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# Women's Advancement in Australian Political Science

## Workshop Report

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Alison Plumb and  
Marian Sawyer





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## Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of the discussions, presentations and recommendations arising from the workshop, 'Women's Advancement in Australian Political Science'. The workshop was prompted by the continuing underrepresentation of women in the discipline of Australian political science and brought together women working in the discipline from undergraduate to professorial level.

Data demonstrates that despite advancements women continue to be underrepresented in the discipline. Two recent surveys indicate that women constitute 28-29 per cent of those working within Australian political science departments. This percentage varies across departments as indicated by the disparity between universities within the Group of 8. Although this data shows that 47 per cent of PhD candidates in political science are women this has not translated into the academic hierarchy. The workshop discussion identified three issue areas that help explain the continued underrepresentation of women within Australian political science, despite the high number of female PhD candidates. These areas are: the leaky pipeline, the normative political scientist and the chilly climate.

*The leaky pipeline:* There is considerable leakage of women from the discipline, in particular after completion of their doctoral studies. However women continue to leave the discipline at all levels. Factors influencing the decision of women to leave include, family commitments, lack of mobility, the nature of the academic career pathway and the lack of good female academic mentors. These factors are considered in more detail below.

*The normative political scientist:* In addition to women leaving the discipline due to mobility and family constraints there is the more complex issue of the normative conception of what constitutes a 'good' political scientist. The construction of a successful academic within political science can result in the exclusion of women. This can be seen in the underrepresentation of women as Chief Investigators on successful ARC grant applications. Contributing factors include the likelihood of women scholars receiving a heavier teaching workload and taking on more pastoral duties than their male colleagues; and the tendency for work by female scholars to be

associated with the 'soft' or 'less scientific' end of the discipline and awarded lower status than the work of male scholars.

*The chilly climate:* Beyond these first two problem areas, there emerged a deeper cultural trend. The environment within many political science and international relations departments can compound the problems outlined above. Workshop participants discussed experiences working in 'chilly climates', where they were disregarded, and where adversarial norms of behavior dominated. This included a lack of respect for methodological pluralism and tendencies to compete rather than collaborate.

In addressing these problems this report puts forward detailed recommendations divided between recommendations for the Australian Political Studies Association (APSA) and recommendations for departments and the discipline as a whole. However the responsibility for addressing these recommendations does not lie solely with institutions and organisational structures. Many of the factors cannot be properly addressed unless the individuals working within it choose to change the way they operate. It is through recognising the factors, working together and clearly supporting each other that the discipline of political science within Australia can grow. The recommendations from the workshop are set out in detail on pp. 12–14 of the Report and range from routine statistical monitoring of the progress of women, to leadership practices within the profession, to curriculum factors such as initiatives to promote a more inclusive discipline.

Finally the conclusion notes that there are clear reasons for seriously addressing these concerns: first, it is important as a matter of fairness to individual women themselves. Second, it is important also for pragmatic reasons. It is important in order to sustain the discipline of political science within Australia, to prevent good female academics leaving for other disciplines and for Australian universities to compete internationally. Finally addressing the underrepresentation of women within the discipline makes sense in order to respond to the needs of undergraduate students. This report concludes that it is although some factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in political science throughout Australia are easier to address than others, change is possible.

## **The Workshop**

The workshop, 'Women's Advancement in Australian Political Science' was held on 29 September 2011 at the Australian National University. The workshop was prompted by the continuing underrepresentation of women in the academic hierarchy in Australian political science departments. It brought together women working in the discipline, from postgraduate students and early career researchers to senior academics. Participants came from across Australia, and there were two representatives from New Zealand. Participants presented research and personal observations on the underrepresentation of women in the discipline. A full listing of the workshop participants can be found at the start of this report.

