

Minutes for HSS Women's Caucus breakfast at Annual Meeting Cleveland, Friday, Nov. 4, 2011

1. Introductions

Co-Chairs Karen Rader (2010-2011, outgoing) called the meeting to order, Erika Milam (2011-2012) agreed to act as secretary.

Karen Rader asked members of the Women's Caucus to approve the minutes of the 2010 meeting. Michele Aldrich so moved, Marsha Richmond seconded, passed by acclamation.

43 members attended the breakfast and, according to tradition, all made brief introductions.

2. Announcements

Michele Aldrich announced that the History of Chemistry interest group would like to co-sponsor a session, with the Women's Caucus, on Rachel Carson for next year's HSS. The person organizing the session will be Sy Mauskopf (shamus@duke.edu).

Pnina Abir-Am (ICHST, Committee on Women in HSTM) spoke on behalf of the International Commission on Women in STEM, announcing next year's meeting in Manchester. She offered to talk with anyone who wanted more information and encouraged our participation.

Karen Rader announced that there was no HSS Session sponsored by the Women's Caucus this year.

3. Submission Criteria for the Rossiter Prize

Erika Milam brought before the Women's Caucus the issue of language of authorship for submissions to the Margaret Rossiter Prize. Ida Stamhius suggested that the HSS Prize Committee should accept publications in English only, as that would encourage people to translate their publications and increase circulation of their ideas. Pnina Abir-Am posited that perhaps people could submit the book in the original language, as long as they provided a translation of the key chapters. Pam Mack suggested that for articles it might be acceptable for authors to submit the original article and an unpublished translation for consideration. She noted, however, that such a strategy was impractical for books. Joy Harvey added that even in France, the Pasteur Institute only accepts English publications. Erika Milam remarked that all other HSS Publication Prizes are for English-language publications. Lynn Nyhart moved that the prize committee accept materials published in English only. Someone seconded, many in favor, Mary Ellen Bowden opposed.

4. Report on the Status of the HSS Employment Survey

Karen Rader described the process whereby HSS is teaming up with the American Historical Association for the next iteration of the job survey. Rachel Ankeny expressed her hope that Jay Malone would pass along job advertisements to the AHA to alert them to positions within our field of which they might otherwise be unaware. She also expressed concern about the percent of departments reporting to the AHA job survey, but we won't have any information on that until we hear back from them. The co-chair of the GECC said that they are happy not to have to be involved in this. Rachel reminded us that the results of the survey need to be published in the HSS Newsletter. We'll need to report back next meeting.

5. Strategic Planning

a. *Report on 2011 Workshop on Teaching the History of Women and Gender in STEM*

Karen Rader noted that the syllabus roundtable session from Thursday was taped and will be made available on the Women's Caucus webpage for people who couldn't be there. Rader then summarized the three/four aspects of ongoing concern for the WC raised at the planning session, including aspects of professional identity, teaching, research, and community engagement.

Profession: Status of women in the profession and questions of diversity.

The question was raised at the planning session about whether or not the purview of the WC should be expanded to include a broader conversation about diversity and inclusion. One possible way of assessing the continuing needs of women and minorities is a climate survey. Georgina Montgomery pointed out that models and templates are available for how to do this. Karen Rader noted the power of the data gathered by the founders of the WC during the first decade of their existence, as reported in the "Report by the Women's Committee of the History of Science and Society, 1982." If a new set of data were gathered, this could provide HSS with background information about which issues of diversity and the inclusion need to be addressed: ethnicity, LGTBQ, women, etc.

Teaching: Resources for history of science courses that address questions of women, gender, and sexuality.

We intend to assemble a syllabus sampler (with additional syllabi) and make this available on the HSS website. It would be great if there were a way for members of the caucus to contribute to a "resource" webpage in an ongoing fashion.

Research: A suggestion was made that the women's caucus might consider dividing into the caucus (to discuss questions of diversity within the profession) and an intellectually-focused interest group on Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies.

Community Engagement: What kinds of things going on in the society in terms of community engagement and how can we encourage more of that.

Possibilities raised at the meeting included a prize for the best student paper at the HSS annual meeting and a prize for the best creative work (play, novel, art show, etc.) dealing with the history of science in a given year.

b. *Open Discussion*

Announcement from the HSS Advisory Board—Stephen Weldon wondered if there is a way for the Current Bibliography to be more useful to the Women's Caucus: key words, taxonomy, ways to make it easier to find, to help students, etc. He asked that we please inform him if we could think of anything.

