10. [Name deleted]--on either committee, and also as a discussant.

11. I'll be happy to serve again if you have another panel on publishing some day!

12. I liked the session on teaching quite a bit and liked the idea raised there of having a site available for sharing syllabi and teaching challenges/successes.

13. Thanks to everyone for all their hard work. APT is a great conference. I would like to volunteer to serve on the Program Committee or the Chairs and Discussants committee (either one). [Name deleted.]

14. Thank you for keeping this going. The APT is a wonderful thing!

15. I love APT; I love the openness and egalitarianism of the culture. I wish more philosophers were involved.

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1. The entire, unedited responses were shared with the officers of the Association, including the in-coming Program Committee chairs, in order to assist them in planning for future meetings. The version of the responses given here has been edited for publication in a number of ways. Misspellings and grammatical errors have generally been corrected. Most abbreviations have been spelled out. References to specific individuals have been largely eliminated - except in some laudatory cases. Questions that asked for frank responses with the promise of anonymity have been removed, particularly the question asking for recommendations for chairs and discussants. Also removed are the responses of individuals who asked that their responses only be shared with the Associations' officers and not be published here. Finally, to better assure anonymity, the order of the responses to each question has been changed (so the first respondent may appear as number one on the first question, but then number 22 on the second question, and so on).

2. The comment by attendee number 10 in response to question 3 raises important issues of the sort that the Association should reflect on seriously. We hope in a future issue of *The APT Newsletter* to provide perspectives from past and present officers of the Association on some of issues discussed here, and we will attempt to find ways for members to engage in discussion and debate, not only at the Business Meeting (which many cannot attend), but also perhaps via other means, such as an on-line blog. For now, however, we would like to clear up some misperceptions or misunderstandings present in the comment.

It is true that an "author meets critics" panel proposal focusing on the work of a very prominent conservative scholar was submitted, and that panel was not put on the final program. That proposal, as attendee number 10 noted, was organized by someone who could be characterized as "very progressive." Not only that, we would characterize the organizer and others included on the proposed panel as individuals who have made significant contributions to previous APT conferences. Yet the panel was turned down in the end. That decision was difficult, and it involved some agonizing on the part of the Program Committee.

The deliberations of the Program Committee began with a full and open discussion on the merits of each proposed panel or presentation (its intellectual quality, the diversity it brought to the program, and the

originality of the work). In the case of this panel, a central concern, widely shared on the Program Committee, was that the panel in important respects replayed a very similar panel staged at the Midwest Political Science Association in April 2006. Some members of the Program Committee had attended that MPSA panel and argued that staging a very similar panel was less interesting than staging other panels on new work.

The debate over this panel came to a head when the Program Committee had prepared a draft program with about 30 solid panels on it, including this one, and then needed to cut at least four panels out. When the Committee voted, the concerns about repetition, along with worries about devoting too much space to one already published work, seem to have swayed the majority. No one individual, including the Program Committee Chair, was responsible for the decision; responsibility rested with the Committee as a whole acting in a democratic manner.

Because the Association currently limits the size of the conference, there will always be good panels and good paper proposals rejected. There is no way to accommodate all good proposals given our size limits, and some will always be unhappily rejected. These decisions can only be taken via informed debate among the members of the Program Committee, followed by a vote; and that vote will always leave some dissatisfied.

Following the panel's rejection, a number of rumors seem to have circulated about the decision. One rumor appears to have reached attendee number 10: the notion that the Association does not accept "author meets critics" panels. Clearly, as evidenced by the placement of the panel discussion of Daniel Bell's book on the London program, this rumor is not true. But one could see how debates surrounding the placement of the one panel and the rejection of the other, when passed on from one person to another, could give rise to this rumor. There *was* a discussion among members of the Program Committee and the officers of the Association regarding a policy concerning "author meets critics" panels, but the discussion focused on *the lack of such a policy*. The reason for the debate is that the Association had not reflected seriously on the problems associated with the author meets critics panel format.

The appearance of two strong author meets critics proposals in one year posed a challenge for the Committee. One of the central aims of the Association from its founding has been to create public spaces for scholarly interaction. The *APT Manifesto* characterized this mission, as it relates to the conference, in the following way:

*It is hoped that this conference would encourage dialogue across disciplines, traditions, and approaches, while also bringing together influential scholars and dedicated teachers, leaders in the field and relative novices, researchers at elite universities and scholars at liberal arts colleges and lesser-known institutions. The organizers of APT conferences will seek to accommodate as many participants as possible.*

The great difficulty in putting together a program is that some of these goals stand in tension with one another, especially because, much to our surprise, the conference has come to regularly reject over 50% of the applicants – unlike many other conferences. In the case of the authors meet critics format, a problem arises: these panels necessarily limit the opportunities for other scholars to present original work since, for each author meets critics panel, *at least four participant slots* are devoted to discussing one work. To be sure, each commentator brings to his or her discussion a potentially different perspective, but that contribution, arguably, is likely to be less original or expressive than would be a paper or other presentation representing the presenter's own research.

The debate that emerged on the Program Committee concerned, in part, whether the Association ought to make a policy of not accepting *any* author meets critics panels. Indeed, the outgoing Program Chair made that policy recommendation to the Governance Committee officially, and for the 2008 meeting, the Executive Co-Directors recommended that the new Program Committee informally accept the recommendation. We expect to discuss this issue at the 2008 Business Meeting and consider adopting whether to adopt a formal rule against such formats.

Attendee number 10 also heard derogatory, ideologically charged comments about the panel, at least one of which appears to have suggested a ban on or hostility to certain kinds of conservative thought at the conference. While no doubt some individuals hold such views, the Association absolutely does not. Our commitment, as noted in the above excerpt from the *APT Manifesto* is "to encourage dialogue across disciplines, traditions, and approaches."

While some of the questions concerning this decision arise from mistaken perceptions or misunderstandings, there are certainly important issues raised here concerning how to manage the trade-offs between the Association's various goals, such as: To what extent should our commitment to encouraging original work limit discussion of important published works, or vice versa? To what extent should our commitment to encouraging those not holding appointments at major research institutions limit the participation of leading scholars who do hold such appointments, or vice versa? To what extent has the intimacy of the conference led us to have an unacceptably high rejection rate? Which kinds of diversity –

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ideological, rank, area of concentration, and so on – ought to be given preference, if any preference is given? How, given our collective interest in things political, can we avoid being pulled apart by ideological rancor? These questions and others like them are ones the Association will have to reflect on more seriously as the organization matures. Our hope is that we can find means to conduct those deliberations in open and thoughtful ways, and manage our inevitable disagreements with integrity and trust.

–Dennis McEnerney (2000–2008), Emily Hauptmann (2000–2007), and Liz Markovits (2007–2010)  
Executive Co-Directors, Association for Political Theory

3. Note: This section has been edited to remove the names of those volunteering to serve on one of the Program Committees. Three respondents requested that their comments be restricted to the Association's officers. Of those, two asked that all of their comments be removed, and one asked that one particular response be excised from the public edition. Their requests have been honored in the above.