The aims:

1. stimulate renewed debate and discussion in light of current research on the experiences of women academics and investigate the reasons why women are still underrepresented in Australian political science;
2. examine factors contributing to underrepresentation of, and pressures on women scholars in the discipline such as; research vs teaching loads, 'chilly' institutional climates and the dual burden of professional advancement and family;
3. include access for and dialogue with early career women researchers and postgraduate students who may be encountering this for the first time; and,
4. prepare a written report on the strategies and future recommendations discussed in the workshop to be submitted to: the APSA Executive; Heads of Political Science Departments in Australian Universities; and made available through the APSA website.

This report represents the fulfilment of (4), but is also a record of the discussions, that occurred during the workshop.

The workshop was supported by a workshop grant from the Australian Political Studies Association (APSA). APSA has shown considerable commitment to addressing gender equity in the discipline. Over time, it has demonstrated this through support of initiatives such as the gender audit included in the annual report of the journal; funding of the biennial Women and Politics Prize; the convention of alternating male and female presidents; representation of the Women's Caucus on the APSA Executive; and the adoption of policy on the integration of gender into the curriculum.

Funding and support was also received from the School of Politics and International Relations of the Australian National University (ANU) and the ANU Gender Institute. The latter grant allowed the engagement of a professional facilitator, Dr Jane Elix, who facilitated the various sessions throughout the day, clarifying the common themes of discussions.



**Professor Katharine Gelber presenting to the workshop, Sept 2011**

## Section One: The problem

Women are underrepresented in the discipline of political science. This underrepresentation persists despite some significant gains and despite continued work in this area.

In 1979 there were few women present in the discipline and the most common pattern was for there to be one woman in a department. Women held 11 per cent of tenured positions, and 28 per cent of PhD candidates were female. In 1998 APSA conducted another survey of departments: out of 172 tenured positions 29.7 per cent were held by women, but there was only one who held a level E position. The increase in the number of female doctoral candidates, which had risen to 38.2 per cent, indicated a growing pool of potential female academics (Sawer 2004, 562-563; Weller 2009, 29).

The nature of the current situation is presented in a report by Alison Plumb analysing figures from the Department for Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and a survey of the staff and student homepages at 27 political science and international relations departments in Australian universities conducted during November 2010. Data for PhD students was available for nine departments.<sup>1</sup> This survey did not capture all casual and sessional staff, who are more likely to be women. Ironically, this can mask the gender imbalance: it is easy to look around and see women in the corridors, without realising that they are mostly in positions with less status and less job security.

Figures from DEEWR show that in 2009, female students represented over half the students at Bachelors and Honours level in the Society and Culture codes.<sup>2</sup> Significant gains have also been

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<sup>1</sup> Department of International Relations, Australian National University; Department of Political and Social Change, Australian National University; School of Politics and International Relations, Australian National University; Government and International Relations, University of Sydney; Centre for Governance and Public Policy, Griffith University; School of Government, University of Tasmania; School of International and Political Studies, Deakin University; Politics and International Relations, Monash University; Political Science and International Relations, The University of Western Australia.

<sup>2</sup> DEEWR field of education codes identify and group discipline areas and are determined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. An explanation of the Australian Standard Classification of Education

made in the number of female PhD candidates. Overall, 47 per cent of political science PhD candidates are women. All of the nine departments for which data was available shared a good gender equality ratio at this level. ). Despite the increase in women<sup>3</sup> PhD candidates the picture is complicated by data from the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) 2008 Graduate Pathways Survey. The ACER survey reveals that although there is little difference in gender patterns of participation in postgraduate study in the first few years after five years, women were more likely to have a postgraduate coursework degree as their highest qualification (26 per cent of females compared with 23per cent of males). In contrast, men were more likely to hold a postgraduate research qualification (8 per cent of males, compared with 5 per cent females) (ACER Graduate Pathways Survey 2008, xiv)

However, this has not yet translated upwards into equality in the profession in general. Table 1 shows the profile of Australian political science by gender and level of employment, indicating that there have been significant gains in level D and E positions held by women. There are now 38 women professors or associate professors of political science in contrast to one in 1998.

