

Dr. Carol Mershon: So thank you everyone, uh, for everything that we [inaudible] around the table. As the title suggests, uh, the charge for my working group, uh, was encapsulated in the title of "Climate and Context", I'll say something more about that in just a second, and I want to focus on findings and recommendations. So I'm trying to advance this and it is not responding. Maybe it wants... [inaudible]

Dr. Carol Mershon: There we go, okay great! So I did advance it. So, I really want to emphasize gratitude to the members of my working group, you can see them all and they're institutional affiliations. We all collaborated, uh, with each other on the working group and actually we also, uh, are all grateful to have produced an edited journal symposium, uh, in PS online November, uh, past year and in print, uh, in a day. Uh, so we do want to focus on, uh, findings and recommendations. We divide our work into four areas, as you can see. Findings prevail in the first two areas and although, we do have recommendations. And then in the latter two areas recommendations prevail, although there are findings. We understand climate to be a matter of perception which varies by our context, could be subfields, university departments, and so forth. And, uh, climate varies also by our place and our experience and our context as shaped by traits like race, ethnicity, sexuality.

Dr. Carol Mershon: Good. Uh, so the first area that we investigated was micro-aggressions, bullying, and implicit bias. Our team findings expand upon those of a landmark 2017 APSA survey, uh, which revealed, um, really awful, uh, experiences for women and junior scholars and above all at the four prior APSA annual meetings. And in particular, 30 percent of women reported harassment at the four prior APSA annual meetings. Our team's, uh, study was done in late summer of 2021, so COVID. And obviously, some people were, um, away from email.

Dr. Carol Mershon: Um, convenience sampling and snowball sampling, so it is not possible to generate a response rate. We had more open-ended questions than in '17 and we asked not only about annual meetings, but also about departments. Two words for the findings that you will see: hostile, climates. Look at the top and these percentages for "Yes" are horrendous. Hostile climates, especially in departments. Either those that you're familiar with or your own departments. So how do we understand these hostile climates?

Dr. Carol Mershon: There are many examples cited in the open-ended, uh... uh, questions, professional meetings. I mean basically... and there's so many more, uh, examples, but just a few dismissive attitudes and behavior directed to women and colleagues of colors in departments. I have not just [inaudible] bullying so severe, shouting during faculty meetings, that this amounts to just plain outright aggression, right? Um, threats of tenure denial, graduate students being told not to pay attention to an advisor who's a scholar of color. It boggles the mind in knots.

Dr. Carol Mershon: So some recommendations for APSA... um, fantastic niches of political science, advance projects in collaboration with Me-Too PolySci, disseminate the project's climate toolkit

[inaudible] department chairs and organized section leaders, and increase the number of bystander trainings at APSA meetings. I checked... I... I don't remember if it was, yeah, at least it was last year's program and there were two trainings. We could, uh, increase that number. Um, exclusion and disproportionate service. By exclusion we mean women academics and faculty of color are being illegitimate within the academy and so scholarship and service turn out to be devalued.

Dr. Carol Mershon: And then what may seem paradoxical, we... we see disproportionate service. So we have relatively few numbers of, uh, women and faculty of color and they end up performing, we end up performing more service, more service that's less prestigious, more time consuming, and so often more in the way of token service. And then you do get to have some senior women and faculty of color who are senior and they end up spending, we end up spending more time on things like promotion letters and mentoring. So... which is so important however, so of course we're going to commit to it. And then we have fewer years of administrative service, tend to have fewer opportunities to lead, fewer publications, fewer grants. And that means that women academics and faculty of color are disadvantaged at tenure and promotion and for promotion from associate to full.

Dr. Carol Mershon: Uh, recommendations. Host of recommendations, I just focus on a few. Chairs, what can chairs do on their own? Develop institutional mechanisms to rotate service, use more flexibility in teaching limit the number of new course preps. Here is working with administrators, hire more faculty of color, prioritize regular data collection. And I think back to what we have heard about the importance of APSA joining in with chairs and administrators in universities on data collection. Uh, guiding tenure promotion, grant writing, publishing, facilitate via funding things like, uh, okay, folks are going to attend the women of color workshop. There are other wonderful networks. Push for institutional membership in the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity, which has wonderful, um, which organizes workshops and has these like weekly email blasts that are so important. Um, and...

