PSA Women’s Caucus Meeting at PSA 2018

Notes taken by Janet D. Stemwedel, Caucus Secretary/Treasurer

12:00-1:15 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 3, 2018 Metropolitan Ballroom B

1. Welcome: The meeting was called to order by Julia Bursten at 12:11 pm. Heartfelt thanks were given to our generous sponsors.

2. Announcements: Attendees were urged to sign in on clipboard, to get on the Caucus mailing list, or volunteer in various capacities. Attendees were also urged to nominate potential subjects for the PhilosopHer feature on the Caucus website.
   1. New Junior Co-Chair Sarah Roe was elected to succeed Julia Bursten. The assembled group offered thanks to Julia for her service.
   2. Other Leadership of the Caucus: Webmistress Karen Zwier and Secretary/Treasurer Janet Stemwedel will continue on in these roles. Karen posted our meeting agenda on Women’s Caucus website in advance of our meeting, helping us to be prepared while also saving paper.
   3. Call for Science Visions volunteers: The Caucus’s blog, Science Visions, has been in hibernation, but Janella Baxter and Julia Bursten will be making efforts to revive it.
   4. Reminder to nominate Highlighted Philosop-Hers of Science: Cailin O’Connor has undertaken the responsibility for PhilosopHer editing, but would be happy to share this responsibility.

3. Committee/Project Reports
   1. Professional Climate Committee: Janet Stemwedel reports that the PSA Governing Board will be taking up a proposal for a conduct and harassment policy at the Governing Board meeting immediately after this biennial meeting. In the absence of such a policy, the Women’s Caucus got permission to produce a flyer for inclusion in registration packets outlining advice for bystanders to address harassing and biased behavior.
      Thanks to the University of Kentucky Department of Philosophy for the financial support to produce the flyer!
   2. Diversity and Outreach Committee: Alisa Bokulich reports outreach to Minorities and Philosophy (MAP) to ensure they were represented as a cognate society on the PSA meeting program. The committee is working on extending mentoring efforts beyond women to underrepresented members of our professional society, and on expanding mentorship to include new faculty. Since mentoring programs require the involvement of mentors, advanced graduate students are sought to mentor new graduate students. Sign-ups for mentors at all levels are ongoing (and were prominent at the meeting.
registration desk). Send suggestions to Alisa at abokulic@bu.edu if you have input to help expand programming.

3. **Bibliography Project**: Colin Allen reports that a database is being built of women contributing to philosophy of science (and to philosophy more broadly) with Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy as a starting point. So far data entry is the limiting factor in the project, but they have a working prototype for mechanical Turk to keep pressing forward. After mTurk is up and running, they will have better idea of what kind of further human assistance and expert oversight will be most helpful.

4. **Executive Director’s Report**: Jessica Pfeifer reports that for the 2018 meeting, there were nine requests for dependent care grants, all of which were funded by PSA, totaling approximately $1,500. PSA is again providing onsite dependent care at a cost of around $5,000. This program is getting more uptake than at last meeting, when we shared it with HSS. (At the 2018 meeting, HSS chose not to participate in providing onsite childcare.) If you have feedback about childcare services at the PSA for the governing board, please send it to Anya at aplutyns@wustl.edu.

Jessica shared some data about the growth of the Women’s Caucus. PSA 2008 had about 300 registered attendees, about 30 of whom attended the Women’s Caucus meeting. PSA 2018 has slightly under 700 attendees; 130 people registered for the Women’s Caucus lunch, and there are more people here for “the business” than registered to eat the lunch.

**4. Prize Announcements**

1. **Caucus prize and honorable mention**: This year saw more than twice the submissions compared to last time. Honorable Mention: Hannah Rubin & Cailin O’Connor. Winner: Gillian Barker, *Beyond Biofatalism*. Big thanks to the selection committee.

2. **Prize Symposium**: This year’s Women’s Caucus Prize Symposium immediately preceded this meeting, and (as recognized by the prize) represented excellent work by women in philosophy of science, responding to the philosophical work of women, about topic of interest to women in philosophy of science. Big thanks to the selection committee.

