

Journal of Public Affairs Education

**Midterm Report
January 1 – December 31, 2025**

Presented to

**The Journal of Public Affairs Education Editorial Board &
The Executive Council of the
Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration**

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Editor-in-Chief

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Brief Overview

The *Journal of Public Affairs Education* (JPAAE) concludes 2025 in a position of strong momentum and strategic transition. Building on midyear progress, the journal experienced continued growth in submissions, stable and competitive citation performance, and a significant expansion in visibility through digital engagement and publisher transition.

Most importantly, JPAAE now sits at a critical inflection point, shifting from visibility to indispensability within the public affairs field.

Across 2025, the journal demonstrates:

- Sustained submission growth
- Increasing reviewer selectivity and manuscript quality
- Strong and stable citation metrics across Clarivate and Scopus
- Expanding international reach
- Rapid growth in digital and social visibility

At the same time, the journal completed a major publisher transition to Sage, positioning JPAAE for long-term operational stability, expanded dissemination, and improved editorial workflows.

As of October 2025, editorial leadership transitioned to a sole Editor-in-Chief model, with Sarah L. Young continuing through the current term (ending December 31, 2027).

Journal Impact

Clarivate Impact Factor Review

JPAE remains indexed in the Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) and continues to demonstrate strong and stable performance across Clarivate metrics.

The journal’s most recent Impact Factor is 2.0, with a five-year Impact Factor of approximately 1.9. While this represents a decrease from 2023 (2.4), it is important to interpret this shift within the broader mechanics of the Journal Citation Reports (JCR). The Impact Factor reflects citations to articles published in the preceding two years, and short-term fluctuations are common, particularly during periods of editorial transition and publication realignment.

More importantly, the underlying citation dynamics remain strong. As noted in the midyear report, citations to JPAE articles increased substantially in recent years, with a 222% increase from 2022 to 2023, signaling that recently published work is gaining traction in the field. These gains are expected to continue feeding forward into future Impact Factor calculations.

A more stable and informative measure is the Journal Citation Indicator (JCI), which reflects normalized citation impact over a three-year window. JPAE’s JCI remains above the global average (≈ 1.2), indicating that its articles are cited more frequently than comparable journals in both public administration and education.

Importantly, since the 2023 JCR release, ESCI journals are now assigned Impact Factors and evaluated alongside SSCI journals, even though they are not yet formally indexed in SSCI. This change allows for more direct comparison across tiers and provides clearer evidence of JPAE’s standing in the field.

By these measures, JPAE continues to perform:

- In the upper half (Q2) of public administration journals
- In the top quartile (Q1) of education journals (via JCI/CiteScore alignment)

Table 1. Clarivate Impact Factor & Citation Indicator Scores

Year	Articles Published	Citations	Impact Factor	Impact Factor Rank in PA	Journal Citation Indicator	Journal Citation Indicator Rank in PA	Journal Citation Indicator Rank in Ed
2019	73	60	0.817*	40/48*	N/A	N/A	315/723
2020	50	73	1.460*	39/79*	1.01	N/A	256/724
2021	53	129	2.434*	30/85*	1.16	N/A	202/743
2022	52	130	2.5	40/89*	1.18	N/A	185/759
2023**	56	119	2.4	34/91	1.23	19/91	159/756
2024	51	103	2.0	48/90	1.13	24/90	179/762

* Estimated – In 2023, Clarivate, who manages the ESCI and SSCI indices, began issuing an impact factor for all indexed journals. The impact factor was simplified to only one point beyond the decimal. For all prior years, Taylor and Francis manually estimated the impact factor at the request of the previous Co-Editors-In-Chief.
 ** JPAE was accepted into the Public Administration category of the ESCI for the 2023 calculations, allowing for it to be officially ranked on multiple metrics.

SCOPUS & Complimentary Metrics

Scopus metrics reinforce this interpretation.