Dr. Carol Mershon: Uh, and then APSA at the Annual Meeting, uh, of course has sessions with chairs and can really really focus on discussing and assessing department initiatives. Best practices for home institutions was our third area of inquiry and we think about best practices for transforming campus climates. Again, a host of recommendations. Make administrative hires with diversity in mind so that the kinds of chairs. Um, recommendations... working with administrators... that I was just talking about for exclusion and disproportionate service. If you have these kinds of hires, excuse me, hires of administrators that, um, these ideas dovetail and the administrative hires will be more likely to work with chairs on, um uh, disproportionate serve and exclusion.

Dr. Carol Mershon: And in this... it should require search committees to increase expertise on equitable recruiting and hiring practices, and if there's no in-house resource, there are superb, uh, resources out there available like Michigan's advanced program. Reform mentoring to ensure that women and faculty of color receive career support and that, um uh, national career, uh, network that I just mentioned would be one superb way to boost mentoring.

Dr. Carol Mershon: Best practices in hiring. Among the recommendations, seek and use allies. Make the department more attractive to marginalized faculty by doing things like adding courses, enlarge the pool of candidates by advertising on the list serves of race, ethnicity, and politics and say, sexuality and politics. And another area for best practices in home institutions thinking about retention. Encourage colleagues to take advantage of APSA's wonderful mentoring program, protect new colleague's time by limiting service assignments. We've already talked about documented bias in student evaluations of teaching, so use teaching portfolio to evaluate teaching. Uh, chairs need to maintain clear and documented communication with administrators and push for affinity groups like LGBTQ centers, Latino studies, programs studying historically marginalized groups, so as to increase the probability that faculty members from marginalized communities will feel at home, will be at home.

Dr. Carol Mershon: What's APSA's role in supporting these kinds of best practices? Well I love the, uh, term, which is not my own, uh, it's the term of the duo of colleagues on the working group who came up with thinking about what can APSA do to create and distribute shovel ready... shovel ready toolkits for departments seeking to recruit and retain faculty and graduate students belonging to historically marginalized communities. And these shovel ready toolkits would be akin to, but distinct from the climate toolkit that's under development by Me-Too PolySci. And even more, APSA could adapt and tailor multiple toolkits for diverse types of institutions like say, community colleges, tribal colleges and universities. And we have... we are so lucky as to have in APSA a superb set of websites for diversity programs and diversity resources, those could still be extended further. Now indeed, thinking about recommendations for APSA.

Dr. Carol Mershon: Uh, three sets of recommendations. Uh, better used infrastructure. Think about for example, organized sections. APSA could more strongly emphasize DEI and anti-harassment policy in the annual meetings that are always held with organized section officers. Assess, revisit how to convey sustained commitment on DEI with organized section leaders. Do the same on DEI in annual meetings with status committee chairs. Um, thinking about a second set of recommendations, broaden membership. The National Conference on Black Political... of Black Political Scientists recently, 2019, identified that at least 60 of 107, so somewhat less than 60 percent of Historically Black Colleges and Universities were outside... it's unfortunate that the hidden word is outside the orbits of the National Congress of Black Political Scientists, Tri Sigma Alpha, and APSA.

Dr. Carol Mershon: I mean this is stunning, this datum is stunning. So APSA should develop and pursue a targeted recruitment plan for HBCU's, tribal colleges and universities, and other minority serving institutions. Think about hiring a recruitment coordinator for minority serving institutions. Still thinking about recommendations and broadening membership and improving its ecosystem, APSA could foster inclusive climates within departments by doing something like adopting the leadership and academic excellence... climate excellence, I'm sorry, LACE proposal that emerged from the 2018 APSA Annual Meeting Hackathon. And LACE would create metrics for rating departments on DEI and non-monetary

rewards for high performers who... I mean and a department would want to enhance its reputation it'd be easier for the department to hire for example, uh, people from marginalized groups. And then, also a set of recommendations on increasing APSA's DEI personnel.