Overall, in Australia, women account for 28 percent of academics in Political Science. This figure varies by department, with some departments having a better gender equality ratio than others, as indicated in Table 2, which ranks political science departments at the Group of Eight universities in order of their gender equality ratio.

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(ASCED) is available at:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/D68A94314A3C62CBCA256AAF001FCA4F?opendocument>.

A list of disciplines within each of the codes is available at:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/E7779A9FD5C8D846CA256AAF001FCA5C?opendocument>.

<sup>3</sup> Although ACER uses the categories of 'male' and 'female', this report uses 'men' and 'women' consistently throughout.

**Table 1: Profile of Australian political scientists by position and gender**

|                        | Professor & Assoc. Professor |                |              | Senior Lecturer/Senior Fellow/Reader |                |              | Lecturer/Fellow/Post-Doc |                |               |
|------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|
|                        | Women                        | Men            | Total        | Women                                | Men            | Total        | Women                    | Men            | Total         |
| <b>Pol. Sci.</b>       | 25.68% (38)                  | 74.32% (110)   | 100% (148)   | 24.24% (24)                          | 75.76% (75)    | 100% (99)    | 33.56% (50)              | 66.44% (99)    | 100% (149)    |
| <b>All disciplines</b> | 26.51% (2 618)               | 73.49% (7 257) | 100% (9 875) | 39.92% (3 656)                       | 60.08% (5 503) | 100% (9 159) | 51.19% (10 203)          | 48.81% (9 727) | 100% (19 930) |

Source: DEEWR & survey of department websites

**Table 2: Group of Eight Departments Ranked by Percentage of Female Academics**

| Rank      | Department                                                                            | Women (%)    |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1.        | Political Science, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Melbourne   | 47.37        |
| 2.        | School of Political Science and International Studies, University of Queensland       | 39.39        |
| 3.        | Politics and International Relations, University of New South Wales                   | 37.50        |
| 4.        | Political Science and International Relations, The University of Western Australia    | 36.36        |
| 5.        | Politics Discipline, School of History and Politics, University of Adelaide           | 35.71        |
| 6.        | Government and International Relations, University of Sydney                          | 34.62        |
| <b>7.</b> | <b>School of Politics and International Relations, Australian National University</b> | <b>21.74</b> |
| <b>8.</b> | <b>Politics and International Relations, Monash University</b>                        | <b>17.65</b> |

Bold denotes below average percentage of women in the discipline

Plumb's 2010 survey is supported by data presented at the 2011 APSA Conference. The APSA Census, conducted in 2011 by Pat Weller and Paula Cowan showed that that 29 per cent of current staff in Australian political science are women. According to the Census, 22 per cent of Assoc. Professors and Professors are women. An interesting finding was the high proportion of the staff self-identifying as working in the field of international relations (35 per cent).

Other political science associations regard the underrepresentation of women a serious problem and thus, have collected data on the status of women in the discipline. The similarity between the number of women in Australian political science and the comparative situation in other Anglo-American countries is striking. The American Political Studies Association 2002 survey of departments revealed that, overall, women held 25 percent of positions. In 2001, 67 per cent of lecturers, 37 per cent of Assistant Professors and 18 per cent of full Professors were women (APSA 2004, 1-2). Similar figures were also recorded in Canada and the UK, where the number of women in the discipline stands at 28 per cent and 30.3 per cent (CPSA 2010, 4; PSA 2009, 1).

It is clear from the data presented that women continue to be underrepresented in the profession and that some departments do far worse than others. The problem cannot be simply narrated through statistics; in the sections below three major dynamics are identified that contribute to the underrepresentation of women in the discipline: the leaky pipeline, the normative political scientist and the chilly climate.

