

MSS Committee for Women in the Profession
2017 Meeting Report – Submitted by Outgoing Chair, Cheryl Childers

Members present: Cheryl Childers (Chair, 2016-2017), Rachel Whaley (Chair, 2017-2018), Megan Nielsen (2017), Deniz Yucel (2019)

Members absent: Susan Bailey (2019), Mary Campbell (2017), Krystal Cooper (2019), Aditi Mitra (2017), Martel Pipkins (2018), Maria De La Torre (2020), Kay McChesney (2020)

1 -- Marlynn May, President-Elect of MSS, and Julia Mendes, Student Director, met with the committee concerning the 2018 program theme of “Sociology and Public Health,” with special attention on “global and national immigration/migration.” We discussed with Dr. May how the WIP committee might contribute to the theme. We agreed to organize some co-sponsored sessions directed toward the program theme.

2 – One of the responsibilities of the WIP Committee is administering the Jane Addams Award. We did not have a 2017 award winner. Members discussed ways to increase the number of nominations, ranging from recruiting applicants from our networks of colleagues, to publicizing and/or recruiting through other committees (i.e., MSWS), to recruiting applicants from cities hosting the MSS conference each year. We did not make any final decisions on this issue.

3 – Our comments on the low turnout of committee members this year led us to a discussion of how to increase member participation and/or identification of potential members who indicate specifically that they wish to serve on the WIP Committee. We discussed each of the current members building networks of our associates who might be interested in the committee, reaching out to them to inquire whether they might wish to serve. We also discussed whether incoming/outgoing committee members realized that they needed to begin/end their responsibilities to the committee at the conference.

4 – The committee discussed that we had only one listed WIP co-sponsored session at the conference this year. While looking through the program, we identified several sessions that could have been listed as WIP co-sponsored. We discussed informing committee, and other MSS, members the importance of indicating such when they submit sessions. We also discussed the possibility of teaming with MSWS in co-sponsoring some sessions. Each committee member in attendance did commit to organizing at least one co-sponsored session for next year’s conference.

5 – Members discussed the online submission portal. While we identified positives in the ease of submitting sessions and/or papers, we did identify some areas we would like to see MSS leadership address. A couple of members commented that the papers they submitted to a specific session topic were ultimately moved to a different session for which they believed their paper was not a good fit. Additionally, when submitting papers to the online portal, the already-established list of topics was not always broad enough to encompass their particular topic.

6 – In regards to how the work of the WIP Committee relates to the strategic plan, we believe that the activities of the committee can contribute to Objective #1 – Diversify Membership & Enhance Member Experience. Part of our discussion about increasing membership was about various aspects of diversity – age, race/ethnicity faculty/student status, tenured/adjunct, etc. We also believe that we can contribute to Objective #5 – Provide and Facilitate Professional Development across MSS Membership.

Part of the bylaws of the committee are “producing equality of opportunity for women.” To that end, our activities are directed toward professional development of women, whether through scholarship (presenting papers), mentorship, or providing opportunities for women to serve on MSS committees.