Dr. Carol Mershon: We all know that APSA's DEI office has superb, uh, members of its DEI office. Uh, and that office has a very broad remit. Somehow, it manages with two superb full-time members, so... so invest more personnel and financial resources and personnel in the DEI program, so as to strengthen and deepen the DEI commitment. Such investments can reinforce links on DEI agendas and initiatives across all parts of APSA to DEI agendas and initiatives and regional associations, Midwest, Southern, etc. And DEI agendas an initiative can be strengthened for follow through on DEI in departments and home institutions.

Dr. Carol Mershon: I don't have takeaways. I want to say more, just a bit more. But there's only one slide, more on shovel ready toolkits. APSA could adapt for... say, leaders of organized sections, for leaders of status committees. APSA could create a template. Templates are so wonderful, uh, and alter that template to suit the specifics of an audience, uh uh, set of interested people. And then let's attend to multiple axes of difference faculty and students in rural institutions, political scientists outside academia. I mentioned very quickly first generation graduate students and faculty, contingent faculty, but I... but more attention needs to be devoted to these groups. More on DEI funding and personnel. Consider a thought experiment that involves an ongoing automatically replenished source of DEI funding.

Dr. Carol Mershon: What if when members initiated or renewed their membership they were automatically asked to contribute a small fee? It could be a tiny fee, could be a sliding fee according to income, but it's to DEI and you would need to opt out... opt out of this. Now think about the contrast, we have sections that you opt into, this is opting out. You could get... looking over in this area, uh, matching funds from external donors and also in this area, matching funds from external... any one external donor or multiple external donors could expand on such an ongoing source.

Dr. Carol Mershon: And then I want to say more about the benefits of DE... excuse me, DEI. Available research shows that relatively equitable inclusive and diverse groups of colleagues generate relatively effective problem solving and relatively great creativity and productivity. This is our business. We all gain, everyone from DEI. And with that, I close and I welcome any questions.

Dr. Carol Mershon: Um, given your [inaudible] and so forth, how would you respond to the given anti-DEI initiatives written in Florida and Texas and like the other states in that context in terms of both DEI and the consequences of removing the programs that do exist in this area? Uh, that big huge sigh is my first genuine, uh uh, start to a response. Um, well there... there are these people out there. Um, and... So part of what we could do as an association is try to have a really strong, uh, push in education. There

is this incontrovertible research that shows that, um, that when we embrace diversity, inclusion, and equity, we're going to have better learning environments, better, um uh, creativity. People in Florida aren't going to be convinced. Uh, well frankly, super old people in my department aren't going to be convinced. Uh, but, um...

Dr. Carol Mershon: And I'm getting to be one of the super old people in my department. Uh um, push back is my... is my inadequate answer. And show the... and show the benefits and recognize that there will be these areas of resistance. Anyone want to help me?

Dr. Carol Mershon: [inaudible] Oh, Lester, you... are you about to intervene? So, um...

Audience Member: This is... this is where I think that, um, there are a number of benefits with the DEI approach, um, and a number of benefits in examining some of the challenges that scholars face using the framework of micro-aggressions. Yeah. But this is where I think we would do, uh, we would do more in really leaning in to what Paula led us with. Uh huh. We talked about... epistemological framework... [inaudible]

Audience Member: So if... so if we, uh, and then... so this story I... I've told before and I apologize, well most of you I have told this story to, but when our [inaudible] are in grad school, um, a number of them approached, um, because Michigan had had a number of Black students, it's important to know the number of Black and Brown students because of Black student protests. Right. So they had this large cohort of students for the first time, most of them interested in REP. Um, but they didn't have the class framework, so a number of them, uh, went to the professors of the different sub fields and the professors in the different sub fields were all like, you know, this thing isn't political. Like this thing you want to study isn't political.

Audience Member: Now if we trace... use that... that account, that's an 80's account, and what, uh, what, uh, Todd Shaw, Rob Castro did in response is they organized a number of other... well they with other Black and Brown graduate students initially created their own, um, bibliography and they gave that bibliography to everybody in the subfield, everybody in every subfield. I'm not sure that the bibliography still exists but, uh, but I was there... I was... you know, I saw it. So if we take that end of the point and... like an 80's point and then the beginning that Paula notes in 1894, we can actually trace our rate functions within every subfield over time. Right? So, if... so one of the challenges that the discipline faces now is that we now take race as something that's important and then we can, you know, not just race, but gender.

