


2008 Workshop for Department Chairs:

Interdisciplinarity and the Political Science Department Chair:

Implications, Challenges, and Opportunities

TRANSCRIPT OF THE WORKSHOP FOR DEPARTMENT CHAIRS
FRIDAY, AUGUST 29, 2008 • BOSTON, MA



THE
AMERICAN
POLITICAL SCIENCE
ASSOCIATION

Interdisciplinarity and the Political Science Department Chair: Implications, Challenges, and Opportunities

Transcript of the 2008 APSA Workshop for Chairs

Friday, August 29, 2008

12:00–2:00 p.m.

Boston, MA

Held during the APSA Annual Meeting

Speakers:

Graham Wilson, *Boston University*, Moderator Chair, APSA Departmental Services Committee

Neal Beck, Chair, Department Of Politics,
New York University

Lynne Ford, Chair, Political Science Department,
College Of Charleston

Virginia Sapiro, Dean, College of Arts And Sciences,
Boston University

Carol VanHartesveldt, *National Science Foundation*, Program Director, Investigative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship

Transcript provided by:
DC Transcription & Media Repurposing

American Political Science Association
1527 New Hampshire Avenue NW Washington, DC 20036-1206

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About the APSA Annual Workshop for Department Chairs

Each year APSA hosts a workshop focusing on issues facing political science department chairs. The workshops are sponsored by the APSA Departmental Services Committee.

The Committee on Departmental Services oversees APSA's Departmental Services Program that supports political science teaching, scholarship, and service and provides resources for department chairs. Currently over 700 political science departments participate in this program. For questions regarding this workshop or the work of the committee, contact dsp@apsanet.org

Departmental Services Committee (2008-2011 O)

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- Joseph Stewart, Jr., Clemson University
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Past Workshops for Department Chairs

PDF summaries available on the APSA website: http://www.apsanet.org/section_508.cfm

- 2007: Development at the Departmental Level
- 2006: Planning for Assessment and Accountability Issues
- 2005: Chairs and the Law: Legal Issues Facing Chairs
- 2004: Strategizing in an Era of Resource Constraints
- 2003: Family-Friendly Policies & Controversies
- 2002: Professional Preparation & Placement
- 2001: Distance Learning
- 2000: Departmental Responsibility

The 2008 APSA Workshop for Department Chairs was held during the APSA Annual Meeting on Friday, August 29, 2008 from 12-2 pm in the Provincetown Room of the Boston Marriott Copley Place in Boston, MA. Over 50 department chairs attended the workshop.

Transcript of the 2008 APSA Workshop for Department Chairs

MR. GRAHAM WILSON: I'd like to welcome all of you here on behalf of the association, and in particular the Department Services Committee. My name is Graham Wilson and I'm chair of the Department Services Committee and one of the highlights of the year for us is this lunch and session for department chairs that you're so kindly attending today.

We are very aware of the importance of departments and department chairs in the life of the discipline. Departments are members of the APSA, as well as individuals. About 774 departments, in addition to all the individual members, sustain the association, but you people do much more than sustain the association. You sustain the discipline. You are the people who organize the teaching, who help structure the research, who help structure the future of the profession through the selection of new faculty and the training of graduate students.



So we are deeply aware of the importance of department chairs to the life of both the association and to the life and future of the discipline and profession. We also know how hard your life is, how demanding the role of a department chair is, and we are eager to do whatever we can to support both you and departments in their work.

As I mentioned, this lunch is a highlight of the year for the Department Services Committee, but I just want to emphasize that we have a number of other activities that are aimed at supporting departments and assisting them in their work.

The APSA has been developing an online survey, which is designed to be easily used and manipulated- or the data from it manipulated easily by you, *so* that you can, for example, construct your own comparison groups of departments, *so* that when you have to go and arm-wrestle with deans or higher authority and you need to make the argument, "This is what our competitors do," you will have access to that information .

When somebody in the department says, "But everybody else gives this to faculty or this to graduate students," you'll be able to put together your own comparison group and find out whether that claim is true or not. And if not, you'll be in a position to either say so or make an argument to your colleagues that it should be so.

So we hope the survey will be valuable to you. Information is power and the survey is designed for information at the-give access to department chairs to that information very readily.

I should also mention some of the other activities that we've got planned. We've now, for two years running, had a conference for department chairs in association with a Teaching and Learning Conference. The last conference was in San Jose, California, last February. The next conference for chairs will be held in association with the Conference on Teaching and Learning to be held in Baltimore in February. And you'll be getting lots of publicity from us about that.

I'm absolutely confident in saying that the chairs who participated in the two previous conferences for chairs found it a valuable experience, an opportunity to talk with their colleagues about the issues that confront you, issues that are perhaps not easily discussed with colleagues. People have said that being a department chair is a very lonely occupation and the conference for chairs gives you a chance to find solutions to your problems, to talk over your challenges and to grouse about your colleagues to people who are doing the same job as you are doing. And the next one, in Baltimore, early February, in conjunction with the Teaching and Learning Conference, and we hope that many of you will attend.

I should also mention that at the convention this year for the first time, we held a session for graduate directors, and this is part of our goal to be of service not only to you as department chairs, but to departments more broadly. And we have found that department-sorry-that graduate directors, like department chairs, have a need to talk over the challenges facing them, to share experiences, to look for ideas in trying to solve the problems that confront them.

We had two excellent speakers this year at the session for graduate directors. It went extremely well. The participants found it very, very valuable. And we plan to repeat it, not next year at the convention and the day prior to the convention, as this time, but as part of the normal convention time-tabling. So we're aiming to hold the session for graduate directors on the Saturday of the convention next year and we hope that you will encourage your graduate directors to attend that session.

We are always on the lookout for fresh ideas on how the association can be helping departments and department chairs. We have a great staff at APSA who are always eager to collect your ideas. Bahram Rajaei, who is at the back of the room just trying to keep the door open, I think, is the staff person I work with most on this. And then—is Helena here? Helena is the other staff person who works on departmental services. And either through them or through me, please let us know about what the association can be doing more to help your vital role and also to help your departments more generally.

We decided this year to dedicate this session to talking about interdisciplinarity. This is a topic that came up a lot in discussions with department chairs, something that was a feature of their lives as department chairs, and it's something which is also confronting the profession. And I put out the three sort of levels at which we might think about interdisciplinarity and talk about it as department chairs.

