

**A Collaborative History of the Western Political Science Association's
Women's Caucus Western Region and the
Caucus for Women and Gender Justice 1970 – 2021¹**

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Beginnings: The Context

The idea for a Western Political Science Association Women's Caucus (WPSC) came from a group of five young women who envisioned Women's Caucuses for Political Science at both the national and the regional levels while attending the American Political Science Association (APSA) meeting in New York City in 1969. In 1970, the Western Political Science Association's Women's Caucus was established at the annual meeting of the WPSA in Sacramento, CA. At the time, gender was generally assumed to be a binary structure of power relations supported by names, pronouns, patterns of dress, hair style, body build and body characteristics that indicated a person was male or female, regardless of that person's gender identity. The objective of the APSA and WPSA Women's Caucus founders was to open opportunities for full participation at all levels of both the national and regional Political Science Associations for those marked as female by the above characteristics in what they generally assumed to be a binary gender system.

In her account of the founding of the American Political Science Association's Women's Caucus in 1969, Joyce Mitchell (U of Oregon) discusses in some detail the male dominated nature of the APSA's meetings at that time (Mitchell, 1990).³ In this article, Mitchell reports that women constituted only 5 percent of the paper-givers on the APSA annual programs in the 1960s. Males not only authored most of the papers but also held all the positions of leadership in the organization. It was a male bastion, as was the case for other social science organizations at the time.

Meanwhile, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s was in full swing challenging the status quo and raising expectations for many. The second women's movement was also getting underway. (The National Organization for Women was founded in 1966.) Within the APSA, another group, the APSA's Caucus for a New Political Science was organized in 1967 by younger members of the profession to promote a variety of reforms including the underrepresentation of Blacks and women in the profession. In 1969, at the APSA annual meeting in New York City, five young women, Katherine (Kay) Klotzburger (Rutgers U.), Audrey Wells (U.FI), Carol Barner-Barry (Syracuse U.), Bernice Carroll (U.IL) and Judith Stiehm (UCLA), decided to form a Women's Caucus, an independent organization, modeled somewhat on the Caucus for a New Political Science but designed to be a broad coalition within the political science profession dedicated to promoting the advancement of women in the profession, to encourage women political scientists to use

their skills to redress inequalities that structure American life, and to advance scholarly work on women. (Hancock, Hawkesworth and Sampaio, 2008; Mitchell, 1990).

Of the original founders, Judith Stiehm, in her first year of teaching at UCLA after obtaining her PhD from Columbia University, was the only one of this group with a PhD. The others were graduate students (Card, 2021). Meeting in the summer of 1970 at the home of Carol Barner-Berry to plan their strategy for the APSA meeting in Fall, 1970, this group decided on a federal structure, discussed their priorities and strategies and assigned their members to initiate Women's Caucuses at each of the four regional political science organizations. Judith Stiehm was assigned the Western Political Science Association which next met in Sacramento, CA in April of 1970 (*Ibid*). Audrey Wells and Dorothy Stetson in organizing a Women's Caucus at the Southern Regional Political Science Association meeting reiterated the national and local objectives for the WCPS. Nationally, the WCPS was to act within the APSA as pressure in support of women's equality in the profession. Locally, the WCPS is "a means for women to build coalitions, discussing problems and strategizing for their solution." (Stone, 1970 cited in Hawkesworth *et. al.* 2021).

The Proceedings of the Western Political Science Association Twenty-fourth Annual Meeting, April 2-4, 1970, Sacramento, California" (*Proceedings 1970*), includes the official program for 1970 which documents the overwhelming male dominance of the WPSA that many young women (including myself and the Women's Caucus founders) experienced at the 1969 New York APSA meeting. Of the 69 papers presented at the 1970 WPSA conference, only four were authored by women. One was by Barbara Callaway (CSU Long Angeles). Another was by Emily Card (UC Riverside). A third was by Lynn Iglitzin (U. of Washington) and the fourth was by Val B. Lorwin (U. of Oregon). Of the 24 panels, all were chaired by men. Of the 54 discussants, 4 were women (Data taken from the *Proceedings 1970* using binary gender markers as no gender self-identity data exists.)

