

# **Annual Report on the Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy (CSWA) for 2016-2017**

By Patricia Knezek (pknezek@gmail.com) & the entire CSWA

The members of the 2016-2017 CSWA are:

David Charbonneau (Harvard University)

Heather Flewelling (University of Hawaii)

Daryl Haggard (McGill University)

Patricia Knezek (in her personal capacity) joined as Chair in February 2017

Jessica Mink (Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics)

Nancy D. Morrison (University of Toledo)

Vishnu Reddy (University of Arizona) left in March 2017

Christina Richey (Chair through February 2017, ASRC Federal & NASA Headquarters)

Sara Seager (MIT) left in March 2017

Cristina Thomas (NASA GSFC/PSI)

Sarah Tuttle (University of Washington)

Aparna Venkatesan (University of San Francisco)

Stuart Vogel (University of Maryland)

Nicolle Zellner (Albion College)

## **1. Overview**

The Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy was established in 1979 with the charge to recommend to the Council practical measures that the AAS can take to improve the status of women in astronomy and encourage their entry into this field. This Annual Report will focus on CSWA activity from May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 until May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. Daryl Haggard and David Charbonneau will be completing their terms in May 2017. Christina Richey decided to step down early from the Chair position, and Aparna Venkatesan decided she was unable to serve as co-chair. In addition, Vishnu Reddy and Sara Seager both decided to step down from the Committee prior to the official end of their terms. Patricia Knezek was elected the new Chair in February 2017, with Christina Richey remaining active as past-Chair for a few months.

## **2. Sexual Harassment in the Astronomical Sciences**

One key focus of the CSWA was working on language for a House Bill introduced by Representative Jackie Speier (D-CA), H.R. 6161, "Federal Funding Accountability for Sexual Harassers Act." This Bill was introduced on Sept. 22, 2016. The CSWA worked on suggestions for revisions to the language in late 2016, and submitted those to Rep. Speier's office through Miriam Goldstein. The bill was tabled in 2017.

## **3. Women in Astronomy Blogspot**

In the month of April, we have had ~30,000 page-views alone. The total pageviews for the blog is currently at 2,152,838. This is a slight decrease from previous years. We did grow the number of unique blog posts this past year (123 posts in the past 12 months vs 97 posts the previous 12 months). The first few months of 2017 have seen a significant dip in the number of unique blog posts with the unexpected departure of blogger-in-chief Vishnu Reddy and the transition from Christina Richey to Patricia Knezek as CSWA chair. We are actively working to return the blogspot to full force by the end of the summer of 2017, with Christina Richey currently helping out as Blogger in Chief until a new member of the committee can take over this role.

In the past 12 months, we published 64 posts with original content (not including the AASWomen posts and 9 cross-posts). We had a popular post this past year: “First Impressions”, <http://womeninastronomy.blogspot.com/2016/09/first-impressions.html>, that received over ~70,000 page-views.

Our regular bloggers were Vishnu Reddy (Blogger in Chief, who departed from the blog in March), Jessica Kirkpatrick (who stepped down to guest blogger in January), Christina Richey (who has taken over the role of Blogger in Chief), Daryl Haggard, Sarah Tuttle, Jessica Mink, and Stuart Vogel (who stepped down from the blog in late 2016). We also solicited guest contributions from other members of the astro/physics community, which has widened the diversity of perspectives featured on the blog. As reported last year, in response to criticism that the blog was too focused on the perspective of straight, white women, we continue to seek out contributions from a more diverse set of bloggers. Popular topics of this past year have been intersectionality, and the various ways it is manifested, and the importance of scientists making their voices heard.

Social media drive 48% of our site traffic (27% from Facebook, 12% from Twitter, 4% from Blogger, >1% from other sources like BuzzFeed, Reddit, LinkedIn, Google+, Quora). This stresses the importance of cross-posting on social. We are also seeing significant discussion of the blog posts in several Facebook Groups (Astronomers, Diversity in Physics and Astronomy). Indeed, these discussion forums have resulted in significantly more comments than can be found in the comments section associated with the blog itself.