One is the level of the sort of intellectual challenge of interdisciplinarity. Political science is a discipline, which has famously or infamously—depending on your point of view—borrowed from other disciplines, from sociology, from economics—indeed, you could argue still from history. So we have been borrowers of ideas from other disciplines.

And one of the questions that has been raised by Bob Axelrod during his presidency is whether or not we can also be exporters of ideas and approaches to other disciplines. We have been—I think we would all agree—enriched by borrowing from other disciplines and by our interchange with them, but can those disciplines benefit from taking ideas and approaches from us, and if so, how?

So we have the APSA workgroup on interdisciplinarity that Bob Axelrod established during his presidency. They have drafted a couple of chapters of a report on interdisciplinarity, and we look forward to seeing the final product of their deliberations. But that's one level of thinking about this challenge of interdisciplinarity. What should we be borrowing from other professions and disciplines? What should they be borrowing from us?

The second level is one which perhaps particularly resonates with department chairs, which is the pretty damn practical level. Now, this is the level at which you find that you don't have anybody to teach something like political theory that you think is pretty central to the discipline and you go and ask your dean for a new position. And the dean says to you, "Well, I'm sorry. Times are tough. We'd love to help you, but we don't—we've only got so many positions for the whole college and you're unlucky this year. However, we do have a cluster position in Polynesian studies and if you could find me a Polynesian political theorist, then there's no reason on earth why you shouldn't be able to hire that political theorist, so long as he or she has got a commitment to Polynesian studies."

And a lot of department chairs sort of fume at this and say, "What's happening to our subject?" And on that level, interdisciplinarity is potentially a threat, or is seen potentially as a threat, something that claims resources that are rightly ours.

Of course, you can also take advantage of those interdisciplinary and cluster positions, and very often, departments are able to get positions which they wouldn't otherwise have done. I have known political science departments that are told at the beginning of the year that they are going to get to hire one or two people, and by the end of the year, have hired, magically, five or six. And those interdisciplinary positions have been vital in sustaining the growth in their recruitment—so a potential danger, potential opportunity.

The final issue that I wanted to just put out there is what the implications of interdisciplinarity are for the graduate students and young faculty that we train and foster. Everybody pays—or most people pay lip service to interdisciplinarity. We say it's the wave of the future; it's happening. It's transforming universities.

But what do we do about that alleged fact? Do we just carry on and say, "Well, our contribution is our own highly interdisciplinary discipline of political science, and we'll link up with whoever wants us to? And we produce graduate students trained in our own discipline?" Or do we think that there might be particular implications for how we train graduate students and how we mentor young faculty if those interdisciplinary opportunities are

not only numerous, but increasing. So one of the questions that I wanted to put out there is what are the implications for interdisciplinarity about how we develop as a profession?

I've noticed something of a contradiction, which is that I think the training of graduate students in political science has tended, I think, to become substantively narrower. As they need more and more methods training, which is great, there's been something of a tendency to cut back on the number of fields that graduate students are expected to master at the prelim level and to cut back only on the level at which the second field is required, being labeled very much a subordinate, rather than an equal second field. And I've heard of that trend taking place in quite a number of departments.

So maybe we've been tending to narrow a little bit as a political science profession in how we train our students, and at the same time, we're saying to them, "Get out there and be ready to work in an interdisciplinary setting."

So those were the three questions that occurred to me in putting together this panel. No doubt there are many different questions which the panelists and you, in the audience, have got in mind. We will have plenty of time at the end for you to ask questions and make comments. My observation of department chairs over the years is they tend to be good at asking questions and making comments, so I look forward to great contributions.

We plan to produce a transcript of this session, so I am asking you to use the microphones when it comes to your turn to speak, and introduce yourself. Say who you are and who you are from before making your incisive contribution.

Now, before we get to the contribution from the audience, we've got a great panel and I will introduce them, although most of them probably need no introduction to you. On my immediate left, we have Neal Beck from New York University, who has got three and a half years' experience under his belt as a department chair and operates in a large, private university setting.

We have Carol Van Hartesveldt from the National Science Foundation, who is the program director of IGERT—the Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship. So she is in an ideal position to talk about that aspect of training graduate students for a new world of interdisciplinarity.

Seated next to Carol is Virginia Sapiro, dean of College of Arts and Science at Boston University, so she can explain why they come up with those incomprehensible lines about no to political theory or whatever else you get turned down on.

MS. VIRGINTA SAPIRO: You're fired. (Laughter.)

MR. WILSON: I have Lynne Ford, who's being chair of the Political Science Department of the College of Charleston and has been a great member of the Departmental Services Committee for some years.

So we've got a diverse group of panelists who can approach these topics from very different perspectives. I'm going to ask them to speak for about five minutes each. We'll then see if any of the panel wants to come back and comment on any of the remarks that have been made at that point, and then very quickly, we'll open it up to you in the audience.

So thank you for your attendance. And Neal, do you want to start?

MR. NEAL BECK: Oh, okay, I thought I was going second. So I have some slides, but I think if that's five minutes instead of 10 or whatever, I'll just talk a little bit. I also want to talk about Graham's second point, which is practical things that take advantage over these or not taking advantage, but on the first, let me just say, obviously, interdisciplinary work is great. We love it. I've benefited working with economists and so forth and I think that's not a question at issue.

Departments and Interdisciplinary Initiatives

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August 29, 2008

On the third, one of the—I was just trying to think why we do less—I was talking to my colleague, a neuroscientist, and trying to figure out why it is that we do less of this stuff, and one of the things I could sort of come up with is we do less sort of shared equipment. So we don't typically buy some big brain scanner that's a lot of money and it's got to be shared. We have to put things together.

So I was thinking just about NYU and some of my comments are about either NYU or my experience at UCSD, is we had this wonderful Center for Experimental Social Science. And because it's a shared facility given by the deans—it's just too big for any department to pay for it. It brings together psychologists, political scientists, economists, and so we have

lots of people who are just naturally trained in experiments, just throwing in working with economists. It doesn't really, in some sense, take any particular work.

