

Interviewer: Please state your name, title, and affiliation.

Jane Junn: Hey everybody, my name is Jane Junn. I am the USC Associate's Chair in Social Sciences and a professor of political science and international relations, as well as a dually appointed in the Department of Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University of Southern California.

Interviewer: Can you tell us a bit about your personal background, specifically, where are you from? What was your home or family life like for you growing up?

Jane Junn: I know when you ask me the question where are you from, you're not asking the question the way that some white lady on a plane asked me where are you from. So I know that you're asking me in the right way, and by that I mean the way of someone who you need a biographical background. So I was born in Macon, Georgia, Georgia Peach. And why was I born in Macon, Georgia?

Jane Junn: Because my father and mother moved to Georgia after immigrating to the United States where my father was a political science professor at Mercer University. If you don't know where Mercer is, it is in Macon, Georgia, it's the deep South. And at that time, the South remained racially segregated. Blacks and anybody other than white were separated, sent to different bathrooms, different drinking fountains, different locations. And I was born in the South when my father took his very first job at Mercer University. He was also a political scientist. And then after that, I moved to, with my parents, to Grand Rapids, Michigan, which is, if you know Michigan, it's on the west side of Michigan. And it's a very, sort of a rural area at that time. I believe it's the second largest city in Michigan now, but at the time it was pretty small. And it was primarily auto workers and truck drivers, sort of a blue collar town. My father taught at a local school. And from there I went to the University of Michigan, and then for college, and then I went on to the University of Chicago for graduate school, where in that time, Asian Americans were still considered disadvantaged minorities. I went to graduate school on a minority scholarship, which today sounds, you wouldn't get that kind of a scholarship today, so I'm fortunate to have benefited from a diversity scholarship when I started graduate school.

Interviewer: How were you introduced to the field of political science? Other than your father was a political scientist?

Jane Junn: Well, I took some classes and I just loved it. It was either that or anthropology, which was also very interesting, but I ended up doing political science. It was mainly the professors I had at Michigan. I was in the honors program as a college student, and I got sort of hooked on, initially, political theory. And then I went from there into studying international relations. And I originally went to Chicago to study international relations until I had a class with someone who, name withheld, where he said, "Well, we're gonna have this class on," I won't say it because it'll be identifiable. And I never read the New York Times, he says, "because all of the details will mess up the model." So I thought, I'm in the wrong field if what's actually happening in politics in the world are to be left out of scholarship. So I switched over just by default into US politics, where I met some people who were very influential in my development as a scholar of US politics. And I have worked in areas in US politics, we would call it like mass behavior. So voting, political participation, civic engagement, public opinion, politics of immigration. And after about 10 years as an assistant professor, the field of race, ethnicity, and politics, which is my main field, along with women in politics or gender and sexuality politics, that's where I ended up and that's where I am now. But you have to remember, for those of you who are watching today, if you, wherever it is that you're watching, if it's now or 10 years from 2026, these fields did not exist in political science. There was no being an REP scholar or women in politics or gender politics or sexuality politics scholar because it didn't exist. And so many of the people that you'll hear in this series will be those trailblazers who started it all, among them people who are already been recorded, particularly Pei-te Lien and Andy Aoki. So I think that I benefited from their work prior that there became an area, a legitimate area, to study race and politics in addition to that gender and politics.

Interviewer: Taking off on that, did you have any mentors when you were going through graduate school?

Jane Junn: I did, but I went to the University of Chicago, which was a very much free market philosophy of how students were trained. When I think I started with about 50 other people in the PhD program, which sounds completely insane, it was, and it was based on this, we have 50 of you all compete, there are 10 fellowships, there's 10 pieces of cheese, now rats go at it. And so it was not great. So in the beginning, I didn't have that much mentorship because it was a very large program and Chicago's not known for being a warm and fuzzy place where mentorship is privileged. Things are quite different now, I think, but in those years, this was in the 80s, it was the 80s, and so things were quite different. And I eventually found some very good mentors over time and I had one in particular who was a very good friend, Norman Nie, who was the guy, if you ever used SPSS in the old days, he developed SPSS as a graduate student, made millions off of it,

by the way, and became a publicly traded company on the NASDAQ. I don't remember when, I think I was still in grad school. I was in grad school a very long time. I'm not recommending it for those of you who are watching. Don't stay in grad school very long, but I did. And so I ended up working for him. I had a very close relationship with him and his family. I also benefited a great deal from the mentorship of others outside of my own institution. At home, at Chicago, I was also advised by Mark Hanson, who is, I believe still, on the faculty at the University of Chicago, and Henry Brady, who eventually went to Berkeley, and two outside of the university who were very close mentors to me, and that was Sidney Verba, a former president of the APSA, as well as Kate Saltzman of Boston College, who was that person who would call me on the phone about every six months just to see, how are you doing, and are you writing? That she helped me more than she can know. And if she's watching, thank you Kate.