Initial Agenda of the Western Political Science Association's (WPSA) Women's Caucus

While Judith Stiehm (UCLA) was the first Chair of the Women's Caucus, Western Region, she had help from many others including Betty Nesvold (CSU San Diego), Barbara Callaway (CSU Los Angeles), Mary Lepper (U of Southern Colorado), Ruth Ross (CSU Long Beach), Emily Card (UC Riverside) and Joyce Mitchell (U of Oregon). The Proceedings of WPSA 24th Annual Meeting 1970 lists Barbara Callaway as presiding over the business meeting of the newly formed WPSA Women's Caucus. Emily Card, a member of the Caucus for a New Political Science (CNPS) represented both the CNPS and the Women's Caucus at the WPSA's Business Meeting where, on behalf of the Women's Caucus, she introduced a list of 12 motions. All of these motions involved resolutions that the Women's Caucus was asking the WPSA to pass and administer to address the male bias of the organization. This initial agenda of the Women's Caucus was encompassing, demanding that:

- all political science departments establish a policy of open recruitment;

- women political scientists be added to all committees, advisory boards and editorial boards within or related to the WPSA;
- part-time jobs for fully qualified persons should count towards seniority and promotion;
- all nepotism rules and quotas be condemned;
- financial support be granted to qualified students regardless of sex and supplemental allowances be provided for dependents;
- day care centers be provided for children of employees, faculty and students;
- parenthood and family leave be provided to employees, faculty and students regardless of sex;
- continuation of the APSA Committee on the Status of Women;
- the WPSA establish a committee to monitor compliance with all these resolutions; and
- the WPSA approve and circulate these resolutions to all political science departments and institutions in the region covered by the WPSA.

Remarkably, all of these motions were passed at the WPSA Business meeting held on April 3, 1970 in Sacramento, CA (Proceedings 1970).

Subsequent Years: Goals, Strategies and Tactics - 1970 to 2008.

The ease with which this ambitious Caucus agenda was passed at the WPSA Business Meeting in 1970 did not mean that resistance was nonexistent. Following the annual meeting, Emily Card wrote to WPSA President H. Paul Castleberry requesting operating funds for the Caucus and appointment of a Caucus representative to serve as an *ex officio* member of the Executive Committee. In his response, dated May 27, 1970, Castleberry explains why he cannot distribute operating funds to the Women's Caucus and also why he will not appoint another member of the Women's Caucus to the Executive Committee as an *ex officio* member. He notes that Joyce Mitchell, who was newly elected to the Council, "provides a means of liaison" to the Women's Caucus. Rather than granting the Caucus the status of *ex officio* membership, he insisted that "observer status" would be sufficient. He also pointed out that "You will recall that the Council responded affirmatively to your request ("on the spot") that you and several of your associates participate as observers at its annual business meeting. There were almost as many observers present as there were council members, and some of the latter were not even able to find seats at the table. In consequence of its cooperative response to your request, the Council spent as much time in "dialogue" with the "observers" as it did in proceeding with its urgent business (Castleberry. 1970).

Writing letters such as Card's to male WPSA officials, demanding that women be appointed to committees, showing up in significant numbers and raising equity questions at meetings and "getting out the vote" at WPSA Business Meetings were political tactics that the Women's Caucus members engaged in the 1970s in their attempts to make the organization more open to women.

Gender Rotation of WPSA Leadership

Perhaps the Women's Caucus' most significant accomplishment in the first twelve years of its existence was the success of the Caucus in securing binary gender rotation in the office of the WPSA Presidency. Betty Moulds, the Executive Director of the WPSA from 1998-2009, as well as a WPSA member before that, remembers the WPSA Women's Caucus as being "the conscience of the WPSA." She writes:

"When the WPSA ignored or paid insufficient attention to matters of gender and race, there would be loud voices in the WPSA business meetings, typically followed by appropriate action. Judith Stiehm often would lead the charge, standing up in meetings and shouting "point of order!" (Moulds, 2021)

Judith was not alone. Other fearless and outspoken leaders such as Rita Mae Kelly combined with scholars such as Joyce Mitchell and Betty Nesvold who were equally committed to the Caucus and its mission, but were working from inside the WPSA hierarchy. Joyce Mitchell was elected to the WPSA Executive Council in 1970. Betty Nesvold was the first female president of the WPSA in 1975 and was reappointed as President in 1977 to fill a vacancy. During this period, many other WPSA women diligently worked in panels, in meetings and in informal discussions with male colleagues to point out the biases and behaviors that many men in the profession did not realize were discriminatory with regard to women. Betty Moulds attributes the early suggestion for gender rotation of the WPSA presidency to Betty Nesvold and credits her with leading this successful effort which required a "get out the vote" political action "to defeat a presidential nominee who was seen as unenlightened" (Moulds 2021). In 1982-83, Helen Ingram (U of Arizona) was the first female elected to be WPSA President under this policy which has been faithfully followed ever since with one exception when Timothy Kaufman-Osborn served an extra year in 2002-2003 to fill a vacancy (See "List of WPSA Presidents" in Appendix).