Interdisciplinary Work Is Good

- Political scientists benefit from understanding economics, statistics, history and surely other things
- Political science characterized by substantive subject, not method (like econ, stats)
- Like Western democracy, universities encouraging real interdisciplinary contact sounds like a good idea
- But we are talking about more than that (or less than that!)
- All from my perspective, a relatively modern and unified political science department in a major research university

So in some sense, we have to figure out more things that we need maybe as we move more into brain scan. Some of my colleagues are doing those kinds of things. Again, it's just going to force them to work with other kinds of people because we just are not going afford our own newest fanciest kind of thing, but the

scientists have a real advantage there. All their equipment is incredibly expensive, and you just can't sort of do it for one thing. You've got to put everything together in oceanography.

So on the second thing, let me say—which is how we can take advantage—there I want to say I'm a little bit sort of more skeptical. So let's even say you hear about—some new initiative, say, in environmental studies, comes to mind. And someone says, "Okay,

there's three slots and you can bid for them and they're extra. They're new. It's not going to cost you anything." What do you sort of do? Or (on area?) studies, again, Chinese studies is building up at some place, or UCSD Latin American studies. So you can hire some people and so it looks like sort of a no-brainer.

Simple Hiring of non PS People

- Need to worry about
- Not just hiring second rate xx that cannot get good job in own field
- Make sure they really care about and know political science, not just an easy place to apply some method
- No reason not to work with a statistician, say, but does that person have to be in a political science department
- But after serious vetting, and making sure to not be overawed by technique, can be a great way to go

And I guess my basic, very short comment is our problems are that we are typically more intellectually diverse and more methodologically diverse, and since we sort of study politics, almost anything sort of comes under our substantive rubric. It ends up that we end up just being more open. We just have a bad bargaining position.

So you go to the economist and you have two or three—I always pick an economist—economists that are reasonable and interesting, and say, wow, this person's really interesting, but the 47 other game theorists in the department, they're just hard asses, and we love you but there's just no way we could get this through the department; or talking now about a joint hire in psychology, and they say, "Well, we'd love to do this, but all of our hard ass experimentalists—none of your political scientists could ever pass muster with that." Or area studies, "Well, it's great, but how many Chinese dialects does this person speak? And when I asked them about 14th century Han and they gave the wrong answer, what do I do?"

We had an environmental studies person and he interviewed with the dean, who was—of natural sciences, who was sort of heading this initiative and the dean was very upset because he didn't understand the physics of radiation in the atmosphere and he was unable to discourse on that. The person, of course, was actually a collective actions scholar who worked on rain forest, but somehow—so I think there's a real problem in our openness in comparison with lots of other people's closedness. So we often end up being sort of taken advantage of.

I think there is a way we can sort of deal with that, but I think that's a very serious problem.

Simple Hiring of non PS People

- Only makes sense for tenured people
- Junior people have enough trouble getting tenured in one dept!
- For senior people, how many are good enough to pass muster from two skeptical faculties?
- Can a person be a real member of two departments?
- (Can be in two communities, or one cross-disciplinary community)
- When deans recount, there are no free slots or extra offices
- We clearly do not want to be taken advantage of by some other department
- Do not want to be a dumping ground for okay x's
- Why do we think they will allow us to take advantage of them? Do they want our y?
- So joint hire only makes sense if you would be happy to have the person as a dept hire
- The cost "subsidy" is irrelevant
- Talking real hires, not courtesy, 0% or the like

And the other problem is that nobody seems to understand what it is we do. So the area studies people—and I hope I'm not—obviously, there's a wide range of things

and I'm caricaturing everybody. It seems to always—somebody who studies the politics of China sort of writes descriptive stuff. Oh, they would fit perfectly fine; or somebody wants to bring somebody who does 19th century intellectual history. Oh, they look like a political theorist; you need someone to teach Max Weber. This person is just fine, whatever—or the scientists—we want somebody who'll tell us about how a bill becomes a law and why Congress didn't pass some environmental restriction. We don't really care about collective action problems. My God, we didn't even think you guys have theory. Actually, we can't tell you from the sociologists and we want sort of some facts here.

And so they're often very disappointed. When you get a talk on collective action, you get sort of a theoretical talk and so it turns out—so again, if you don't have control, you often either have just a disastrous outcome where you end up hiring nobody. You just can't sort of figure out what to do, or you get somebody you sort of don't particularly want. And I say unfortunately—I just have fewer colleagues—it's not so bad. They're pretty tough, but I think in general, we have fewer colleagues though who will just say no, than say economists or heart scientists or whatever and I think we just tend to be more reasonable.

So in an ideal world, if the economists would compromise and we could all sort of do all—I think we're not in a-(unintelligible)—situation, but unfortunately, we're asked to bear all the costs of the improvement. And the problem from my perspective—and this is the perspective of research department, that's both of them relatively unified—is you bring people in and again, if they're typically senior people, they're going to vote. They're going to have an influence on the Ph.D. students you bring in.

Interdisciplinary Initiatives

- Seems easy, since we are such an open discipline
- But often can be ways for other, less open departments (economics?) to hire people they otherwise would not hire
- Other departments often do not understand what we do
- Area studies departments would like us to hire area experts
- Scientists want us to hire people who can help get grants or policy experts
- In my experience no one seems to want a theoretically oriented political scientist
- Others seem to believe that because one studies something that is related to the political arena, one is a political scientist

It would be nice to sort of bring someone in and say, "Well, we really don't like you, but we need someone to teach environmental studies, so as long as you promise never to take part"—but A, it's sort of hard to believe that anybody would come under those circumstances, and B, that—it's also not enforceable. So even if somebody promises never-give me their vote in advance, I just can't do that.

So I think even if there was a free lunch, there really is not that free lunch in the sense that's just enormous costs as to how your department moves, and again, if you have a small group of three or four normative theorists, and then you bring in this historian of intellectual thought, that's going to move that group quite substantially. And again, they're not going to sit there and say, "Well, we didn't really want any Ph.D. students." We don't really care if you hire." It just doesn't happen. So I think the cost really can be—can be quite high.

And then of course there is no free lunch that deans, in spite of what they say about this is a free slot in Polynesian studies—

MS. SAPIRO: I would never say a thing like that.

