

APA Committee on the Status of Women
Annual Report
September, 2008

The CSW had another active year. There were multiple sessions at each APA and a variety of projects were continued or begun.

Committee Members: On July 1st we welcomed Lisa Schwartzmann (Michigan State University), Sharyn Clough (Oregon State University), and Elizabeth Hackett (Agnes Scott College). We look forward to their new ideas and energy.

Sally Scholz served as the editor of the Newsletter on Feminism and Philosophy, and so on the CSW. She recently decided to retire from this position and the CSW began searching for a new editor. Chris Bellon has taken her place. We look forward to having her in this role.

APA Sessions sponsored by the CSW:

Eastern 2007: Can't access program information at this time—there were two sessions.

Central 2008: "Reflections on Being A woman Philosophy Student: Lessons for the Profession"

Pacific 2008: "Strategizing Changes in the Culture and Ideology of Philosophy" and "Feminist Perspectives on Vice"

Eastern 2008: co-sponsoring a session on Miranda Fricker's books, Epistemic Injustice, and sponsoring a session on "Philosophical Perspectives on Female Sexuality" and one on mid-career issues faced by women.

Central 2009: panel on mid-career issues faced by women

Pacific 2009: panel on mid-career issues faced by women

Eastern 2009: session on issues related to journals

You will notice that we are experimenting with a theme at the next the three APA meetings. We will have panels on the same issue at all three APA meetings. This is an attempt to allow more participation by members and to deepen the level of the conversation.

Other projects:

Chris Bellon continued to volunteer her time to update and maintain the list of feminist friendly graduate programs. The national office has offered to help with this effort. Chris will continue to gather information and the staff in the national office will get it posted. There were some glitches this summer with the first attempt at this arrangement, but I expect it will work well in the future. There are other issues with the list, however. It relies on voluntary reporting by departments. This means we get complaints that a particular department is or is not on the list. We also get complaints that the information on a particular department is out of date. It is hard to expect departments to remember to keep us updated. It is equally difficult for volunteers to

stay on top of this amount of information. We can expect that the list will always contain some inaccurate information. It is also the case that not all individuals agree that particular departments or people belong on the list. We rely on self-reporting and put such a disclaimer on the web page. The committee will continue to discuss these issues when we meet in December. A basic question is whether some information is better than none? Given some of the other “information” out there, it seems a good idea to continue to try to provide this service.

Miriam Solomon began the project of gathering membership and job placement information. We thank the national office for hiring some extra help this summer so that this very important effort would not be delayed again. We now have a database and are in the process of mining the information. I hope to be able to report more in November.

The committee had also taken up the idea of creating a position of an ombudsperson to handle complaints and concerns related to diversity issues. David Schrader joined the committee for this discussion last December and suggested it would be best if there were one such position, rather than one connected to a number of different committees. Chesire Calhoun, Chair of the Inclusiveness Committee, has taken up this project.

Other projects on the horizon include finding ways to make the information we do have more accessible to the members of the APA. The possibility of a blog is being explored. There is also a concern with issues of the culture at APA meetings and in philosophy departments (is sexism on the rise?) We also struggle to help members when they contact us wanting information about the number of women earning PhDs, average number of women majors in undergraduate programs, or number of women being hired, tenured, and/or promoted. This is the kind of information we should be able to provide, but the committees are not equipped to gather it. This is where we need help from the national office.

Conclusion:

The CSW remains a very active committee. We do, however, believe that our work would be even stronger if the national office were in a position to regularly gather and report basic membership data information. We would like to encourage the Board to help with this.