JPAE’s CiteScore of 5.2 (Q1) places it among the top journals in both public administration and education categories, with a steady upward trajectory over time . Additional indicators include:

- SJR: 0.421 (Q2)
- H-index: 36, indicating a mature and well-established citation base

These metrics confirm that JPAE’s influence extends beyond Clarivate indexing and is consistently recognized across multiple evaluation systems.

Table 2. SCOPUS CiteScore

Year	Citable Documents	Citations (preceding 3 years)	CiteScore	PA Rank	Education Rank
2018	23	27	0.9*	95/142	696/1179
2019	110	191	1.7	69/157	467/1254
2020	101	209	2.1	75/165	447/1319
2021	97	311	3.2	62/190	327/1406
2022	91	402	4.4	50/213	268/1469
2023	93	469	5.0	56/232	272/1543
2024	98	507	5.2	53/242	282/1620

* 2018 data is incomplete due to JPAE’s accepted into the index in the fall of 2018

SCImago & Additional Impact Indicators

In addition to Clarivate and Scopus metrics, SCImago and related indicators provide further insight into JPAE’s influence and trajectory within the field.

JPAE’s SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) is 0.421 (Q2), and the journal holds an H-index of 36, placing it firmly among established journals in public administration and related fields . The H-index reflects sustained scholarly influence over time, indicating that a substantial body of JPAE articles continues to be cited across the literature.

Several complementary indicators reinforce this position. JPAE's external citations per document have increased steadily, reaching 2.764 in 2024, demonstrating that articles are being cited beyond the journal itself and are contributing to broader scholarly conversations .

JPAE's estimated financial value, an external metric based on publication volume and standard article processing benchmarks, has grown to approximately **\$475,818** . This substantial increase not only reflects the scale and impact of the journal's scholarly output, but also reinforces the importance of JPAE's recent publisher transition and the negotiation of more favorable contractual terms. In particular, the move toward a revenue-sharing model with NASPAA ensures that the organization is now better positioned to capture and reinvest the full financial value generated by the journal.

Taken together, these indicators highlight a consistent pattern: JPAE demonstrates stable, cumulative influence rather than episodic impact. The journal's citation base is not dependent on a small number of highly cited articles but is instead distributed across a broad portfolio of publications. This pattern aligns closely with the type of sustained, field-level relevance evaluated in journal indexing and promotion decisions.

Integrated Interpretation of Impact

Across Clarivate, Scopus, and SCImago indicators, a consistent pattern emerges:

- JPAE demonstrates above-average and sustained citation impact
- Performance is stable across multiple, independent metrics
- The journal is competitive with applied public administration outlets
- Citation growth is increasingly driven by recent publications and broader external uptake
- Influence is distributed across articles, rather than concentrated in a small number of highly cited pieces

Taken together, these data point to a journal with both immediate relevance and cumulative scholarly influence. At this stage, JPAE is best understood as occupying the "SSCI transition zone." The journal demonstrates:

- Citation impact within the range of many SSCI-indexed journals
- A mature and expanding citation base across indexing systems
- Increasing external citation reach and international engagement
- Established indexing history and consistent publication performance

The primary constraint is no longer quality or impact. It is index classification and the structure of citation distribution across the field. The data increasingly suggest that JPAE's trajectory is not one of emerging impact, but of delayed recognition relative to its demonstrated influence.

Submissions & Accountability Statistics

Table 3 illustrates the total number of manuscript submissions and the mean turnaround times across key touchpoints in the JPAE publication pipeline. In 2025, the journal received 140 new submissions, continuing a steady upward trajectory from 126 submissions in 2024 and reflecting sustained growth in both visibility and author demand.

At the same time, a few processing metrics show modest increases relative to prior years. These changes are both intentional and structural and should be interpreted in the context of strategic editorial decisions aimed at expanding the journal’s capacity and long-term impact.