MR. BECK: Okay. Well because you're not a liar— (laughter)—because when it comes back, two years later, A, it's a new dean who says, "I don't see any records on this," and B, he sort of says, "Oh, you have 1,800 majors and 17 faculty or 23 faculty, and that seems like enough." And you sort of say, "Well, one of them was free from Polynesian studies," and they say, "You have 17 faculty, and"—or "That's nice, you have those free, but we're not just going to give you a slot because you don't really need as much from other people." So they're really—and again, we just really can't strike sort of bargains like this.

So I guess my basic rule would be, I think, interdisciplinarity work is great if there's somebody who you would hire on your own, who does interdisciplinary things, just a gift to people who do environmental studies

How to Take Advantage

- Does dept totally control the individual hire?
- Would the person hired be happy being in the group?
- Would you want the person hired to be a full member of your department?
- If not, resist!
- Why not just have the non-PS person teach PS courses, come to seminars, etc., without being full department members?

or China, whatever. That's great. Then just hire that person. If it's not a person you would hire on your own, with your own money, with no incentives—because it's going to be your own money; it's going to be a person in your department—then just sort of don't do it.

And you just have to sort of keep control where it's not embarrassing if you end up not finding somebody and you're not going to be in a position where the dean

says, "Well, you sort of promised to bring us this Polynesian theorist and here is the best Polynesian theorist that you found. How could you say you're not going to go for that person?"

So I think in some sense, interdisciplinary work is great, but I think at the level of department hiring, it's very problematic.

I hope I kept my five minutes here.

MR. WILSON: I think you did fine. There's no computer problems if we go to— (inaudible)—minute at this point. I thought it would be a good idea to have a second-a department chair perspective, Carol (sic).

MS. CAROL VAN HARTESVELDT: Oh, sure.

MR. WILSON: And we'll then go to Gina, as a dean, and we'll end up with the NSF as the supreme body. (Laughter)

MS. LYNNE FORD: With that introduction, I thought I would give you a little bit of background and context for my remarks. My department is a 20-person department, 20 full-time faculty. We have a major base of 400 undergraduates. In addition, the department offers a minor in Geography, so three of our 20 are Ph.D. geographers. And we support

two graduate programs, neither of which are political science. One is a Master's of public administration and one is an interdisciplinary Master's of environmental studies.

In addition to that, our department supports and administers two interdisciplinary majors—Latin American and Caribbean studies and urban studies. In addition to that, we make a regular contribution to the Honors College by way of offering a rotating introduction to American politics and world politics every fall. And three of my faculty make a regular contribution to the interdisciplinary required Western Civilization Sequence that the Honors College requires of all of its students.

By way of some context for the institution, the College of Charleston was founded in 1770. It's the 13th oldest institution in the nation. It's a public liberal arts and sciences institution—a lot of people think it's private—enrolling 10,000 undergraduates, another 1,400 graduate students. There are 46 majors and 81 minors. Of those 81 minors, 24 are interdisciplinary in their nature. The political science department, being generous souls that we are, make a contribution of faculty expertise and/or courses to 20 of those 24 interdisciplinary minors.

So I say all this by way of context because I think my situation is not unlike many of yours that when you're in a liberal arts and sciences context, part of the lure of that is that you attract both faculty and students who are, by their very nature, interested in the linkages and connections that interdisciplinarity provides. Faculty, of course, are quite interested in the collaborative opportunities provided by interdisciplinary teaching, the networks that lead them to research collaborations with colleagues outside the department. And so what, as department chairs, are we left with?

Well, I think you know what we're left with. We're left with a pretty ugly situation in which half of you, the professional development side of the job is encouraging to faculty, who want to teach outside the department to develop those collaborative relationships, bring in new majors as a result of their teaching in interdisciplinary programs, enrich their professional lives, in addition to what they gain from the department itself

And the other half of you, the evil managerial side of you, is left to put limits on what faculty can do because, of course, if you have 20 faculty and a base of 400 majors, and a number of things to do, you have to serve the disciplinary corps. Well, with that context, there's nobody home to serve the disciplinary corps. So you are in a position of having to say no, and I know you all are familiar with that position.

There's a bit of a collective action problem too because people rightly assume that their own professional development is what matters most. They're on the precipice of a new discovery or a new teaching opportunity or a new collaborative relationship. Urban studies is a mission of the institution or whatever it happens to be—women's and gender studies, environmental studies, Jewish studies, you name it. It is the most central thing we do.

And you, of course, are in the position of saying, "Yes, but the other 19 of us also make regular and important contributions to this program or that program. And oh, by the way, we are in fact, a disciplinary department of political science. We offer a major in political science."

And so who will be teaching that? And over time, as department chair—I've been department chair for eight years, and I think the biggest problem is exactly that. How do you explicate the collective action problem in a way that helps individuals who are used to pursuing, as you well know, their own self-interest, understand that the department itself has a collective problem?

And you know the costs as well, so in the last year, I sort of tallied up what those costs to the department would be and a conservative estimate is we gave away 23 course sections; or another way of thinking of that is we gave away 690 seats; or in the workload nomenclature, we gave away 2,070 student credit hours.

So when an administrator—not to pick on the deans anymore—looks at that, sometimes it looks like a department is not carrying their weight. When the department itself feels like they are stretched to the absolute limit and can't possibly do more—in fact, there's no other department on campus that does as much as we do. And so at the very time when people are feeling stretched, you need to figure out ways to draw their attention back to the disciplinary home and figure out ways to help them understand turn-taking. I'm also a mother of small children, so that's very helpful.

So how do you do that with professional colleagues? I think that's a real challenge. And as embarrassing as it may sound, I'm going to tell you what I did. I made a big poster, and I made a big poster of every course we teach in the department, every course we're obligated to teach, every faculty member we have, and every course they teach—the courses both in the department and out of the department—and I color-coded it all. And I color-coded the courses we teach outside the department in red because they cost us and then, you can start to see where our collective labor goes.

We can start to see that in fact, everybody makes an important and valued contribution, both to the department and to interdisciplinary programs on campus, but you can also help people see the bigger picture. And as a regular faculty member, I think that's very difficult for faculty to see.

What is the bigger picture? As a chair, you have to deal with the bigger picture all the time, but individual faculty can't do that. So if it's enormous visual, it's very hard to miss that, and then you can start to have a conversation about, well, how is it that we can make it possible for everybody to pursue the enrichment that interdisciplinary brings to their own professional life and to their teaching and to the students, to the department's health, but at the same time, understand that there has to be a way in which sometimes you're simply going to be told no.

