

## **NSF Workshop Panel 2: Forging Inclusive Diversity Coalitions (January 7-9, 2015)**

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### **Introduction**

This white paper is a response to the question put forth by the NSF funded Workshop on Coalition Building to Advance Diverse Leadership and Address Discrimination in Political Science and the Law & Social Sciences:

*Research tells us that coalitions across groups can provide critical resources for advancing policy change and diversifying institutions. How can coalitions be forged in our own discipline to achieve these goals? Which groups are to be included, and what types of coalitions are likely to most effective and most feasible? Why? What kinds of obstacles might the change advocates intent on building such coalitions need to overcome, how might they do so, and what opportunities exist in the discipline that they might be able to exploit?*

I will address the aforementioned questions and focus specifically on the role of disciplinary associations in coalition building. Partnerships and collaborations have long been employed in academic disciplines to advance scholarship and knowledge. They have also been a fruitful way to develop solutions to long-standing and complex problems such as under-representation, low retention, and hostile work climates. In cases that require systematic policy or organizational change, coalition building has been shown to be an advantageous approach. Coalitions bring together individual and groups to achieve a common goal. Coalition formation and participation can lead to long-term benefits and future opportunities for collaboration.

### **Challenges facing the discipline: Under-representation, low retention, and discrimination**

Under-representation of female and faculty of color is a persistent challenge facing the political science discipline. APSA data on political science faculty (ranging from 1980-2010) presented in the APSA Task Force Report on Political Science in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (2011) shows that while there have been increases in the number of women faculty and faculty of color in political science, these increases are occurring at a slow pace. This is especially the case for faculty of color. Specifically, there are racial/ethnic as well as gender disparities in political science faculty representation:

- “In 1980, of 7,473 total faculty members, 182 or 2.4% were African Americans, and 86 or 1.2% was Latina/o. In 2010, of a total of 9,302 faculty members, 461 or 5% were African American; 249 or 2.7% were Latina/o; and 319 or 3.4% were Asian Pacific Islander” (39-42).
- “The number of women faculty has increased at a noticeably faster rate. In 1980 female faculty numbered 769 or 10.3%, in 2010 the number had increased to 2660 or 28.6%” (42).

- “The number of overall faculty is still overwhelmingly male: In 1980, 89.7% were male faculty and in 2010, 71.4% were male faculty.” (Ibid).
- “The overwhelming majority of women political science faculty members are Caucasian.” Here is the breakdown for 1980: Caucasian, 93.4%; African American, 4.3%; Latina, 2.3%. In 2010: Caucasian, 86.6%; African American, 6.1%; Latina, 3.0%; and Asian Pacific Islander, 4.4% (Ibid).
- “There is a significant gender gap present for each group.” (Ibid.). However, within each group, this gap is narrowing: Among Caucasians it is 50.4%; among African Americans, 33.4%; among Latinas and Latinos, 36.6%; and among Asian Pacific Americans, 26.6% (Ibid.).

The Task Force report states in no uncertain terms that “(A)bsent direct intentional efforts to further diversify faculty, we should expect the pace of progress will continue to be slow and that the rate of inclusion will also be very slow” (APSA Task Force 2011, 4).

Another problem facing the discipline is low retention rates of tenure-track faculty. The drop off of the number of female or minority graduate students and faculty members at various points along the academic/ faculty trajectory is commonly referred to as the leaky pipeline (APSA Task Force, 2005; APSA Task Force, 2011; Monforti and Michelson 2008; Monroe and Chiu 2010). Various individual and institutional factors have been found to contribute to either dissatisfaction with, and/or exit from, the profession by women and minorities leaving the discipline. These factors include: discrimination; wage and career pattern disparity (Hesli and Burrell 1995; Monroe and Chiu 2010) hostility; feelings of isolation and lack of mentoring/ professional development (Alex Assensoh, et al. 2005; Monforti and Michelson 2008; Monroe 2003); financial concerns (Monforti and Michelson 2008); lack of collegiality; lack of transparency in tenure and promotion system; family-work life balance; lack of perceived agency (Terosky et al. 2014); and difficulty navigating service expectations and obligations vs. research and professional expectations and obligations (Alex Assensoh et al. 2005; Monforti and Michelson 2008).

