

# NEWSLETTER: MIDWEST WOMEN'S CAUCUS FOR POLITICAL SCIENCE

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## NEWSLETTER CONTENT

- I. **Mission Statement**
- II. **Message from the Caucus President Kira Sanbonmatsu**
- III. **The 2006 Annual Meeting and Award Information**
- IV. **Tools of the Trade**
- V. **Update: What we have learned from recent surveys of graduate students**
- VI. **News and Announcements**
- VII. **Membership Form 2005-2006**
- VIII. **Officer Names and Contact Information**

### I. Mission Statement

The Midwest Women's Caucus for Political Science is a regional caucus affiliated with the Women's Caucus for Political Science of the American Political Science Association. The Midwest Caucus promotes professional equity for women in the discipline of political science by sponsoring sessions at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, working with the Association to promote the interests of women political scientists, encouraging research that acknowledges and investigates the presence and activities of women in political life, and serving as a network for members between annual meetings.

We welcome your participation and membership. To join the Midwest Caucus or to renew your membership, please complete the form provided on the last page of the newsletter and return it to the Caucus Treasurer as indicated on the form.

### II. Message from the Caucus President Kira Sanbonmatsu

Greetings! I hope everyone is having a great summer.

I am writing to update you about recent Caucus activities. Former Caucus President Claudine Gay deserves tremendous thanks for assembling a wonderful program. In addition to the breakfast meeting and cocktail reception, the Caucus hosted a number of roundtables—five on various career-related issues—during the 2005 MPSA annual meetings. Claudine also made a lasting contribution to the caucus by overseeing the writing of our by-laws, which were approved at the business meeting, and by creating the “Tools of the Trade” section of the newsletter that recaps the highlights of the Caucus roundtables.

Many thanks to all of the participants who served on the Caucus roundtables, including panel chairs Jacqueline DeLaat, Jeanette Mendez, Lee Ann Banaszak, and Susan J. Carroll. I also want to extend my congratulations to Pippa Norris (Harvard University), recipient of the 2005 Outstanding Professional Achievement Award. Pippa was honored at the panel chaired by Rosalee Clawson, chair of the Award Committee.

We elected a new slate of officers at the business meeting including President-Elect Christina Wolbrecht and Newsletter Editor Regina Branton. Leslie Schwindt-Bayer (Treasurer) and Elizabeth Bennion (Secretary) are continuing in the second year of their respective terms. Karen Kaufmann has agreed to serve as Award Committee Chair. And I am honored to serve as President for the next year.

As a result of our discussion at the business meeting, I have assembled a Recruitment Committee to brainstorm ways to enhance our membership. Past Caucus President Kathy Dolan (University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee) is the chair of the committee. She is joined by Katharine Floros (University of Pittsburgh), Celeste Montoya Kirk (Southern Illinois University), Wendy Smooth (Ohio State University), and S. Laurel Weldon (Purdue University). I am grateful to Kathy Dolan and the other members for agreeing to serve on this committee, which is already hard at work. Please contact Kathy with any suggestions ([kdolan@uwm.edu](mailto:kdolan@uwm.edu)).

Newsletter editor Regina Branton has graciously agreed to create a virtual presence for the Caucus. Please contact her if you have ideas for the Caucus website ([branton@rice.edu](mailto:branton@rice.edu)).

Meanwhile, I am working with Caucus members to organize the 2006 roundtables. Below, we preview the 2006 roundtables. Please let me know if you would like to participate.

Kira Sanbonmatsu, The Ohio State University  
[sanbonmatsu.1@osu.edu](mailto:sanbonmatsu.1@osu.edu)

### **III. The 2006 Annual Meeting and Award Information**

#### Roundtable Proposals and Participation

Each year the Caucus sponsors several roundtables that address various professional development concerns salient to graduate students, junior faculty, and senior faculty. If you are interested in participating in any of the 2006 roundtables, please contact Caucus President Kira Sanbonmatsu at [sanbonmatsu.1@osu.edu](mailto:sanbonmatsu.1@osu.edu). Based on our discussion at the business meeting, plans are underway for panels that discuss: how to land your first academic job; working with the media; careers at non-Ph.D. granting institutions; nonacademic careers; and methodological approaches to studying gender.

