

## <header>Teacher Symposium

<running head>*Structuring Inclusion into Political Science*

### **Introduction: Structuring Inclusion into Political Science Education**

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<5-line drop cap><start text>In 2019, the International Studies Association (ISA) called for panels on structuring inclusion for the 2020 ISA Conference. The call encouraged panels that “offer practical reforms and institutional mechanisms to advance inclusivity in ISA or at our home institutions, and those that provide support, encouragement, and strategies for coping with differential treatment in professional and academic settings” (International Studies Association 2019) We created a panel that included scholars from universities that have demonstrated a commitment to structuring diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in their classrooms, academic programs, departments, and universities—scholars who also have advocated for and facilitated the adoption of structural changes to improve DEI. Although the conference was canceled in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we remained committed to sharing how we were actively creating formal structures, strategies that we found to be successful, and challenges we encountered along the way.

We acknowledged the continued importance of making structural contributions to the ongoing discussion in the discipline and wanted to provide examples of successes from within political science. Therefore, we expanded our invitation to scholars from various academic ranks and institution types across the Global North and Global South to consider submitting proposals for a symposium, explicitly

focused on structuring DEI in the discipline. The result of this expanded call was two symposia. The first symposium focuses on structuring DEI into undergraduate and graduate student training, course curriculum, and graduate admissions to foster DEI. The second symposium focuses on faculty recruitment, retention, collaboration, and promotion. These symposia are not the first in political science to address DEI nor will they be the last. However, it is our hope that pathways to inclusion that have been paved by our colleagues will provide meaningful insight on practical ways to foster inclusion in the profession.

## <heading level 1>**STRUCTURING INCLUSION INTO POLITICAL SCIENCE EDUCATION**

<text>Many of us are aware that our departmental demographics and classrooms do not reflect the nations or the regions and communities where we teach. Review of educational statistics demonstrates the lack of diversity among students who receive bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees in the United States (figure 1). Data from the American Political Science Association (APSA) reflect a similar reality among those who comprise the political science discipline (figure 2).

<insert figures 1 and 2 here>

<text>The APSA Project on Women and Minorities (P-WAM) provided additional insight (APSA nd). The P-WAM, which relies on data from 21 of the largest MA- and PhD-granting institutions, reported that in 2018–2019, 75.39% of all faculty (i.e., tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure-track) were white. Furthermore, the P-WAM underscored the reality that incoming PhD students and PhD recipients reflect historical and current faculty demographics. Whites comprise 63.38% of PhD recipients and 56.36% of incoming PhD students.

Many in the field understand the disparities in enrollment, participation in high-impact practices, degrees conferred, and faculty ranks. Yet, the discussions highlighting these issues often do not provide

concrete strategies to address the disparities. We seek examples of actions that have been successful and can serve as models for adoption, modification, and application across departments of political science, government, and related fields.

Although there is a normative value to DEI in the discipline, political science has a unique responsibility to society that extends beyond academia. During the October 2021 APSA webinar, “Building an Inclusive Syllabus,” Todd Shaw noted: “Political science courses are bridges students cross to civil, economic, and political society. They will either leave with the capacity to understand and act as political citizens, or they will be inactive. Instructors are an extension of that institutional bridge” (Shaw 2021).

This symposium presents a subset of recommendations, approaches, and programs that our colleagues have found helpful. The articles focus on the student experience and how to more inclusively teach and mentor students to diversify the pipeline of future scholars, public managers, analysts, and policy makers. Not all of these examples have yielded dramatic changes, but each has been successful in refining our thinking about how to improve gaps in opportunity for students from underrepresented groups in political science education.

The contributions to this symposium provide new insight into how political science faculty can proactively create inclusive classrooms and assignments, enhance the accessibility of research norms and practices, engage in holistic admission practices for graduate programs, and demonstrate how student coauthorship can contribute to DEI in the profession. Each contribution relies, in part, on the experiences of the authors in their universities, departments, and programs. This personal experience is bolstered by scholarship that connects to a broader understanding of approaches to DEI that are not specific to our field. Together, the contributions provide pathways and examples that can be followed

and modified to address structural barriers that affect DEI in undergraduate and graduate political science instruction and training.

