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## Council Establishes Committee on the Status of Lesbians and Gays in the Profession

At the April 11, 1992, Council meeting, on the recommendation of

September 1992

the Task Force on the Status of Gays and Lesbians in the Profession and the Administrative Committee, the APSA Council established a new Committee on the Status of Lesbians and Gays in the Profession as a new standing committee in the Association. The Committee will formally

begin work on January 1, 1993.

Last fall, the Council created the Task Force to prepare a charter for a permanent committee. President James Q. Wilson appointed Jean Elshtain to chair the task force, and Mark Blasius, L. Sandy Maisel, and Sarah Slavin to serve with her on it. The Task Force drafted both a proposed charter and a background report, which were adopted by the Council.

The proposal adopted by the Council is as follows:

### Proposal of the Task Force on the Status of Gays and Lesbians in the Profession and the Administrative Committee

February 14, 1992

The Administrative Committee and the Task Force on the Status of Gays and Lesbians in the Profession join in recommending:

1. That the American Political Science Association establish a Committee on the Status of Lesbians and Gays in the Profession;
2. That the Council of the Association appropriate sufficient funds to meet the costs of the operation of the Committee during its first year and for subsequent years;
3. That the Committee consist of five members appointed by the President of the Association to staggered three-year terms;
4. That the Committee be charged with articulating and promoting a policy of non-discrimination against and collegiality towards lesbians and gays in the profession of political science.

In light of this general charge, we further recommend that the work of the Committee, once established, include, but not be limited to, the following goals:

- a. to undertake an empirical study of the current status of lesbians and gays in the profession, culminating in a report to the Council and distribution to the membership;
- b. to explore the need for a senior political scientist with *ex officio* status on the Committee to serve as a resource for the Committee and as advisor to individual political scientists and departments regarding issues of non-discrimination and collegiality;
- c. to underscore that research about lesbians and gays in politics should be judged by standards ordinarily used for evaluating scholarship in the discipline;

- d. to facilitate the distribution of curricular materials on lesbian and gay politics;
- e. to develop a working relationship with the Committee on Professional Ethics, Rights and Freedoms and other relevant committees in the Association.

**Report of the Task Force on Gays and Lesbians in the Profession**

The following statement is the report of the Task Force on the Status of Gays and Lesbians in the Profession. It is keyed to the elements in its proposal for creation of a standing committee. The proposal itself is in italics, accompanied by supporting commentary from the Task Force. The report has been accepted by the Administrative Committee and the Council with amendments agreed to by the Task Force.

**Report of the Task Force on the Status of Gays and Lesbians in the Profession**

The following proposal is the report of the Task Force on the Status of Lesbians and Gays in the Profession. The Task Force included Jean Elshtain, chair, Mark Blasius, L. Sandy Maisel, and Sarah Slavin. Michael Brintnall staffed its work. The Task Force was charged with preparing a charter for a permanent standing committee, stipulating its goals, its composition, and the obligation of the APSA to educate the profession about discrimination against gays and lesbians.

The Task Force on the Status of Gays and Lesbians in the Profession recommends:

1. *That the American Political Science Association establish a Committee on the Status of Lesbians and Gays in the Profession;*
2. *That the Council of the Association appropriate sufficient funds to meet the costs of the operation of the Committee during its first year and for subsequent years;*

The Task Force expects the routine budgetary needs of the Committee to equal the other Status Committees (typically about \$3000 per year), but suggests that in the first year expenses may go somewhat above that and suggests that the Committee be allocated additional funds (perhaps a \$5000 total budget) to cover start-up costs.

First year activities which may warrant additional funding include an extra meeting of the Committee for planning, and a study of the status of lesbians and gays in the profession.

3. *That the Committee consist of five members appointed by the President of the Association to staggered three-year terms;*

Procedures for appointing members are determined by APSA by-laws. The Task Force assumes that appointments will be gender balanced, will be individuals supportive of the goals of the Committee, and will include adequate representation of lesbian and gay political scientists.

