

THE SOUTHEAST REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Jefferson S. Duffey
Florida Technological University

Donato J. Pugliese
Georgia State University

Editor's Note: Jefferson S. Duffey and Donato J. Pugliese present here an overview of the history of the Southeast Region of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA). The authors propose a "formalization" of the informal arrangements among chapters in the Region with the goal of possibly formally incorporating a regional conference. This formalization, the authors assert, is made necessary by the growth of the Region and by the greater interest in regional activities taken by chapters and their members.

The American Society for Public Administration, a chapter-based organization, added a new dimension to its geographical underpinnings when the membership, at the 1970 national conference in Philadelphia, approved a constitutional provision for the election of eighteen of its council members from six geographical regions. While these regions, now expanded

to ten by action of the membership at the 1975 national conference in Chicago, were to serve as electoral and representational districts, they soon became the base for expanded program activities, primarily regional conferences.

Prototypes of regional activities in ASPA did exist prior to the adoption of the formal regional structure. Of the four pre-existing regional conferences, two---Cal ASPA (an organization of chapters in California) and the Midwest Region---presented a somewhat more formal approach to regional conferences than the loose, informal leadership network of New England and of the Southeast.

Since the 1969 national conference in Miami, a loose---but expanding---network of individuals has guided the affairs of the Southeast Region, particularly with respect to the annual meetings. Far from being a small "elitist" group, the network has been open and accessible. Anyone who has sought involvement by participating in the deliberations of the Region's affairs at the various meetings held during the national and regional conferences, and by doing the work which was and is necessary to carry on the Region's business has been welcome. Publication of the Southern Review of Public Administration is in this tradition and represents a milestone in the development of the Southeast Region.

Appearance of SRPA also provides an opportunity to record the history of the Region and to inform many of the members of the events that have transpired and of the policies which have been formulated over the past eight years.

The actual "first" annual southeastern conference was the result of an attempt by the South Florida Chapter to initiate a new chapter in the Metropolitan Tampa Bay area. An existing national conference host committee mechanism was utilized to stage what was intended to be a public administration "buffet" which

would attract local administrators and hopefully create a fertile garden for the planting of new ASPA seeds.

Table 1 presents much of the information concerning the eight regional conferences held to date. Explanation is necessary for some of the information appearing on the chart. With regard to the process for selecting the conference sites, until 1973, it had been a matter of "recruiting" someone to host the conference and, in effect, to assume the responsibility (or burden) of making the arrangements. The expenses for the early conferences were assumed by host chapters as a matter of duty; the 1969 Tampa, 1970 Atlanta, 1971 Hollywood, and 1972 Atlanta meetings had both institutional and chapter support.

The 1972 meeting was originally scheduled for New Orleans and subsequently transferred to Atlanta when the New Orleans Chapter indicated it would be unable to undertake the program and financial obligations necessary to a successful conference. This development clearly emphasized the need for a conference support foundation beyond the support provided by the host chapter.

An important output of the 1972 Atlanta leadership meeting was the decision to develop a seed fund and solicit modest chapter contributions. With the availability of a conference seed fund, the selection process was reversed: chapters began bidding for the opportunity to host the conference. Future conferences are scheduled for Knoxville (1977), Charleston (1978), and Montgomery (1979).

While the chapter presidents and the members of the national council from this Region constitute the conference planning committee, the local chapter hosting the meeting selects the conference and program chairmen. Each conference committee has been free, within a minimal number of region-wide policies discussed below, to develop the conference from its own per-

TABLE 1
SUMMARY INFORMATION CONCERNING
THE SOUTHEAST REGIONAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION CONFERENCE

YEAR	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
LOCATION	Tampa	Atlanta	Hollywood	Atlanta	Nashville	Orlando	Williamsburg	Miami Beach
Conference Chairman	Goode	Pyles	Spence	Jones	Pugliese	Duffey	DeCair	O'Neil
Program Chairman	Duffey	Pyles	Duffey	Gibson	Pugliese	Duffey	Conklin	Tanner
Number of Program Days	1.5	1.5	2.5	1.0	1.5	2.5	3.0	2.5
Number of Tracks					4	3	6	10
Number of Panels	8	16	23	6	17	29	23	35
Number of Panel								
Participants/Speakers	26	54	103	36	78	92	80	145
Number of Attendees	47	(b)	(b)	65	158	179	276	160
Number of Chapters Providing Financial Support	1	1	1	1	7	10	15	8
Total Revenues	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	\$3,243.00	4,278.60	5,110.50	8,257.00
Total Expenses	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	2,701.30	2,858.08	2,759.95	4,814.36
Surplus/(Deficit)	(a)	(a)	(a)	100	541.70	1,420.52(c)	2,350.55	3,442.64(d)
Membership Forum			X		X	X	X	X
Presidents Meeting			X		X	X	X	X
Candidates for President-Elect				X	X	X	X	X

(a) First four conferences were funded by host chapters. Data not available.