Interviewer: How would you characterize the political social environment in the US while you were in college and graduate school?

Jane Junn: The political and social environment, when I was in school, this was the 80s and the 90s, it was a lot of Republicans, so it was a lot, I mean, we thought Bush was bad. We thought Reagan was bad. We had no idea what was coming. I mean, can I say that? Well, you can take it out if it's not appropriate. And so we thought that was bad. I mean, we were protesting apartheid. This was a very different time when politics seemed kind of normal, even if ideologically problematic. So these were years of strong conservatism in the Reagan way, and then following to Bush. I was out of graduate school by the time, I was almost out of graduate school by Clinton's time. And then of course I was already teaching in a tenured professor by the time Obama came into office. So it was a time of, from that perspective of liberal conservative, it sort of meant what we traditionally think it means today, but now we know that liberal and conservative Democrat Republican are in a very realigned or de-aligning or realigning place. So it was more normal politics. By that I simply mean the parties were very much in control and there wasn't a whole lot of realigning going on. What was going on had already happened with respect to Reagan Democrats. So that was happening in the Midwest, which is where I went to school.

Interviewer: You touched on this a little bit, but were you involved in social political activism when you were in grad school?

Jane Junn: Mostly on campus and locally. I didn't do a whole lot with elected officials. There were always problems. Look, any university you go to is gonna be terrible. Let's

just face it. Politically they're gonna be terrible. They're not gonna look after students properly. They're gonna allow professors to sexually harass students or take advantage of students or much worse. I mean, we see many instances of this. So we were usually fighting the university and locally to provide proper resources for victims of sexual assault and sexual violence otherwise, as well as for providing services and an opening for people of color, which were very rare at that time. There were no diversity deans. There was no one who really, let me not say no one who really cared, but there was not much attention to it. And then furthermore, really everybody did not look like us. And by us, I mean, when I was in college, there was a relatively large minority population at the University of Michigan. We had many more black students than they have today, which is amazing in the wrong direction, I think. There were Asian students, but Asian students were a lot, many of them in the 80s and 90s were international students. And so that was different. And we didn't understand or have a Latine population that we knew. I think if I was in California, which is where I teach now, it would have been different, where Chicano studies and Chicano politics were much more prevalent. But at the time in the Midwest, we had no idea. Graduate school, it was like, oh, it was all men. I think there were three or four women out of this 50 some class. And so I know it's a very, it's shocking, right?

Jane Junn: And I don't know if it's as bad as that anymore, but by bad, I just mean unequitable or non, I don't mean it's necessarily bad. Like if I had, I sometimes ask students, what if the Congress was all women? You know, like if we just made them all women, they were like, whoa, that'd be terrible. Well, why would that be terrible? So, but in this case, Chicago, we had very few women students. They were constantly getting sexually harassed, sorry. But it was true, I'm not apologizing for them at all. But it was instances not just of like, somebody trying to kiss you or chase you around the desk, but plenty of other things that were, you were obviously different because you're a woman. I felt much more gender consciousness as a graduate student because it was so rare to have female students. And if you're, I think we only had white female students, the other ones, and, or maybe one or two international students. So we had nowhere to turn really. And it was not great.

Interviewer: So, what was it like?

Jane Junn: It was difficult. I'm sure everybody feels graduate school is difficult because graduate school is hard, but it should be hard because it's intellectually challenging. It shouldn't be hard because you face different treatment, different perspectives. Sometimes people call these things microaggressions. And I sort of, I was glad when microaggressions first came out because I was like, oh my goodness, yes. But I've come to see those not as, I feel like that that minimizes what it really is. It's just everyday forms of violence. And whether that violence is on purpose or whether it just happens because of the systems of ideological beliefs that are embedded in patriarchy or white supremacy, there's, they're nevertheless still everyday forms of violence. And they become so common that people take them for granted. I think that that is, at the time we didn't even have a vocabulary for it. We knew it was wrong when somebody tried to touch you or kissed you or ask you to come out late at night or, one famous example is a colleague of mine. She, if you know Chicago at all, in the summer, just out of nowhere will come this massive rainstorm and then it'll be gone. And she showed up for office hours with a professor drenched from the rain. And his first comment to her was, oh, is this a wet t-shirt contest day?