Gender rotation of the WPSA presidency is one of the most important accomplishments of the WPSA Women's Caucus both symbolically and operationally. According to WPSA practice, prior to assuming the presidency, every President-Elect spends the year serving as Program Chair, making decisions that shape the annual conference in terms of themes, special panels as well as regular panels. For graduate students and young faculty, seeing a woman as Program Chair or as the President sends a message about the organization and the profession. When the Program Chair becomes President, she/he becomes the public face of the organization, travels around the region representing the WPSA and makes numerous committee assignments. Many of the members of the WPSA Women's Caucus at the time were also members of the APSA's Women's Caucus. After their success at the WPSA, women from the WPSA Women's Caucus took the campaign for gender rotation of the presidency to the American Political Science Association. The APSA eventually responded in 1989-90 by choosing Judith Shklar (Harvard U) as the first female APSA President. Seven years later they elected Elinor Ostrom (U of Indiana)

as the second female APSA President and then 5 years after that, chose three women presidents consecutively: Theda Skocpol (Harvard U) (2002-2003), Suzanne Rudolph (U of Chicago) 2003-2004 and Margaret Levi (Stanford U) 2004-2005. Thereafter, the APSA has elected female presidents every 3 years, every other year, and in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021, consecutively (“Presidents of the American Political Science Association. [https:// en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Political_Science_Association](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Political_Science_Association)).

The WPSA Women’s Caucus Changes its Name to the Caucus for Women and Gender Justice

A second major event in the history of the WPSA Women’s Caucus is the name change from the WPSA Women’s Caucus to the Caucus for Women and Gender Justice, a process that began in the first decade of the 21st century and culminated in the name change in 2010. As Mary Hawkesworth reports:

“Four decades of feminist, critical race, and queer scholarship problematized binary

conceptions of sex. Challenging the assumption that there are two and only two sexes, recent scholarship documents the fluidity and malleability of gendered embodiment and traces the complex systems of power deployed to shore up the male/female binary. To contest the naturalization of sex difference and to foster an inclusive social justice agenda, the Caucus voted to change its name to the Caucus for Women and Gender Justice in 2010. This change created space to address a wide range of LGBTQI issues in the Caucus, the profession, the discipline and the Western Political Science Association. Anna Marie Smith (Cornell University) proposed the name change at the Caucus business meeting, supported by Edwina Barvosa and Heath Fogg Davis among others.” (Hawkesworth Email Correspondence, 1 November 2021).

After the adoption of the name change, Susan Burgess, Jennifer Gaboury, and Ange Marie Hancock pressured the WPSA to ensure that all venues for WPSA meetings have or create gender-neutral bathrooms (“Minutes from 2011, WPSA Caucus for Women and Gender Justice Business Meeting.” April 21, 2011, San Antonio, TX). More recently, in the writing of this history, members of the WPSA’s Caucus for Women and Gender Justice have made clear their opposition to the traditional binary gender system and methodology that determines gender by gendered names, pronouns, gendered characteristics or physical appearance, rather than by individual gender self-identification. Here they are a part of a movement that reaches far beyond the WPSA in challenging the established binary gender system throughout the entire society or perhaps world. However, for the purposes of this history, the lack of data about the self-expressed gender identity of WPSA members in the past and in the present makes it impossible to use gender self-identification as the measure of the success or failure of the Caucus in its original quest for binary gender equality in the WPSA and the APSA. Hopefully, this can be rectified in the future.

Other Activities of the Women’s Caucus and the Caucus for Women and Gender Justice ⁴

Over the period of more than 50 years from 1970 to 2021, the work of the Women's Caucus / Caucus for Women and Gender Justice has emphasized different issues as it responds to the concerns and conditions of the times. As explained above, the first years were focused on transforming a predominantly male organization into one that is more representative of women and one that works to put women in positions of authority and influence equally with men. This involved a variety of activities: identifying issues that needed attention, making demands for change in meetings, getting supporters at meetings to support resolutions, getting out the vote, providing leadership to identify issues and strategies and explaining the need for change to male colleagues. Providing a place for women from the region to meet one another at annual meetings, to encourage and counsel one another, to meet other women political scientists with similar interests, to network and to make each other feel a significant part of the WPSA organization was another important function performed by the Caucus. Peri Schwartz-Shea describes her experience in this regard.