(c) \$800 transferred to Virginia Chapter

(d) \$200 of 50% turned over to conference fund granted to SRPA.

spective. This explains the variations in the number of program days, the use of and the number of tracks, and the number of panels.

For the two Atlanta conferences (1970 and 1972), the local committee attempted to plan the conferences so that the meetings would be held coterminously with the annual meeting of the Southern Political Science Association. It was able to do so for the 1970 meeting only, but it did not achieve its objective for cross-attendance. Neither was the objective of carry-over attendance achieved at the Nashville meeting when that regional conference was scheduled to follow the meeting hosted by the Center for the Study of the Presidency.

Pre-conference sessions, primarily as means to bolster participation and to increase attendance at the conference by carry-over registrants, have been successful in Orlando and Williamsburg, when such sessions involved ASPA's own sections. In Orlando, the Section on Criminal Justice, the Section on Human Resources Administration, and the regional representatives of NASPAA sponsored a full day of sessions in their respective fields.

All of these sections also carried their meetings over into the main body of the annual regional meeting. A special criminal justice track and a track on "Blacks and Public Administration in the South" were offered prior to the official opening of the meeting in Williamsburg.

A meeting of the national council was held at the time of the Hollywood conference and a meeting of the national executive committee was held at the close of the Miami conference. Meetings of national committees or of regional representatives on national committees have also occurred at the various other conferences. These committee meetings, as well as specific invitations to individuals to participate on

panels or to serve as speakers, have helped to draw participants from areas outside the region.

In 1972, the national ASPA Headquarters volunteered to assume the regional conference sponsorship but it was unanimously agreed by the southeastern chapters that an important conference flavor could be retained only if the chapters themselves continued to support what was essentially a chapter undertaking.

The annual national conference, despite its ever-increasing size, prestige and program dimensions, has never quite successfully captured the ASPA member whose professional organization orientation is focused primarily upon his chapter. To some extent that member has identified with the regional conference.

Data exists only for paid registrants so attendance figures in Table 1 do not reflect total attendance. From an analysis of paid registrants, it does appear that the attendance at the regional conference tends to differ from the clientele attending the national conference. There is, however, a core of attendees who attend almost all of the regional conferences and the national meetings. Generally, this core tends to act as the informal leadership of the Region.

From its inception, the annual southeast regional conference has been the mechanism for this informal leadership group to meet to discuss matters of both national and regional interest. These meetings, open to all chapter presidents and to others inclined to attend and usually guided by the senior regional council member (see Table 2), informal at first, have evolved into the more formal Membership Forum and the Chapter Presidents Meeting.

The Forum has become the vehicle for communicating with the membership about the affairs of the Society. It has included, on occasion, presentations

by a general speaker, the executive director of the Society, and some regional representatives.

TABLE 2
REGIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS
SOUTHEAST REGION (V)

NAME	STATES	TERM OF OFFICE
Jefferson Duffay	Florida	1971-1974
Donato J. Pugliese	Georgia	1972-1975
Orba F. Traylor	Alabama	1973-1976
Frank R. Spence	Florida	1974-1977
William A. Jones	Georgia	1975-1978
Walter N. Lambert	Tennessee	1976-1979
Picot Floyd	Florida	1977-1980

Since the 1973 meeting in Nashville, the Forum has been also utilized to present the candidates for president-elect of ASPA to the membership. The practice of inviting the candidates and having them appear at the regional conference commenced in 1972, with the Atlanta meeting, and continued until 1975. More as a result of the early timing of the last conference than anything else, neither of the two final candidates for president-elect were invited to appear at the Miami Beach conference.

Candidate selection and support for national council seats have been important functions of the leadership group at the regional conferences. An early decision was that only one of the three regional council seats would be filled with a representative from the State of Florida.

The importance of this decision cannot be underestimated given the fact that, in the initial days of regional development, Florida had approximately one-half of the regional membership of ASPA and, today, still has slightly more than two-fifths of the region's

membership. Thus, this decision insured that the other states of the Region would represent the Region at the national level and that the leadership would not be concentrated only in the State of Florida.

Other policies adopted by the leadership group relate to the annual meeting. The members of the national council from this Region and the chapter presidents serve as the conference committee. At the time of the conference, these chapter presidents are actually past presidents but this approach provides some continuity in conference planning and implementation.

