

Conference announcement

SHOULD POLITICAL SCIENCE BE MORE RELEVANT? An Empirical and Critical Analysis of the Discipline

John E. Trent, Centre on Governance, University of Ottawa

Date: Wednesday, December 2, 2009

When: 10:00 – 11:30

Where: University of Ottawa, Desmarais Building (DMS) 3102

The presentation will be in English followed by a bilingual discussion.

Abstract: This presentation arises from the empirical evidence about trends, issues and perspectives in political science to be found in the International Political Science Association's (IPSA) Research Committee 33 book series entitled: *The World of Political Science: Development of the Discipline* and the papers presented at the 2008 Montreal Conference of the IPSA on *New Theoretical and Regional Perspectives on International Political Science*. One of the issues raised by this analysis of the discipline's strengths and weaknesses is the question of whether political science is relevant to the outside world and if not, why not? It is evident to the naked eye that in comparison with, say, economists (President Obama has three advisory councils of economists), political science is of relatively little interest to policy-makers, the media and the public. We have to ask if political science is out of step with the world and, if so, what might be done about it?

Biographical Notes: Author, speaker, activist, John E. Trent is a Fellow of the Centre on Governance at the University of Ottawa, where he was formerly a professor and chair of the University's Department of Political Science. His current work concentrates on the reform of international institutions and of the discipline of political science as well as electoral reform in Canada. His career has had a triple orientation, each of them overlapping: as a university professor, as a manager of academic associations, and as a social activist – all of them becoming international. His research interests focus on the reform of international organizations, federalism, electoral reform, French-English relations in Canada; and the development of political science. Recent publications include: *Quebec-Canada: What is the Path Ahead?* (with Robert Young and Guy Lachapelle); *The United Nations System* (with Chadwick Alger and Gene Lyons); *L'impact référendaire* (with Guy Lachapelle and Pierre Tremblay); *The Social Sciences in Canada* (with Steen Esbensen and Michel Allard) and *Federalism for the Future: Essential Reforms* (with Gérald-A. Beaudoin, Joseph Magnet, Benoît Pelletier & Gordon Robertson). With Michael Stein, he is Co-editor of the international book series, "The World of Political Science: the Development of the Discipline". He has recently published a new book on reform in global governance, titled, *Modernization of the United Nations System: Civil Society's Role in Moving from International Relations to Global Governance*, (2007, Barbara Budrich Publishers, Upladen, Germany, www.barbara-budrich.net www.renoufbooks.com). Professor Trent is the former Secretary General of the International Political Science Association, for whom he has been working on a study of the development of the discipline for the past three years. He was also the Executive Director of the Social Science Federation of Canada, a founding Vice-President of the Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS), past-president of the Société québécoise de Science politique and a member of the International Social Science Council..

Conference organized jointly by the School of Political Studies and the Center on Governance. For more information, please contact Eric Champagne (Echampagne@uottawa.ca) or Caroline Andrew (Candrew@uottawa.ca).