### **Disciplinary responses to the challenges**

The American Political Science Association (APSA) currently provides a number of programs and initiatives aimed at addressing many of the challenges listed above. For example, the APSA Ralph Bunche Program--RBSI (1986) and the APSA Minority Fellowship Program (1969) aim to increase the presence of under-represented minorities in political science graduate programs. The RBSI program resulted from a collaboration between APSA, the Committee on the Status of Blacks in the Profession and Professors Jewel L. Prestage (Southern University) and Peter Zwick (Louisiana State University). In their proposal to the APSA council they write: “The APSA and its committee on the status of blacks after extensive deliberation...that something more must be done to increase the number of blacks who pursue graduate education in political science. The something more should include concerted efforts that have programmatic and institutional dimensions. Thus we propose a (six week) summer institute for Blacks in political science.” (Prestage and Zwick 1985). Since its start in Louisiana, the institute has expanded to focus on all under-represented students and has moved to Georgia (a coalition of four Atlanta area

schools), the University of Virginia and finally to Duke University—where it currently resides under the direction of Dr. Paula McClain. In 2013 the APSA Council approved the creation of the Ralph Bunche Programs Endowment. The endowment is meant at the outset to support the RBSI program that is now in place and any additional programming aimed at introducing students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups to graduate study and careers in political science. The APSA Minority Student Recruitment Program (MSRP) (1999) connects undergraduates who are interested in political science graduate school with political science graduate programs who actively recruit them. The APSA Mentoring Program (2002) provides mentors to graduate students and junior faculty (women and minorities in particular) seeking advice on a wide range of career and professional topics. Recognizing that there are many factors that contribute to “problems of retention, integration and advancement”, APSA joined forces with the Women’s Caucus for Political Science to create the APSA mentoring program. “We hope that an APSA mentoring initiative will both mitigate this professional isolation by providing support for women and minority faculty members at critical career points and position the Association as a key force encouraging the full integration of women and minority political scientists.” (Monroe 2003). Thus, the mentor program was partnership between the APSA, the Women’s Caucus, and the respective caucuses and committees on the status of Asian Pacific Americans, Blacks, and Latinos in the Profession. From time to time over the years, the mentor program has been updated to improve matching and to make it more user friendly. In 2014, the mentor program was updated to include a more detailed set of professional and career categories in order to make the matching process more efficient and precise. Each of these diversity and inclusion programs is the result of the combined efforts of APSA governance bodies—the council, status committees, and standing committees—and task forces, association members, sister associations and related groups such as the National Conference of Black Political Scientists (NCOBPS); the Women’s Caucus for Political Science (WCPS); The Latino Caucus in Political Science (LCPS).

In addition to these programs, APSA hosts a number of recruitment, retention, professional development, and diversity-related programs and events that have been featured at the annual meeting and the teaching and learning conference: short courses, e-Jobs interviews; professional development roundtables on the tenure process; graduate and junior faculty breakfasts; non-academic career panels; the chairs workshop; Ralph Bunche poster sessions; the graduate school information fair; and the mentor reception. Academic meetings are an important component of the professionalization process and should feature programs and opportunities to advance diversity and professional development.

### **Forging inclusive coalitions to address long-standing challenges to diversity, inclusion, and equity**

Yet, despite the existing discipline-wide diversity and inclusion programs, and professional development events at the annual meeting, and in light of the aforementioned problems of under-representation and retention of faculty of color and women in the discipline of political science, and other persistent problems mentioned above, more focused, creative, and purposive work needs to be done to bring people, groups, and organizations together to address these issues. To that end, this white paper argues that inclusive coalitions should be forged within the discipline and beyond, to achieve the goals of

advancing diverse leadership and policy change. The paper offers recommendations and strategies for forging effective and inclusive coalitions. This paper also argues that disciplinary associations are in a unique position to encourage and potentially facilitate coalition formation. Examples from the discipline, its governance bodies, and taskforces are presented below to illuminate the argument.