#### Nominations for Outstanding Professional Achievement Award

Every year the MPSA Women's Caucus solicits nominations for the Outstanding Professional Achievement Award. If you would like to nominate an outstanding woman for the 2005-2006 award, please send a brief description of the nominee's accomplishments in the areas of scholarship, teaching, service and mentorship to the Award Chair, Karen Kaufmann. Her email address is [kkaufmann@gvpt.umd.edu](mailto:kkaufmann@gvpt.umd.edu). The deadline for this year's award is **September 15th**. The award committee will announce the recipient by the end of October.

#### PREVIOUS AWARD WINNERS

1993-1994 Doris Graber  
1994-1995 Jewell Prestage  
1995-1996 Susan Welch  
1996-1997 Arlene Saxonhouse

1997-1998 Diane Blair  
1998-1999 Roberta Sigel  
1999-2000 Peggy Conway  
2000-2001 Betty Glad  
2001-2002 Karen O'Connor  
2002-2003 Virginia Sapiro  
2003-2004 Catherine Rudder  
2004-2005 Pippa Norris

#### IV. Tools of the Trade

At the April meetings, the Caucus hosted several roundtables exploring a range of professional development issues. In case you missed any of these interesting discussions, the highlights are summarized below. Kira Sanbonmatsu, Jeanette Mendez, Zoe Oxley, Lee Ann Banaszak, and Susan Carroll contributed their notes to make these summaries possible.

**Topic:** *News You Can Use: Tips for a Successful Post-Tenure Career*

**Panelists:** *Kira Sanbonmatsu (The Ohio State University) (chair); Linda L. Fowler (Dartmouth College), James G. Gimpel (University of Maryland), Michael Jones-Correa (Cornell University), Diana Mutz (University of Pennsylvania), Robert Franzese (University of Michigan)*

- Getting tenure is an exciting career change, but can be anticlimactic. New opportunities—and new requests for service—abound. You may feel more ownership in your institution and seek to play a larger role in your department and in the discipline. Tenure may also bring new life changes, such as starting a family or buying a house. And with tenure comes many responsibilities: to your students, your institution, the community, and the nation.
- It is tempting to explore all of the new opportunities at once—research, grant writing, mentoring, teaching, administration, textbooks, professional service, tenure reviews, and so on. Soon, you may be over committed. Over time, you'll learn what you enjoy and what you are good at. Keep in mind that you have your entire career to pursue these endeavors. At the same time, the busier you are, the better your work may become. Enjoy life! Diversifying your life may make you more efficient.
- Think before saying yes; never agree to anything immediately. Decide beforehand how much is reasonable to do, and only agree to that amount. Learn to say no. Women faculty and faculty of color may be particularly likely to receive requests and must learn to say no. One strategy to decide when to say yes is to consider whether someone else can do this, or whether you are the only one who can. Will this get done if I don't do it? Will it get done well? Also, decide on a moral level, which goals are most important to you and turn down any request not related to your primary goals.
- Interacting with the press is a service to the community. There are many opportunities for political scientists to inform the public about political science. Think about ways to make political science insights more accessible. One tip: talking to radio or print reporters is less time-consuming than traveling to television studios.

- Keep applying for grants. You now have an opportunity to think about long time horizon projects that may not have a payoff in the short-term. Coauthoring may also become more feasible with tenure. You also have a greater opportunity to do interdisciplinary work, which can enrich your research and theoretical contribution.
- Keep an open mind about moving and living in a place you haven't yet thought about. Mobility can help your career.
- One of the most rewarding aspects of life as a senior faculty member is working with graduate students. Eventually, you will produce academic children, and even grandchildren. The rewards in this area are limitless.
- A specialty journal provides a good opportunity to serve as editor, especially because editing these journals is not as time-consuming as one might assume. It can be possible to limit journal business to one day a week.
- How does one leave a research legacy in political science? Stay close to politics. Stay fresh; don't get caught in a rut. Stay focused; remember why you entered a career in academia. Finally, set your own agenda. If you develop a "brand name," be careful not to lose time lending your brand name to edited volumes when you could be furthering your research goals.
- You could also leave a legacy by institution building. Keep in mind that institution building may be informal, by creating communities of scholars. Be respectful of different ways of doing political science and be attentive to developments in other disciplines.