First, JPAE has deliberately shifted toward a capacity-building editorial model. This includes:

- Integrating a larger number of special issues into the pipeline
- Providing greater autonomy to associate editors and guest editors to manage the review process
- Expanding opportunities for collaborative editorial decision-making

These changes modestly extend early-stage processing times, particularly in the transition from submission to reviewer invitation. However, they allow the journal to handle higher submission volume, diversify content, and strengthen the quality and reach of published work.

Second, 2025 marked a significant publisher transition and migration to a new editorial management system (ScholarOne). As part of this transition, JPAE was required to comply with European Union privacy regulations, which restricted the transfer of reviewer data to the previous three years. As a result, the journal temporarily lost access to approximately 70% of its historical reviewer database, requiring the editorial team to rebuild reviewer networks and re-establish matching processes. This had a short-term effect on reviewer invitation timelines.

Despite these factors, JPAE’s performance remains exceptionally strong relative to the field. The mean time from submission to first decision in 2025 was 28.5 days, which remains substantially faster than the average turnaround times for peer journals in public administration and higher education, many of which exceed 60–90 days.

Importantly, increases in processing time have not been accompanied by decreases in efficiency or throughput. Instead, they reflect a strategic recalibration to prioritize scalability of the journal, increase editorial depth, and improve long-term citation impact over marginal gains in speed. Taken together, these trends indicate that JPAE is not slowing down, it is building the infrastructure necessary to support continued growth and disciplinary influence.

Table 3. JPAE Submission & Accountability Statistics

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025

# of All New Submissions	96	82	101	89	87	106	126	140
Revisions Requested	38	32	30	53	61	51	64	66
Revisions Received	36	29	31	52	57	57	56	62
Submission to Tech Check	0.8	1.3	0.9	1.1	1.3	1	2.3	1.8
Tech Check to Editor Assign	0	0	0.1	0.1	0	0.5	0.1	0.3
Submission to Editor Assign	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.9	1.5	2.4	2.1
Submission to Reviewer Invite	2.3	3.1	1.7	2.6	2.8	4.5	5	6.6
Submission to First Decision	26.8	38.3	32.1	32.5	31.8	26.1	22.1	28.5

Editorial Decisions

Table 4 presents the distribution of editorial decisions across initial submissions and subsequent revision rounds for 2025.

JPAE rendered decisions on 140 initial submissions, along with 49 first revisions, 11 second revisions, and 2 third revisions. Consistent with editorial policy, manuscripts unlikely to become publishable are not sent out for review in order to protect reviewer time. As a result, approximately two-thirds of submissions were desk rejected (36 unsound; 39 unsuitable).

Among manuscripts sent for review, the majority received major or minor revision decisions (41 major; 6 minor), with no immediate acceptances at initial submission. This reflects both the strength of manuscripts entering review and the journal’s emphasis on iterative development.

Acceptance rates increase across revision stages, with 23 acceptances at first revision, followed by additional acceptances at later rounds. Rejection rates at these stages remain low, indicating that manuscripts invited to revise are typically developed into publishable contributions.

Overall, JPAE maintains high selectivity at the front end paired with a strong developmental review process, supporting both rigor and scholarly contribution in public affairs education.

Table 4. 2025 Editorial Decisions

Decision	Initial Submission (n=140)	First Revision (n=49)	Second Revision (n=11)	Third Revision (n=2)
Desk Reject - Unsound	36	NA	NA	NA
Desk Reject - Unsuitable	39	NA	NA	NA
Major Revision	41	4	1	0
Minor Revision	6	12	2	0
Reject	18	10	0	0
Accept	0	23	8	2

Reviews & Referees

In 2025, JPAE received 146 completed referee reports across submitted manuscripts. The mean time from review invitation to completed review was 24.4 days, remaining consistent with prior years and reflecting the continued responsiveness of the journal’s reviewer community.

