

History of Science Society Women's Caucus Minutes

November 19, 2004

1. Opening: Judy Johns Schloegel, co-chair of the Women's Caucus, opened the meeting at 7:30 am. Forty-two people attended the meeting, including Joan Cadden, representing the HSS Executive Committee. Those present introduced themselves

2. Election: Pamela Henson, co-chair, nominated Elizabeth Green Musselman to serve as co-chair, and she was elected by acclamation.

3. Committee Structure: Schloegel introduced the issue of the relationship of the Women's Caucus to the HSS Committee Structure and Executive Committee representation. She noted that changes mandated by the Executive Committee affect the caucus. Joan Cadden summarized the issues as a representative of the HSS Executive Committee. Two changes have been made in the way "ordinary" HSS committees work. First, in order to make sure that standing committees always have informed leadership, HSS will set up a rotation so that a new person joins each year and the most experienced person becomes chair. Second, in order to insure good communication and effective collaboration between committees and the Executive Committee, each committee will have an ex officio/liaison member from the Executive Committee. Cadden noted that the Women's Caucus is not an "ordinary" committee and, therefore, not necessarily subject to these mandates, but asked, Is the mode of sustained carrying on of business and communication with the HSS acceptable? After discussion, Women's Caucus members concluded that no changes are needed and the current structure is working well. The one change that they did request is that the Executive Committee invite the Women's Caucus co-chair to present the Women's Caucus Report to them in person at the Council meetings. Henson offered a motion that the HSS Council considers asking the Women's Caucus co-chair to present the Women's Caucus Report in person at the Council meetings at the annual History of Science Society meeting. Michelle Aldrich seconded the motion and it passed.

4. Rossiter Prize: Pam Mack, HSS Treasurer, provided a report on the Rossiter Prize Fund. She reported that there is an endowment of \$22,000, which meets the HSS base level of \$20,000 but noted that we need to continue to increase the endowment to keep pace with inflation. She suggested that we try to increase the endowment by \$10,000 in the next five years. The \$1000 Margaret Rossiter Prize will be given formally this year. Mack suggested that we launch a new drive in the next couple of years in order to not conflict with the current HSS fundraising initiatives. The Women's Caucus should send out a reminder over the listserv this year.

5. HistWomenSciTechMed LISTSERV: Pam Mack, who maintains the HistWomenSciTechMed Listserv, noted that it has been a fairly quiet year. Women's Caucus members offered their thanks to Mack for maintaining this important communications link between meetings.

6. HSS Employment Survey: Schloegel referred to the HSS Employment Survey that appeared in the October 2004 HSS Newsletter, pp. 16-18. She thanked Cornelia Lambert for her efforts in compiling the survey. Lambert noted that not all surveys were filled out completely, and so she has suggested several ways to streamline the survey. Women's Caucus members expressed their gratitude for her work on this important monitor.

7. Women's Caucus Archives/Chronology Project: Schloegel noted that Rima Apple had volunteered to take responsibility to improve our historical record keeping and access to archival materials. Apple noted that she was not able to make progress on this project during the past year due to a serious illness. Her goal is to create a history/chronology of the Women's Caucus. She noted that the Women's Caucus Archives should go to the History of Science Society Archives. Henson reminded members that these are located at the Smithsonian Institution Archives. Women's Caucus co-chairs should keep records for five years, and then send earlier records to the HSS archives at SI Archives.

8. Women's Caucus Online Directory: The Women's Caucus Online Directory is located at <http://www.hssonline.org/guide/women/> Schloegel reported that the Women's Caucus Online Directory was launched in March of 2005 and was publicized at that time. Its objective is to help facilitate networking among scholars working in the history of women and gender topics in science, and for women in the profession generally. Initial response was positive and at the time of the meeting, there were 70 people registered. Schloegel would like feedback on its usefulness and would like to attempt an initial assessment of whether and how people are using the resource so we can determine what should be done to improve its effectiveness going forward. Schloegel volunteered to serve as coordinator for the online directory in the coming year. Green Musselman noted it is useful for finding advisors and asking for advice. Lynn Nyhart suggested it be linked in a more obvious way from the HSS home page.

This led to a more general discussion of the Women's Caucus page on the HSS website. Nyhart noted it could only be found through the site map. A goal for the year will be to create an introductory page that has a link from the main HSS home page.