A host of recent task forces and workshop reports— focused on diversity, inclusion, equity and broadening participation in the STEM fields and political science specially—cite the importance of forging coalitions and joint action as a means of developing more effective strategies and policies for positive outcomes (APSA Task Force 2005; APSA Task Force 2011; COSSA CEDS Reports 2008, 2012). For example, the three overarching recommendations put forth by the APSA Task Force Report on Political Science in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (2011) are: 1) more comprehensive systematic collection of access and inclusion related data (at the individual and institutional levels) in the profession; 2) the dissemination of use of best practices for mentoring and professional development; and 3) the formation of disciplinary partnerships to develop new and innovative “research, teaching, and career development paradigms” for teaching and learning diversity and inclusion (5). Efforts are currently underway to address these recommendations. For example, a number of APSA status committees are examining data on faculty rank, fields of interest, and tenure status, by race/ethnicity and gender. Other status committees are in the process of collecting original data and information that will shed light on the current professional experiences of under-represented faculty. Where possible, these committees will work join forces.

### **Disciplinary associations, coalitions and the discipline**

The workshop conveners ask: *How can coalitions be forged in our own discipline to achieve these goals?* To that question, I add the following question: *In what ways do associations participate in coalitions?* I would argue that the role of associations in coalition participation and formation can vary depending on a number of factors such as availability of resources, timing, whether the advocacy goal lines up with the goals and mission of the association and its members, etc. In my experience as the director of diversity and inclusion, I have seen associations play a direct role in coalition participation and formation on the one hand, and an indirect role in coalition formation or facilitation, on the other.

#### *Interdisciplinary Coalitions*

Association leaders may decide to directly involve their organization in interdisciplinary partnerships or coalitions with other associations. Due to the commitments required (i.e., time, money, staff, other resources) these partnerships are only undertaken after careful consideration to ensure that the benefits of participation in the coalition outweigh the costs and that the coalition’s mission is congruent with the association’s mission. For example APSA is an active member of COSSA, the Consortium of Social Science Associations. COSSA is an advocacy group and most recently has been very active in working to protect political science funding. Another example is CEDS – Collaborative for Enhancing Diversity in Science—a coalition of diversity program directors in which I am currently participating on behalf of the APSA. The outcomes of these efforts will bear benefits for the discipline as a whole and its members. For example, CEDS is currently working on a literature review of mentoring best practices across professions and

disciplines with a focus on successful mentoring strategies for women and minorities. The ultimate goal is to develop fellowships and to produce comprehensive resources that can be shared within the STEM fields in order to increase retention rates among under-represented groups. CEDS originated in 2008 and has produced reports, best practices, and a fora for associations, organizations, universities, and federal agencies that are committed to broadening participation. Examples of recommendations that resulted from this 2008 report include: encouraging associations to be sure to that their mission statement reflects their commitment to diversity and inclusion; join together with other associations to examine and document best practices that can then be shared across fields; work with members, departments and universities about the importance of diversity and on how enhanced data collection will aid in the goal of broadening participation (COSSA CEDS Report 2008). However, one note of caution: the direct benefits of these types of partnerships may take time and a great deal of coordination to materialize within the discipline. Thus a long-term commitment is required in order to see real institutional change.

### *Intra-disciplinary coalitions*

Disciplinary membership associations—by their very nature—can facilitate the formation of intra-disciplinary partnerships, collaborations, and even coalitions among their members around the topic of broadening participation in the leadership ranks, and diversity, inclusion and equity. First, the vast network of members, departments, related groups, and governance bodies such as status committees and the council, are connected via the association’s mission, virtual communities, its website, publications, and its meetings and programs. The annual meeting and the teaching and learning conference have been the site of countless panels, roundtables, and discussions on diversity, inclusion, and equity in the profession. There are many examples of committees, organized sections, caucuses and related groups collaborating with one another on plenaries, panels, short-courses, or receptions that revolve around the theme of the meeting. Part of my role as director of diversity and inclusion programs is to be the staff support for all of the APSA status committees. Thus, I have seen firsthand the collaborative efforts in which committees and related groups engage. Furthermore, when possible APSA staff working with the various governance groups encourage and can help to facilitate these collaborations and partnerships. These one-off collaborations are important-- and frequently turn into longer term collaborations—because they can advance inter-group understanding, cultural competency, and professional networks.