Reviewer recommendations in 2025 were distributed as follows: 20.7% reject, 38.7% major revision, 24.3% minor revision, and 16.7% accept. The relatively low proportion of “accept” recommendations, compared to earlier years, reflects increasing reviewer expectations and higher standards for publishable work. At the same time, the decline in reviewer-recommended rejection rates suggests that manuscripts sent out for review are of consistently stronger quality, aligned with the journal’s practice of desk rejecting approximately two-thirds of submissions.

JPAE issued 201 review invitations and received 146 completed reports from 95 unique reviewers, resulting in a *completion rate of 60.5%*. This rate substantially exceeds typical journal benchmarks and reflects both a highly engaged reviewer community and deliberate editorial practices. These include careful matching of reviewer expertise to manuscripts and active management of reviewer workload to avoid overburdening individuals.

Taken together and within the context of the significant loss of reviewer data with the publisher transition, these patterns indicate a mature and well-functioning peer review system, characterized by strong reviewer commitment, increasing rigor, and efficient editorial coordination.

Table 5. 2025 Frequency of Reviewer Recommendations

Recommendation	Percentage (N=146)
Reject	20.7%
Major Revision	38.7%
Minor Revision	24.3%
Accept (Normal Editorial Changes)	16.7%

Circulation & Readership

Table 7 presents the number of article downloads for JPAE across its publishing platforms. From 2016 to 2017, the journal was hosted on JSTOR and the NASPAA website. In 2018, JPAE transitioned to Taylor & Francis (T&F) as its publisher while maintaining archival access on JSTOR. This shift significantly expanded access and visibility, reflected in the steady increase in downloads through 2021.

Downloads declined in 2022 due to a technical issue linking NASPAA membership credentials to journal access. As noted in prior reports, corrective measures were implemented, including targeted communication to NASPAA member institutions. These efforts began to restore access in late 2024, with a noticeable increase in downloads in Q4 2024.

Readership trends in 2025 indicate a strong rebound. JPAE recorded 74,217 downloads in 2025, representing a substantial increase over the same period in the previous year and signaling renewed accessibility and engagement following system improvements. This recovery suggests that prior declines were not demand-driven, but rather the result of temporary access barriers that have now been largely resolved.

Table 7. Number of Article Downloads

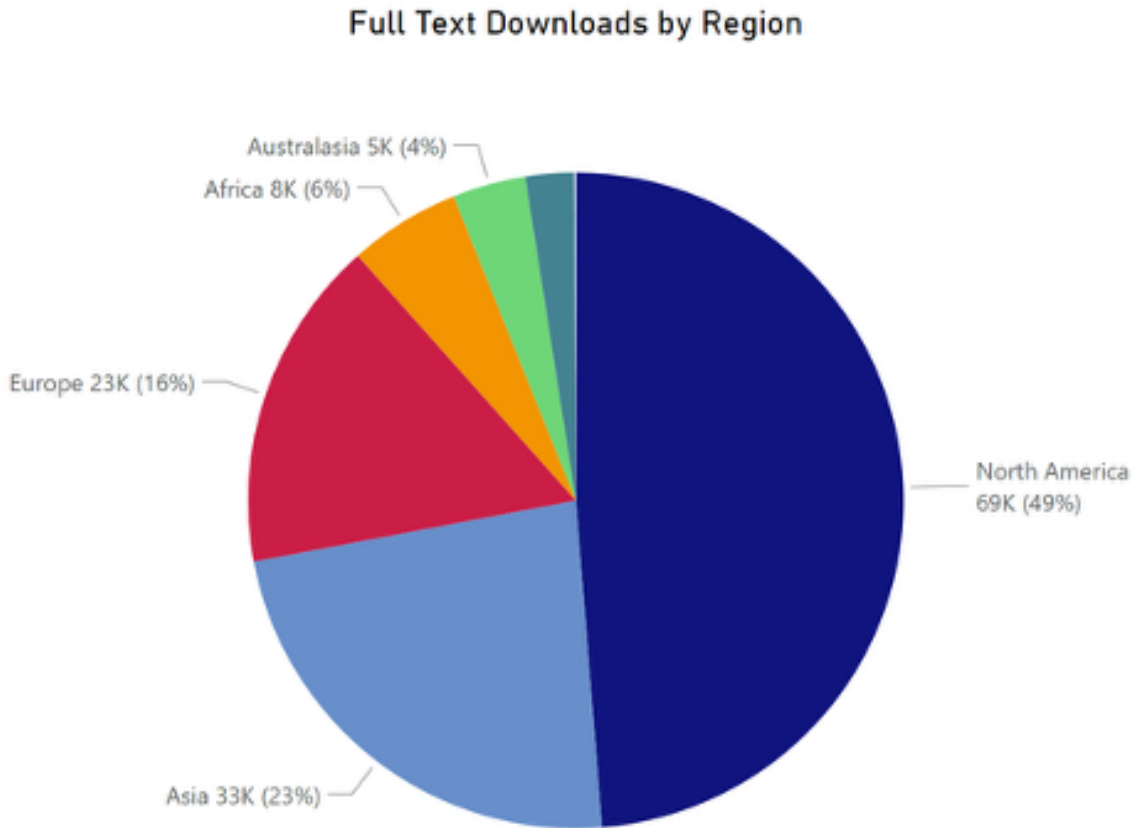
Year	Taylor & Francis	JSTOR	Total
2016*		38,314	38,314
2017*		42,336	42,336
2018	9,906	45,383	55,289
2019	25,865	35,904	61,769
2020	41,232	53,553	94,785
2021	51,605	63,012	114,617
2022	44,670	29,552	74,222
2023	61,318	29,756	91,074
2024	60,083	25,272	85,355
2025	74,217	20,139	94,356

