A Word from Our Chair, Dr. Marijke Breuning

Welcome to our Fall Newsletter! It’s been almost a quarter century since Mary Meyer and Simona Sharoni organized the first Women’s Caucus Breakfast, as described in the article on the origins of the Women’s Caucus in this newsletter. There are now many more women members of ISA – and the WCIS – than there were in those early days, when the association could be a lonely place for women.

It is not that long ago that ISA’s journals were resistant to considering submissions that empirically investigated various aspects of the status of women in the profession. Although the door to work on the sociology of the profession has been cracked open, there is much work left to be done. Empirical assessments of the status of women in the profession continue to show that women publish in academic journals at lower rates than their presence in the profession, that their work is cited less often than comparable work by men, and that their work is less likely to be featured on graduate syllabi.¹ I invite each of you to help mediate these issues, especially if you are tenured (in the US) or have a more established position in the discipline. Share the empirical work on various aspects of the status of women in the profession with colleagues and suggest works by women scholars that others might cite and include in syllabi. And, of course, encourage your women colleagues to submit their work to academic journals – and to accept review requests, which is another way to be part of the conversation about what gets published.

Despite the advances women have made in international studies and its associated disciplines, there is still much work to be done. Our newsletter editor, Anwar Mhajne, asked the members of our executive board to say a few words about what the WCIS means to us. The common theme that emerged in our comments is that the caucus helps us connect with colleagues, and encourages and empowers us. I sincerely hope that this

¹ See, for instance, the recent series of articles in the Monkey Cage of the Washington Post, which the WCIS publicity team of Kelebogile Zvobgo and Hind Atef Alhelou has linked to our Facebook page and tweeted about.
is also the experience of our membership more broadly, because it is at the heart of what the WCIS seeks to be and do for women in the profession.

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The Right Women at the Right Time: the origins of the
Women’s Caucus for International Studies

by Meredith Reid Sarkees, Vicki Golich, Mary Meyer McAleese, Susan Northcutt, and Simona Sharoni

In the 1980s, the meetings of the International Studies Association (ISA) could be isolating and lonely places for women. The prevailing “wisdom” of the day – that women were not, could not, and should not be knowledgeable about world politics – often led to subtle and more openly-expressed attitudes that international studies was not a suitable place for women. Women who dared to challenge this stereotype generally attended graduate programs in which they were one of only a few women (or the only woman). Then, they joined departments in which they were likely to be the only woman working in international studies. At ISA conferences, women frequently found themselves to be the sole female on panels or in the audience, greatly limiting the opportunities to find research collaborators. Furthermore, women were rarely included in ISA's leadership positions: for instance, from ISA’s founding in 1959 to 1990, there was only one female President of ISA, Dina Zinnes in 1980–1981. Similarly, women’s research rarely appeared in ISA publications, especially work about women or gender in international studies, a topic which encountered very hostile attitudes at that point.

Women scholars who believed that studying the contributions of women in international affairs was important began to organize with the goal of creating a space within the ISA where their research would be welcomed. The Feminist Theory and Gender Studies (FTGS) section was established as an official ISA section in 1990, thus becoming a mechanism by which innovative research could be accepted for ISA annual conferences.

A number of the original FTGS members were also concerned about the professional status of women in international studies. With the prompting of women like Ann Tickner and the supportive leadership of ISA President Hayward Alker (1992–1993), ISA created its first ad hoc Committee on the Status of Women (later the Committee on Gender Research). Between 1992 and 1996, the Committee, led by Christine Sylvester, conducted a four-pronged study of women in ISA: with Christine collecting oral histories; Marianne Tetrault examining women’s representation in ISA publications; Karen Erickson assessing the placement of women within ISA’s leadership structure; and Marie Henehan and Meredith Reid Sarkees surveying ISA members concerning the impact of gender on their careers. The final report was presented to the ISA Governing Council, but neither the report nor any of its individual sections was ever published in
an ISA journal since its subject matter was deemed not to be of interest to the ISA membership.