Jane Junn: And he thought he was making a joke. It's not a joke. And of course you can't concentrate really after that, after hearing someone say that. This is the kind of thing that happened on a regular basis. And so while you're going through it and you understand that this is what's happening, there's really no recourse for it. There was no place to report it. We didn't have, I mean, Title IX was in effect, of course, because I think that was from, ooh, when was Title IX? I should know that, I teach that. It's an amendment to the educational amendments of the Civil Rights Act. But I think that we didn't have Title IX offices. We had no diversity officers. We had no Office of Civil Rights. I'm not gonna say we accepted it, but we knew it was coming. So there were people that we knew, don't close the door, don't go in there, have somebody come with you if you're doing office hours and be sitting there waiting. And these were all the same kinds of precautions that you have to take if you're walking down a dark street in a bad neighborhood at night. That's graduate school for women in the 80s. And I think that's what I felt it was. And maybe it's not just my school, it's everywhere. Most of the organizations now, the professional organizations have an anti-harassment policy. Why do we have to have an anti-harassment policy?

Jane Junn: Because harassment is happening. So just because it's there doesn't mean it's not still happening. But we're finally at that point institutionally where there's an awareness, doesn't mean it's stopped, but there is an awareness. When I was in school in the 80s and 90s, I had to cope with it. And at the time, you don't realize, like as you're receiving everyday forms of violence, you're just dealing with it. Many of anybody who would be watching or listening to this, you know exactly what I'm talking about. But when it's happening to you, all you're trying to do is just cope. You're dealing with it, you're coping, you're trying to like keep yourself together and continue on with your scholarly work, which is what you're supposed to be judged on. And it would be wonderful to be just judged on that, wouldn't it? So that went on too long, but that was what life was like. I found Michigan, even though it's deep in the Midwest, it's not in cornfields anymore, but people think that it is. It was just a much cooler place. It was, I'm not sure why that is the case, but it could also just be the level of education at which it was. I never felt like as repressed at Michigan and part of it was a much freer place to me.

Interviewer: Can you tell us about your research trajectory? I.E., what was your dissertation topic? Where is your current main area of focus? And were there any particular scholars whose work was influential in your thinking and research?

Jane Junn: Oh, so many, so many influential scholars. It's not just the early stuff, because the early stuff when I was in graduate school was really focused on the basics of political behavior in the United States. I started off, as I said earlier, as an international relations scholar. Then I thought maybe I do comparative politics, but my foreign language skills are so very bad. So I'll give you an example. I tried to take Chinese in college because I wrote my BA paper on the Taiwan Relations Act with a famous scholar at Michigan called Michael Auxenberg, and he's no longer around and no longer there. But I thought, oh man, I'm gonna learn Chinese. What a disaster. It was a disaster. Then I went to grad school and I just had the worst time with languages. There was a foreign language requirement at the University of Chicago, and I kept taking it and failing it. It was Spanish, okay? Which is a relatively easy language for Americans or for English speakers in the United States. The exam was you get a passage in Spanish and you could translate it into English with a dictionary. I think I failed it at least twice. I had already taken my first job, and so my advisor said, Jane, let's just substitute statistics for you. I was like, great idea. So we substituted statistics, which is where I ended up doing it. I did a lot of, most of my work is quantitative. Some of it is qualitative as well. By that meaning not gathering information from individual subjects or respondents on the basis of like, what are you on to one to five?

Jane Junn: It's kind of an absurd question, but it's what we do all the time. And I just found the qualitative work to be so very interesting, but also so very difficult. So I do more quantitative work, and I've been inspired by a lot of people, mostly those not in my own field, and I guess that's because I find that other stuff more interesting. I find really, I wasn't actually prepared for this question, but one of my favorite books of all time is by a political anthropologist from Yale called "Weapons of the Weak." And it is about, I think this is right, "Weapons of the Weak." Can somebody please quick Google that?

Jane Junn: It's by an author named James Scott, and he's a political anthropologist, and he studied everyday forms of resistance. So, I mean, I've assigned that book many times. Is that what it is? "Weapons of the Week Weak," right? And my first book was called "Education and Democratic Citizenship in America." And it was really about the influence that formal educational attainment has on producing more active and more knowledgeable citizens. So my dissertation began before this book, and part of my dissertation flowed into this book that I wrote with Norman Nie and Kenneth Stehlik-Barry. And that was a successful book, and I thought, well, after that, it's pretty much all downhill for me. Like, you're not gonna write another really great book, but hopefully I did. And that book, it was really influential to me because we were trying to understand not just in the United States, which is where we gathered data from, but from also, is it the case that a formal liberal education as we have in the United States influences people to become more active, to become more knowledgeable, to become more participatory? And how does that affect, under what circumstances does that happen?

