



July 22, 2016

Dear Professors Novkov, Abrajano, Beltrán, García Bedolla, Htun, Junn, Montoya, Rouse, Strolovitch, Weldon and Wong,

Thank you for your letter from September 2015, highlighting the presence of sexual harassment within the discipline, including at professional meetings and conferences. As I wrote in the fall, APSA takes these matters extremely seriously. I referred your letter to the APSA Committee on Professional Ethics, Rights and Freedoms, with the charge that they evaluate and make recommendations for the Association's responses to sexual and other forms of harassment at professional meetings and conferences. This has been the primary focus of the committee this year. They met in person in February, 2016, and several times by phone conference. The Ethics committee submitted a set of recommendations to the APSA Council in April. The recommendations were accepted and are at various stages of implementation. I write to you now to outline those recommendations and to provide an update on our progress on these initiatives.

First, the APSA Council voted unanimously to adopt a new anti-harassment statement that will be displayed prominently at the APSA Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, PA and at APSA meetings thereafter. I have attached the longer and shorter version of this policy; it will be communicated to APSA Annual Meeting attendees in the printed and online program, at registration desks and kiosks, in posters positioned on the conference site, and on our Annual Meeting web pages. In the coming weeks, APSA staff will reach out to the APSA status committees to introduce the new statement, gather feedback, and answer questions, and we will also begin communicating the policy more widely. I encourage you to share this anti-harassment statement among your own networks to help raise awareness.

Second, APSA will conduct a survey in the coming months on member and meeting attendee experiences with harassment or violations of the anti-harassment statement while at professional meetings and conferences. The Committee on Professional Ethics, Rights, and Freedoms will lead the survey, and APSA will make the aggregate results from the survey available for members to read on the APSA website and through other means of communication.

Third, we will begin exploring a two-year pilot program for an Ombuds to serve at the APSA Annual Meeting. As described by the Ethics Committee,

The key elements here are that the Ombuds is (a) neutral and not an advocate; (b) is aimed at appreciative listening and problem-solving; (c) is not part of any formal dispute resolution, investigative, or judicial procedure; and (d) keeps individual cases confidential, but is usually held responsible for informing the organizational



leadership at an aggregate level about possible systematic problems or challenges that might need to be addressed.

This effort puts APSA among a small group of associations taking substantial measures to address sexual and other forms of harassment as they occur within professional conferences and meetings. As this is fairly new territory, over the coming months consultation will continue with the APSA Council, Ethics Committee, APSA's legal counsel, universities and others on the details of this proposal. That will include discussing how it will work, understanding the requirements and implications for APSA as an organization, and determining the process for implementation. Incoming president David Lake, who has been involved in these discussions and is committed to ensuring that APSA is an inclusive organization that is welcoming and safe for all its members, will keep you posted on these developments throughout the coming year, with the aim of having the first Ombuds in place at the 2017 APSA Annual Meeting in San Francisco, CA.

Finally, the Ethics Committee recommended that the APSA work with our sister associations holding regional conferences to pool resources, coordinate efforts, and work with colleagues to ensure that *all* political science conferences and meetings are sites where scholars can fully participate in the academic and professional activities of the discipline without fear or experiences of sexual and other forms of harassment. Over the coming months, the APSA staff, led by Steven Rathgeb Smith, will initiate discussions with counterparts at US regional political science associations to see how we can collectively accomplish this goal.

Thank you again for raising these important issues, for your service to the junior members of faculty as you describe, and to the discipline of political science.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Hochschild
APSA President

Cc: APSA President Elect, David A. Lake
APSA Executive Director, Steven Rathgeb Smith
APSA Committee on Professional Ethics, Rights, and Freedoms, Chair, Virginia Sapiro