The other way I work that is to start to ask them to figure out, well, what is the solution to this? How do you put the puzzle together? Who's going to say no first and create some incentives for being the one to say no first? And so we came up with a rotation. It's not perfect because don't you know, somebody goes on leave as you as you get this nice rotation going, but it's a step in the right direction. And we have a much better sense of the totality of the contributions we make to interdisciplinarity, but the potential cost and the potential downfall to the discipline that we all care a lot about, so that we can make some more collective decisions, and so that I, as the department chair, don't have to be the

only one to know the big picture and to have to say no, that everybody has a little bit better understanding of what the entire context is.

So I think I'll stop with that and look forward to your questions and comments.

MR. WILSON: The way that we're going to proceed is keep raising the level, so the next speaker-and I'm very grateful to her for her level of generality, as opposed to (everything?) else-is Virginia Sapiro, who's the dean of Boston University, who has got the ability to look across departments and address these issues.

MS. SAPIRO: Thank you. He said earlier he asked those questions to deal with-I didn't pay attention to those questions any more than I usually pay attention to it.

It's—thank you. This is a topic that's very important to me and I just want to say first of all, hi, out there. There are a bunch of people who I've known for a long time. Really nice to see you and I'm really sorry you're here because that means you're being a department chair here. But I'm also really excited to see you here because, as Graham said, that is just simply one of the most important jobs there is in a university. It's where most of the management and the leadership happens.

My background for talking about interdisciplinarity comes from a couple of various-I'm kind of empirical, so I like to know where your evidence comes from. I spent 31 years at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, holding a joint appointment between a major Ph.D. department in political science and one of the new interdisciplinary programs, women's studies. So I juggled that personally throughout my whole career-and on the one side, a venerable disciplinary department, and on the other hand, an interdisciplinary program in which I was one of the first four hires. So I experienced running a career through that.

I served as chair of both of those places for a full term, spent some time in the provost's office, so I saw all of that from the point of view of the provost's office. Also being at Wisconsin meant that I really talked about these issues a lot with my fellow folks at the CIC, at the big 10 institutions.

And now, as Graham says, I'm dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Boston University, a private university, a private liberal arts university, and one in a different situation, when you compare the two departments of which I am a member. I have the chair of my former department and my current chair is out there as well. Good afternoon, sir.

One of those departments, the large, the very large, Ph.D. department, I think I counted once while I was chair. I was trying to show the dean about my department and what he had to understand. I walked him up and down the halls and we were able to count that more than half of the members of that department were then associated formally or informally with another department or program, and I daresay that's still the case. John can nod or not. But if you put together women's studies, the Honors Program, Chicano studies, African American studies, and a whole host of area studies, plus Polynesian studies, the vast majority of us there were in fact, clearly associated with another place.

My current institution does something a little different. We have some interdisciplinary people, but we have an ingenious situation where a very large portion of the political

scientists are actually in other departments, in philosophy and history and in the department of international relations, for reasons I won't go into. So there are a variety of ways of being disciplinary and interdisciplinary.

I want to just make a couple of points, not as briefly as Graham would like me to. First of all, political science, it's not just that we borrow from other disciplines. I think we are fundamentally interdisciplinary, but then I actually think that most disciplines today are fundamentally interdisciplinary and we all think we're very special children. We all think we're more reasonable than the others. We all think we're more open. We all think we're more rigorous. That's a dean's perspective. But I hear that story every day from every different discipline. All the things Neal said about his department, I've heard it from physics; I've heard it from sociology; I've heard it from languages. But we're fundamentally interdisciplinary.

Remember where we began, 1908. We're a break-off from the historians and the economists and we haven't changed much since then, except for now if you went around this room and asked about your fields, we have political psychologists; we have political development people; we have political anthropologists. We have those pure political scientists who like spending most of their time talking to statisticians and economists, now increasingly, physicists. I know people who play with the chaos people.

If you look at what we do, it's not just—it's not just borrowing. I think the problem is the scientists own up to much more than we often do. I think the problem is that most of the really interesting questions and problems don't come in conventional disciplinary bite-size pieces. And if the problem is really challenging, if we don't know the answer, it's probably because our discipline, whatever it is, hasn't yet drawn in what it needs for us to have the answer.

So we look for it and we borrow and we read and we read widely. So I actually think we are extremely interdisciplinary. And when people, a few years ago, started arguing PoliSci doesn't have enough of a core, I think we do have some core, but I also said, on the other hand, good—when we sit together and talk, we really have a diversity of approaches and knowledges to bring to bear on the crucial questions that political scientists ask.

What's the problem with interdisciplinarity? One of the things I've noticed over time—I have written on this subject and I actually taught a Ph.D. seminar in women's studies that was aimed at how do we be interdisciplinary, as I used to put it, without being promiscuous, by which I meant not just sleeping around with somebody's concepts or methods, but actually figuring out how to use them honestly, and I won't go further with that. (Laughter)

But what's the problem? Advocates and critics alike of interdisciplinary I think really often lack specificity that we need in identifying the problems because only if we're really clear and specific in what problems we're facing, can we then, as leaders at the departmental level or the college level or at a university level or whatever, figure out how to solve the problem. It's like any other kind of question. I think is, define the problem well. Figure out what the methods would be to approach it. Figure out what kind of resources you need and figure out what kind of solution you can come up with. There's a lack of conceptual clarity about what we mean by interdisciplinarity.

What is fascinating to me is the number of times I hear from people who are afraid of interdisciplinarity that only disciplines have rigor and are deep and are profound and all that. Interdisciplinary people kind of mess around. And on the other hand, the interdisciplinary advocates very often will say things like, "Well, the people in the disciplines, they're very stodgy. They're territorial. They just like going about things the old way. We, on the other hand, are inventive and creative and we have new problems." That's all garbage. Think about the people you know. We have people who are political scientists who don't read much other than political science, who are creative, interesting, inventive and we have political scientists who don't read much else who are boring.

On the other hand, I know plenty of interdisciplinary people who could stand up to anybody in rigor, in care, in specificity. And of course, I know plenty of interdisciplinary people where interdisciplinarity is sleeping around with concepts.