“...the Caucus breakfasts were where I first heard the stories of its founding and met ‘women who organize’ at WPSA, e.g., Rita Mae Kelly. That reinforced other WPSA events and gave me, as someone newer to WPSA, a place to meet and get to know activist women. It was an inspiring and supportive space... (T)he ‘tangible’ accomplishments matter but so do the less tangible ones of helping younger scholars to believe in themselves. That can help with getting tenure and having the wherewithal to keep plugging away in poli sci (as opposed, as we know happens, to scholars who choose to leave for other disciplines.” (Schwartz-Shea, Email communication. 2021).

Nominating women for election to Association offices and committees was another Caucus activity as was getting out the vote for particularly important elections and writing letters in support of or opposing various policies or proposals. Reaching out to mentor recent female PhDs and graduate students, putting them on panels and encouraging them were other major activities. The Caucus meetings regularly announced job openings, held panels addressing problems such as gender discrimination and sexual harassment in political science departments and co-sponsored activities and panels with the WPSA Women and Politics Section and the WPSA Committee on the Status of Women.

During 2005--2007, Caucus President Anna Sampaio established a Caucus website which organized the recording of written records of Caucus activities – a website that lasted until 2012 and was then discontinued. Also during this period, Ange Marie Hancock, Mary Hawkesworth and Anna Sampaio attempted to formalize the rules of the Caucus by writing a “Report of the WCPS – West Committee on By Laws” which they submitted for discussion at the Women's Caucus at the 2008 WPSA meeting in San Diego. No evidence exists that these were adopted, or if adopted, followed.

As mentioned above, by around 2008 after the WPSA had agreed to the gender rotation of presidents beginning in 1982 and women were represented at least somewhat on most

committees and on most panels as chairs, paper-givers and discussants, LGBTQ issues came to the fore. The Caucus responded by changing its name to the Caucus for Women and Gender Justice in 2010 and turning its attention to that need (WPSA's Timeline).

Two of the three written Caucus minutes available for this account are those of 2010-2011 and 2012-2013, They show that in 2011, Anna Sampaio was still hosting the Caucus website at <http://wpsawomen.com/Hom.Page.html>. The Caucus was continuing its practice of sponsoring or co-sponsoring appropriate panels and symposiums with a mini-symposium on Intersectionality by Ange-Marie Hancock and Evelyn Simien which appeared in the 2011 issue of PRQ V 64, No 1 March 2011. A new issue for Caucus action in 2011 was a call for opposition to Temple University's recent decision to fold all interdisciplinary programs – including Women's Studies – into existing departments. Four Caucus members volunteered to write letters to oppose this change for Temple University's Women's Studies department. Other action items included following up on the accessibility by trans to gender-neutral bathrooms, and insuring that all WPSA hotel sites had or created gender-neutral bathrooms. However, the 2011 Caucus minutes also show that Caucus leaders realized that the Caucus was losing its momentum. Attendance at the Caucus meeting was low. Caucus President Tamara Metz in 2011-2012 called for the theme for the next year to be "The Sustainability of the Caucus."

2012- 2019.: The Caucus' Achilles' Heel is exposed : Organizational Discipline

The Caucus' inability continuously and consistently to store and pass on its records, its minutes, its By Laws, its history, has meant that to compensate, each President has had to be personally responsible for passing that information on to the next president. This function cannot be performed by the WPSA because since 1995 when the WPSA became a non-profit organization, the Caucus as an advocacy group could not and cannot be officially connected with the WPSA as it will jeopardize the WPSA's tax exempt status. Originally, the Caucus had boxes of records that it passed from President to President until the late 1980s, when reportedly these boxes were taken to be stored in the garage of a member (Yanow 2021). Unfortunately, the name of that member is lost. Anna Sampaio started a website for the Caucus during her Caucus presidency from 2005-2007 which lasted until 2012. However, websites cost money to maintain for individual faculty members without institutional support and take time and energy from busy faculty members, no matter how dedicated. Realizing the importance of rules that support organizational continuity, Ange Marie Hancock, Mary Hawkesworth and Anna Sampaio rewrote the lost By Laws to submit for passage to the Caucus meeting in 2008, but no known report says that they were discussed or passed.