Meanwhile, women who worked in traditional international studies areas (and did not normally focus upon gender research) also felt the need for a space within ISA that would be welcoming for them and their concerns. Mary K. Meyer (McAleese) and Simona Sharoni organized a “Women’s Caucus Breakfast” meeting at the 1995 ISA meeting in Chicago, which thirty women attended. After considering various models from other professional organizations, those involved decided to form the Women’s Caucus for International Studies (WCIS) as a formal section within the ISA. Susan S. Northcutt and Meyer volunteered to draft the Mission Statement and Constitution of WCIS; and the section was formally recognized by the ISA Governing Council at its 1996 meeting in San Diego. At the same meeting, the ad hoc Committee on Gender Research presented its report to ISA’s Governing Council, and one important recommendation was that a permanent entity be charged with an enduring mandate to monitor the status of women in ISA after the ad hoc committee was dissolved.

The following year, WCIS submitted a set of “New Age Recommendations” to the ISA Governing Council (written by Northcutt and Meyer) that included a paragraph that would have empowered the Women’s Caucus to monitor the status of women in ISA. While the Governing Council embraced most of the Recommendations, it required that the Caucus delete the “monitoring” section. Instead, in 1998, the ISA Governing Council created the Diversity Committee to monitor the professional visibility of women and other minorities. It was not until 2007 that the ISA Governing Council approved a WCIS-sponsored proposal (written by Lisa Prügl) for the creation of a permanent Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession.

Since its founding, the WCIS has worked to advance the status of women and other underrepresented groups in the profession, to nominate more women to ISA officer positions, to create networking, mentoring, and career advising opportunities for women and underrepresented groups in the ISA, and to hold the ISA accountable for its responsibilities for gender inclusion and equality. One of its early victories for all ISA members was the institutionalization of childcare at the ISA annual conferences, despite initial resistance from the Governing Council.

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Call for Nominations: Susan Northcutt Award

Deadline
October 1, 2019

The Women’s Caucus for International Studies (WCIS) invites nominations for the Susan (Stoudinger) Northcutt Award. The award recognizes a person who actively works towards recruiting and advancing women and other minorities in the profession, and whose spirit is inclusive, generous and conscientious. It also acknowledges someone who has made significant contributions through service and competence to the field of international studies and to the International Studies Association.
• Recipient must be a current member of ISA.
• The recipient must demonstrate the strength of their candidacy based on the intention of the Northcutt Award, which is to recognize not only outstanding service and competence in their field, but also exceptional inclusivity and courageous work in advancing women and other minorities in the international studies profession.

The recipient of the Northcutt Award will receive an award certificate and commemorative vase at the ISA Business Meeting.

Selection Process: The award is made annually on the basis of nominations by member(s) of the ISA and selection by the WCIS Executive Committee.

Application or Nomination for the Award: Nomination should include a brief (three pages maximum) articulation of the candidate’s strengths relevant to the aims of the Northcutt Award. Self-nominations are welcomed. Nominations for this award must be submitted to the Awards/Nomination Coordinator Jennifer Ramos (Jennifer.ramos@lmu.edu) by October 1st, 2019. See here for more info: https://www.isanet.org/Programs/Awards/Susan-Stoudinger-Northcutt

Call for Nominations: Gerner Grant for Professional Development, Deadline October 1, 2019

The Women's Caucus for International Studies (WCIS) invites nominations for the Deborah "Misty" Gerner Grant for Professional Development, sponsored by Lynne Rienner Publishers. Deborah Gerner (1956-2006) was a much-loved and inspirational scholar who worked extensively on contributing to conflict resolution and peace in the Middle East. She was also a great advocate for women scholars in the international relations discipline. Funds from this grant may be used to support any legitimate professional development identified by the candidate. Some examples of possible uses include the following: (a) Travel to a professional meeting, (b) travel to conduct interviews, work with a colleague on a collaborative project, or field research, (c) purchase of databases, software, books, or other materials needed for research, or (d) participation in an appropriate pedagogy workshop or institute. Please note that these are just examples, and other documented professional development needs will be considered.

• Scope of the Grant: While there are no restrictions on the subject of a candidate's research or teaching area, it will be incumbent upon the candidate to document (a) the need for the professional development activity to be supported by the grant, (b) the appropriateness of the proposed venue/purchase, and (c) the feasibility of the proposed project/activity within the specified time frame. Should the case arise where more than one candidate qualifies for the award under these criteria, preference will be given to applicants whose research or pedagogical goals focus on conflict resolution, achieving peace in the Middle East, and/or the role of women in international relations.
• ISA Membership: Although there will be no administrative costs deducted from this award and the opportunity is open to both Members and Non-Members of ISA, any Non-Member recipient must immediately join the Association to receive this award in order to maintain ISA’s tax-exempt status.