### **1.1 The leaky pipeline**

From the 1970s onwards, the number of women in Australian political science increased significantly. Yet, despite these gains, the number of women in the profession has stalled in the past ten years at approximately 30 per cent. In her workshop presentation Alison Plumb noted that, in 2010 women accounted for 28 per cent of academics and approximately 50 per cent of PhD students in Australian Political Science. It would be easy to assume, then, that there are

more women 'in the pipeline', and we need only wait for them to progress. Yet the metaphorical pipeline is leaky. The greatest 'leakage' occurs with completion of a PhD, a point where many women leave the profession. Although women now account for nearly 50 per cent of PhD students, many leave the discipline after completing their PhD studies, with women only accounting for 34 per cent of level A and B positions (Plumb, 2011). Thus, even at the lowest levels a gendered pattern of recruitment is evident.

Why do women leave the discipline? There are several factors involved. Firstly, several characteristics of academic careers are more difficult for those with family and caring responsibilities. Women are more likely to have such responsibilities than men. Therefore, some women leave the discipline once they decide to have children, choosing to stay at home or take on part-time roles, to fit in with family commitments. Even women who do not have children are more likely to care for a family member, to have responsibilities for older relatives, and to have significant social and community responsibilities.

The clash of work and family responsibilities can prompt women to leave the profession. Even earlier, the postgraduate 'treadmill' results in women leaving the discipline. The length of time that it takes to complete a doctorate and the competing demands of publishing and tutoring, in addition to thesis writing, may discourage women from continuing to progress into a career in academia. Despite increased recognition of work/family issues in higher education as elsewhere, the performance pressures set in train by new research evaluation frameworks inevitably mean longer work hours and disadvantage for those with family responsibilities. Alternatively, women choose to do coursework or research-based masters degrees and not doctorates. This reduces the number of potential candidates who go forward into an academic career.

There is often a perception of a 'good academic career' follows a linear path. Female scholars who have left the discipline or taken on part-time hours are not considered to be on a par with those who have remained in the discipline. Moreover, the skills and experience women scholars gain in other sectors, such as the public service, are not recognised. Due to this lack of

recognition, female scholars returning to the discipline must wait until later to reach the peak of their careers.

Expectations of mobility can also push women to leave the discipline. An academic career may demand relocation every few years. In order to receive a promotion, it is often necessary to move to a new institution, so those who are able to relocate are likely to progress up the levels more quickly. Moreover, working at many different institutions, including overseas, is often regarded as a marker of excellence, so as well as having fewer opportunities for advancement, those who are less mobile are also less competitive. Gendered patterns in caring and family responsibilities – as well as gender roles in relationships – mean that women are less likely to be able to relocate for career purposes than are men.

The third factor discussed at the workshop was that many women scholars do not put themselves forward for promotion or wait until a later stage in her career to go for promotion. It may be that what is required in order to build a successful academic career is often obscure. Moreover, because there are still few women at senior levels in political science, women postgraduates often have difficulty finding a mentor who will both provide advice on the unwritten rules of the profession and also speak up for them and draw attention to their merits. A successful mentoring relationship often depends on the senior person being able to identify closely with the more junior one; gender differences can be an issue here, whilst sameness is easier and more comfortable.

## **1.2 The normative political scientist**

The second problem area that constrains the status of women in the discipline is the narrow understanding of what makes a 'good' political scientist. This is not as simple to explain as the leaky pipeline. However the winning of ARC grants is a good example as it has become an increasingly significant indicator of 'research quality' in the discipline. In her workshop presentation, Marian Sawer noted that over the last three years at least, women have been

dramatically underrepresented as Chief Investigators (CIs) on political science ARC Discovery grants. While women held around 30 percent of positions in political science they were only 12 per cent of CIs on successful Discovery applications for the 2009–2011 rounds (Sawer 2011).

The solution, however, involves creating a broader understanding of what constitutes a ‘good’ political scientist. There are two related aspects to the problem: first, that women scholars are more likely to receive a heavier teaching workload than their male colleagues; second is that work by female scholars is associated with the ‘soft’ or ‘less scientific’ end of the discipline, which is considered to be of lower status than the work of male scholars.