Yesterday I went to a panel on the political psychology of the presidency, and only one person there, as far as I could tell, had read anything professional on political psychology, and people were abusing concepts and methods left and right.

Okay. So what are some things that might help chairs? First of all, I think that when you get yourself involved in these discussions, really try to pare down to what actually is the problem we're facing and where are the differences. I really don't believe there is an essential difference between disciplines and inter-disciplines, not anymore. When you look at the bookshelves, the journals, when you look at the departments, you—by how a department or a program acts, you couldn't really tell, I think, whether it's interdisciplinary or disciplinary.

So we can think about the question in terms of our individual colleagues' careers, what are the issues that face people when they come into a university and are split between departments or programs, or within their own disciplinary work are very interdisciplinary people, like me, who are political psychologists and read the *journal of Personality and Social Psychology* as much as I read political science journals.

We can look in terms of our curricula and our classrooms. What does it mean to offer a curriculum that's disciplinary or interdisciplinary? What does it mean to offer courses that do so? There are some interesting questions. And what does it mean in terms of research?

I want to just make a couple of quick comments about each of these. In terms of the individual—this is really crucial. As a dean, I interview almost all the people who come through BU who are looking for jobs and I can't tell you how many of the young people who come through, when I say, "We're a university that actually values interdisciplinarity. We've been doing it forever and in most cases, we really have a lot going on." So many look so thrilled because that's where they want to be. They are reaching outward.

And so especially in the sciences, which have been doing this for years—you can hardly tell the difference between a chemistry department, a physics department, and a biology department these days—they're absolutely thrilled, but increasingly, the social scientists and the humanities people are, because they bump into universities where people talk to them about, "You can be interdisciplinary later, but right now, you must be a politi-

cal scientist." And some of them say, "I don't really know what that means because I wasn't trained that way."

What is crucial, though, is for you within the departments to think about the culture and practices of your department and work with your deans and others about the stepping-stones and the requirements that we place before people. You can welcome people who are interdisciplinary, but do you say to them, "You have to do everything that people did who are working only within a department, plus you can do that other stuff," or do you say, "We hire and nurture the whole scholar-teacher and if you're teaching is partly in the department and partly out, or partly bread-and-butter and partly something else, we value that as the teaching we hired you to do."

If you say, "We need you to do some service," are you in a department where you remind your colleagues that a human being who is employed by a university needs to be making a contribution to that university in terms of service and so forth, but that part of that's in the department and part of that needs to be outside; or do—are you one of the departments where you let your colleagues say, "Well, they're doing all this stuff outward and we're not benefiting."

The reason I think that is important is imagine if your political science department were simply across the street from your university instead of in it. Would your department be as good if it were across the street, on its own, not in your university? For most political science departments, the answer is no. And therefore, you, your curriculum, your research, your colleagues must be a part of the lifeblood of the larger institution, because there is no one else, other than academics, who have a home base in a department. And so we have to value the people. We have to figure out what's the balance we need to do, but we need to value the participation in the larger university.

It's why, when I hear Lynne talking about trying to figure out the matrix of what are the teaching contributions, as a dean, I correct chairs when they talk about the deficit they have by giving up courses because unless you're totally revenue-based down to the department, so your department pays the tab of everything, including your lights, then what we're all doing is trying to contribute to the existence of our colleges and our universities. They're not just made up of autonomous departments.

And therefore, as in the institution I used to work at, and the place where I now work, when I see departments that pull their weight, and where they contribute to things like our signature writing program, or the poor curriculum that integrates general education, or the interdisciplinary programs, the area studies, and so forth that are so important to the richness of what is my institution—when I see departments contributing to those, that puts my elbow on the scale when they make their proposals for what positions they want. And that is just very important because they're crucial. They're—so it is a problem if you have deans or if you have provosts who don't recognize that, but I think increasingly for a lot of us, we give and get. We want people who really contribute. So there are those issues.

I'd like to say—I know I'm going on, but I just wanted to say one thing about courses and curricula because I know a lot of you do—your departments do participate in interdisciplinary curricula and courses. And this is an area where I actually checked out the research

a few years ago because I've been doing that a long time and I wanted to know what we know about interdisciplinary teaching.

Increasingly, when people look at interdisciplinary teaching, they regard that as a setting in which individuals from different disciplines get together and take turns giving lectures in the same course, and that our students really benefit from the diversity of those viewpoints.

Think again. It's not the best model for interdisciplinary teaching. And the reason is, for those of you who know a little bit about cognition and learning, a lot of what people find—although they can be exciting—from the students' eye view, it is very difficult to integrate the knowledge, and do the comparing and contrasting, and make the conclusions that we're hoping they do.

And so what a lot of the research suggests is that when you do interdisciplinary teaching by doing a variety show, or even by having two different people sit in the room and just argue together and say, "Look at this, aren't we cool? You're getting different points of view." In the end, in fact, it's very difficult for the students to get what the faculty are hoping they're getting.

And so if you want to support interdisciplinary teaching, or if your dean wants to support interdisciplinary teaching, in fact, what you have to do is put some more resources behind it. And what you really need to do is get people trained up to be able to know something about each other's field and actually present a more coherent course and not a variety show. And that, I think, is a very important point to make.

So last couple of things—universities are not just departments. They are more than that and that's why deans and provosts look it that way. When you hire young people, increasingly, those young people have been trained in an interdisciplinary way, and they want to be in a place that will value them and not just be narrow.

The deans you have, if they're any good at all, look for opportunities and want to work with you and know who's serving the college and the university, but they have a bird's eye view of things and when you say we're the only ones doing the following, it's probably not true. When Graham says, "Get the data," do get the data. I am thrilled when my chairs come in with good data and that's what I used to do as a chair, not because I want them to argue with me, but because I want them to know more about their discipline and their field than I know. I want to learn from them, so I can do the best by them. Reward your colleagues' contributions and help your colleagues understand that they need to be rewarded for this.

And finally, I think, thinking about interdisciplinary and disciplinarity together, this is a story about depth and breadth and intellectual diversity and vitality in universities. I think the best interdisciplinarity is grounded in real depth and rigor in disciplines. It's not a superficial rendering of five books from each of four fields. It's really grounded; it's vital; it's interesting. And I think it's about finding the cutting edge of our knowledge and finding the cutting edge of our teaching in the future.