#### **4. AASWomen Electronic Newsletter**

The CSWA continues to publish a weekly email newsletter called AASWOMEN. Currently, the regular editors are Nicolle Zellner (Senior Editor and list manager), Cristina Thomas, Daryl Haggard, Maria Patterson (non-CSWA member), and Heather Flewelling.

A typical issue of AASWOMEN contains: cross-posts of commentaries from the Women in Astronomy Blog; information about relevant AAS special sessions, including CSWA events; requests for and responses to information and/or advice; links to news items about

women in science; announcements of honors and awards given to women in science; information about upcoming programs and meetings; proposed bills or policy changes affecting women in science; and links to internship and job opportunities.

For maximum exposure, the newsletter is cross-posted on the Women in Astronomy Blog, and the AASWOMEN editors now post the newsletters to the blog directly, rather than going through the blog administrator. (The blog administrator position is currently vacant). The newsletter is also cross-posted on the CSWA Facebook page and sometimes on Twitter. AASWOMEN also lists the table of contents of each new issue of Status.

As of April 2017, AASWOMEN increased its readership to 1526, with 66 new subscriptions in the last year. The newsletter's archives can be found at <http://www.aas.org/cswa/AASWOMEN.html>

## **5. STATUS**

The editorial personnel of CSWA's semi-annual magazine Status was unchanged: Nancy Morrison as editor; Joan Schmelz (Univ. of Memphis) as acquisitions editor; Katy Garmany (NOAO), Joannah Hinz (Univ. of Arizona), and Patricia Knezek (NSF) as associate editors; and Meg Urry (Yale Univ.) as contributing editor. Publication as a PDF document, formatted in LaTeX by Morrison, continued.

There were no STATUS publications during this reporting period. One article is almost ready for publication, waiting for its author (new Chair Patricia Knezek) to complete suggested revisions. Once the Women in Astronomy IV meeting has occurred, the editorial team will discuss options on how to move forward.

## **6. CSWA Website**

During the report period, maintenance of the web site continued, but little development took place. Once the Women in Astronomy IV meeting has occurred, this will be a focus of CSWA Webmaster Nancy Morrison.

## **7. Activities at Meetings**

### *DPS 48/EPSC 11 Meeting*

The previous Chair, Christina Richey, is also the co-Chair of the Division for Planetary Sciences Professional Culture and Climate Subcommittee, and was part of the team working to implement a plenary session at the conference. Patricia Knezek was invited as the speaker, and gave a presentation entitled "Professional Culture and Climate: Addressing Unconscious Bias." Committee member Nicolle Zellner has also assisted with several women's leadership events through the Women in Planetary Science Group, including helping to organize the women's lunch at DPS and the Susan Niebur event at the Lunar and Planetary Science Conference.

## *The 229<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the American Astronomical Society*

The 229<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the AAS was held in Grapevine, Texas from January 3-7. The AAS led the organization of the 8 mentoring events, with assistance from the leadership of SGMA, CSWA, and the CSMA. New this year, the CSWA held a meet and greet event the evening of Friday, January 6, which was highly attended. Astronomy Allies (of which Heather Flewelling is one of two founders) was highly active at the 229<sup>th</sup> AAS Meeting.

### **8. Twitter and Facebook**

Activity on the AAS CSWA Twitter account (@AAS\_Women) continued to gather followers at a steady rate. By May 21, 2017, the account had 1,529 followers, up from 1,214 followers a year earlier and 848 followers the previous year. Total, the account has made 1,642 tweets and has received 830 likes.

Our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Committee-on-the-Status-of-Women-in-Astronomy-43977374494/>) likewise experienced growth in activity during the past year. As of May 21, 2017, it had 1,869 total 'Likes,' up from 1,729 from a year previously. Women in Astronomy blog posts were the primary shared items on the page.

