

The Profession

Honoring Mentors of Distinction

Jennifer Hochschild, *Princeton University*

Every few years, the Women's Caucus for Political Science (WCPS) issues a call to its members to identify people who have acted as their mentors in the process of becoming and remaining a political scientist. Everyone wins in this "competition," since the only requirement for honoring a nominee is that a letter of explanation and commendation accompany the nomination. During 1992-93, the WCPS received 35 nominations from 34 members. An award ceremony for the mentors was held during the WCPS business meeting at the APSA convention, and was followed by a reception for honorees and members of the Caucus. My citation consisted entirely of quotations from letters of nomination, some of which follow. They give a sense as nothing else can of how important mentoring is to women in particular and to the discipline as a whole, how much work it entails, and how gratifying it is to the recipient.

Learning To Be a Scholar

"I first met her when I was an undergraduate student many years ago, and she had recently received her Ph.D. I still remember the lecture she gave on Marx—it was a tour-de-force, which struck me as an experience I would never forget (and I haven't). The fact that it was delivered by a young woman was, needless to say, particularly inspiring. She had a remarkable ability not just to ask interesting and important questions, but somehow to teach us how to ask them. I have come to believe that learning how to ask the right questions is the most important thing we can teach our students. She was one of the people from whom I learned that lesson."

"I became a political theorist because of his inspired teaching and because of the example he set of an intellectual for whom political theory has to do with how one lives one's life. One day when I was stuck on my thesis, he took the pen and paper from my hand and outlined for me the argument I was trying, incoherently, to make. It was a major 'aha' experience for me; I believe that on that day I learned how to write. He showed me how to think through an argument, how to press against the limits of a conceptualization, how to expose power in the places where it hides."

"Even in these days when morale is low due to salary pay cuts necessitated by budgetary woes, his commitment to his students is exemplary. This is so important for some of us who are not traditional students but also have to deal with realities of being older, mid-career working women who have to juggle our academic obligations with the challenges of single parenthood. Thus, during those bleak times when one might throw in the towel, a word of advice and encouragement here and there goes a long way in determining whether one succeeds or fails. This is what my mentor has been able to offer while also expressing a strong sense of confidence in my potential."

Embarking on a Career

"She taught me how to survive in an all-male department. She was the only, and very underpaid, woman when I went to X College in 1961. She could not have been nicer to me even though those were the days when token women were often competitive. She found me a place to stay and urged unhappy students to be tolerant of me. She demonstrated

that it was possible to be a professional and a human being with a rich personal and political life."

"I am nominating these people because their continued support for me within a broad collaborative research program has provided opportunities for research and writing that otherwise may not have been available to me. The research program involved sponsored surveys in other countries. My participation has given me access to new and exciting data, has allowed me to travel and to participate in a variety of interesting conferences. Each of these men has been careful to include me in all aspects of the project, even though it would have been just as easy to sidestep the participation of a junior colleague."

"He is a mentor who excels at creating in graduate students the sense that they are assessed on their merits. When his students succeed, and they seem to do so often, they are helped to believe that it was on the strength of their work, not because of any particular group membership. This is of particular benefit to women, whose success is too often credited at least in part to affirmative action.

"At the same time, he has avoided the pitfall of pretending women are, or should be, just like traditional men. He has been personally supportive of my decision to have a child while in school, mostly through many subtle yet crucial cues. He has made it clear that though it is a difficult life choice for anyone to make, it is a legitimate, worthy one for academic women as well as men. And he provided a needed boost of confidence after I had my baby by implicitly letting me know that I was still just as good a scholar with just as promising a potential.

"I see this as remarkable, given the less-than-positive experiences of many other women graduate students and assistant professors who have tried to juggle children and professional careers. It is also remarkable given that as a man who did not have babies in graduate school, he has had some psychological work to do to transmit such a considerate message to me. Supporting me has also come at some professional cost to him. He depended on my efforts—and my decision whether or not to continue them after my baby was born—to complete a conference paper we had committed to presenting. I cannot overstate the importance of such positive signals to creating the supportive, nurturing environment so necessary to success in graduate school, especially at the dissertation stage."

Feminism

"The insights she offered about my work were very influential in helping me to develop a voice that negotiated the often conflicting worlds of political theory and feminist theory. And the voice she helped me develop—in spite of the fact that my work was substantively indebted to her feminist standpoint methodology—was nevertheless my own, not just a new twist on hers. She encouraged and enabled me to express new ideas and interpretations, even when they sharply diverged from her own."

"In terms of her contribution to women political scientists, I personally know of no other woman of her generation who has been as open and candid about forms of discrimination and as insightful about how to confront them. She inspired women graduate students at my university to collectively express their views and work towards change."

"I know I am not the only woman to be encouraged this way. He was convinced that women were, if anything, superior to men. He used to say that the University of X was actually better than Y [a famous university] because it was where the wives of the Y professors taught. He

used to say, too, that educated women were the best cooks, because they did not leave their brains behind when they were in the kitchen."

"He has been an important source of inspiration and support to a large number of women graduate students across the years. He displays on his shelf, with pride, a set of books edited or written by his former graduate students of which the preponderance are women. He has been an incredible force for good, often behind the scenes, in standing up for the rights of women and nurturing and mentoring specific women who have worked with him."

"He has taken on the difficult (and for him, unlikely) role of champion of women's issues in the department. His support of an innovative departmental sexual harassment policy, his stand in a contested tenure decision in a woman's case, and his personal intervention in at least one sexual harassment case have been influential in making sure the department did the right thing."

