

WOMEN'S CAUCUS MINUTES

History of Science Society: Pittsburgh Meeting

7 November 2008

Attendees: 53

1. Welcome by Gwen Kay and Marsha Richmond, Co-Chairs
2. Announcements
 - i. Jay Malone (Executive Secretary), Women's Caucus Report to the Executive Committee of the History of Science Society
 - a. Breakfast fees: donations about equaled expenses. Thanks to everyone who contributed to the fund.
 - ii. Childcare: For Pittsburgh, 5 individuals (includes HSS and PSA) asked about childcare. Only one service was available, Rent a Mom, and for liability issues parents/guardians were asked to make their own arrangements. Last year Women's Caucus members made pledges to begin a campaign to establish a fund for childcare, and the Executive Office would like feedback as to whether these pledges could be used to offset childcare expenses for next year's meeting so that childcare grants could be made available to participants.
 - iii. Graduate and Early Career Caucus (GECC): The HSS Council is revising the Bylaws to allow for other groups to apply as "caucuses." Currently the Bylaws only include the Women's Caucus; the new language will not affect the Women's Caucus.
 - iv. Employment Survey: There have been some problems with the Employment Survey in recent years. The response rate continues to drop, and some surveyed were confused by the online form. The Executive Office does not have the staff available to handle the survey, and wishes to continue it only if the Women's Caucus will assist with its preparation and follow up with responders.
3. New Business
 - i. Election/nomination of new co-chair
 - a. Susan Rensing (Mississippi State University) was nominated, seconded, and elected unanimously. She will serve a two-year term, replacing Gwen Kay.
 - b. Discussion about women & science online collection (Kimberly Hamlin and Judith Zinsser, in absentia)
 - ii. Issue: Miami University is no longer interested in housing the web site on Women and Science Before 1800, which was demonstrated to the group. The site needs a new home and other collaborators to contribute to its expansion.
 - a. Discussion: Brown has a similar digital collection. Kerry McGruder at Oklahoma is working on digital collections, and may be interested. Pnina Abir Am's comments, sent to the Co-Chairs, were read:

- b. It would be useful to include the following items:
 - i. Reviews of major books, including all those who received the Margaret W. Rossiter History of Women in Science Prize and also finalists, in conjunction with an annotated bibliography;
 - ii. Lists of past and ongoing grants on women in science, including grantees and their institutions. NIH had a major solicitation between July and October and many of our colleagues did not seem to know about it. Some of these grants require collaborative proposals and it will help all to know which solicitations are out there, and who are active in getting grants on this topic.
- c. Annotated links to useful websites, such as personal websites of leading scholars (e.g., Alison Wylie at Univ. of Seattle; Pnina's at Brandeis <http://people.brandeis.edu/~pninaga> has a lot of pertinent material); and institutional websites of projects, such as some of NSF's Advance institutions, esp. Univ. of Michigan, which has an interactive theatrical troupe and program which highlights bias in hiring and tenuring, issues of particular concern to women.
 - i. Suggestions: The proposal was made to have Judith follow up on this through an email posted on the WC list-serve.
- iii. Mentoring:
 - a. Issue: Following up on a suggestion made at the Women's Caucus meeting in 2007, a pilot "Mentoring" program was carried out for the Pittsburgh meeting. Joan Cadden volunteered to administer the trial program—calling for volunteers to serve as mentors (using the WC list-serve) and matching volunteers with interested mentees. Mentors and mentees were able to meet at the HSS New Members reception on Friday night. There will be a follow-up report about how this trial program worked in the future.
 - b. Discussion: A suggestion was made to the HSS Executive Office as to whether it would be valuable to expand the program into a full "Academic Mentorship program" within HSS. The aim of this expanded program would be to match graduate students and early career HSS members with more senior colleagues who could serve as professional mentors throughout the year. Discussion about this expanded mentoring program will continue on the WC list-serve, and the WC Co-Chairs will report back to the Executive Office to influence planning for the 2009 HSS meeting in Phoenix.
- iv. Job survey
 - a. Issue: A propos to the concerns of the Executive Office, there was discussion about whether the WC should continue to direct an annual job survey. There was discussion at last year's meeting about whether the Graduate/Early Career Caucus might take this over. The rate of return for the survey is low—only about 20% of those contacted. Many institutions did not want to give out information about gender of the applicants, claiming it violated privacy. Should we continue to do this? Is it still necessary, and, if so, should the GECC take it over?
 - b. Discussion: Dawn Digrius and Jacqueline Wernimont (GECC Co-Chairs) stated that the GECC would like to continue it. Pam Mack suggested that folks persist in asking institutions for their statistics—near the close of the search. Mike Sokal: As of now we