Jane Junn: And we see that more education doesn't make people more participatory. In fact, you can still see that people with higher education are more active, but across the board, it doesn't make, the United States is like 25, 26% now, formal education of college and beyond, but we're no more active than we were in the 1960s when only four or 5% had education. So it's a relative effect of education, sort of putting you into different tiers. On the other hand, other positive qualities of democratic citizenship, such as tolerance for difference and political knowledge, did go up with education as time went by. I think that pattern is probably now disrupted, so somebody needs to go back and look at that again. But what was most influential to me about that was not just trying to understand how does one critical independent variable, everybody takes education for granted. You're not gonna hear a political candidate saying, let's not educate people. Well, actually maybe you would in this day and age, right? Let's not put it past some of these folks. But for the most part, education is always a good thing. You're always gonna say like, oh, I'm running on an education platform. But education also has other effects, right? It might make people buy into a system that doesn't actually help them. It might make them buy into a structure where they think there's gotta be some people up here, there's gotta be

some people down there. I think that that is part of what the liberal educational tradition in the United States, as well as in other westernized countries does. And so that was my first skepticism, like what does this really mean? And why are we pushing more of this?

Jane Junn: Because we're pushing more of the same to the extent that education broadens people's minds and makes them more capable of thinking about a wide variety of issues and how they may go together and strengthen analytical capabilities. It also has, boy, it's a great reproducer of meritocracy, isn't it? Those of you who did well, you deserve to succeed, and those of you who didn't, you should be on the bottom. I think that's kind of f'd, frankly. And so I think we need to think about that more carefully. I began thinking about these things back then. And the other thing, I mentioned this book by James Scott. You asked me what are some of the more influential books. There are many of them, but he's among them, *Weapons of the Weak*, and then a book that followed, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*. And he has another book called *The Art of Not Being Governed*. When is it that people resist being governed? And when is it that people can be powerful even when they don't have power? And one of my favorite examples is *Crossing the Street*. So he uses, I mean, his fieldwork is all in Southeast Asia. But the concepts are the most important thing. So you know what I'm talking about? The light's flashing, don't walk. And there's a big sports car with some dude driving. He's like, "Rrr, revving his engine." And it's saying, "Don't walk." And you think, "Well, I'm just gonna walk real slow across the street." It's the only power you have because he's not supposed to run you over. He might. Okay, in New York, he might. But the point is that you have power in certain situations of moving slowly. If anybody's ever been a server in a restaurant and you have this kind of jerk of a customer, you're like, "Let me go check why that's taking so long." You know, what you're really doing is exercising the power you have from your powerlessness. So there are other books that, so what I'm trying to get at is my interest in agency. Like where is it that people get their power?

Jane Junn: It shouldn't be only through traditional means like education because education, formal education can be really limiting in how you think about things. Like Trump thinks he should be the best because where'd he go to, Wharton? Who gives, right? And there's no justification in that. Sorry for that comment, but there's no justification in that. And I think that it provides an excuse for institutions in liberal democracy like higher education to stand in for a place to exert and push elitism and meritocracy. So the things that I was most interested in is when are, you know, where can agency develop? It shouldn't only come from these traditional sources where you're powerful and can smoosh other people. It should also come from context. It should also come from your own sense of power and your own sense of, because as you know, if

you've ever given your partner the silent treatment after an argument, you're like, "Oh man, I'm losing this argument. "I'm just not gonna say anything." That's power too, right? I'm gonna give the silent treatment. There are instances where, many instances, where American voters are just saying, "To hell with it, I'm not gonna do it," because that isn't them having a problem or something being wrong with them. We need to reinterpret that as them making a statement. Plenty of people are doing that, but I think we focus far too much on the activities that we can observe versus the ones that we can't observe and interpret on our own. So there's that. The other thing I'm very interested in is agency being limited by structural constraints, namely race and gender. And I think any of the other marginalizations that exist, and among them, currently, it's obviously sexuality that isn't classic cisgendered heteros, in addition to that, is standing as an outsider to the polity, whether you are a non-citizen or an immigrant of some other form.