In 2012, at the end of Tamara Metz' term as President, the new President and President Elect of the Caucus both announced that they were unable to fulfill their responsibilities for the next year. This was a major blow to the sustainability of the organization because it significantly disrupted the organization and morale of the Caucus and left Tamara Metz, the Caucus President for 2011-2012 to fulfill the President's duties for another year, 2012–2013, (with no President in Waiting). She sent around an email list asking for

volunteers to do the job in 2013-2014, rather than having an election at the annual meeting. At the end of 2013, Janni Aragon agreed to be president again for 2013 -2014.

The 2013 Minutes of the Caucus Meeting state that the institutional health of the Caucus is “in obvious doldrums at the moment but important to have around as a resource when needed.” The minutes report an attendance of around 13 people including Tamara Metz who chaired the meeting and took the minutes. The minutes also report that neither the current nor the upcoming Presidents were able to attend the meeting. The discussion led to proposals to 1) ask the current President to serve as President for the coming year 2013-2014 since she was unable to serve in the current year and 2) to co-sponsor a panel at the WPSA 2014 with the Committee on the Status of Women on the Status of Women in the Profession. The other major topic concerned an announcement on the WPSA website concerning faculty members who are willing to be informal mentors for graduate students and a request by the Caucus that the WPSA support a lunch for female graduate students at the annual meeting. According to the minutes, no election of a President or a President in Waiting for 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, respectively, occurred.

The Years 2013-2014 to 2021-2022: A Dedicated Few Carry On

The inability of the elected President and President-in-waiting for 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 to be able to perform their duties seems to mark the beginning of a breakdown of Caucus succession procedures. The minutes from 2011-2012 already refer to the need for Caucus records, documents and email lists to be transferred from one President to the next. With the incoming President and President-in-Waiting resigning after being elected and after the last meeting of the Caucus when replacements might have been chosen, the outgoing President, Tamara Metz, volunteered to hold the office of Caucus President for another year and personally recruit a successor. She persuaded Janni Aragon who had been Caucus President in 2010-2011 to be Caucus President again for 2013-2014 and still again for 2014-2015. Susanne Beechey (Whitman College) was elected as Caucus President for 2015-2016 and she continued as President for 2016-2017. Susanne reports that during her term as President, attendance at Caucus meetings was “sparse.” (Beechey. 21 October 2021). To address this problem, she worked with WPSA Associate Director Elsa Favila to change the time of the Caucus meeting from 5:30 pm when it conflicted with the *Politics, Groups and Identities (PGI)* Reception, to 12 noon. The *PGI* journal is a relatively new journal established in 2013 under the aegis of the WPSA which, according to Beechey (2021), was founded by many women in the Caucus for Women and Gender Justice. Beechey speculates that another reason attendance at Caucus meetings was low during those years is because the *PGI Journal* usurped an informal function of the Caucus which was to enable women to meet one another, mentor each other, and plan academic projects together. In 2017, Susanne Beechey and Janni Aragon organized a Roundtable session on “Gender Trouble on the Job Market: A Roundtable with the Caucus for Women and Gender Justice.”

Susanne Beechey also reports that Jocelyn Boryczka (Fairfield U) and Jennifer Gaboury (Hunter College) were elected to be Caucus leaders for 2017-2018. However, this news

did not reach the WPSA Executive Director's Office. Richard Clucas reports that in 2019, the WPSA Executive Director's Office had struggled to discover who was President of the Caucus. Elsa Favila approached those whom she believed had been in charge of the 2018 Caucus, Anna Sampaio, Janni Aragon and Susan Burgess, but found that none of them knew who was responsible for running the 2019 meeting (Clucas email 9 Sept 2021). According to Sara Angevine (Whittier College), she and Janni Aragon were scheduled to be responsible for the Caucus for 2019-20, a responsibility that is being carried over to 2021-2022 because the Caucus meetings were cancelled for 2020 and 2021 due to Covid (Angevine 2021).