Initial funding for conference support was provided by the South Florida Chapter. With the repayment of this advance, two policies were initiated with the 1972 Conference in Atlanta. First, each of the chapters of the Region was requested to make a non-refundable contribution of no more than \$50 to the conference fund. These contributions not only provided "seed" money for the conference but also gave the contributing chapters a sense of involvement in the conference planning.

A second policy concerned conference funding so that after all conference expenses were met, the surplus funds were to be divided equally, with half being given to the chapter hosting the conference and the other half being forwarded to the conference committee for the next annual meeting.

At the recent (1977) meeting in Atlanta, this policy was modified by representatives of fourteen of the eighteen chapters of the Region. Surplus funds are now to be apportioned in thirds: one-third to the host chapter; one-third to the conference revolving fund; and one-third to SRPA.

We have described the Region's past. As is true of many ASPA activities at the national and chapter levels,

it has been the personal commitment of a small group of individuals that has provided the thrust for the development of the Southeast Regional Conference.

What of the future? Over the last several years, the "regional conference" has come to have two meanings. Initially, the term referred to the annual meeting. Lately, the term has been used not only to refer to the annual meeting but also to the organization of chapter officers in the Region. Paralleling the development of this meaning is the thought that the time has arrived to organize the regional conference in a formal manner.

One approach discussed by the regional leadership at recent regional and national meetings is to incorporate the Southeast Regional Conference of the American Society for Public Administration. A committee of three persons, chaired by Jefferson S. Duffey, was appointed by the regional chapter representatives to develop a proposed plan of incorporation and organization which is to be considered at the annual regional meeting in Knoxville.

Formalization of the Conference at this time would be advantageous to the ASPA membership in the southeast. The number of persons involved in the leadership network has increased in the last several years as a result of two factors: first, the increase in the number of chapters and their respective officers getting involved in regional activities; and second, the succession of new regional council members and new officers in those chapters who have been previously involved in regional affairs.

Thus, there is now a need to have a formal mechanism to provide an orderly and systematic manner for embracing new members into the leadership network. Formalization would also provide the basis for formal legitimacy of the entire regional

operation and the policies forthcoming from this operation.

With the expansion of the annual meeting in terms of size of participation and with an increase in the amount of funds being transferred from one conference committee to another, formalization of the leadership network will insure continuity of activities and accountability of actions and finances, concepts with which we are all familiar. Transfer of leadership will also be facilitated by the formal organization.

Finally, under the formal organization approach, new endeavors beyond the annual meeting may be undertaken. As an example, organizational and financial support may be provided to the Southern Review of Public Administration, particularly as the funds generated by the annual meetings continue increasing and exceed the amounts necessary to initiate planning for the succeeding annual meeting. As indicated in Table 1, SRPA was granted \$200 from the 50% share of the Miami Beach surplus which is allocated to the conference revolving fund.

A concern of a number of us in the past has been the lack of chapters of other ASPA activities in some states of the Region. A more formal organization and leadership system, not totally concerned with the planning of annual meetings, could focus some attention on the matter of chapter development in the Region. While this is a major responsibility of the National office of the Society, regional efforts could be very helpful in supplementing the national program. In addition, with national policy requiring regional council members to serve in a liaison capacity with chapters, the formal organization may be useful in facilitating this function, particularly with some of the aspects of communication and of financing.

Moreover, a formal organization, particularly through a corporate approach, might provide the opportunity for seeking grants for regionally-oriented educational, training, or research projects. The potential for future development of regional programs exists in shifting from the informal, loose system of the past, which has served the Region well, to a formal structure. In essence, the shift is from Gulick's idea of coordination through "dominance of an idea" to coordination through structure, even if a small, loose structure.

The development of the Southeast Region, in conclusion, provides members in this geographic location with the opportunity to mold a new structure so as to better service the needs of the membership.

As in the past, the decision process is an open one and as many of you as possible should commit yourselves to participating in it.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN A CHANGING SOUTH

C. E. Teasley, III

University of West Florida

It is a current vogue to talk about a "Changing South." In fact, however, notions about a "new South" have been prevalent for the better part of a century. With the election to the Presidency of a former Georgia Governor, interest in the South has reached its pinnacle. Almost every national news magazine has an issue dedicated to the South, energy shortages are placing more focus on the sunbelt states, and now, of course, we see the inception of a new public administration journal which emphasizes that topic and that Region.

Students of public administration have long realized the inseparability of politics and administration. Undoubtedly, southern politics have painted the administrative picture with distinct colors.

Key's Southern Politics remained a remarkably accurate portrayal for nearly three decades. His