

American Philosophical Association Small Grant Report: Fostering Publication for Early Career Women in Metaphysics

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Overview

Fordham University hosted an Early Career Workshop in Metaphysics focusing on Social and Scientific Ontology on April 30, 2016 at the Fordham University School of Law. The workshop was built on Fordham's existing Metaphysics and Mind Workshop Group, and was advertised by email, word of mouth, and using the workshop's website at fordhammetaphysicsworkshop.weebly.com.

The goals of the workshop were twofold: to encourage pre-tenure women working in metaphysics to develop their work towards publication, and to increase the visibility of this scholarship.

The workshop had 17 participants who attended the entire day (the total number of individual participants attending at some point throughout the day was 21). A survey was distributed to all participants on May 12, 2016 using the Qualtrics platform. Ten full-day participants responded—this gives us a complete conference attendee response rate of 59%. All responses are recorded below.

Going forward, workshop organizers plan to:

- Follow-up with presenters at six months and one year after the workshop's completion to track publications coming out of the workshop. Workshop organizers will then track citations of any publications resulting from the workshop for at least two years. When this data is compared to controls (publications by women in metaphysics not part of the workshop), this will help organizers determine whether the workshop increased visibility of the presenter's work.
- Plan future workshops to continue building on the momentum built by the Metaphysics and Mind Group and this summer's workshop. The hope is that Fordham will continue to host several workshops throughout the academic year, with a larger workshop held at a grant-participating university (Fordham, City College, or NYU) at the end of every academic year. Presenters and those who have heard about the workshop through word of mouth have already expressed interest in giving papers in the 2016-17 academic year.

Workshop Expenses

The workshop was awarded \$1000 from the American Philosophical Association. The funds were used as follows:

- Workshop Programs: \$40
- Labor: \$460
- Workshop Breakfast, Snacks, Coffee & Tea, and Reception: \$729.15
- In addition to APA funds, Fordham University provided funds (approx. \$283) for a dinner for all workshop presenters and session chairs, in addition to \$229.15 to cover additional costs for the above.

Media Coverage

The workshop was covered by *Fordham News*, a University-wide publication of Fordham University. The story can be found here:

<http://news.fordham.edu/inside-fordham-category/workshop-to-highlight-womens-voices-in-metaphysics/>

Summary of Survey Findings

A survey was distributed to all workshop participants, included 14 items, and asked participants to indicate some basic demographic data as well as feedback about their experience of the workshop. Some notable findings included the following:

For the following items, >75% of respondents indicated ‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly Agree’

- I would participate in this workshop again. [100% responding ‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly Agree’]
- I would recommend this workshop to a colleague. [100% responding ‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly Agree’]

For the following items, >75% of respondents indicated 4 or 5 on a Likert scale where 1 indicated ‘Poor’ and 5 indicated ‘Excellent’:

- Workshop Sessions [89% indicating 4 or 5]
- Workshop Organization [89% indicating 4 or 5]
- Networking Opportunities [89% indicating 4 or 5]
- Breakfast [100% indicating 4 or 5]
- Reception [100% indicating 4 or 5]
- Facilities [100% indicating 4 or 5]

Workshop Participant Demographics

At the beginning of the survey, respondents were asked a number of demographic questions—their responses are catalogued in this section.

Institutional Affiliation

	Fordham	City College of New York	NYU	Brown	CUNY Grad Center
Number of Respondents	5	2	1	1	1
% of whole	50%	20%	10%	10%	10%

Title

	Professor	Asst. Professor	Postdoc	Grad Student
Number of Respondents	1	3	1	5
% of total	10%	30%	10%	50%

Heard about the Workshop

	From the Organizers	Word of Mouth
Number of Respondents	9	1
% of whole	90%	10%

Survey Results

Respondents were given the chance to rate various aspects of the workshop using a Likert scale of 1-5, with 1 indicating 'Poor' and 5 indicating 'Excellent.' The current section catalogues their responses.