* Represents years that predate journals publishing relationship with Taylor and Francis

Beyond volume, readership patterns reflect the continued relevance of JPAE’s content. Highly viewed and trending articles over the past year include timely editorials and invited pieces addressing current challenges in public administration education, including contributions from Christopher Koliba, Mary Guy, and Richard Callahan. These pieces, along with targeted research articles on emerging classroom and institutional issues, continue to drive strong engagement among faculty and practitioners.

JPAE’s readership is also increasingly global. Nearly half of all full-text downloads originate from North America (49%), while Asia (23%) and Europe (16%) represent a substantial and growing share of engagement. Additional downloads from Africa (6%) and Australasia (4%) further demonstrate expanding reach beyond traditional regions. These patterns underscore JPAE’s continued transition from a primarily U.S.-centered journal to a globally engaged platform for public affairs education scholarship. Taken together, these data indicate that JPAE’s readership growth is driven not only by improved access but also by highly relevant, timely scholarship and expanding international engagement.

Figure 1. Geography of Submissions



Updates on Ongoing JPAE Initiatives

JPAE would not be successful without its committed editorial team, editorial board, and the support of NASPAA. To continue forward momentum, we highlight a few areas of continued opportunity.

Publisher Transition

A defining feature of 2025 was JPAE’s transition to Sage Publishing. This transition included:

- Migration to ScholarOne manuscript system
- New website and branding
- Completion of backlog transfer

- Temporary open-access availability of content

The new partnership provides JPAE and NASPA with improved editorial infrastructure, increased discoverability, revenue-sharing opportunities, and dedicated support for journal operations. While the transition introduced short-term disruptions and a few challenges, it positions JPAE for long-term growth and stability.

Special Issues & Scholarly Development

JPAE continues to leverage special issues as a mechanism for shaping the field. These initiatives are important because they attract high-quality submissions, expand international reach, and generate sustained citation activity. JPAE's 2025 special issue initiatives include:

- “Leadership on Pedagogy of the Emotionally Exhausted” by Staci M. Zavattaro, Rachel Emas, Nicole Humphrey, & Sean McCandless
 - 15 manuscripts in process
- “AI in Public Affairs Education – Bolstering the Bridge to the 21st Century” by Victoria M. DeFrancesco Soto, Robert Richards, & Songkhun (Sunny) Nillasithanukroh
 - 10 manuscripts in process
- “Public Affairs Teaching in the Middle East and North Africa” by Kim Moloney, Rana Hendy, & Mohamad Alkadry
 - 11 manuscripts in process
- “Advancing the Discipline and Profession: Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Emergency Management and Homeland Security” by Claire Knox, Qian Hu, Tom Haase, & Scott Robinson
 - Proposal due April 3, 2026
 - Manuscripts due September 25, 2026

Impacts Beyond Publication

JPAE continued to expand its impact beyond traditional publication by convening and co-branding high-impact scholarly discussions at the NASPAA Annual Conference.

The first was an all-day preconference workshop, *The Intersection of Democracy and Public Administration: Implications for Teaching and Accreditation*, co-led by Drs. Christopher Koliba, Mary Guy, Richard Callahan, and Sarah L. Young. The workshop engaged more than 50 faculty members from across the globe and focused on strategies for embedding democratic values into public administration curricula amid rising censorship and democratic backsliding.

The second was a roundtable discussion, *Teaching Through Grief, Struggle, and Exhaustion: Institutional Barriers to Healing*, chaired by Drs. Staci Zavattaro, Sean McCandless, Seth Wright, and Derek Slagle. This session addressed the growing emotional and institutional challenges facing educators and highlighted emerging pedagogical responses.

Together, these efforts reflect JPAE's evolving role not only as a publication outlet, but as a convening platform for critical conversations shaping the future of public affairs education.

NASPAA Coordination:

JPAE strengthened its alignment with NASPAA through expanded coordination and formalized governance structures.

Editor-in-Chief Sarah L. Young was appointed to NASPAA’s Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Committee, ensuring closer integration between the journal and NASPAA’s efforts to advance pedagogical innovation.

In parallel, the NASPAA Advisory Committee for JPAE was reestablished. This committee is charged with advising the Executive Director, serving as a liaison to the Executive Council, and reviewing the JPAE–NASPAA memorandum of understanding under the new Sage Publishing agreement.

Together, these developments create a more structured and strategic partnership, positioning JPAE to better support NASPAA’s mission and the broader public affairs education community.

International Representation

JPAE continues to expand its global reach through intentional outreach, conference engagement, and editorial visibility.

Efforts include meet-the-editor sessions, targeted recruitment of international submissions, and active engagement with scholars across regions. The editorial team also increased the journal’s presence at major conferences, participating in panels and SoTL discussions at:

- ARNOVA (Indianapolis)
- ASPA (Washington, D.C.), the NASPAA Regional Conference (Riyadh)
- IASIA (Mexico City).
- NASPAA Global Conference (Flagstaff)
- UKAPA (Belfast, Ireland)

These activities support increased international submissions, broader scholarly exchange, and stronger global positioning, reinforcing JPAE’s role as a central platform for public affairs education worldwide.

Spotlight Articles

JPAE continued its Spotlight Articles initiative in partnership with NASPAA, recognizing outstanding scholarship—particularly from underrepresented voices in public affairs education.

Awarded articles in 2025 included work on governance competencies in Ethiopia, social equity in education, e-resilient education systems, pedagogical training in PhD programs, and public administration education in the MENA region.

These articles were highlighted at the NASPAA Annual Conference and made temporarily open access, reinforcing JPAE's commitment to equity, global inclusion, and the elevation of diverse scholarly perspectives.

Editorial Developments

2025 marked a significant transition in JPAE's editorial leadership.

With Dr. Sara R. Rinfret assuming the role of NASPAA President, she stepped down as Co-Editor-in-Chief on October 15, 2025, and continues to serve on the journal's editorial board. JPAE transitioned to a sole Editor-in-Chief model, with Dr. Sarah L. Young continuing through the remainder of the current term (ending December 31, 2027).