4. *That the Committee be charged with articulating and promoting a policy of non-discrimination against and collegiality toward lesbians and gays in the profession of political science.*

The charge to the Committee is directed both to the status of lesbian and gay political scientists in the profession, and to research on questions of sexual orientation and politics by any political scientist. The ultimate objective is to create an environment in which sexual orientation, expressed or perceived, is not an issue.

Non-discrimination is the fundamental imperative—it means that scholars and their work should be judged solely on the merits of the scholarship involved. An early priority of the Committee should be to work with the Committee on Professional Ethics, Rights, and Freedoms on a non-discrimination statement for the profession.

A policy of promoting collegiality contains an educational role, including distributing information about the current status of lesbians and gays in the profession and about issues of sexual orientation and politics in research agendas and curricula, and about the standards of the profession regarding non-discrimination. Important work of the Committee will be to collect such information as well as to distribute it. The Task Force views collegiality as respect for people's reasoned choices, whether the choices are about sexual orientation or about personal and private decisions of whether to disclose one's sexual orientation.

It is also a matter of fairness not to make presumptions about sexual identity. For example, while some members of the Committee will be self-identified lesbians and gays, and some will not, the environment we seek is one in which members of the Committee will not be presumed to hold one sexual orientation or the other.

Collegiality takes place among people diverse in their identities. Colleagues must make professional judgments about each other's behavior, but collegiality demands that such judgments not be determined by each other's identities. Collegiality calls too for a more affirmative role. The status of lesbians and gays has been ill-dignified in the past; there is genuine pathos in being *in* a department but not *of* it—of being excluded from all but the

strict formalities of academic life. Colleagues work to dignify each other.

*In light of this general charge, we further recommend that the work of the Committee, once established, include, but not be limited to, the following goals:*

- a. *to undertake an empirical study of the current status of lesbians and gays in the profession, culminating in a report to the Council and distribution to the membership;*

An empirical study is needed which looks at the extent of the problem faced by lesbian and gay scholars, and by all scholars interested in the study of the politics of sexual orientation. The Task Force wants to educate colleagues about hidden as well as overt dimensions of this issue. This is not an easy subject to study, and the Task Force does not wish to pre-judge the methodology to be used. It will be important that the experiences and voices of individual scholars come through as part of the study.

- b. *to explore the need for a senior political scientist with ex officio status on the Committee to serve as a resource for the Committee and as advisor to individual political scientists and departments regarding issues of non-discrimination and collegiality;*

There are unquestionably many instances in which lesbian and gay political scientists have concerns about career, collegiality, or scholarship for which advice from informed colleagues would be valuable, analogous to informal support that Status Committees in the Association provide to women, African Americans and Latinos.

The status of lesbians and gays, however, differs in one significant way from that of other groups served by Status Committees—some lesbians and gays wish not to disclose their sexual orientation, and may be reluctant to risk the loss of confidentiality by contacting a committee of five people.

The Task Force discussed this issue at length and recommends that the Committee further consider the designation of a senior political scientist, with ex officio status on the Committee, to serve as a point of contact for lesbian and gay political scientists seeking confidential advice about issues in their career, their scholarship, and their relationship to the professional community. This individual would serve as confidential advisor and diplomat, acting in the interest of the individual and the Association.

Based on the insights gained from such confidential contacts, the political



scientist filling this role would also be a resource to the Committee and to the wider community of political science regarding non-discrimination against integration of, education about, and sensitivity to lesbians and gays in the profession.

The Task Force envisioned that the designated political scientist be someone who could fill the role for a relatively long period of time, overlapping the 3 year terms of Committee members, and that he or she be a tenured, senior, respected member of the profession. The key is having an individual who gains the confidence of the entire political science community, and who offers more continuity than normal turnover in Committee appointments allows.

The Task Force also noted that the advisory role they recommended was not intended as an advocacy role or, in the case of grievances against individuals or institutions, as a substitute for the proper role of the Committee on Professional Ethics, Rights and Freedoms, where such matters would be referred.