I think it's harder, in fact, to do some of this at the Ph.D. institutions here. I think it's much easier in some of the other institutions, and it's partly because in a Ph.D.-offering de-

partment, you begin to train yourself too much to think of yourself as creating new political scientists, even at the Ph.D. institution. That's not what we're doing with undergraduates. Undergraduates don't become political scientists. They may later.

But the liberal arts curriculum, I think this is where the liberal arts colleges really have a lot to teach the Ph.D. institutions. We're not teaching BAs to be political scientists. We're teaching them to be educated, interesting, rich and deep thinkers and that says you don't have to worry so much about whether they could pass a prelim.

MR. WILSON: Thank you. So we've started at the department level, moved up to the college level, and now, I'm particularly delighted to welcome Carol Van Hartesveldt from the National Science Foundation. I want to thank her for making the effort to come up to this convention on Labor Day weekend to talk with us. And as director of the IGERT program, she is ideally positioned to talk to us about the IGERT program and the preparation of graduate students with interdisciplinarity. So thank you so much for coming.

MS. VAN HARTESVELDT: Thank you very much, Graham, and good afternoon, everybody. I'm Carol Van Hartesveldt from the National Science Foundation. I'm kind of

Interdisciplinary Research and Education: The IGERT Perspective

American Political Science
Association
August 29, 2008

Carol Van Hartesveldt, Ph.D.
Program Director, IGERT

the odd woman out here since I'm a behavioral neuroscientist, the people who have the advantage of having expensive equipment. (Laughter) So I want you talk to you about a couple of things here and I'm going to try to make this march. My email said 12 to 15 minutes, but I know you all want to get to the discussion part, so I'll try to move quickly.

My perspective is mainly one from two things—one my own training, which was interdisciplinary before there was such a field as neuroscience—I go back that far—and my joint appointment at the University of Florida between the neuroscience department and the medical school and psychology and our training programs for students, and my last four years with the National Science Foundation as a program director for the Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship program.

I want to tell you very briefly about IGERT. I want to focus a little more on the outcomes of a study on

TOPICS

- The view from an interdisciplinary graduate education program: IGERT
- IGERT history and purpose
- IGERT program
- Outcomes for students, faculty, institutions
- Challenges for students, faculty, institutions
- Conclusions

what the IGERT program has done with respect to students, faculty, and institutions, as well as their challenges and some conclusions.

So here's a report from the Committee of Science, Education, and Public Policy of the National Academy of Sciences in 1995, saying what graduate education should be doing. More versatile scientists and engineers know more things, can do more things, with a greater range of academic options, and so forth, but down there, you'll notice without compromising excellence and research, that translates into without compromising disciplinary depth.

The IGERT program has an interdisciplinary theme plus disciplinary depth. That interdisciplinary theme must be in an emerging research area, not status quo. There have to be innovative models for graduate education, not just team-teaching with a variety show, ways to broaden participation to diversify the graduate student education, and help make a difference in how graduate students are educated. And we can interpret this in many ways, but I think this cultural change is something of what you're thinking about in terms of your departments.

The history of IGERT is that we've been around about 10 years, 215 total awards, including some renewals, and 102 lead institutions. We have also some institutions partnering with others. We are in 41 states, the District of Columbia and in Puerto Rico. So the concept is that we're looking here to the science of the future and everybody's prediction is that a lot of the science of the future is going to be more interdisciplinary. And if that's the conclusion,

COSEPUP Report 1995

Reshaping the Graduate Education of Scientists and Engineers

Produce more versatile scientists and engineers

- A greater range of academic options
- Greater training in a variety of career skills
- Avoid compromising
 - Local option
 - Excellence in research
 - Time to degree
 - Broader participation

IGERT Program

- Interdisciplinary theme plus disciplinary depth
- Emerging research area
- Innovative models for graduate education
- Broaden participation
- Catalyze a cultural change in graduate education
 - For graduate students
 - For faculty
 - For institutions

The History of IGERT

- First awards made in 1998
- 215 total awards, including renewals
- To date, IGEATS are in
 - 102 lead institutions and 26 partner institutions
 - 41 states and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico

Science of the Future

Reshaping the Graduate Education of Scientists and Engineers

More interdisciplinary

- **Work across disciplines**
 - Cross-disciplinary advisory committees
 - Lab rotations
 - Out-of-discipline lab requirement
 - Interdisciplinary curriculum

More Collaborative

- **Teamwork**
 - Incentives for collaborative projects
 - Graduate student team projects
 - Teamwork exercises
 - Retreats
 - "bootcamps"

up as incentives for learning them or incentives to do collaborative projects. A lot of times, graduate students do team projects as part of their education, have teamwork exercises and courses or other situations, have retreats or boot camps, as some of our students call them, but these are often in the summer before the Ph.D. program starts, harking back to your discussion on graduate education previously in this meeting.

Everyone expects that research is going to become more global in nature. You can see this everywhere. So if that's the case, graduate students need opportunities for international activities and experiences, either research collaborations abroad,

then what should happen in terms of graduate education?

Well, students should learn to work across the disciplines. Many of our students have cross-disciplinary advisory committees. They do lab rotations not just within their departments, but across departments and colleges as well. Some of our programs have out-of-discipline lab requirements and all of them have an interdisciplinary curriculum. It's expected that the research of the future is going to be a lot more collaborative. If that's so, what do you need to do?

You need to learn how to work with other people. And interestingly, at a workshop we just had with about 50 of our PIs, and over 80 vice presidents, provosts, and people with graduate deanships, they said everybody—whether students within a discipline or between—needs to acquire teamwork skills. It was a very interesting outcome.

These teamwork skills show

More Global

- **International activities and experiences**
 - Research collaborations
 - Summer institutes or short courses
 - Internships abroad
 - Fieldwork

summer institutes or short courses abroad. We have internships and fieldwork abroad.

The careers of the future, what are they likely to be? Overall, I've seen estimates that up to 50 percent of graduate students do not take academic positions. They do something else. So there are two choices—say, "Well, they failed. They're on their own," or "Let's prepare them for those because that's where a lot of the exciting research of the future is going to happen." So students need a varied preparation for careers because they don't know where they're going to end up. They're not sure when they start and sometimes not for a while.