Jane Junn: I think that in my difficulty with foreign language, I'm not sure where that comes from. I think I just have a bad language brain or one that just can't go there. I could do the math, but I can't do conjugation of verbs in other languages. I have such admiration for, think about these international scholars. They are coming in without English, and they are just kicking a**. That is just tremendous. They have to face an outsider status that is not often acknowledged in the same way that we do the classic troika of race, gender, class. It's not necessarily a part of class, but it is nevertheless a marginalization. So I'm interested in how that standing and how that outsider status works as how you understand yourself in terms of your identity and your consciousness, but then furthermore, how that affects your political behavior. And that's probably my two most recent books are about race and gender. So I have a book out last year called "Women Voters" with Natalie Masouka. And I also have a book in 13 about the politics of immigration and why it is the people of color are in essence more supportive of progressive immigration policies as a function of their knowledge and recognition and daily experiences with exclusion. So I continue on that. I'm writing a book now still in the very early phases because I'm a University of Chicago PhD. So we're like, let's get some really big impossible question and try to write about it. So I've been writing about this now. It's called "The Allure of Patriarchy." And I'm trying to understand why women participate in their own subjugation, because there are many women who support candidates and parties for office where a woman's subjugation is actually part of the platform. It's not, I mean, it's funny. Like if this was me 25 years ago, I'd be like, well, that's not gonna happen. How wrong are we? It's happening now. So I'm trying to understand, better understand how it is and why it is that not just women, but why do people support policies not only that are against their own self-interest, but that are exclusionary and repressive? It's a big question, but I think it's an important one. So I might be working on that for a while. I'm sorry I went on so long.

Interviewer: All right. We're gonna shift gears a bit. What does being a political scientist of color mean to you?

Jane Junn: Well, I could take that in a lot of different ways. What does being a political scientist of color mean? Well, I mean, it means exclusion almost all the time. And so it's not even like necessarily exclusion purposefully, but you're just different. So I'm gonna give you an example. When I was younger, young, and teaching at my first school, which was Rutgers, wonderful teaching experience, I would have students, so I'd walk in, I'm teaching intro to American government. And they're like, what's this Asian lady doing teaching intro to American government? And I would have students tell me, I'm only laughing because, I mean, what else can you do with it? They would write in my evaluations, she speaks good English. And, you know, or where are you from? Like, and I'm like, I'm from California. I'm actually not from California, but I know that's not what they were asking me. So from the very beginning, when you're a person of color, or you're somehow different from the norm, and political science is still a white discipline for the most part, if you looked at its population demographics and still probably more male than female, there's a very leaky pipeline all the way to the top. So to be at my level, as a woman and a woman of color, there's not that many of us, you know, there aren't that many of us. And that's, it's not shocking, it's just the reality. And there will be more because times are changing. What does it mean?

Jane Junn: It means always being a little bit on the outside and having to find a way in with a strategy that works for you at the time. In the beginning, the only strategy I had was just try to be like them because I didn't know what else to do. And I didn't have other alternatives. I didn't even really know feminist theory when I was in grad school because nobody was teaching it. So I did read other works. One of my favorite books right now is by Judith Butler called "The Trouble with Gender." Or gender, I mean, her original books, I'm sorry, is called "Gender Trouble." Today, her most famous book recently is called "Who's Afraid of Gender?" I highly recommend it if you haven't read it. It's also an audio book in case you're just driving around wanting to learn it. So I didn't understand what was going on. And the only way to survive was to sort of do what they did, namely the people who, you know, your peers or the people who you're trying to publish for and to do it better. And so you really tool up methodologically, you write properly the way that people want you to write, and you follow the mold. So I understand why people do that. I wish more people would do their own thing, but you can't really do your own thing when you're just starting. So what it means is trying to find a way to fit in somewhere that

you know you don't belong there. I was well aware that I didn't belong, despite the fact that my father was a political scientist and I come from an educated background family, even though my parents were immigrants. They came to the United States. My father came to the United States only two years after the McCarran-Walter Act was passed. And if you don't know the McCarran-Walter Act, that's McCarran-Walter Act of 1952. That finally took down the racial restrictions to Asian immigration, because prior to that, Asians were effectively barred. There was some, there's this great law called the Asiatic Bar Zone Act. Like if you're from Asia at all, but you don't belong in here. McCarran-Walter wasn't great in the sense that it only allowed literally a quota of 100 from places like China and Korea, my family's from Korea. He came in actually three years after McCarran-Walter, and when he came by steamer ship, it was a very different place. And he, when we went to Macon, Georgia for his first job, I was born there. And one of the interesting things is that I was born in the white part of the hospital. And I said to my mother like, I don't know, maybe 10 years ago, I'm like, mom, how was I born in the white part of the hospital?