Being less likely to hold a research grant may make the carriage of greater teaching workloads more likely. It is a common finding of surveys of women in political science that they carry a heavier teaching load than their male colleagues (eg. Mitchell & Hesli 2011). Unfortunately, the large contribution that female academics make to teaching in their departments is not valued or acknowledged on equal terms with publishing. Nevertheless, female scholars with heavy teaching workloads still face the same pressure to publish in order to be seen to be producing ‘high quality’ research and to remain competitive in the job market and for promotions.

A narrow perception of ‘excellence’ is also at work in how knowledge is conceptualised. In her workshop presentation Fiona Jenkins presented a critique of the ‘hard vs soft’ distinction in philosophy, but there is evidence that her critique is also relevant for political science and international relations, as Katrina Lee Koo commented in her workshop presentation (Lee-Koo 2011). Jenkins noted how women collect in the ‘soft’ end of the discipline in ethics, aesthetics, social and political philosophy and feminist theory and not in the ‘hard’ end in areas such as logic, epistemology and metaphysics and so on. The first set of groupings are broadly seen as ‘value theory’ and generally counts for less than the area in the second set is associated with ‘knowledge theory’ which is deemed to be more ‘scientific’ and related to academic ‘excellence’ (Jenkins 2011). Similarly in political science, the more abstract model-building or mathematical parts of the discipline are frequently regarded as more prestigious than the more contextual (institutional and discursive) areas where women work.

This gendered pattern actually shapes how women's work is perceived: Jenkins described how, even when speaking on 'hard' topics, women are often heard as presenting 'soft' materials. Thus, these dynamics can make it difficult for women to be regarded as 'excellent' political scientists. The marginalisation of women scholars is more widespread than the marginalisation of feminist scholarship.

Both of these problems are demonstrated in the research presented by Jim Jose and colleagues analysing first-year textbooks. Feminist work tended to be presented as a discrete 'alternative', rather than being integrated into the overviews of the discipline. There was significant discussion of how to counter this tendency. Textbooks or required reading for students that fail to incorporate feminist scholarship clearly contribute to the continuing masculinist biases and preoccupations of what passes for normal vis a vis the contemporary political science discipline. Louise Chappell suggested that feminist scholars need to reach out to 'mainstream' academics by bringing them together through workshops, symposia and collaborations.

### **1.3 Chilly climate**

Finally, the environment within many political science and international relations departments can compound these problems. Workshop participants discussed experiences working in 'chilly climates', where they were disregarded, and where adversarial norms of behaviour dominated. This section summarises the workshop discussions on this subject without attributing opinions to particular speakers.

Many women found that the gendering of elite and 'hard' knowledge supported, and was reinforced by, antagonistic and disrespectful behaviour. This extended to outright exclusion in some cases: one participant noted that she was not included in planning and discussions, and was never invited to social events. Another participant reflected on how the lack of respect was a problem in teaching as well. Unlike her older and male colleagues, she had difficulty with rude and inappropriate behaviour from students who seemed not to recognise a young-looking

woman as an academic authority figure. She countered this by dressing much more formally, and by explicitly outlining her qualifications and achievements in the first lecture.

In some departments, an adversarial and competitive approach dominates. In particular, critique of others' work aims to tear that work down, rather than to be constructive. Some speakers described working in areas where departmental seminars were an opportunity for point-scoring, to demonstrate one's prowess by ripping others' work to shreds. One participant recounted her experiences in a department where senior academics competed to most effectively attack the work of junior academics and post-graduate students. Others observed that peer-review processes can be harsh and discouraging for women without supportive networks.

Such 'chilly' departments were extremely stressful, and some women had coped by choosing to withdraw – not participating actively in departmental activities, or working in other locations – and seeking to move to other departments. Coping with these problems also had social costs, requiring 'unfeminine' or socially discouraged strategies. For instance, the lecturer who outlined her achievements at the start of her courses noted that this was contrary to Australian expectations.