In fact, the theme of the upcoming 2015 APSA Annual Meeting is *Diversities Reconsidered: Politics, and Political Science, in the 21st Century*. This topic will most assuredly generate important discussions that could lead to collaborative data collection and scholarship. Scholarly collaborations, co-authoring on a panel paper, and attending a professional development roundtable are experiences that can lead to enhanced agency, and the formation of informal professional or mentoring networks —opportunities that are especially important for the success of women and under-represented graduate students and faculty of color. One example that comes to mind is the networking that occurred after the graduate student professional development breakfast at the 2014 annual meeting. The senior faculty panelists were candid and stayed after for questions. The space was inviting, resulting in individuals interacting with people they didn’t know, but whom they want to connect with. Given these existing disciplinary

connections, interaction and collaboration with associational colleagues and programs can lay the groundwork for future opportunities for collaboration or coalition-building.

Second, disciplines conduct surveys and collect important data on demographics, placement, and career and professional status that can be used by diversity coalitions to advance their goals. Data can be shared with departments and universities, or used in proposals for funding to conduct interventions to broaden participation. Additionally, this data can be shared across disciplines in order to gain perspective on the advances being made, or the common challenge faced by our colleagues in other fields. More longitudinal, individual, experiential, and contextual discipline-wide data is needed, however, to shed light on trends in the discipline.

Finally, for those groups who have already formed coalitions, disciplinary meetings can be viewed as opportunities for the coalition to meet face to face in order to deliberate on the next steps, or develop a strategic plan, workshop a draft of a white paper or report, or recruit additional coalition members.

### **Creating and maintaining an effective coalition**

To measure coalition effectiveness, this paper advocates for the use of the Core Capacity Model (as offered by the TCC group—an organizational consulting group for nonprofits). The Core Capacity Model is used to evaluate the ability of a coalition to attain its desired policy outcome and “to successfully implement advocacy strategies in pursuit of advocacy outcomes” (Raynor 2011, 5). The model states that there are four key capacity areas: Leadership capacity, adaptive capacity, management capacity, and technical capacity. I will focus on two of these capacities—leadership capacity and adaptive capacity—and briefly highlight how they can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of diversity coalitions whose goals are to advance diverse leadership and address discrimination. Leadership capacity is “the ability of organizational leaders to create and sustain a vision, inspire, model, prioritize, make decisions, provide direction and innovate, all in an effort to achieve the organizational mission” (Raynor 2011, 15). Adaptive capacity the “ability of a nonprofit organization to monitor, assess, and respond to internal and external change” (Ibid.).

In order to effect policy change in the area diversifying institutions and leadership and increasing equity, coalitions need to harness the power, energy, and scholarship of diverse set of members. This requires coalition leadership that can clearly outline the advocacy goals and help the coalition determine what actions to take to reach those goals. Communication is key to effectiveness. Leaders should encourage inclusiveness by inviting contributions and informed input (both qualitative, quantitative) from each coalition member/ stakeholder will be important to ensuring the effectiveness of the coalition’s goals.

In terms of adaptive capacity, coalitions should be prepared to be responsive to challenges that arise, and changes that occur in the advocacy landscape, such as changes in membership, funding challenges and changes in the policy arena. Acknowledge and take advantage of the strengths, expertise, and influence of each of the coalition partners in order to adapt with the change.

The overarching goal should be to seek to benefit the coalition and the coalition’s stakeholders, as well as broader community. Benefits to the broader community will ensure future/increased opportunities

for buy-in, development, and longevity of the outcome. I close with additional recommendations for building effective coalitions.

### **Additional Recommendations for successful coalition formation and advocacy outcomes**

- Coalitions should be inclusive and diverse. Seek out informed stakeholders from a diverse set of communities both within and external to the discipline. Seek out coalition members who have a variety of experiences, backgrounds, and approaches to problem-solving. The critical piece is ensuring that all groups or stakeholders are included in the planning, decision making and implementation process.
- When building coalitions, look both within and outside of your disciplinary association for allies, stakeholders such as colleges and university administrators, and campus chief diversity officers (CDO). Be sure to familiarize yourself with the CDO as their role and authority varies by campus (Leon 2014). You will want buy in and input from these groups who may be working first hand with the policy outcomes that will be put into place.
- Set a timeframe for the different phases of your partnership or coalition—planning, deliberation, data collection, evaluation, action, implementation etc.
- Participating and being active in your disciplinary association is beneficial to coalition building. Participation will help develop strong and weak ties that you will have at your disposal.

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