The editorial team also experienced key changes at the associate editor level. Dr. Sean McCandless concluded six years of service as Associate Editor. In response, the editorial structure was redesigned to a more flexible, capacity-oriented model, allowing associate editors to contribute across stages of the review process rather than within fixed roles.

As part of this transition, JPAE welcomed Dr. J. Brandon Philips as Associate Editor, further strengthening the editorial team's expertise and capacity.

These changes position JPAE with a more adaptive and scalable editorial structure, aligned with the journal's continued growth in submissions and scope.

Social Media Developments

Since January 2024, JPAE's expanded its social media four platforms, with LinkedIn doubling from 1,298 to 2,591 followers, Twitter/X holding steady at ~3,700 (no small feat right now), Bluesky reaching 602 in its first year, and Instagram (113 and growing). But the real shift is not in the numbers—it's in how we're showing up.

We've moved from simply posting articles to building a scholarly community through consistent, recognizable touchpoints: Sunday Scholar, Throwback Thursday, article and award spotlights, editorial board features, and CFP campaigns that invite new voices into the field. With JPAE's new branding now live across all platforms, we're creating a more cohesive presence where public affairs education scholarship is visible, accessible, and emerging as a leader in the online public affairs education conversation.

Opportunities for Future JPAE Successes

JPAE is now at a very different stage than even a few years ago. The challenge is no longer building visibility but converting that visibility into sustained field-level impact. What matters most at this point is strengthening the journal's citation architecture. SSCI advancement is not driven by a few highly cited articles, but by consistent, distributed citation patterns across the field. That means ensuring JPAE scholarship is not just read, but routinely cited in leading public administration journals. To support this, we need to prioritize highly citable work that shapes how the field thinks about public affairs education.

At the same time, continued progress depends on expanding JPAE's reach and integration within the broader scholarly community. Indexing bodies increasingly evaluate journals' global engagement. Internationalization remains critical, not just in authorship, but in citation networks and editorial representation. In parallel, we need to continue leveraging the visibility we have built through social media, conferences, and professional networks to ensure JPAE scholarship is actively used in classrooms, cited in publications, and embedded in ongoing conversations about the field. The goal moving forward is not simply growth, but positioning JPAE as the place where public affairs education scholarship is developed, circulated, and taken up.

Editorial Board

Members of the editorial board for the *Journal of Public Affairs Education* serve three-year, rotating terms that adhere to the calendar year, with service beginning on January 1st in year one and ending on December 31st in year three. Each year, ten members of the editorial board end their service. To select new members, the editors-in-chief of the journal and NASAA's journal oversight committee each nominate five new members. Nominations are then subjected to confirmation by the other nominating group.

The 2025 editorial board for the *Journal of Public Affairs Education* included:

Hunter Bacot – University of North Carolina Greensboro
Brandi Blessett – University of Minnesota
David Campbell – Binghamton University
K. Jurée Capers - Georgia State
Victoria De Francesco – University of Arkansas – Clinton School
John Diamond – Edge Hill University
Luke Fowler – Boise State University
Ting Gong – City University of Hong Kong
Mary Guy – University of Colorado Denver
Meagan M. Jordan – Old Dominion University
Soonhee Kim – KDI School
Christopher Koliba – University of Kansas
Shin Kue Rye – Idaho State University
Christopher Larimer – University of Northern Iowa
Peng Liu – Renmin University of China
Luis Luna-Reyes – University at Albany
Sean McCandless – University of Texas at Dallas
Lindsey McDougale – Rutgers University
Cullen Merritt – University of Maryland at College Park
Roseanne Mirabella – Kean University
Rosemary O’Leary – University of Kansas
Julie Olberding – Northern Kentucky University
Beth Rauhaus – University of Louisiana – Lafayette
Meghna Sabharwal – University of Texas at Dallas
Abdul-Akeen Sadiq – University of Central Florida
Ellen Shiau – California State University, Los Angeles
Edmund C. Stazyk – SUNY University at Albany
Kimberly Wiley – University of Florida
Staci Zavattaro – University of Central Florida