Melinda Gormley, co-chair of the Graduate and Early Career Caucus this year, reminded us that the GECC has a website, a Facebook page, they are on Linked-In, and are happy to help spread the word of any initiatives, questionnaires, announcements, etc.

Marilyn Ogilvie also noted that the University of Oklahoma Library's History of Science resource page could be an important resource for teachers because of the great number of digitized primary source documents they have (<http://libraries.ou.edu/locations/?id=20>). On the other hand, she also suggested the webpage would be more useful if there were instructions for teachers on how to use these documents in their classes.

Meredith Sayer remarked that graduate students are also interested in questions of professionalization. She asked whether there would be interest in forming a GLBT caucus or interest group within HSS (as separate from the Women's Caucus). Karen Rader then asked whether it would help if the Women's Caucus simply changed its name to be more inclusive. Marsha Richmond raised the distinction between an "Interest Group" (which enjoys a certain level of autonomy from HSS, can charge dues, and is intellectually based) and a "Caucus" (a group about representation within HSS). Meredith then responded that the Women's Caucus could be useful as a model for establishing a new group.

Pam Mack asked whether or not it would be worth trying to endow a prize. She suggested that the primary function of a prize is the honor not necessarily the money. She remembers trying to gather funds to endow the Margaret Rossiter Prize and how much hard work it was. Lynn Nyhart added that she thought a monetary prize wasn't required—it is the line on the CV that makes the biggest difference. She also suggested that a separate the interest group from the Women's Caucus would only follow a much larger trend of women's studies departments that have increasingly been transforming into W/C/L/G/B/Q departments. She asked, what would happen if we separated the two functions (professional and intellectual)? Would it enhance the Women's Caucus mission to separate them, or hollow it out? Christine Manganaro suggested that the main issue before us is Equity. The question used to be women, but what does that mean now? Queer and minority representation within the caucus?

Pam Henson wondered if the graduate student prize could at least cover transportation or registration for the HSS Annual Meeting even if it didn't carry a monetary reward. This could be especially important for grad students!

Based on the precedent set by other HSS interest groups someone wondered whether it would be possible to establish it as a caucus prize first and then try to endow it later.

Pam Mack argued that dividing the interest group and the caucus was a bad idea. There is productive cross fertilization between questions of women's equity and research interests in women's history. Certainly, she has found it very valuable. But, she added, it could perhaps be helpful to have overlapping but somewhat separate groups. Rachel Ankeny suggested that teaching could function as a bridge between the two groups, because teaching has both functions. She proposed a session next year for talking about these issues. Joy Harvey doesn't want to divide because thinks it will cut down on the force and influence of the Women's Caucus within HSS. Marsha Richmond noted that there used to be very few women in science sessions, but as a whole the society is no longer marginalizing women as topics, so she feels there is no need for separating out the interest group and worries that the interest group would dissolve after no time.

Someone raised the point that having a Women's Caucus prize at the meeting for graduate students would actually be quite difficult to coordinate.

Tania Munz added that it is also important for men to be competent with teaching gender. She found that in her own teaching experiences it was important for questions of women's equality to come out of the mouth of male professors, too. Plus, it needs to come out of their mouths competently, thus, it would be a good idea for men to participate in the discussions raised in the Women's Caucus issues as well. Pnina Abir-Am concurred, saying that women's history is a ghetto subject in a way, and that men need to be able to talk about it, too.

One suggestion was that in organizing panels on teaching gender in history of science (or workshops or roundtables) it is therefore important to put some men on the program. Pnina countered that men are not interested in questions of gender and sexuality.

Melinda Gormley suggested that equity and inclusiveness are important parts of the conversation and that a climate survey could help to establish that. Karen Rader wants to have open questions on any climate survey, like "what has been your worst experience with equity and discrimination?" Perhaps there should be a roundtable discussion next year to talk about climate issues.

Marilyn Oglivie asked what people meant when they referred to a "climate" survey. Explanations followed.

Georgina Montgomery proposed and Christine Manganaro seconded a motion to gather materials for a climate survey and present them to the caucus and HSS as a whole. The motion passed. Meredith Sayre also volunteered to help pull this together. It was decided that a climate survey would have more force if it came from HSS rather than the caucus.

6. Nomination & Election of new co-chair (Georgina Montgomery nominated)

Motion: To nominate Georgina Montgomery (Michigan State University); motion seconded by Marsha Richmond. No further nominations made; Montgomery elected unanimously.

7. New Business

Margaret Rossiter reiterated how important it is to train people in the history of science and feminism, gender, theory, etc. There was no other new business and the meeting was adjourned.