**Topic:** *Becoming Faculty: Transitioning to the First Year*

**Panelists:** *Jeanette Mendez (University of Houston) (chair); Candice Orbals-Wiser (Pepperdine University), Tracy Osborn (Bridgewater State College), Tasha Philpot (University of Texas, Austin), Jennifer Lawless (Brown University), and Andrea McAtee (Indiana State University)*

*Research Strategies:*

- Don't take too much time off from your research during your first year. Time passes quickly. It is a common cliché to say, "carve out some time for your research." But in your first year when you are prepping courses it can be difficult. You can catch up if you devote summer break and Christmas break to research, which frees you up during the semesters.
- It gets easier once you have gone through the courses once. Determine when you are productive in research and when you are productive in teaching and schedule your day accordingly. For example, if you do your research better in the morning, be sure to schedule your courses for the afternoon.
- Protect your time; try to get the most done in a short amount of time. Take the time in graduate school to write a good dissertation that will not need endless re-writing to send it out for review. The time in graduate school is ideal for this.

- Find a mentor. Don't expect mentoring; seek it out. You may find a mentor in a different department. And when all else fails, and even if it doesn't, continue the mentoring from your dissertation adviser. They are more than happy to help continue your progress!

#### *Teaching Strategies:*

- You don't have to create the perfect class the first time out. Recognizing this will help. It is nice if we can prep a course once and then the next time not have to add to it, but you will grow as a teacher and your classes will change.
- It is tempting to add too much to the courses and try to be the best and most innovative teacher. But some of these innovations take time and effort and pull you away from your research. In your first time out with a class don't be overly ambitious. Make sure to schedule some flexibility in the class, such as a movie day, to allow you to catch up on grading and lectures. The students also need this flexibility and will appreciate it.
- Learn the bureaucracy early on—how to schedule classes, how to request technology and web-pages, who/where to print your tests, etc. The sooner you identify the bureaucracy of how the department works, the easier it will be. On a related note, make friends with the staff; they are your best resources!
- Be genuine with your students—they will respond to your open and honest approach. For example, if it is not in your personality to wear a suit, don't try to impress students by wearing one. They won't be impressed if you are not genuine.
- Set boundaries with students, especially in terms of email. Don't answer email at any time day or night. Set aside a specific time for email and tell your students. Also, send out a Frequently Asked Questions list, discuss these in class or have your students email through a discussion board (like WebCT or Blackboard) so that you don't answer the same questions over and over again.
- Become familiar with the university and what type of students it has. Learn about where the students come from and how this might affect your classroom, etc. For example, students from smaller, more rural state colleges might not be indoctrinated to college life and norms. Don't be surprised if they call you "Mr." or "Mrs." vs. "Professor" or "Dr." Take the time to help them learn the norms.

#### *Service Strategies:*

- Talk with your chair. Your chair will be able to tell you what is expected in the first few years in terms of service and will help you narrow down opportunities. In the first month of school you will encounter many opportunities in the university and beyond and many will be tempting, but you do not want to overburden your first few years with a lot of service, no matter how tempting it is!

#### *Other Advice:*

- You will be busy; but be sure to take time for yourself. This will keep you sane. Find an outlet—exercise or a hobby to allow you to unwind. One of the biggest challenges is creating a new social network. You are most likely living somewhere where you don't know anyone and you probably had a large social network in graduate school. Finding a hobby that allows you to

meet other people helps. Also, use the resources on campus and orientation to meet new people. In addition, you can network with organizations with which you have an interest.

- Know that things take longer than you plan—both in research and teaching. Things take about 3 times longer than you expect—so plan accordingly.
- Learn the culture of the department. For example, does your department expect face time or would they rather have you work at home or somewhere besides the office if it means you are productive?
- Two great books to read are *The Courage to Teach* by Parker Palmer and *The Compleat Academic* by Mark Zanna.