Jane Junn: Because technically at that point, Asians were not fully excluded in the same way as Blacks. But she told me at the time when they lived in the deep South, she didn't go to the bathroom outside of the house. I mean, nobody carried around two liter bottles of water all day long. She never took a drink from a drinking fountain because she didn't, she knew she wasn't supposed to drink in the white fountain or the white bathroom, but she didn't know where she was supposed to go. But oddly, I got born in the white part of the hospital and I was teaching a book, a brilliant book. This is another one I recommend by Claire Kim called "Asian Americans in an Anti-Black World." It's so good. It just published, I think in 23 or 24. And the argument is that Asian Americans are obviously minorities. We do face disadvantages. But one of the most significant things about the place of Asian Americans today and even in the period where Asians were excluded is that Asians were not Black. And that was a very important distinction. So I shared with her a couple of months ago. I'm like, yeah, you know, Claire, I was born in the white part of the hospital to which we had a laugh about it. I mean, I don't know what would have happened when I had a safe birth, would I even be here if I was born in the colored part of the hospital? Maybe, maybe not. But the point is that being a minority, being a person of color isn't the same for everybody. It's quite different. It's different depending on how you're read racially. Like nobody in graduate school ever thought I was gonna have a problem in the stats classes. Even though I was used, why? Because of that stereotype of being good at math or whatever, that I was there because I was smart rather than on a fellowship for some other reason, which is obviously total sh*t, right?

Jane Junn: But a lot of times I struggled in those classes just as much. I never thought I was better at math. But it's a stereotype that affects all kinds of aspects of how we think about the world hierarchically. So being a person of color, it's not the same for everybody. It's different. And I think we have to recognize that. And recognizing it doesn't mean that as one of my colleagues so brilliantly wrote, this is Ange-Marie Hancock, it's not an oppression Olympics. What it is instead is a way for us to better understand how these ideological systems, whether it's white supremacy, anti-Blackness, settler colonialism, patriarchy, any of those things are affecting how it is that we're seen by others and even how we see ourselves. That's the essence of what I try to study. So what does it mean? It just means everything because sometimes I wish that, I sometimes ask students this, what if we could just erase everybody's memory and everybody just becomes, I don't wanna use that phrase, but where you don't really know what the person is. Where gender and race are ambiguous, would it be better?

Jane Junn: I'm like, hell yeah. But then at the same time, most students don't like it and they don't like that idea because I think there's also a lot of good stuff to it. There's tremendous camaraderie and pride in who we are. At the same time, it would be great if it didn't affect you negatively, it would be. But I mean, as long as the day goes on, I would have that many stories about what's happened to me and many colleagues who are people of color. Also, white people get discriminated against too for other reasons, not necessarily because of their race, not necessarily because of their gender, but they are discriminated against, they are treated unfairly. So civil rights are for everybody. Civil rights are not just for Black people or Latinos or Asian-American, civil rights are for everybody. And so I think that it would be better if we recognized just how much everyday forms of violence exist against people of color and against women, other marginalized people, and that we did our best to recognize it, to not call them snowflakes, to not say, "Oh, stop being so sensitive." I just was joking. Well, the next time someone says that, I'm gonna have a pretty good comeback. I'm not sure what it is, but someone help me with that. It is, it's not been easy, but it's also, I wouldn't have got this far if I didn't have the help of a lot of people. And not just people who were above me, but other people that are my same cohort or many younger than me who have helped me. I think that's true for anybody in this kind of a profession, but that's a long answer, but it means everything.

Interviewer: In your view, what is necessary in order to further diversify the discipline and make it more equitable and welcoming to scholars of color in the profession?

Jane Junn: Number one, generational change. That's just my number one. It's hard to change people's perspectives about what's valuable work or who's valuable. If you don't do the work that's supposed to be done, if you don't do the work that's supposed to be normal or standard, I mean, it's called normal for a reason. It is normative. It's a preference. First thing, generational change. And that only happens with time. And generational change doesn't only mean people who like to see political science as a field or types of courses or whatever as curricula, as them leaving, as newer people coming in and newer people with wide diversity, whether that diversity is with respect to race or gender, sexuality, gender identity, immigration status, or from the South or from a community college, all of those, rather than research universities, all those perspectives are coming in. I think the profession's doing better than it was before. It's time to stop putting men always first. Men are always first when it comes to the APSA president. I made a complaint about this. I had a rant about this, oh, I think at the Western last year, why are men always first? There's a rotation. We gotta have a Black man first, and we're gonna have them only later do we get the Black woman in. We have to have a Latine president, but guess what, he's a man. And then, wait, we still haven't had a Latina president of APSA. They've been vice presidents, same for Asian Americans. So we've had Asian American presidents, but they're always men. So I think that's something APSA needs to do. And because it's at the highest level, it's not, it's sorta like being the queen, you know?