"They stretched their own academic boundaries to understand and appreciate the challenges posed by feminist theory to existing methods and paradigms of political theory and political science."

Building the Discipline

"This professor has served as a mentor for literally thousands of individuals, with majority support having been given to females. She began her teaching career in 1954 having received her doctorate in political science at the tender age of 21. Mentoring activities began at that time. Several members of her very first class of political science students went on to obtain their doctorates in the discipline. In 1956 she assumed the chairmanship of the department of political science at X University. She produced scores, then hundreds, of graduates in political science. The result was that during her years as chair, and as founding Dean of the School of Y, an unlikely place such as her university became a thriving and vital center of intellectual activity in political science."

Conclusion

"I see her three or four times a year. She is always open, honest, accessible, and very supportive. She is someone for whom I have the utmost respect and I hope that I can someday repay her kindness and generosity by being the same sort of role model/mentor for graduate students and young faculty. A mentor is someone that you can *trust* to counsel and advise you—she is a person I trust, respect, and appreciate. She has made a continued effort to support not only myself, but other young scholars (in many disciplines)."

I can add nothing more, except to give profound thanks to our mentors and to urge other political scientists to follow their example.

Women's Caucus for Political Science Mentors List—September 3, 1993

Suzanne Berger, Massachusetts
Institute of Technology
Joseph H. Carens, University of
Toronto
Berenice Carroll, Wesleyan University
Dorothy Cline, Albuquerque, NM
Melissa Collie, University of Texas,
Austin
Gary Copeland, University of
Oklahoma
Karl W. Deutsch (deceased)
Murray Edelman, University of
Wisconsin, Madison
Roger Goldstein, Long Island Uni-
versity—C. W. Post Campus
Nancy Hartsock, University of
Washington
Manfred Henningsen, University of
Hawaii—Manoa
Barbara Hinckley, Purdue University
Jennifer Hochschild, Princeton
University
Ruth S. Jones, Arizona State
University
Farhad Kazemi, New York University
Robert Keohane, Harvard University
Donald Kinder, University of
Michigan
Carol W. Kohfeld, University of
Missouri, St. Louis
Andrzej Korbonski, University of
California, Los Angeles
Thomas Lancaster, Emory University
Duane Lockard, Brewster, MA

The Profession

Peter Manicas, University of
Hawaii–Manoa
Arthur H. Miller, University of
Iowa
Kristen R. Monroe, University of
California—Irvine
Deane Neubauer, University of
Hawaii–Manoa
Jewel Limar Prestage, Prairie View
A&M University
William M. Reisinger, University
of Iowa
Alison Renteln, University of

Southern California
Cedric Robinson, University of
California–Santa Barbara
Suzanne Rudolph, University of
Chicago
Virginia Sapiro, University of
Wisconsin, Madison
Mulford Sibley (deceased)
Sidney Tarrow, Cornell University
Michael Weinstein, Purdue University
Laura R. Woliver, University of
South Carolina

About the Author

Jennifer Hochschild is a professor in the department of politics at Princeton University, and president of the Women's Caucus for Political Science.

The Science of Political Science Graduate Admissions*

Gary King, *Harvard University*
John M. Bruce, *Georgetown University*
Michael Gilligan, *New York University*

As political scientists, we spend much time teaching and doing scholarly research, and more time than we may wish to remember on university committees. However, just as many of us believe that teaching and research are not fundamentally different activities, we also need not use fundamentally different standards of inference when studying government, policy, and politics than when participating in the governance of departments and universities. In this article, we describe our attempts to bring somewhat more systematic methods to the process and policies of graduate admissions.

We had a role in the graduate admissions process at the Department of Government at Harvard University at different times over the past half-decade.¹ We conducted a study of the admissions committee's policies and attempted to bring some of the modern methods of statistical inference, common in political science research, to the task of choosing among applicants to our graduate program. We report here our experience, our statistical studies, and our improvements to the process, as well as a variety of information that may be of use to scholars and administrators at other universities in similar circumstances.

Admissions committee decisions represent an interesting combination of judgments based on quantitative and qualitative information. Until our changes, virtually all decisions were made using only qualitative (or "clinical") methods, even though some of the data on applicants were quantitative, such as grades and standardized test scores. We speculated that this pointed to an inefficiency in our admissions process since "a search of the literature fails to reveal any studies in which clinical judgment has been shown to be superior to statistical prediction when both are based on the same codable input variables" (Dawes 1982, 394).

Because some of the information available to admissions committees is quantifiable, it seemed only reasonable that using quantitative methods would help improve our decision making, if appropriately combined with relevant qualitative information (see King, Keohane, and Verba n.d.).

We begin with a brief summary of the Harvard admissions process, prior to our involvement, and provide some generally useful information about standardized tests. We then outline our first statistical study, which we conducted before making any changes to the system. In this study, we demonstrate that the most

common folk wisdom about admissions processes is wrong: admissions committees *are* able accurately to distinguish which students will do best if admitted. This is followed with a section that reports on our changes to the admissions process, based on further statistical studies, designed to reduce the workload of the committee while still improving the quality of its decisions.

Throughout, we are more vague than usual about the specific numerical results of our statistical analyses in order to protect the confidentiality of our applicants, graduate students, and certain parts of our admissions process. For example, we avoided presenting results that would enable prospective applicants to calculate the probability of admission or expected grades in graduate school.

An Outline of the Harvard Admissions Process

In recent years, the Department of Government has received between 600 and 700 applications to its Ph.D. program. From this, we accept 40–50 students (about 7%). As these statistics indicate, the admissions process is extremely competitive, and those admitted have every reason to feel