**Topic:** *The Politics of Studying Gender* (co-sponsored with Gender and Politics)

**Panelists:** Susan Carroll (Rutgers University) (chair); Tracy Osborn (Bridgewater State College), Ange-Marie Hancock (Yale University), Mala Htun (New School for Social Research), Christina Wolbrecht (University of Notre Dame), and Aili M. Tripp (University of Wisconsin, Madison)

- Opportunities abound for studying gender. Publishers are sometimes more interested in gender research than research on more traditional topics. At the same time, obstacles remain. Gender scholars in comparative appear to be publishing mainly in books. Women scholars and gender scholarship are missing from the leading comparative journals; more common outlets are interdisciplinary, area studies, and topical journals, or journals in other disciplines or based abroad. Work/family issues are particularly complicated for comparative scholars with children who need to do field work for a second project.
- Do good work! Make your research more accessible and for a broader audience. Even the use of language is important. Take extra steps to demonstrate how your work relates to broader questions in your field. Situate your work in broad theoretical questions. Reframe your work if necessary in order to speak to recognized debates. Take gender seriously in your scholarship. It's not just a dichotomous variable.
- The gender politics community is a great resource. But your tenure writers will come from fields beyond gender politics. Get to know scholars beyond gender politics. Don't be afraid to contact senior people. Junior people should be aggressive and network with other fields. Meanwhile, it's not too early for junior faculty to mentor graduate students.
- We should support and promote our work and each other's work. Send your work to other scholars. Submit your work to prominent journals, serve on boards, and communicate with journal editors. Participate in smaller conferences.
- Think about how to present your work on the job market. Being a "women and politics" candidate poses framing dilemmas. But gender scholarship can be viewed as an asset. Apply for all jobs. Just because an ad doesn't mention women and politics doesn't mean you shouldn't apply. Meanwhile, subfield boundaries make it more difficult to engage in innovative, cross-

cutting work. Make sure your work does not get marginalized if you are doing work that crosses subfields.

- Balance solo-authored work with co-authored work. Balance risk taking with your tenure strategy. Some of the interests and commitments of gender scholars need to be balanced pre-tenure. Be sure to demonstrate the value of these efforts.

**Topic:** *Recruiting and Retaining Women Graduate Students*

**Panelists:** *Lee Ann Banaszak (Pennsylvania State University) (chair); Vicki Hesli (University of Iowa), Celeste Montoya (Washington University at St. Louis), and Susan Welch (Pennsylvania State University)*

- Women are a greater share of undergraduate political science majors than Ph.D. students. According to the APSA report to NSF, women were about 47% of undergraduate majors in 1998 and about half of M.A. degrees, but were 32% (1988), 43% (1996), and 38% (1998) of students admitted into political science Ph.D. programs. Once admitted, women graduate students are less likely to complete their Ph.D. In 2001, 33.5% of Ph.D.s in political science were awarded to women. The report did not include data on what percent of all applicants to Ph.D. programs were women.

- There is a lack of information about admission of women into graduate programs and incoming graduate students. Questions for future research include: why are women better represented among political science undergraduate students than graduate students? Are women pursuing law and medical degrees instead? Are there ways to increase interest in the profession among women undergraduates? How are women distributed across subfields of graduate work in political science? If women are not evenly concentrated across subfields, does this distribution have implications for women's job opportunities?

- Strategies for increasing undergraduate interest in graduate study include inviting students to present research at conferences and offering more women and politics courses.

- Strategies for retaining women graduate students include: outreach by women faculty (including assistant professors); one on one mentoring as well as introduction to broader networks; coauthoring; improving leave policies for graduate students; and improving orientation programs for all graduate students.

## **V. Update: What we have learned from recent surveys of graduate students**

Jacqueline DeLaat (Marietta College) chaired a Caucus roundtable called "Success in Graduate School and in Finding Academic Employment: Lessons from Current Research." Vicki Hesli (University of Iowa), Barbara Burrell (Northern Illinois University), Jeanette Mendez (University of Houston), and Helena Rodrigues (University of Iowa) participated on the panel. Discussion focused on the results of a second survey of a panel of graduate students first surveyed in 1997 and again in 2003. A summary of the discussion follows.

### Research on the graduate experience and early academic positions

A number of studies and issues were identified, including: the disjuncture between graduate enrollment and degrees granted (male v. female); variations in service assignments; the nature of job announcements; APSR articles on women and politics (few); salary discrepancies (male v. female); retention and progression through faculty ranks; and types of initial academic positions, by institution.