**5. New Business**

1. **Co-Chairs**: Proposal from Julia Bursten to move *Science Visions* to a quarterly newsletter format with shorter pieces including Highlighted PhilosopHers and other things of interest. In its current existence as a blog, *Science Visions* has been a cool synthesis of ideas, but it’s on a Tumblr few people regularly check. More people may read a newsletter, which will could also update people on Women’s Caucus business, committee activities, etc. Discussion:
• The plan is to send out the newsletter via email and to have it archived/permanently hosted on the Women’s Caucus website, making it more easily citable.
• Will it be searchable? That would be useful, but it may depend on getting volunteer(s) with relevant expertise.
• We should take care to make sure it is in an accessible format (it turns out not all PDFs are).
• Could we also promote it through PSA proper? This would be up to the PSA Governing Board (whose President, Sandy Mitchell, says, YES!)
• There are mechs for creating DOIs that could make this newsletter more widely discoverable down the line. We could look into those.

Proposal moved/seconded/passes with about 3 abstentions.

2. Sabina Leonelli: Requesting support from PSA for a proposed empirical study of career trajectories. Working to put together a pilot study on how career trajectories in philosophy of science relate to diversity in philosophy of science. Philosophy of science is a small enough subfield that social scientists are hard to lure into studying it, but one has been found (£5,400 is needed budget). Will carry out survey using mailing lists in our field to identify study subjects, etc. BSPS participating, too; this is an international project. Can the PSA Women’s Caucus support a request to the PSA Governing Board for the PSA to contribute $3,000 toward this project?

Proposal moved/seconded/passed.

3. Morgan Thompson: Proposal to collect syllabi from PSA at large and feature inclusive syllabi. The introductory philosophy of science syllabi that were findable online seem to be not very inclusive. Pilot survey of ~25 such syllabi yields depressing results. The proposal is to reach out to PSA membership as a whole in a “syllabus drive” to create searchable database as a resource for the membership. Morgan would then like to analyze the syllabi gathered in this drive demographically. Finding ways to highlight especially inclusive syllabi is an outcome that might flow from this. (The HSS Women’s Caucus already did something like this). Morgan would love volunteers to help. Will Women’s Caucus take the larger call for syllabi from the membership to the PSA Governing Board?

Proposal moved/seconded/passed.

Volunteer: Kelli Barr, Margaret Farrell, Mark Povich.

4. Karen Zwier and Morgan Thompson: Proposal to form committee to renovate the directory. There exists an Underrepresented Philosophers list, but it is not uniformly useful, especially across
subdisciplines. All entries are based on self-reporting and self-identification, so lots of people one might hope to find from the list are missing. Can we create a better list, and work with keepers of existing list to improve it? Can PSA Women’s Caucus Directory (which is itself already very old and out of date) be updated to serve some of these purposes? Who would be interested in being in on committee to work on this?

Volunteers: Chia-Hua J Lin, Susan Sterrett, Maria Ferreira Ruiz

6. Survey results and the future mission of the Caucus: Results were shared via email. Our group has changed since 2006, so it’s worth discussing our shared goals and needs, especially the relationship of the Women’s Caucus mission and other diversity/inclusivity initiatives in PSA. Based on survey results, the three biggest priorities of respondents are (1) increasing diversity & inclusivity w/in PSA, (2) raising awareness of women’s research in philosophy of science, (3) mentoring women in PSA. According to survey results, the single most important priority on which the Women’s Caucus should focus over the next 5 years is increasing diversity and inclusion within PSA. Should the Women’s Caucus become a Caucus for Underrepresented Groups? Comments that were included with survey responses expressed a range of opinions from “LET’S DO THIS NOW” to concern that the Women’s Caucus may have a particular charge that we don’t want to lose.

Let’s talk about this (until 1:10) and come up with some way forward (such as a committee to work on this, or something else).

*Points below were each made by different Caucus members in the order they appear below. Each point is doubled because two note-takers were keeping record during this portion of the meeting.*

• We will need to reach out to people who are not in the room AND work details out with the Governing Board. Committee proposing ways to move forward, reaching to PSA board, folks who aren’t in the room

• The Women’s Caucus has an initiative to increase diversity beyond just women. We could be a broader caucus with a subcommittee focused on specific issues women face. We should expand. Subcommittee to attend to Women’s Caucus specific issues? Another subcommittee for other specific groups as well? That way we are all under the same heading, but still get to keep issues specific to certain demographic groups present/work on them/ etc. We should expand.