Such working environments, though, are simply unacceptable. One speaker urged participants to get angry about what too many women in political science experience – for such behaviour would not be tolerated in other sectors. Moreover, dog-eat-dog workplaces can be just as harmful for men, who may be feeling just as insecure, or feel compelled to adopt such behaviour in order to compete.

The 'climate' varied greatly across different departments: some workshop participants had had more negative experiences than others, and many had found particular departments worse than others. This reaffirms that an adversarial environment is not an inherent part of academia, and there was strong agreement on the need to learn from positive experiences.

Some participants had worked in collaborative, supportive environments, where methodological pluralism meant that different approaches and areas of enquiry were equally

valued. Academic leadership was an important factor in this, and had established a constructive and positive tone in some departments. Some participants wondered whether the value of such positive leadership is properly recognised in the discipline or in academia, given the focus on 'elite' intellect. Yet there is a strong business case for supportive work environments, and participants agreed that this business case needs to be articulated and promoted.

The next section of the report presents the recommendations that emerged from the workshop discussions to address the statistical underrepresentation of women and also the specific three problem areas just outlined. The recommendations are broken down into those directed at and to be pursued by APSA and those directed to and to be pursued by individual departments, management and the discipline in general.

## Section Two: Recommendations

### Recommendations for APSA

#### R1. Gender monitoring

**1a** It is recommended that APSA take responsibility for conducting a gender audit of the profession every 5 years, beginning 2015.

**1b** To assist with this, Heads of Department should provide a five-yearly gender breakdown of staff and in between maintain the following data;

- gender disaggregated data on applicants for employment and promotion;
- gender disaggregated data on those named as CIs in funding applications;

**1c** That APSA seek gender-specific statistics from the ARC on success rates.

#### R2. Recognition of feminist scholarship

**2a** It is recommended that APSA establish a named book prize (perhaps named the Mary Gaudron book prize) for the best incorporation of gender perspectives, feminist thought or approach into political science, to be offered biannually beginning 2013 (the alternate year to the woman and politics article prize).

**2b** It is recommended that the APSA journal ranking be audited for inclusion of diverse approaches within the discipline.

**2c** It is recommended that APSA provide a small development grant for the preparation of web-based curriculum resources, to be hosted on the APSA website and including;

- short readings suitable for use in either undergraduate or graduate courses;
- a syllabus archive of gender and politics or gender and IR courses such as that hosted on the ECPR Standing Group on Gender and Politics website  
[http://www.ecprnet.eu/standinggroups/gender/syllabus\\_archive.aspx](http://www.ecprnet.eu/standinggroups/gender/syllabus_archive.aspx).

#### R3. Addressing chilly climate factors

**3a** It is recommended that APSA auspice workshops on good academic leadership practice, encompassing mentoring and collaboration and avoidance of adversarial forms of academic competition. Such workshops might draw on resources offered by Pippa Norris from her Kathleen Fitzpatrick Laureate Fellowship.

**3b** It is recommended that APSA Women's Caucus establish a national mentoring program with the possibility of expanding throughout APSA.

## **Recommendations for departments and the discipline**

### **R4. The leaky pipeline**

**4a** That departments promote knowledge of re-entry scholarships for graduate research for those returning to university after a break due to childrearing or similar responsibilities.

**4b** That more career assistance be provided for PhD students, such as 'Nuts and Bolts' programs that encompass sessions on;

- writing a first course guide • developing a publishing proposal • preparing and revising an article • writing grant applications • academic job applications • practice job interviews • how to 'own the space' and communicate ideas.

**4c** That funding for conference attendance include childcare costs where appropriate.

**4d** That departments seek more support from university equity offices with raising gender awareness in relation to supervision and staff recruitment, including evaluation of applicants and reasons for career gaps.

**4e** That targeted support be provided before the flight of women from academic careers, including mentoring.

### **R5. The normative political scientist**

**5a** That we challenge the privileging of particular approaches to the discipline in the construction of what is 'excellent'.