Recommendations of previous studies have emphasized: a need for formalizing mentoring for graduate students and junior faculty; family-friendly policies; and a flexible, nontraditional approach to the design of positions.

### The 1997 Survey of Midwest Graduate Students

*(This work tested hypotheses about what graduate students need for successful matriculation and socialization into the profession; the results were published in the July and October 2003 issues of PS)*

The best predictor of level of dissatisfaction with the graduate experience is whether the student receives sufficient encouragement, mentoring and consultation from faculty. An ongoing orientation program also helps reduce the average level of dissatisfaction. A surprising finding was that the receipt of an assistantship or fellowship had no impact on satisfaction levels. A scale measuring whether respondents think that incidents of sexual or racial harassment would be handled promptly and appropriately by the department was another significant predictor of dissatisfaction in graduate school.

### Highlights of the Results from the 2003 Survey

- There is a great deal of consistency between the 1997 and 2003 surveys showing respondents answered the questions the same across both waves. (For example, in both surveys respondents felt too great an emphasis was being placed on research methodology in their course.)
- Eight independent variables—gender, marital status, faculty advisor support of career, career planning and placement services offered by the department, publications while in graduate school, funding, emphasis on research methodology, and ranking of the graduate institution attended by the respondent—were used, most of which were statistically significant.
- Three dependent variables were used: whether the respondent left graduate school or finished, whether the respondent is currently employed at a college or university, and the type of institution of employment.

### Leaving Graduate School:

Only 20% of those who were in a political science Ph.D. program in the Midwest region in 1997 did not complete the degree.

- Women were slightly more likely to leave graduate school before completing a doctoral degree, but the difference is statistically insignificant.
- Faculty advising is crucial. Of those rating their advisor on the low end of the scale, the predicted probability of completing the degree is 0.28, holding all other variables at their mean. This increases dramatically if the student rates his or her advisor on the high end of the support scale; for those students, the predicted probability of completing the degree is 0.91.
- Married or partnered students are significantly more likely to complete their doctoral degree programs. This is in line with previous research on graduate school retention, and may indicate

that spouses or partners are able to provide the emotional support and stability that complements the academic support that successful students receive from their advisors.

- Students who feel that there is too much emphasis on research methodology are less likely to remain in their programs. The probability of completing the degree increases by 0.33 if the student does not think the department places too much emphasis on research methodology, holding all other variables at their mean. This may indicate a need for departments to be more up front with students about methodological expectations prior to their entry into graduate programs.
- The relative status of a department also contributes to success in graduate school. Students at departments ranked in the top 20 are more likely to complete their doctorates.

Current Employment at a College or University:

- Out of the total (including those who did not and who did complete their degree), 49% are currently faculty members.
- Less than half of the women are faculty members. The difference, though, does not quite achieve statistical significance.
- A stronger, more supportive relationship with one's faculty advisor significantly increases the chances that a person will become a faculty member after completing his or her Ph.D.
- A department's career planning and placement services can have a significant impact on whether students pursue an academic career.
- A student's publication record while a graduate student also plays an important role in charting her or his future career path.

Type of Institution of Employment:

- Among those who are faculty members, 52% are at a Ph.D. granting institution.
- Men teach and research at Ph.D.-granting institutions at a higher rate than women, but a solid 50 % of women does so, too.
- Faculty advising is yet again important. Respect, approachability and career support from a faculty advisor also increases the likelihood that someone will end up at a Ph.D.-granting institution.
- The relative status of a department also contributes to success after graduate school. Students at departments ranked in the top 20 are more likely to teach in Ph.-D.-granting departments.

The Role of Gender:

- Gender did not achieve a level of statistical significance in any of our models for the total sample.
- However, when we disaggregated the sample by gender, significant differences emerged between the two models for men and women. The results for men mirror those for the total sample for all three outcome models. For women, the variables of interest do not reach statistical significance, except for the role of faculty advising and obtaining a position at a Ph.D. granting institution. For women, success in obtaining this position is a product of strong faculty advising and encouragement.

The World Outside of Academia

- One-third of our respondents indicated that they were not working in academia.
- Fifty-one percent of respondents (46% of men and 58% of women) indicated that they were not faculty members.

- A larger portion of those married or partnered are faculty members and significantly more of the single people are non-faculty. Among those who are not faculty members, education remains the most common career, with 32 percent of our sample employed in this sector. Private business was just behind education at 30 percent, and 17 percent work for the government.