have a 30-year history of data. It would be good to have this data collection continued.

Rachel Detinger: At this point gender no longer a central concern in the profession.

Perhaps it is time for this function to move to GECC, which could include ethnicity and other data. In Australia, it would not be possible to provide any personalized

information for such a survey. Nancy Hall: Delaware just conducted a search and

Affirmative Action (Equal Opportunity) criteria of the US law requires that such data is

submitted. Rima Apple: If we're only getting a 20% return, the data is suspect and it may

not be meaningful. Karen Rader: Is it too much work for the GECC if the caucus is new

and doesn't have the same secure administrative leadership, i.e., senior-junior co-

chairs? Could we follow the AHA model? There is a problem with this, since the data is

not as finely tuned as the information we seek. Judy Johns Schloegel: Suggests we

transition by partnering with the GECC. Any volunteers? Cornelia Lambert, as a former

survey author, suggests a small committee work on this. In 2006, we shifted to online

form using SurveyMonkey, but the data produced was not accessible. If we continue

with an online survey, we should use another product (Zoomerang?). For someone on

the job market, the main issue is thinking about women in the workforce.

- c. Suggestions: Motion: That we form a joint committee with GECC to revise the survey. Marsha Richmond (WC Co-Chair) and Cornelia Lambert (former surveyor) volunteered to join as the WC members of the committee with the 2009 GECC Co-Chairs (Jackie Wernimont and Lynnette Regouby).

4. Old Business

i. Child-Care Initiative

- a. Discussion: While available in Pittsburgh, child-care is very expensive and not well organized. Rachel: \$14/hr + \$5 for agency + nanny parking in garage. Nanny doesn't want to watch more than one child. Qualifications of nanny not available. Mike Sokal: Initiative to endow a fund dedicated to CC not yet successful. He was looking for a \$20,000 contribution from a donor for this purpose, as "seed money" for this. Perhaps we could establish an endowment specifically for this purpose. Rachel Ankeny: HSS Council has made this a priority to attract more funds for an unrestricted endowment that would enable HSS to provide more funding for child-care as well as Graduate Student/Independent Scholar travel. Need more imagination about what this service would look like, especially for families with small children who have to bring them to the meeting. Could this be a grant from HSS to individuals? This is still an important question for the WC, since only women deal with breast-feeding issues. Could we partner with university early childhood education programs in the host city to use as a training exercise? Mike: Also broaden this to include senior care. Could we also involve other HSS groups? Also, could graduate students volunteer for this duty at a meeting and be remunerated? Could we have a list of people willing to serve? Before next year's meeting, we could circulate a call for volunteers on list-serve. Many stated that they would prefer someone that moms know (i.e., HSS members) rather than strangers

watching their kids. Could HSS ask hotels for a child-care room where this could take place. Any liability issues?

- b. Suggestions: Judy Johns Schloegel and Rachel Ankeny will follow-up on this issue with the HSS Council. Further follow-up item for the WC list-serve: Should the WC continue raising money for the child-care fund?
5. Adjourned 9:00am.

Respectfully submitted, Marsha Richmond