• Want to expand our focus to address diversity and inclusion more broadly, but there are persistent issues for women in the community that won’t soon go away here in the patriarchy. Inclined to see the opposite side. Expand duties to addressing diversity more broadly, but
as a subcommittee to the Women’s Caucus at large. There are issues that women face in particular (e.g., bias, misogyny) that will not go away and the Women’s Caucus addresses this.

• However this goes, let’s avoid policing who’s really a woman.
  Make sure that this conversation doesn’t become a conversation about policing the boundaries of women. We should be inclusive with what we mean by women.

• As a woman of color, I think my challenges as a woman and as a person of color are intertwined; we must be intersectional.
  Being a woman of color, challenges that I face as a woman are intertwined with my experiences as a person of color. Need to pay attention to intersectionality

• 70% of survey respondents agreed intersectionality is important to the Caucus. Bolsters the previous point

• One reason not to widen the mission would be splitting our efforts, but we’re already too big to generate consensus. Expanding our mission might not be a huge change.
  One reason not to widen the mission would be splitting efforts, but to be honest, we’re already so large with lots of folks willing to help out. So, we can address lots of issues. (x2)

• I’m in agreement with Lisa; we should be inclusive and intersectional, but giving up the Women’s Caucus would be a big loss.
  Emotional reaction to women’s specific issues and give up the Women’s Caucus. For those women who were there at the beginning, they’re asking us to trust them on this issue. There are special issues about misogyny.

• A ranking of minority status that might be signaled by creating a subcommittee (for/on other underrepresented groups) within the Women’s Caucus would be troubling.
  Worry: if it is Women’s Caucus w/ other subcommittees, then it might imply a hierarchy/ranking of value/power

• The challenge is understanding similarities and differences in oppressions. We could go “women-plus” or we could have more caucuses. These options might be structurally equivalent. These could be choices about ceding (seeding?) more strength in other areas.
  Speaking as one of the older people, there is not just unanimity among us. Women’s studies is about understanding oppression and injustice wherever it is found. One way to go is to go Women’s studies: include women plus other oppressed groups. We don’t lose by doing that. The other way is to a have a multitude of Caucuses, equivalent to the first if you have enough energy and resources. Maybe we can use the recent steam and interest in Women’s Caucus to motivate this kind of project. Cede strength in subcommittees
• How should we/could we maintain focus on specifically women’s issues? Perhaps it’s a generational thing. I see young women having problems that they aren’t even noticing.
I also worry about how we’re going to maintain a focus specifically on women’s issues. Perhaps it is a generational thing. I see young women having problems that they aren’t even noticing. We have limited time and energy.

• As a woman of color, I lean toward keeping the Women’s Caucus because it creates space where we don’t have to explain the context of women’s issues. People of color in the PSA might benefit from a parallel caucus with a similar setup.
As a woman of color, relaxing definition of women, but still have mostly women. Conversations don’t have to start with an explanation of women’s experiences, as it is common ground. Don’t have to defend whether those issues exist. Relaxing too much might undermine this environment.

• Another possibility to consider would be to keep the Women’s Caucus, lobby for the creation of a Diverse Philosophers of Science Caucus, and have lots of cross-fertilization between the two.
Third possibility: keep Women’s group and also have Diverse Caucus and have lots of fertilization between them.

• Transition to concrete action (for today!): What is our way forward?

Morgan Thompson has volunteered to coordinate a committee to generate genuine proposals to consider how to move forward, to be presented to the Women’s Caucus membership for their consideration.

Proposal to form committee moved/seconded/passed.

Volunteers: Sean Valles, Alisa Bokulich, Sharon Crasnow, Dan Hicks, Janet Stemwedel, Megan Delehanty, Soazig Le Bihan, Denise Hossom, Kino Zhao, Samantha Noll, Michale Hunter, Sarah Lipman.

7. Thoughts on moving meeting time: The Women’s Caucus membership is almost equally split on their expressed preference for having the Caucus meeting at the PSA at breakfast or at lunch, but over 80% of early career Caucus members expressed a preference for a lunch meeting. The issue has not been decided for PSA 2020. If you have a strong preference for one or the other, please communicate it to Julia’s inbox. She hopes lunch will be her legacy!

Meeting was adjourned at 1:15 pm.