During each of the years that the WPSA met in person, (2014-2019) the Caucus was given a place in the Program Schedule. Whether it met or not in 2018 or 2019 is not recorded. The eight individuals listed above, Tamara Metz, Janni Aragon, Susanne Beechey, Anna Sampaio, Susan Burgess, Jocelyn Boryczka, Jennifer Gaboury and Sara Angevine appear to be responsible for keeping alive an organization with a rich and accomplished history, but also with a dwindling base. Janni Aragon, a dedicated feminist scholar, has devoted energy and time to keeping the Caucus together and provided a thread of continuity for the organization since her elected Presidency in 2010-2011. Her willingness to take over leadership when needed - beginning in 2013-2015 - and recruiting a small group of others to join her in various combinations through the rest of the decade has resulted in what promises to be a new and more energetic year for 2022-2023 emerging out of the era of Covid restrictions. Sara Angevine and Janni Aragon are at the helm.

Some Comments on the Caucus' Historical Role and Future Prospects

As noted above, at the 1970 Annual Meeting of the WPSA the WPSA Women's Caucus was created to change the binary-gender male dominance of the WPSA, of political science departments in the Western region and of the discipline as a whole. The WPSA at the time was an organization that in its 1970 annual meeting had only four papers given by women out of 69 paper givers, no women chairing any of the 24 panels and only 4 women among the 54 discussants. In contrast, 49 years later, the 2019 Annual Meeting of the WPSA was much larger with a total of 1483 paper-givers, 310 panels, 42 percent of them chaired by women, and 282 discussants, 43 percent of whom were women. Of the 1493 paper-givers at the 2019 WPSA Annual Convention, an internet search enabled the binary gender of all but 19 of these to be identified to reveal that 647 women composed 44 percent of the 1493 paper-givers at the WPSA 2019 annual meeting.⁵ Insofar as the original mission of the WPSA's Women's Caucus was to change the binary gender male dominance of the organization, certainly the Caucus has had considerable success – so much perhaps that the explicit need to obtain 50 percent representation for women in WPSA has lost some of its salience when the organization already has over 40 percent women among paper givers, panel chairs and organization officers. In addition, respondents among those who were asked to contribute to this “history” have suggested that the function of making women welcome in a male dominated organization that the Caucus is explicitly credited for doing may be being performed by several other organizations associated with the WPSA; the WPSA Standing

Committee on the Status of Women created in 1970, The Feminist Theory Workshop, begun in 1996 and the WPSA *Politics Groups and Identities* Journal created in 2013.

The WPSA Standing Committee on the Status of Women

The Committee on the Status of Women, (unlike the Women's Caucus - Western Section before 2010 and the Caucus for Women and Gender Justice after 2010,) is an official part of the WPSA. However, its mission and many of its activities other than directly advocating political positions, are quite similar to those of the Women's Caucus/Caucus for Women and Gender Justice. As an official part of the WPSA, it receives the support of the WPSA President and the Executive Director's Office with regard to succession and record keeping, activities which seem to have become a problem for the Caucus for Women and Gender Justice.

The Feminist Theory Workshop

The Feminist Theory Workshop provides a space for scholars interested in feminist theory to gather for a day-long pre-conference at the WPSA Annual Convention venue. Many women have testified that this Workshop has provided them with a network of women - not only from the Western US states (the official constituency of the WPSA) but from around the country and even from abroad - women and allies who have been helpful to them as mentors, as collaborators, as critics, and as friends. The Feminist Theory Workshop, however, does not appeal to all women political scientists, but rather to those explicitly interested in feminist theory.

The Politics Groups and Identities Journal - PGI Journal

Suzanne Beechey (2021) notes that the *PGI Journal* was started and is now supported by many who were strong Caucus supporters and activists making its meetings and receptions function in part as a welcoming and stimulating place for women – drawing support away from Caucus meetings and activities. Mary Hawkesworth concurs noting that *PGI* “now provides a critical intellectual space that is both welcoming to diverse scholars and committed to transform disciplinary understandings of racial, gender, ethnic and sexual politics (Hawkesworth 2021 Nov 1).”

A Decline in Female Graduate Students

Finally, a societal change suggests that the reduced attendance at Caucus meetings may be due to a decline in female graduate students in the discipline of political science as US universities in recent years have increased part-time non-tenure track faculty loads to 74 percent of all classes (Bousquet 2008, Ginsberg 2011). Mary Hawkesworth explains:

“As the prospects for tenured faculty positions diminish, graduate school enrollments have been declining. Scholars in non-tenure-track and part-time positions have no institutional travel support and wages too low to cover conference participation. Right wing attacks on gender and critical race studies contribute to declining institutional

support for established programs in some institutions, which may make affiliation with progressive organizations seem an increasingly risky endeavor. Competition for increasingly scarce tenured appointments may heighten pressures to restrict conference participation to explicitly career-enhancing activities. Although the Caucus has fostered solidarity, creativity, and intellectual growth, as an upstart feminist organization, it cannot secure the career prospects of individual scholars (Hawkesworth 2021, Nov. 1).