Jane Junn: You don't have much of a, that's the queen's wave. You can't really affect that much, but symbolically, it's important. It's important for somebody. I, when I was a graduate student, like, oh, we had like two faculty members who were female. We had no people of color. So that's all you see, and that's why you have to just try to be like them, because you don't have anybody to follow. So from a kind of descriptive representation perspective, I think that's something the association needs to work on. I'm glad that they're now being more open to women as presidents and as leaders of the association, but that's relatively recent. That's within the last 20 years. So get with it, APSA. And it starts at the top. It should start at the top. And I think they're doing other things quite well. I do. I think that Kim Mealy's leadership has been really important, and I applaud her for all that she's doing, including this project. Because otherwise, what ends up happening a lot is we just work, work, work, work, work. We're in there doing all the committee work. We're in there doing a lot of the work, which is very important and really useful, but it needs to be recognized as well. So I think the association is doing pretty well. There's nothing they can do about generational change. It's gonna happen. And it's gonna happen in the Democratic Party too, but it's gonna happen.

Interviewer: Well, based on what you were just talking about, in addition to the existing diversity, equity, and inclusion programming, what is your advice for associations like the APSA and WPSA on how to best support scholars of color in the profession as they approach milestones in their career, i.e. dissertation completion, tenure and promotion, and career advancement?

Jane Junn: Well, there are very different areas, right? So there's the pipeline issue out of completion. Rodney Hero, as part of, when he was the president of APSA, he constituted task force, which we then turned into a smaller group of scholars who we attempted to mentor. And we just lost the funding for it. We attempted to mentor scholars of color who were at the stage of getting to the tenure decision. And there's not that close to the tenure decision, because if you're trying to fix it, in year five, it's too late. So relatively early on, programs like that, where funding is very difficult, but it doesn't have to be something where we all convene and hunker down for three days in a hotel somewhere, this can be done in other ways, where we target those communities. I think it's not just scholars of color. I think some of the people that I know, and I've been at this a long time, and I've mentored many people outside of my own institution, some of the most difficult times are for people who are first generation college students, and the first person to really go to graduate school. They don't have any models. People don't understand, like why are you still in graduate school?

Jane Junn: So I think that that, we should double down on that. I know there's a first gen committee. And by double down, I mean like providing APSA sponsored, either mini conferences in advance, or other gatherings at regional conferences like this, where it's easier for a student to come. And for the, I gotta tell you, I think that the other place that's really hard, in particular for women and scholars of color, I know them the best because I mentor many of them, is after tenure, you are like so exhausted, and you're like, I need to watch television. I mean, I need to watch Netflix for like, or all 456 episodes of "Law and Order." I need to watch them all, eat as much ice cream and Doritos as I can, for like two years, and then go back. It's hard to get back in because the process of getting tenure for women, especially women of color, it's so difficult. Maybe I just feel that way. You should talk to some white guys and see if they feel the same way. They probably do, but it might be different for them. I think that we need a program that's at the associate level, advanced associate level, to help those, not help them, help them to talk to each other, to find resources, to get them pushed over to the level of full professor, because I'm telling you, it is exhausting writing so many letters. When you're a full professor in an area like REP, or women in politics, gender politics, there's not that many people out there from research universities who can write those letters for tenure. Most of the time, universities

want tenured full professors to write, and we need to get more people into that. I find that to be, people say like, it's like being married for 10 years. You don't need help anymore, believe me. You need help after 10 years of marriage. In the same way that you would need help being an associate professor for a while, you do need help in thinking like, how am I gonna get this project off the ground? What's my strategy to full professor? That's something I don't think that APSA has done. I would love to see something like that. I'm happy to lead that if you need it. Oh, great, sounds great. Well, shifting gears again. Yeah. You've held a number of leadership positions in the profession, including APSA, and also as former president of WPSA. Yeah.

Interviewer: What in your view makes a good leader? Or what did you learn from these experiences?

Jane Junn: Oh my gosh, that's such a big set of questions. What makes a good leader? You know, you gotta have integrity. You gotta be committed, not just to the health and welfare of the association, but really to the people who make it up, and to the staff who staffs it. That's like so important. A lot of people are in it. I don't mean to malign anybody, but let's be real. You know, a lot of people are in it because they're like, "Look at me, I'm the president." That is like so not helpful. And you, as a president, will not make, or as a leader, you won't make an impact in that one year. It's just not possible. You know, you're in a kind of ceremonial position, but instead, you've gotta be doing that service from the time you join the association all the way through your career. And you need to be, you never should say no when someone asks you to be on a committee, unless you're totally overburdened. And that point, you do say no, because this does happen to people of color in particular. When people ask you to write a letter of tenure, please try to do it. And when you're in the association and someone asks for help, and you can do something about it because you're the president, you should damn well do it. So I just think that you're like a public servant. You need to be serving what it is that people in the association need, and you need to listen to them so that you don't just do stuff unilaterally, which I don't think it happens that much, because I think the associations are pretty strong. I mean, some better than others. I mean, there's some that we don't have to talk about here, but that have had their issues and had taken too long to solve them, or to resolve them. APSA's a very well-run organization, so I have no trouble with that. I think you just gotta, you have to be a public servant. You're not there to be a trustee. No, you're there to serve the population. What was the second part of the question?