• Final Report: Within one-year of receiving the award, recipient is expected to submit a final report to the WCIS Chair describing the activities accomplished with the grant.

One recipient of the Gerner Award will receive a prize of $2000. An award certificate is presented at the WCIS/FTGS/LGBTQA reception at the ISA annual convention.

Selection Process: The WCIS Executive Committee will rank applications/candidates with the final selection made by Lynne Rienner.

Apply for the Grant: Please submit the following in PDF format by email to the Awards committee chair Jennifer Ramos, Jennifer.ramos@lmu.edu; complete Curriculum Vitae; a brief narrative describing proposed project/activity (one-page); and a budget (one-page). Nominations/applications deadline: October 1, 2019. For further info, see https://www.isanet.org/Programs/Awards/Deborah-Gerner-Grant-For-Professional-Development

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Meet the 2018-2019 WCIS Executive Board!

Caucus Chair: Marijke Breuning, Professor, The University of North Texas
Why did you join WCIS? I have been a member of WCIS since 1996, which is also the first time I attended a WCIS Breakfast meeting at the ISA annual meeting. I found out about WCIS from Meredith Sarkees, whom I met at the Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) section meeting. I joined the caucus at the breakfast meeting, largely because it was such a welcoming group that made me feel comfortable within ISA for the first time. There are a lot more women within ISA now and the caucus has helped to make ISA more women-friendly, but WCIS still has an important role to play for women in the association.

Vice Chair/Program Chair: Jennifer Ramos, Associate Professor, Loyola Marymount University
Why did you join WCIS? I do not know where I would be if it weren’t for this wonderful group of women. I love that we have this shared space together. I’ve received generous support from mentors who seek to empower other women through their generous gifts of time, energy and encouragement. As we each work through our daily challenges in our own corners of the world, it is comforting to know that we can come together through this network and learn from each other at all phases in our careers.

At-Large Members:
Jamie E. Scalera, Associate Professor, at Georgia Southern University
Why did you join WCIS? I joined WCIS during my last year of graduate school, because I was looking for a supportive community to help me as I began my academic career. I have found the women in WCIS to be both inspiring and encouraging in my career. I wanted to join the executive board to give back to this community.

Srobona Bhattacharya, Associate Professor, Georgia Southern University.

Why did you join WCIS? I wanted to join WCIS to interact with women scholars across the globe, share my work and experiences and continue to work towards improving the status of women in the profession of international studies.

Anwar Mhajne, Visiting Assistant Professor, Stonehill College.

Why did you join WCIS? I joined WCIS in 2016 as a the Graduate Student Representative on the Executive Committee. My background as an international graduate student from a minority background motivated me to contribute to the essential work of WCIS in promoting women in the profession, addressing their challenges, as well as increasing the diversity in the decline.

Kristina Hinds, Lecturer, University of the West Indies

Penny Griffin, Senior Lecturer, University of New South Wales

Aakriti Tandon, Assistant Professor, Daemen College

Why did you join WCIS? I first joined the organization in 2017 so am a relatively new member. I am grateful that Women's Caucus works to provide better access and improved opportunities for women in the academy and within our discipline. I am also happy that WCIS works with other similar groups such as FTGS and the Committee on the Status of Women (CSW) to address issues of intersectionality for all kinds of minorities. It has been difficult navigating the academy as an international student and now female faculty and I am very grateful that the Women's Caucus has provided me the opportunity to get involved and serve in a leadership role.

Graduate Student Representatives:

Kelebogile Zvobgo, Ph.D. candidate, University of Southern California and pre-doctoral fellow at the College of William & Mary's Global Research Institute.

Why did you join WCIS? I have been a WCIS member since 2018. I joined WCIS because I am committed to taking and making space for women, scholars of color, and scholars from the Global South—individuals who have been under-represented and under-appreciated in the International Relations.

Hind Atef Alhelou, M.A. student, American University in Cairo

Why did you join WCIS? I joined because I truly believe in the mission of WCIS as women in the Middle East are under-represented in the academic field especially. I hope to network with well established and successful women across the world to learn from them and hopefully inspire the women where I come from to aspire to reach their full potential. Advocacy in this respect is not...
encouraged in patriarchal societies in the Middle East and I hope this changes soon with the efforts of the esteemed members of WCIS.

Past Chair: Gigi Gokcek, Professor, Dominican University of California
What has the Women’s Caucus meant to you? An unwavering support of professional colleagues and friends.