Workshop Sessions

	1	2	3	4	5
Number of Respondents	0	0	1	3	5
% of whole	0%	0%	11%	33%	56%

Workshop Organization

	1	2	3	4	5
Number of Respondents	0	0	1	3	5
% of whole	0%	0%	11%	33%	56%

Networking Opportunities

	1	2	3	4	5
Number of Respondents	0	0	1	2	6
% of whole	0%	0%	11%	22%	67%

Breakfast

	1	2	3	4	5
Number of Respondents	0	0	0	2	6
% of whole	0%	0%	0%	25%	75%

Reception

	1	2	3	4	5
Number of Respondents	0	0	0	3	6
% of whole	0%	0%	0%	33%	67%

Facilities

	1	2	3	4	5
Number of Respondents	0	0	0	1	8
% of whole	0%	0%	0%	11%	89%

Scheduling of Workshop

	1	2	3	4	5
Number of Respondents	0	1	3	1	4
% of whole	0%	11%	33%	11%	44%

Finally, respondents were asked whether they would participate in the workshop again, and whether they would recommend the workshop to a colleague. Their responses were as follows:

I would participate in the workshop again.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Number of Respondents	0	0	0	2	7
% of whole	0%	0%	0%	22%	78%

I would recommend the workshop to a colleague.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Number of Respondents	0	0	0	2	7
% of whole	0%	0%	0%	22%	78%

Comments on Workshop

Respondents were also given the chance to provide comments on the workshop. They provided the following:

Survey Comments
My one suggestion would be to start planning a bit earlier. (I know that wasn't possible this year!)
My main suggestion would be to publicize earlier. People's schedules fill up quickly, and having a month notice would have increased the turn-out.

In addition, workshop presenters sent the following (unsolicited) comments to organizers by email:

Additional Comments
Thanks, again, Joe and Amy for putting on the workshop. I really enjoyed it and learned a lot. I'm excited to keep in touch and hopefully do this again next year!
I had a really good time at the workshop and was so pleased to meet a group of such lovely... young philosophers. Huzzah!
Thanks so much for organizing the workshop this weekend. I had a great time, learned a lot, and had a fun time meeting some other awesome women (and people!) doing metaphysics.
It was a great opportunity to meet young colleagues and hear excellent new work presented. I hope we can do it again!

Follow-Up

Workshop organizers will be following-up with presenters at six months and one year after the workshop's completion to track publications coming out of the workshop. Workshop organizers will then track citations of any publications resulting from the workshop for at least two years. When this data is compared to controls (publications by women in metaphysics not part of the workshop), this will help organizers determine whether the workshop increased visibility of the presenter's work.

We have already heard from the presenters that the comments and discussion from the workshop have been as we had hoped – helpful in further presentations and the goal of publication. The current status of the papers is as follows:

- Ricki Bliss is currently in the midst of a two-year research grant from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation entitled *Reality and its Structure*, of which the presented paper, "What Dependent Entities Explain", is a part.
- Elise Crull's "Privileged Frames in Quantum Relativity?" was new, exploratory work which she plans on continuing, particularly concerning the implications of general relativity to the philosophy of time (which appears to be currently underexplored by metaphysicians). Her discussions with the metaphysicians at the workshop have convinced her that this is a fruitful area of research to pursue.
- Nina Emery's "Actualism without Presentism: Not by way of the Relativity Objection" is currently being revised, with the ultimate goal of publication.
- Zee Perry's "Substantialism without the Shiftiness: Or, Priority Monism about Spacetime" was a chapter in her dissertation, which was successfully defended in August. She is currently a postdoc at Rutgers University and plans on publishing the paper.
- Katherine Ritchie presented "Varieties of Social Structure" at the University of Oxford a month after our workshop. The conference, *Structure in Metaphysics*, included major scholars in the field. The comments from our workshop helped prepare her for further presentation and anticipate objections.

The workshop organizers also hope to host future workshops in order to continue building on the momentum built by the Metaphysics and Mind Group and this spring's workshop. The hope is that Fordham will continue to host several reading-group workshops throughout the academic year (in the format of the Metaphysics and Mind reading group, now known as the Metaphysics and Philosophy of Religion Group), with a larger workshop at the end of every academic year, held at one of the institutions of the grant participators. Philosophers have already expressed interest in giving papers in the 2016-17 academic year.

Discussion

Future planning will be based on a complete set of assessment data, which will not be finished for at least a year. Our preliminary survey findings, however, already indicate a number of strategies for moving forward:

- Continue holding similar workshops. Survey respondents indicated that they would both participate in a similar workshop again, and that they would recommend the workshop to colleagues. Moreover, several philosophers have already expressed interest in presenting papers at future workshops.
- Publicize future workshops earlier to increase attendance. Survey respondents indicated this would be helpful in both their quantitative and qualitative responses.
- Publicize in a larger variety of formats, especially non-traditional. We have good evidence that early dissemination of conference fliers via multiple facebook users increases attendance.
- Advertise future workshops to senior level philosophers. The workshop was focused on early career metaphysicians, so it was to be expected that most attendees would be at the junior level. However, for future workshops, the organizers hope the distribution of attendees to be spread more evenly across the junior and senior levels.