Interviewer: What makes a good leader? And what did you learn from these experiences?

Jane Junn: I learned that there's a lot of stuff to fix, but that's not bad. It's not like the problems, or it's not like a leaky roof or anything, but okay, it's certainly a leaky pipeline. There are many things that need to be addressed, and that the main thing that I learned is you gotta have good people that work with you and who are willing to do it. I think the Western Political Science Association, it's very well-run. The people here do, all the people, like the association members who are populating the committees, they do all the work. It's fantastic, it's basically, you don't have to do much work as a president, except to coordinate and to try to help to motivate them. I think, what have I learned? I have learned, man, I mean, political scientists are wonderful people. There's some sh*ts out there for sure, but there's some not great, but for the most part, political scientists, I have found to be generous, intellectually talented, methodologically strong, and I think people of integrity. Of course there are exceptions, but it's a pleasure to work in this field. I wouldn't still be here. I would have either just checked out or gone to another area or discipline, but I stay because the people are great. I learn new things. Like I was just at a panel this morning called Intersectional Theorizing Toward Liberation, blown away I was. It was so good. I'm like, man, it's a good thing I got up at eight o'clock, well, before then, but to go to this eight o'clock panel, because I was like writing down notes, thinking of new things, it's very stimulating, and I hope that the conferences never go away. I hope that we're still in them. I see tons of people that I know and enjoy, and people that I've known since graduate school who are now full professors. It's awesome, it really is.

Interviewer: What's the best thing about it?

Jane Junn: It's that, making the connections and learning still. I'm like getting long in the tooth here, but I'm still learning, and it's exciting. It is. I think we can make an impact. I think we do. We just don't always recognize it. I was teaching an Asian-American politics course this fall, and I had this one student come in the other day, looking for a recommendation for law school. He's a white guy from Chicago. I'm like, what are you doing in this class? Actually, my class, Asian-American Politics at USC, it's like maybe 25% Asian. Everybody else is everything else. I was teaching the case of Wong Kim Ark. It's an 1898 case. If you listen to the oral arguments in the United States Supreme Court a few days ago about birthright citizenship, where was that articulated? It's articulated in the opinions, the Supreme Court opinions on Wong Kim Ark, an Asian exclusion case. So this guy comes in, he's like, oh, you know, that case we learned about Wong Kim Ark was like an ID term or something. He was like, the Supreme Court just talked about that today. I'm like, you bet they just talked about that. So I don't think that we can always

see, most of the time we cannot see what we have done in the classroom or spent a long time correcting or giving comments on a paper. But I hope it comes back. And it should come back to us in a way that we never really see. We get the honor to observe it every now and then when someone will write you and say, oh, I just saw that on the news. And I learned that in your class or something. But for the most part, we're putting it out there as what scholars and teachers should be doing, which is to create new intellectual work, academic work, that pushes the boundary of what we're thinking about and what we're doing in politics. And then beyond that, we're helping people to think about politics in a more systematic and intelligent way. And that, there is no better job than that, is there? OK, maybe if I won the lottery, then I wouldn't have to work. But basically, there's no better job than this. So the associations are-- thank goodness for the associations because it keeps us all going. We all look forward to going to the conferences so we can rejuvenate, replug, plug ourselves in. And it's better than massage and facial. Thank you for that.

Interviewer: Is there anything else that you'd like to share with us?

Jane Junn: Gosh, you've been thorough. I mean, I'm really glad you're doing this project. I hope that the new young people who are entering the profession in graduate school or even in college, I hope you keep thinking that things are possible. I think they are. It's harder. Yeah. I mean, we had it pretty-- I'm not going to say an easy time because it wasn't easy. But it seemed like things were going all right in terms of justice, inequality, and diversity. Now we've taken a turn backwards, but it's on us to fix it. So that's it. I just hope that everybody keeps up energy and in the process has enough candy and caffeinated drinks to keep going.

Interviewer: Well, thank you very much for sharing.

Jane Junn: You're welcome.

Interviewer: And that concludes our interview for today.

Jane Junn: OK. Well, thanks for having me.