Audience Member: We take these axes of differences that are... as important but we still relegate them to be cor... we corded them off, right? So it's very difficult now to have a top 20 department and not

have somebody study REP. Uh, it's easier for... it's easier we have to make similar to grab the Latino politics and gender but it's not... if... if... we made headway. But what we still haven't done is integrate the study of these dynamics into this discipline as fundamental, not as secondary, not as tertiary. Now one of the challenges with the DEI and micro-aggression approach is it renders our... this problem we have one of human resources rather than one of the intellectual foundation of the discipline. And then, what the... what the problem of that is is that it renders and we've talked, Robbie and I have talked about this, it renders political science unfit for its mission. So there are people in this room who believe political science is predictive. Because you ignore this stuff, it doesn't function that way. There are people in this room who believe political science is descriptive and normative, it doesn't function in either of those ways.

Audience Member: So if we actually take... if we take the intellectual slash political approach to this issue that ei... either alongside of or maybe even depending instead of kind of an HR approach that I think we may gender... we may generate more purchase. Yeah. So... There are people out there... so thank you so much, first of all, but in my view, there are people out there who would reject the binary that you have just identified. My lived experience so far in the discipline includes this or is this okay and I know that that is because of the origin of the discipline, of the epistemological foundation of the discipline that leaves their legacy today. So these two things, which might be seen as two separate things, are actually joined. My lived experience reflects the origins and the continuing imprint, I'll use that word again, of the origin of the discipline that, um, lasts today.

Audience Member: So I'm having a hard time understanding, so... Can you repeat that again? Yeah, so...

Audience Member: So there could be people out there who would say, no, I don't believe that this is an HR take that this like focus on implicit bias, bullying, etc. is an HR take on, um, on issues of climate and context, just to take the original title of my working group. This instead is how political scientists, particularly those who are from underrepresented groups, experience day to day their work and lives, whether in their universities, colleges, whatever their workplace is, or their professions when they go to meetings. This is their life. Okay? I have been bullied repeatedly and I know, so this is not HR, this is my life and I know that this is because of the origins of political science. And... that continue to leave their imprint today. And there can be marginalized communities... I've experienced a lot of that stuff. Yeah. So... so. Let's get this up a notch. Okay, okay.

Audience Member: So like when, you know, after George Floyd you've got all these departments come up with their statements and the statements were all, you know, this is terrible damage, this kind of stuff, right? And various departments link that to the intellectual mission of the department, right? And so, if I think you're absolutely right that... that this... that the... the DEI stuff is integral to the intellectual mission that we have, right, as political scientists, um, the strategic question, which is not what you're saying, but the strategic question is how... how can we be held hostage by the fact that DEI is much more palatable? [inaudible] ...then actually connecting, you had mentioned, how many of those

department said we need to rethink our political science at the same time as we, you know, are aghast at what what happened outside?

Audience Member: I really like the direction, um, here and I think it's particularly the inclusion model that time. So, I think I agree, these things are in relationship to each other, whether you know the body's in the room and the whatever as well as the fundamental intellectual project that is political science. Um, but as we move this work forward I do think it's really important, I think as you guys are suggesting, how we frame the problematic, um, because that will to a large degree I think animate the kinds of interventions we design. So for example, and this was part of the conversation earlier, like if we frame the problematic as resistance to submit, which I don't think it's a resistant... like there's... it's a resistance or that resistance just doesn't... doesn't exist in a in a vacuum to the quote-unquote top journals, um, it's something well founded because of our experiences, um, and it's because there's a resistance to accept on the other side or resistance to be taken seriously on the other side, um.

Audience Member: But it's really about, and I can't remember who was saying it, about... kind of... we don't just encourage people to submit, but we where do we have the conversation about why do we fetishize these journals in the first place? Where does that come from the foundations of the discipline? Um, similarly like I think the HR piece is, well then we need to hire recruit and retain more BIPOC scholars, but without changing the discipline for the department then we're just adding more people that will be submitted to the harassment. So like where's the intervention, you know? Sure, I want a colleague that's Native American [inaudible] the science.... the whole about a group that upon which the discipline was you know founded to erase, um, but you know not without this sort of deeper conversation around the discipline, um, and our field, and the department. So like, where is the piece if there's a lot of focus on BIPOC Scholars and sort of our our experiences in an HR sense, but where's the intervention to the to the racism in the department, in the field, um, and in the journals and everywhere else? What's gonna work on that? Right, um...