Whatever the causes of anemic meeting attendance, one Caucus member expressed a view that may be shared by many which is that “ We have to keep the organization going in case something happens and we need it.” This is quite likely. Participation at all levels in WPSA affairs and activities continues to favor males. Sexual harassment, LGBTQI issues, old-boy networks, job, project and scholarship opportunities favoring male versus female graduate students, more childcare responsibilities for women than for men continue to exist and continue to need to be noticed, made public and corrected as does the continuing identification, questioning and dismantling of the power systems that support the binary gender system. While progress has been made since 1970, much is left to do for the WPSA’s Caucus for Women and Gender Justice!

FOOTNOTES

1) Note on Sources

Unfortunately, written records for the Western Women’s Caucus for the years following its founding are few and far between. Dvora Yanow, Caucus Chair from 1996-1997, remembers a woman who took a couple of boxes of Caucus records from the late 1980s and other records to store in her garage. Unfortunately, Dvora doesn’t remember her name or institution. Ron Clucas, the current Executive Director of the WPSA and Elsa Favela, Associate Director, who currently manage the WPSA records, have searched their computers and WPSA files (insofar as is possible during this Covid period) to find WPSA Women’s Caucus records with little over-all success with the exception of the valuable copy of the Proceedings of the Western Political Science Association Twenty-Fourth Annual Meeting, April 2-4, 1970 in Sacramento, CA, a few letters written by others to the WPSA and some documents concerning the WPSA as a whole such as a “WPSA Timeline from 1947 to 2022.” It records that in 1995, the WPSA became an independent non-profit organization which means that the WPSA from 1995 on cannot act as a repository for Women’s Caucus records or for the Caucus for Women and Gender Justice records (the Women’s Caucus changed its name in 2010) because the Caucus is an advocacy group that takes stands on political issues and therefore any mingling of the organizations could jeopardize the non-profit status of the WPSA if it were not a separate organization. A partial list of Caucus Chairs from 1970 to 2011-12 was found on a Caucus website that began under the aegis of Anna Sampaio when she was the Caucus President for two years, from 2005-2007. This webpage was apparently discontinued after 2012, the last date it records, as it is no longer easily available on the internet. A page giving a partial list of Caucus Chairs from 1970 to 2012 from this website was found by Melissa Michaelson on “Internet Archive: The Wayback Machine” that stores some old webpage records (Michaelson 2021). Another source of written information about the Caucus comes from the currently active WPSA webpage run out of the

WPSA Director's office that lists Caucus meetings as a part of the Program for the annual WPSA meetings from 2014 to 2021 and also lists the Caucus chairs for some of those years. Tamara Metz has provided the Minutes from 2011 WPSA Caucus for Women and Gender Justice Business Meeting April 21, 2011 in San Antonio, Texas., presided over by Janni Aragon as President with Tamara Metz taking minutes and also the Caucus minutes for the 2013 meeting. All other information for this account comes from published articles and from email communications with members, with past and present WPSA Executive Directors Betty Moulds (1998-2009), and Richard Clucas (2009 – the present) and with Elsa Favila, Associate Director.

2) Due to the dearth of written sources for this account, this is a collaborative and hopefully an on-going effort heavily dependent on the contributions of many members of the WPSA mentioned in this text. Special thanks go to Mary Hawkesworth for her supply of references about the American Political Science Association's Women's Caucus, and to Richard Clucas and Elsa Favila for their efforts to find WPSA Women's Caucus and WPSA Caucus for Women and Gender Justice Information in WPSA records.

3) Mitchell does not explain exactly how she determined the gender of the participants; however, questioning the binary nature of the established gender system was not the issue it became after 2000 and she does not report asking men and women to self-identify their gender which means she probably used first names, pronouns, physical appearance and personal acquaintance as binary gender markers.

4) The activities of the Women's Caucus and the Caucus for Women and Gender Justice were generally recorded in the minutes of the business meetings at the annual WPSA conventions. Unfortunately, at this time, the Minutes of Caucus Business Meetings are available for only three years, 1970, 2011 and 2012. Drawing on them and memory, some general statements can be made about the overall activities of the Caucus.