The Task Force expects that the Committee will establish guidelines for the role of this designated political scientist, and that the individual be appointed by the President of the Association.

*c. to underscore that research about lesbians and gays in politics should be judged by standards ordinarily used for evaluating scholarship in the discipline;*

This goal is intended to dispel any presumption that all research on lesbians and gays in politics is conducted by lesbian or gay scholars, or that lesbian and gay scholars are interested only in lesbian and gay research. It is not an appropriate role of the Committee to propose any special treatment for research on lesbians and gays in politics, but it is an important role of the Committee to encourage *inclusion* of such research that occurs in all fields and components of the discipline and to emphasize that such research be taken seriously.

To this end, the Committee may want to assist in recommending reviewers familiar with the field of work which journals could draw upon to review submissions dealing with lesbian and gay politics.

*d. to facilitate the distribution of curricular materials on lesbian and gay politics;*

There is an opportunity to include materials on lesbian and gay politics in

many courses in the political science curriculum—U.S. politics and policy, comparative politics, international relations (e.g., immigration policies), even methodology (e.g., identifying elusive research populations).

The Committee can take many steps to help political science teachers incorporate materials on lesbian and gay politics into their curricula, including developing reading lists, identifying appropriate literature, distributing illustrative syllabi, and leading panels on teaching at our meetings.

*e. to develop a working relationship with the Committee on Professional Ethics, Rights and Freedoms and other relevant committees in the Association.*

The issues faced by the proposed committee are shared by others in the Association. There is much to learn from the experiences of other Status Committees in APSA in addressing analogous matters, and much to cooperate about with APSA committees, e.g., on research support, publications, annual meeting, and education.

The relationship with the Committee on Professional Ethics, Rights and Freedoms (CPEF) will be especially important. Apparent discrimination or other seeming violations of professional and ethical standards will be referred to CPEF. The Committee may also want to work with CPEF on reviewing and perhaps strengthening the Association's statements against discrimination, and on coordinating a liaison role with AAUP.

## 1993 Program

APSA President-Elect Lucius J. Barker, Stanford University, has appointed Paula D. McClain of the University of Virginia, and Peter Gourevitch of the University of California at San Diego, 1993 Program Co-Chairs. The 1993 meeting will be held September 2-5 at the Washington Hilton.

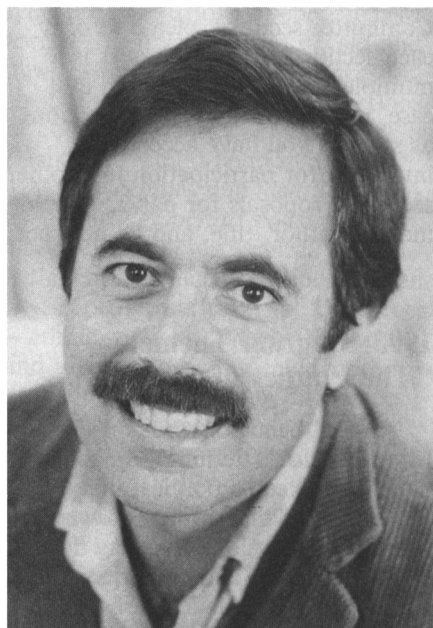
The 1993 Program will continue the practice of the past two years of integrating the Organized Sections with the Program Committee sections. Consequently, the 1993 Program Committee represents 28 Organized Sections and 13 additional program sections. Under a Council "rule of three" policy, each Organized Section was asked to nominate three candidates to be section head for that Organized Section's field.



Paula D. McClain

The Program Co-Chairs then selected one of the three nominees to serve on the 1993 Program. Additionally, McClain and Gourevitch selected other members of the Program Committee to handle parts of the Program not covered by the Organized Sections. The APSA Council subsequently approved all appointments to the 1993 Program Committee.

In the Call for Papers below, the Program section heads appointed through the "rule of three" are indicated with an asterisk (\*).



Peter Gourevitch