Audience Member: [inaudible] ... And then there's sort of a... and then there's a training programmatic professionalization, I don't know quite what to call that second agenda and... and the latter needs not to be uh Band-Aid or... or a way of... I don't know quite what the word, alluding, dealing with the former, they both need to be go... happening at the same time being pushed forward in parallel, but I think we also need to interrogate the inner... this intersection between them and what... how does the one exacerbate the other. So I don't... I don't... I don't... I think they both need to be emphasized, they both need to be advanced and we need to look at how they intersect with each other and use that to inform how we advance them both. I think we need to think of it as a whole not of it as a that or that, but as... as how they fit together.

Audience Member: [inaudible] ...seriously about what we... what do we do? What we're [inaudible] too. At least my experience is when you give people the option they're, gonna go... to DEI every time and within DEI to gender, um... Oh, no... no. I was just thinking with all of you all talking, it made me think of,

um, Bonnie Honig, "Democracy and the Foreigner", right? That the foreigner picking, right, the country is... is evidence of his choice worthiness. So nothing has to change about this page, right? It just... it could be, right? And it just made me think of this, right, the fact that we are doing this and all of this stuff is the easy stuff to do, right? Hire more people, retain those people, but it leaves the foundation intact and that's ultimately the goal, right, is to leave the foundation of exclusion, white supremacy, patriarchy, etc. impact. And that's always going to be easy, easier. And, um, yeah and I think that's a hard one because it's going to really change some fundamental ways that we organize this discipline. Um, but I think what's the underneath of all of this is that this is a discipline and a practice of the elite and what does it look like when that starts to change or be challenged? Well, it'll move in certain ways, it'll bend in certain ways, but not in any way that actually threatens what the thing is, um, and I think that's the the underneath, right? When we're talking about all of this.

Audience Member: This is a comment from the section between the intellectual pedagogical versus the professional and not being separate. It seems to me, one observation I've made over the years is that many times we do... people are trained to differentiate professional life versus intellectual and essentially utilization of one's experiences are not as relevant in the intellectual sphere and... and in the personal. In some regards, issues of micro-aggression and bullying are really... we know they're in our gut, but also from an intellectual point of view we also could talk about, you know, unintrusive measures and other other indicators that this is what's happening and not just my own experiences, but many times people partition their symptoms. Their sense of self and their professionalism one around and operates in this kind of context and is not relevant to apply those rigors in understanding in what's going on. And in some sense, [inaudible] a lot of times just younger people bought into certain standards, expectations of what professionalism entails. And not... not really examining or critiquing what's the underlying elements are in the biases and that's fine, we don't question that and just, that's life. And that separation, I think, has those kind of costs as well.

Dr. Carol Mershon: [inaudible] ... but I never thought I would be the chair. [inaudible] ...full of guys, like someone like me, I worked on gender, I worked on intergroup relations, the stuff I do was like, no way. Here I am as chair. I'll tell you, step up. You guys have been in leadership positions, no it makes a difference. So we can pretend we're outside the system, we're actually in it and we have the ability to change it, right? You may not think you can but you can, um, by setting... and what we're doing is setting norms for our graduate students. Those norms are powerful. We're group animals is what I always say, we're group creatures, right, and people conform to these norms, so if you can set the stage, set a tone, it makes a huge difference.

Dr. Carol Mershon: And I also think we're dealing with a graduate student population that is much more aware of these issues. They're looking for it, you know? We can empower them to speak up also, I mean I know in some departments they don't have much power. We try to empower the students in our department, we have a diversity committee, they're on it. Um, they hold our feet to the fire as well, different kinds of diversity but... so I do think, you know, we can complain from the outside or you can

get in there and try and make change. From... and we're inside. I mean, when you're a full professor, sorry, you're inside the system.