**5b** That we acknowledge and value teaching but that we also ensure that women are not unduly burdened with teaching loads and have time out for research.

### **R6. A more inclusive discipline**

**6a** That we ensure our textbooks and curriculum integrate feminist scholarship rather than treating it as just another 'ism'.

**6b** That we ensure seminar series and departmental events encompass diverse subjects and approaches, exemplifying a pluralistic discipline.

## Section Three: Conclusion

### Why this is important

The report so far has outlined the problem areas that contribute to the underrepresentation of women within the discipline of political science in Australia and has set out a list of recommendations for APSA, Heads of Department and the discipline in general to address this. It is worthwhile within the concluding section to make explicit why it is important to take action regarding this situation.

First it is clear that it is important to address the factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in the discipline as a matter of fairness to individual women themselves, whether those who are currently working in political science or those who wish to build a career within the discipline. While small inequalities may at times seem to be inconsequential, when considered in totality there is a strong moral argument for these forms of inequalities to be considered seriously (Brennan 2011). Furthermore where these inequalities have clear 'easy fixes' as some of the stories detailed above do, then it is imperative on those with the capability to take action.

Addressing underrepresentation of women is the *right* thing to do, yet it is also clear that addressing the root causes of the underrepresentation is important for pragmatic reasons. It is important in order to sustain the discipline of political science within Australia. The immediate past president of APSA, Professor Katharine Gelber, presented data in her Presidential address to the APSA 2011 Conference<sup>4</sup>, indicating that political science in Australia might be moving into a period of renewed recruitment in the next period (APSA Census 2011). It is also likely that, in the era of increased competitiveness, some people might be able to secure promotion more rapidly. The exclusion of women, especially young PhD graduates, due to factors

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<sup>4</sup> Please contact Professor Katharine Gelber [k.gelber@uq.edu.au](mailto:k.gelber@uq.edu.au) if you would like a copy of the Presidential address.

discussed in this report would leave the discipline with a drastically reduced pool from which to continue to build and positively move into this period of new recruitment.

Closely related, it is desirable to prevent good female academics leaving for other disciplines. The workshop heard that many women move to related fields such as sociology and history where there is perceived to be a more welcoming environment.

Individual universities must also consider the effect workplace culture can have on recruitment. The difference in percentage of women academics between institutions paints a stark picture; the reputation of universities can influence both female and male candidates in their decision to accept or apply for positions within them.

Internationally, addressing these factors constitutes good practice and Australian Institutions must be prepared to meet these standards in order to be internationally competitive. The data presented in the International Political Science Association (IPSA) 2011 Gender Monitoring Survey show that of 33 national political science associations the majority had formal commitments to genderrelated equity in their code of conduct. Other strategies taken to promote equal opportunities included seeking gender balance in nominations for board members, committee members and chairs, mentoring programs and support such as childcare provision at conferences.

Finally addressing the underrepresentation of women within the discipline makes sense in order to respond to the needs of undergraduate students. Many workshop participants recounted stories of being thanked by female undergraduate students who had only been taught by men and welcomed the presence of women within the department. Close to 50 per cent, and sometimes over, of the undergraduates undertaking political science courses are female (Plumb 2011) and need female role models.

The recommendations in this report are directed specifically towards the Australian Political Studies Association (APSA) and towards individual departments and the discipline as a whole. It was emphasised in the workshop that the responsibility for taking action on these recommendations should not lie only with women within the discipline. Where it is important

for women to contribute, they should be provided with the support needed in order to avoid further burdening those already carrying heavy workloads.

Individuals, both male and female should be encouraged to consider how these recommendations can be applied within groups, workshops, departments and classes. These issues can only be addressed through the concerted efforts from all within the discipline of political science in Australia.

In summary, the underrepresentation of women in the academic hierarchy has come about for a variety of reasons. Some are easier to address than others. However this report lays down a foundation for moving forward on these issues. We hope that the work done here will be the beginning of a more concerted effort to achieve gender equality across the discipline.



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