Schloegel pointed out that the basic biographical data for the online directory is taken from the University of Chicago Press database. If there is a problem with that data, it is copied into the Women's Caucus Online Directory. Schloegel will work on data entry problems this year.

9. Sponsorship of HSS Sessions: Schloegel reported that the HSS Women's Caucus is sponsoring the session, "All in the Family: Science and the Domestic Sphere," at the 2004 HSS meeting, to take place immediately after the Caucus meeting at 9 am in the Texas Ballroom, and requested that Women's Caucus members support that session.

Schloegel then turned to sessions for the 2005 meeting. In light of the WC's discussion last year, plans have been made for the Women's Caucus to sponsor a session at the 2005 meeting honoring the 25th anniversary of Carolyn Merchant's *The Death of Nature*. Joan Cadden will chair the session. Carolyn Merchant will offer introductory remarks. Other panelists include Gregg Mitman, Katy Park, and Charis Thompson. Gregg Mitman has assisted with organizing the session and has arranged with Bernie Lightman to have the papers appear in a "Focus" section of *Isis*. Schloegel will organize the HSS session. Mitman will organize the *Isis* section.

Schloegel then opened discussion of other ideas to ensure that we organize sponsored sessions going forward. Pnina Abir-Am noted the recent death of Mara Beller, noted historian of physics from Israel. She was an enthusiastic supporter of gender studies, of making women visible in the history of science. She is known for her work on the Bohr/Einstein debate, analyzing their dialogue, rather than their individual papers. Ayelet Shavit offered to organize a session in her memory for the 2006 HSS meeting.

Sally Gregory Kohlstedt suggested that we present a workshop on gender studies at a future meeting. Kohlstedt and Janet Browne will prepare a proposal for the Women's Caucus and HSS Program Committee. Kohlstedt also suggested that we lobby to have women included in every HSS session.

Marcia Richmond raised the issue of how to find out what other women are doing, in order to develop programs like this. Discussion centered on the online directory and web-based bibliographies. Nyhart noted that there is a Women's Studies bibliography prepared annually by the Women's Studies Librarian at the University of Wisconsin. (Nyhart has since sent information on this through the HistWomenSciTechMed Listserv.)

10. Childcare at HSS Meeting: Schloegel opened discussion of the issues of childcare at HSS meetings. She reported that Jay Malone, HSS Executive Secretary, had sent out information on childcare services available from the hotel for this meeting via the HSS. Parents must contract directly with the provider. A childcare information page was also created on the HSS website. She noted that there is a great deal of interest in this issue, and it is being discussed by the Committee on Meetings and Programs, which is meeting concurrently with the Caucus. Karen Rader is outgoing chair and Jole Shackelford is incoming chair, and both are quite concerned about the issue, so we hope to work together on this. Rader has

collected data on what other professional societies do, as has Jay Malone. The question remains what can best be done to assist parents, given the HSS's concerns from a legal liability standpoint.

Possible solutions are: 1) advanced communication of information concerning available childcare services; 2) assistance to parents who wish to share childcare services by creating communication links such as electronic bulletin boards; 3) pursuing whether the availability of childcare services should be added to HSS site selection criteria; and 4) exploring whether the HSS can contract for childcare services as the American Anthropological Association does.

Rebecca Press Schwartz reported that childcare services were difficult at this meeting. Contracting with the hotel proved VERY expensive, prohibitively so. Rader noted that the COMP will pursue this issue in the coming year. Most other societies also communicate information on vendors - - only one society provides childcare because most are concerned about the liability. Additional solutions were suggested, including a fund, similar to the graduate student travel fund, for childcare expenses, asking local arrangements committees to compile information on childcare services, and providing a forum for parents to communicate in advance of the meeting so that they can share costs. Since the HSS may engage an event planner for future meetings, the WC would like to see this added to their contracted duties. Joan Cadden will be the point person on this for the Executive Committee. Rebecca Press Schwartz volunteered to coordinate pre-conference communication between parents.

11. Other Announcements: Margaret Rossiter noted the upcoming International Congress of the History of Science in Beijing, China, in July of 2005. She is interested in developing a session on Women's Roles in Emerging Disciplines. Colby College has a one-year job available. Steven Foster University has two positions open.

Concerns were voiced over communications between meetings, especially with graduate students who don't know about the Women's Caucus until they arrive at the HSS meeting. The WC needs more visibility, perhaps through the HistSciTechMed announcements.

The meeting adjourned at 9 a.m.