Elaine Denny and her coauthors—all of whom are undergraduate students—demonstrate how research can be used to foster inclusive education and be grounded in best practices for first-generation students. Using a semester-long research project, they outline how aligning the classroom structure and related assignments can meet the needs of first-generation students and improve their confidence, knowledge, and growth. The inclusion of students who participated in the class as coauthors of the article speaks to the opportunities to address DEI beyond the classroom.

The ability of high-impact practices to foster DEI also is addressed by Brittany Perry. She discusses the Data Lab, which is a program that explicitly addresses the diversity gap in political methodology and advances career opportunities in data science for students from underrepresented minority groups. The Data Lab is a two-day workshop that focuses on the basic principles of quantitative statistical analysis. In addition to enhancing students' exposure to research methodologies, survey results suggest that participation in the Data Lab increases the likelihood that students from underrepresented groups will consider pursuing a PhD or a career that uses quantitative methods. The discussion of the Data Lab's application process also demonstrates how program applications can be structured to reduce barriers for underrepresented students.

The decisions made by doctoral program admissions committees directly affect the demographics of academic candidate pools. The application and evaluation processes that are used to determine who is accepted into graduate programs historically have relied on grade point average and graduate record exam (GRE) scores to determine which candidates have the foundational knowledge to be successful. However, as conversations about graduate program diversity and questions about the appropriateness of GRE (and other standardized tests) scores as predictors of success in graduate school

have emerged—particularly for underrepresented populations—many programs have transitioned to a holistic-review process.

A holistic review is “a process by which programs consider a broad range of characteristics including both cognitive and noncognitive abilities when reviewing applicant’s files” (Michel, Belur, Naemi, and Kell 2019, 5). Whereas many programs may want to transition to a holistic review, determining how to make such a transition can be challenging. Heather Stoll and Bruce Bimber provide one example based on their department’s transition to a holistic review. They describe the change as having one short-term goal and one long-term goal. The short-term goal was to reduce the undergraduate-to-graduate leaky pipeline for the Fall 2021 incoming class. The long-term goal is to have a graduate student body that resembles the undergraduate student body. Their article focuses on the rationale, process, challenges, and outcomes of their transition. Although their discussion concentrates on only one round of holistic review, they found that the diversity of the final candidates for admission far exceeded their current graduate-student population through their process, thus meeting their short-term goal.

Finally, this symposium addresses DEI in graduate training through coauthorship. Reyna L. Reyes-Nunez and her coauthors—a combination of faculty members and graduate students—address how actively engaging graduate students with coauthorship opportunities can help them learn the hidden curriculum of the profession, further their professional development, and improve the academic job prospects of those from underrepresented groups. They provide a series of inclusive practices and scholarly insights that faculty members can adopt to promote DEI in graduate student coauthorship.

As stated by Sinclair-Chapman (2017, 454):

<ext>[T]he heightened attention to institutional diversity across academia presents an opportunity that political scientists should seize by presenting themselves as credible

stakeholders who are well equipped to steward institutions' newly available resources, run innovative pilot programs, and produce returns on institutional diversity investments for both students and faculty.<end ext>

<text>Although there is much that we can learn from other disciplines that have experienced success when addressing pipeline and leaky-pipeline challenges, the articles in this symposium demonstrate that the continued expertise in our discipline that can be leveraged to address DEI. These articles demonstrate that with commitment, innovation, and a willingness to try, the current structural status quo in teaching, research, and collaboration in undergraduate and graduate political science can be changed to create new opportunities for DEI in the profession. The contributors to this symposium hope to encourage and inspire all scholars to consider how their teaching, research, and expertise might be positioned to directly address structural conditions that limit DEI efforts.

## <heading level 1>**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

<text>The authors declare that there are no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.<end slug>

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## FIGURES

### <fn/ft>**Figure 1 Bachelors, Masters, and Doctoral Degrees Conferred, 2020**

<fig1 note>The proportion of Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders and American Indian and Alaska Natives is less than 1%.

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Completions, 2020.

<https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data>.

### <fn/ft>**Figure 2 Racial/Ethnic Composition of APSA Members, United States**

<fig2 note>These data reflect the demographics of APSA membership and therefore may include undergraduate and graduate students, practitioners, and retirees.

Source: American Political Science Association (2020).

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