### **9. Survey on Workplace Climate**

The CSWA Survey on Workplace Climate was designed to provide information regarding how many in the astronomical community encounter negative language, or experience verbal or physical harassment on the basis of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability status, or race and ethnicity. The survey was designed to request the same information at different stages in a respondent's career in order to understand whether astronomers encounter increased or varying types of harassment over time. The CSWA, through Christina Richey and Erica Rodgers, partnered with Kathryn Clancy of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to administer the survey and analyze the survey data. The University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign gave the team IRB approval in January and the survey was conducted January 4th-March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The survey resulted in over 400 responses and 90 requests for follow-up interviews. Follow-up interviews were done in Spring and Summer of 2015, and the first results from the survey were presented at the June 2015 Inclusive Astronomy Meeting, with other presentations made throughout the summer and fall (i.e. the XXIX IAU meeting). These preliminary results became a focus of the community and the media when the first sexual harassment story broke in October of 2015, and have been presented at many major conferences within the planetary science and astronomical communities since, as well as at several institutions via requests made to the authors. Kathryn Clancy's graduate student, Katharine Lee, joined the team in the winter of 2016 and is the primary person working on data analysis for publication. The first publication from these results is currently under revision, and will be published as an open access article.

### **10. Climate Site Visits**

In February 2017, the AAS Council unanimously approved the documents “AAS Climate Site Visits of Astronomy Departments – Goals,” and “AAS Climate Site Visits of Astronomy Departments Policy and Procedure.” Stuart Vogel, a CSWA member, served on the subcommittee developing these documents, and will continue to serve as the CSWA member of the Site Visit Oversight Committee.

### **11. Women in Astronomy 2017 Meeting**

The “Women in Astronomy IV: The Many Faces of Women Astronomers” meeting, will take place June 9-11, 2017 in Austin, Texas, immediately following the AAS Summer meeting. CSWA members Christina Richey, David Charbonneau, and Sarah Tuttle were a part of the pre-SOC organization of the conference, assisting the NRAO. CSWA member Nancy Morrison served a SOC Chair and CSWA member Sarah Tuttle is also a member of the SOC. NRAO has led the LOC effort with the AAS and SOC. As of May 21, 2017, there were 171 people registered to attend the meeting. The web site is <http://www.cvent.com/events/women-in-astronomy-iv-the-many-faces-of-women-astronomers/event-summary-589214b84ab94f26ac269ad9823ef977.aspx?i=d9f3fb0c-40f3-46c5-b300-4742e69a1608>.

### **12. Cross-Over with other Committees (AAS Diversity Summit)**

At the 2015 AAS Diversity Summit, a CSWA sub-group presented the following goals:

- To promote a safe environment conducive to the success of women in the astronomical sciences and to work toward the ultimate goal of parity at all levels
- To engage and participate in intersectional feminism and ensure we are representing more than one marginalized group
- To conduct and disseminate research about women in science
- To advocate for and give a voice to women
- To be a resource for and to coordinate concerns
- To leverage our visibility to assist fellow committees, fellow US professional societies, and international astronomical societies.

In 2016-2017, the CSWA continued to interface with the other diversity groups through liaisons Aparna Veskatasen (CSMA), Sarah Tuttle (WGAD), and Jessica Mink (SGMA). The main focus of 2016-2017 was the development of the Climate Site Visit plans, which was led by Stuart Vogel.

### **13. Path Forward in 2017-2018**

We recently had a major recruitment effort to provide 4 potential members to the Council for consideration in order to replace the 4 members leaving the committee. The summer will be a time for the Committee to focus on filling roles that have opened up on the AASWOMEN newsletter, the blog, and other vital CSWA functions. These new members will not only bring extra support to a successful committee, but also provide new ideas and paths forward.

The new Chair is working with the Committee to develop a plan to revisit the 2009 Strategic Plan, and develop a new Strategic Plan that will guide the Committee into the 2020s. This is expected to be a significant effort over the next 1-2 years.