5) The original mission of the WPSA Women's Caucus was to change the male dominated WPSA organization of 1970 to one in which women were represented and participated equally with men as members, participants and leaders. Gender was assumed to be binary, identified by markers such as body structure, dress, hair style and language among other attributes. Pronoun references ("he/she" or "his/her") or common usage gendered first names (Joyce, Elizabeth, Maria, Teresa or John, Richard, Alfonso, Pedro) signified the presumed binary nature of sex and gender. The original assumption of the Caucus founders was that getting more individuals associated with these female binary sex/gender markers as members, participants and leaders of the WPSA would bring results favorable to all. One mission of the Caucus of Women and Gender Justice is to challenge, complicate and eliminate, the binary concept of gender by unmasking the structures of power that support it and taking seriously the subjective identity of individuals in the discussion of gender. They worry that using binary gender assumptions and methods rather than gender self identification methods of assessing gender as has been done in this history will further entrench these binary gender power structures that they believe must be eliminated if gender justice is to be achieved. Yet they also realize that self-reported gender data is often not available and that the binary gender approach does provide information (albeit crude and problematic) about the changes in binary gender participation.

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Appendix

PARTIAL LIST OF PRESIDENTS OF WPSA WOMEN'S CAUCUS AND THE CAUCUS FOR WOMEN AND GENDER JUSTICE 2021

2021-2022. Sara Angevine (Whittier) and Janni Aragon (UVic). Confirmed by Sara Angevine

2020-2021 . Sara Angevine (Whittier) and Janni Aragon (UVic) Cancelled because of Covid and because it was a virtual meeting.

2019-2020 -entire WPSA meeting cancelled due to Covid

2018-2019. No one is listed on the WPSA website.

2017-2018. Jocelyn Boryczka (Fairfield U) and Jennifer Gaboury (Hunter College) listed on website - confirmed by Beechey but not Boryczka or Gaboury

2016-2017. Susanne Beechey (Whitman College) confirmed by Beechey

2015-2016. Susanne Beechey Whitman College confirmed by Beechey

2014-2015. Janni Aragon continued for another year as President. Confirmed by Tamara Metz

2013-2014 Janni Aragon to replace vacancy

2012 – 2013 Tamara Metz to replace vacancy

2011-2012 Tamara Metz, Reed College

2010-2011 Janni Aragon, University of Victoria

2009-2010 Hawley Fogg-Davis, Temple University

(2010 is the year that the WPSA webpage cites as the year the WPSA Women's Caucus became the Caucus for Women and Gender Justice.

2008-2009 Cristina Beltran, Haverford College

2007-2008 Ange-Marie Hancock, Yale University

2006-2007 Anna Sampaio, University of Colorado Denver

2005-2006 Anna Sampaio, University of Colorado Denver

2001-2002 Sonia Garcia, St. Mary's University, San Antonio

2000-2001 Noelle Norton, University of San Diego

1999-2000 Janie Steckenrider, Loyola Marymount University (Los Angeles, CA)

1998-1999 Dianne Long, California State Polytechnic, San Luis Obispo

1997-1998 Michelle Saint-Germain, California State University, Long Beach

1996-1997 Dvora Yanow, California State University, Hayward

1995-1996 Shane Phelan, University of New Mexico

1994-1995 Peri Schwartz-Shea, University of Utah

1993-1994 Debra Salazar, Western Washington University

1992-1993 Christine DiStefano, University of Washington

1991-1992 Jane Bayes, California State University, Northridge

1990-1991 Marilyn Dantico, Arizona State University

1989-1990 Eloise Buker, Gonzaga University

1988-1989 Virginia Muller, University of San Diego

1987-1988 Anne Lee, University of Hawaii (dates?)

1986-1987 Janet Flammang, University of Santa Clara (dates?)

1985-1986 Amal Kavar, Utah State University, Logan

1984-1985 Anne Schneider, Oklahoma State University

1983-1984

1982-1983 Emily Stoper, California State University, Hayward (or 81-82, or both?)

1981-1982

1980-1981

1979-1980

1978-1979

1977-1978

1976-1977

1975-1976

1974-1975 Dale Rogers Marshall?

1973-1974 Ruth Ross, California State University, Los Angeles

1972-1973 Mary Lepper, Executive Seminar Center, Berkeley

1971-1972 Joyce Mitchell, University of Oregon

1970-1971 Betty Nesvold

1969-1970 Judith Stiehm, University of Southern California