

Communications

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

The Winter 1981 *PS* devoted 40 pages to the activities of political scientists at the national political conventions. Many, if not most, political scientists with academic affiliations find time for political activities more demanding than voting. I encourage *PS* to provide information on the political activities of political scientists. What are academic political scientists doing politically and how can these activities benefit our research and teaching?

Nevertheless, the devotion of 40 pages to political scientists as delegates seems silly. Political scientists are having a significant impact on public policy as we are candidates, office holders, members of boards and commissions, and, probably most importantly, consultants to government officials and agencies. As delegates, we do not have a significant impact on public policy. As a delegate to the Democratic National Conventions of 1976 and 1980, I can attest that the role of delegate is similar to that of a member of the studio audience of *Let's Make a Deal*. It was fun, sort of a political Mardi Gras, but worthy of 40 pages in *PS*?

Instead, let's read about political scientists as political actors in roles where we are significant. *PS* might usefully ad-

dress itself to possible role conflicts. What kinds of conflicts may emerge from combining political roles such as consultant with our university responsibilities as scholars in traditions of free and open inquiry? How are different political scientists resolving these dilemmas?

Robert E. O'Connor
Pennsylvania State University

To the Editor:

The Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation (*PS*, Spring 1981) is certainly to be commended on its report and its suggestions for restoring the timeliness *and* the credibility of *Foreign Relations of the United States*. I would hope that the Committee's recommendations would receive widespread backing within this Association and gain the support of other cognate organizations; perhaps with enough encouragement (pressure?), someone at State will listen and act.

While not meant as a criticism of the Committee's efforts, I wish the problem of access to records at the National Archives, prior to publication in *FRUS*, had also been addressed. As things stand now, the Diplomatic Branch can provide practically nothing in the decimal series beyond 1949.

Richard J. Powers
University of Victoria

To the Editor:

In the Winter *PS*, Patricia Florestano gave figures on participation by women in the Southern Political Science Association. I have been monitoring their role in the annual meetings of the American Political Science Association since the early 1970s. What follows is an examination of the role of women in the largest of the regional associations of the profession, the Midwest.

Intuitively, we might expect that women would come farther sooner at regional meetings. Competition may be less intense. Travel expenses to meetings would be less. Contacts with those able to assist one's career would be easier to establish. Have these factors resulted in greater visibility of women as professionals at the Midwest meetings?

Letters to the Editor

My study looks at the four most recent meetings of the MWPSA, juxtaposing against them data from the 1973 meeting (representative of the earlier years in the decade). This was a time when the percentage of women in the discipline increased significantly and when women's caucuses and committees on the status of women in the profession worked to secure first-class status for female scholars. Heightened consciousness and increased presence had cumulative effects. Other women were encouraged to attainments. Males became accustomed to regard their sister scholars as co-equal professionals.

What emerges from the statistical evidence is that women are beginning to play more than a nominal role at meetings, that the old alibi that there are no women scholars in a particular subfield won't wash, that it's less necessary for women to make their contributions through panels which are sponsored by adjunct groups, and that studying the role of women in politics (and problems of women) is now respectable. However, if the Midwest region is typical, there is no evidence that participation by women at regional meetings is more extensive than at the national convention.

Participation at Annual Meetings of the MWPSA

	Section Heads			Chairpersons			Paper Givers			Discussants		
	T	W	%	T	W	%	T	W	%	T	W	%
1981*	17	4	23.5	101	16	15.8	773	98	12.7	119	19	16.0
1980	14	3	21.4	102	17	16.7	748	72	9.6	157	34	21.7
1979	15	2	13.3	122	26	21.3	508	96	18.9	173	37	21.4
1978	14	3	21.4	104	13	12.5	451	73	16.2	155	28	18.1
1973	9	2	22.2	43	2	4.7	166	19	11.4	49	7	14.3

*Data taken from the preliminary program.

In Sections Headed by Women*

	Chairpersons			Paper Givers			Discussants		
	T	W	%	T	W	%	T	W	%
1981**	25	10	40.0	100	35	35.0	24	5	20.8
1980	24	8	33.3	84	18	21.4	40	14	35.0
1979	17	9	52.9	73	27	37.0	23	10	43.4

*In 1973 and 1978 the program didn't list the members of the Program Committee according to which sections they organized.

**The statistics are distorted by the section on Sex, Gender and Politics which had 6 out of 6 female chairpersons, 25 out of 30 female paper givers, and 5 out of 6 female discussants.

In Panels Headed by Women

	Paper Givers			Discussants		
	T	W	%	T	W	%
1981	67	34*	50.7	17	5	29.4
1980	67	11	16.4	23	8	34.8
1979	119	40	33.6	36	17	47.2
1978	53	21	39.6	21	10	47.6
1973	8	0	0	6	0	0

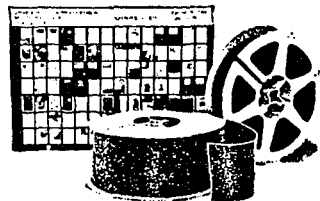
*25 paper givers and all 5 discussants came from the section on Sex, Gender and Politics!

% of Women Participants at the Convention in Panels Headed by Women

	% of Panels	Paper Givers	Discussants
1981	15.8	34.7	26.3
1980	16.7	15.3	23.5
1979	21.3	41.7	45.9
1978	12.5	28.8	35.7
1973	4.7	0	0

Martin Gruberg
University of Wisconsin (Oshkosh)

from APSA . . .



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