#### A personal reflection on the results from a recent Ph.D.

A close relationship with advisor/dissertation chair existed throughout the graduate school experience. Mentorship helped the student persist in the program, assisted with conference participation and networking, and co-authored papers. All of this supports the research findings about the importance of mentoring.

- The program's emphasis on research methods was made clear from the outset, so that was not in any way a discouragement.
- The program's strong ranking helped by providing successful role models (former graduates) and a good base from which to interview.
- Substantial help in career advising and placement was provided by faculty and through an organized placement service.
- Contrary to the study's findings, financial support was important, both for the money itself but also for the professional opportunities departmental assignments in research and teaching provided.

## **VI. News and Announcements**

### ***Politics & Gender***

*Politics & Gender*, edited by Karen Beckwith (College of Wooster) and Lisa Baldez (Dartmouth College), and published by Cambridge University Press, is the new official journal of the Women and Politics Research Section of the American Political Science Association. The journal is an intellectually rigorous, methodologically sophisticated, agenda-setting publication that presents the highest quality scholarship on gender and politics and women and politics. Visit <http://www.apsanet.org/~wpol> for more information on the journal's aim and scope, and for instructions for contributors. Submissions should be sent to [politicsandgender@cambridge.org](mailto:politicsandgender@cambridge.org).

### **RENEW NOW!**

If you did not renew your membership at the 2005 Annual MPSA Meeting, be sure to fill out and mail the attached membership form. This will ensure that you continue to receive the Midwest Women's Caucus newsletter and important information related to the Caucus. If you are unsure of your membership status, please check with the treasurer, Leslie Schwindt-Bayer ([schwindt@olemiss.edu](mailto:schwindt@olemiss.edu)).

If you know of faculty or graduate students who might be interested in the Caucus, please forward this newsletter to them and encourage them to join.

**VII. Membership Form 2005-2006**

**MIDWEST WOMEN'S CAUCUS FOR POLITICAL SCIENCE**

If you would like to renew your membership or become a member, please complete this form and return it with your payment to:

Professor Leslie Schwindt-Bayer\*  
Department of Political Science  
University of Mississippi  
P.O. Box 1848  
University, MS 38677

*\*Make checks payable to "Midwest Women's Caucus"*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

University Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is this a new address within the last 12 months? \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

(We need an accurate e-mail address so that you will receive the newsletter.)

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

New member \_\_\_\_\_

Renewing member \_\_\_\_\_

**MIDWEST WOMEN'S CAUCUS DUES:**

Student/Unemployed	\$1.00 _____	One-Year Membership	\$10.00 _____
Low Income	\$2.00 _____	Two-Year Membership	\$20.00 _____

**Breakfast at the Business Meeting during MPSA 2005 in Chicago:**

*(For those who attended the business meeting in Chicago)*

Student/Unemployed	\$5.00 _____	Faculty/Staff	\$10.00 _____
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**You also have the option of joining and paying your NATIONAL WOMEN'S CAUCUS DUES:**

*(These dues will be forwarded to the Treasurer of the APSA Women's Caucus)*

Student/Unemployed/Retired	Free _____	Salary \$15,000 - \$40,000	\$20.00 _____
Salary under \$15,000	\$10.00 _____	Salary over \$40,000	\$30.00 _____

**Donation to Midwest Women's Caucus:** \_\_\_\_\_ *(Please enter the amount you would like to contribute)*

**TOTAL: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make checks payable to "Midwest Women's Caucus."*

### **VIII. Officer Names and Contact Information**

**President:** Kira Sanbonmatsu (The Ohio State University), [sanbonmatsu.1@osu.edu](mailto:sanbonmatsu.1@osu.edu)

**President Elect:** Christina Wolbrecht (University of Notre Dame), [wolbrecht.1@nd.edu](mailto:wolbrecht.1@nd.edu)

**Secretary:** Elizabeth Bennion (Indiana University South Bend), [bennion@iusb.edu](mailto:bennion@iusb.edu)

**Treasurer:** Leslie Schwindt-Bayer (University of Mississippi), [schwindt@olemiss.edu](mailto:schwindt@olemiss.edu)

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