So academia, internship, government positions, internships in industry for many of our students, and in government to have public policy experience and internships as well—these traineeships programs cover everything the National Science Foundation funds, which, in case some of you are wondering, does include social sciences and psychology, including political science. But you can see here that this is a wide array.

Careers of the Future

More Varied

- **Preparation for varied careers in Academia**
 - Academia
 - Industry (internships_
 - Government
 - Policy
 - Internships

Examples of IG ERT Projects

More Varied

- Smart sensors and integrated devices
- Biosphere-atmosphere research
- Molecularly designed materials
- Assistive technology
- Sequential decision-making
- Urban ecology
- Astrobiology
- Public policy and nuclear threats

IGERT: Public Policy and Nuclear Threats University of California, San Diego

- PI Susan Shirk, political scientist
- Trainees in the PPNT program traveled to DC to present their nuclear forensics work to policy makers

I draw your attention to the one on the bottom, public policy and nuclear threats, which is an interesting IGERT at UCSD with PI Susan Shirk, who, herself, is a political scientist. About half the trainees in the program are nuclear physicists and the other half are political scientists that do work on public policy and nuclear threats. That's PPNT. And one of the highlights of their year is to come to Washington and talk to policy-makers about their conclusions. About two years

IGERT Evaluation Study Initial Impacts

Both IGERT and non-IGERT samples

- Graduate Students
- Faculty
- Administrators

Results: Students

- Program more attractive to students (increased applications)
- Faculty report that students are different; "better" in several ways
- IGERT students have more diverse career goals and report better preparation for non-academic careers
- IGERT students have more and take more opportunities to conduct research off campus (including internationally)

ago, they had an extremely interesting conference on North Korea as a nuclear threat and what might make it so.

We've had an evaluation of the program by a third party with control groups—we can talk about that if you like later—from both within and without the program, including graduate students, faculty, and administrators and here are the results with respect to the students. These programs are more attractive to students. There are many more applications. The faculty report that the students are different. We've heard this over and over again and we heard it again at the workshop in May, and many use the word "better." In what way did they describe them as better? Creative, independent, more willing to take intellectual risks.

IGERT students have more diverse goals and report better preparation for non-academic careers. That's built right into our program. And they take—they have more

opportunities and take more opportunities to conduct research off campus at industry, internationally, and so forth. Again, that's built right into the program.

They report that they are better prepared for responsible conduct of research—a requirement of our program—learning about other disciplines, working across other disciplines. That is not necessarily being interdisciplinary all the time, but working in teams, being able to do collaboration and teamwork and communicate outside their own field, and also communicate with the general public. Communication is a big part of our efforts in education.

IGERT Students are Better Prepared For:

- Responsible conduct of research
- Learning about other disciplines Working across disciplines Collaboration and teamwork
- Communications inside and outside own field
- Communication with the general public

IGERT faculty say they do more team-teaching, have written more research grants with faculty outside their discipline, and remember, we provide no money for research at all. Our money is for the students and their travel and other kinds of things. The research has to be there. They receive more new research grants, mentor more grad students outside their home department, and publish more outside their own discipline.

For institutions, the faculty report that institutional support from within the institution for interdisciplinary graduate education has increased. The number of participating faculty drawn into the training program grows each year and they don't get paid either. We don't provide faculty salary, except for the PI and four months of curricular development.

And the departmental research focus has become broader. New department—there are a lot of things that have changed in institutions. I won't go through these a lot, but a lot of our programs are what might be called enrichment programs or Ph.D.—plus their certificates, minors, concentrations, other kinds of credentialing.

These things do not come without challenges and we're well aware of the challenges. For students, it's tough to cope with an interdisciplinary curriculum. Trying to learn something outside what you had as an undergrad and then trying to learn and to work with someone else in that field at a grad level isn't easy. Engineers aren't biologists; biologists aren't engineers. Yet they learn to work together in our curriculum.

IGERT Faculty

- Do more team teaching
- Have written more research grants with faculty outside own discipline
- Receive more new research grants
- Mentor more graduate students outside home department
- Publish more outside own discipline

Institutions

- Faculty report that institutional support for interdisciplinary graduate education has increased
- Participating faculty per IGERT increased each year
- Departmental research focus broadened

Institutionalization

- New department policies stressing interdisciplinary coursework (68%)
- Changes in degree requirements (47%)
- New certificates (47%)
- Increased access to other disciplines, expertise, research facilities
- Cross-institution adoption of IGERT program elements

Challenges for Students

- Coping with an interdisciplinary curriculum
- Having a critical mass and support group
- Role models
- Career if in traditional academic discipline

Having a critical mass and a support group—it's not easy to be green. It's not easy to be the only—in the Kermit sense—it's not easy to be the only one trying to do this. Who do you have to talk to about it? It's important to have role models. If there aren't faculty who are doing the same kind of crossing of interdisciplinary boundaries, it's tough for the students.

And finally, thinking about a career within a traditional academic discipline, how does an

interdisciplinary-trained student going to make his or her way if in a disciplinary oriented university?

Challenges for Faculty

- Departmental requirements
- Cultural differences among departments
- Administrative load on PI, faculty
- Release time or credit for faculty teaching
- Recognition for interdisciplinary teaching, research for tenure or promotion

Challenges for faculty—here are what the faculty said. They had a tough time meeting both their departmental requirements and contributing to this interdisciplinary—you're going to hear a lot of echoing of points made here. There are a lot of cultural differences across departments. How people do things, how they think, how they go about things is entirely different. So while you're speaking English—I think Winston Churchill says that of England and America, English-speaking a common language is what

divides us or something close to that. The administrative load, it's-taking on interdisciplinary things is sometimes, very often, an extra-added burden. That's tough.

Getting release time or credit for faculty teaching and how that's valued, a tenure promotion and so forth is tough-recognition for teaching or research for tenure promotion. How do you treat multi-authored publications, multi-authored grant proposals? Does everybody get credit? Do you divide the number of authors to arrive at some percentage? The same with teaching-it's not easy.

Challenges for institutions—well how do vice presidents, deans, and department chairs not just remove disincentives, but actually reward interdisciplinary graduate education or research by the faculty? If the overhead's not coming back to you, if the credit isn't coming back to you, or if you perceive it isn't, this is going to be a problem and your faculty aren't going to want to do it.

Simply overcoming resistance or inertia—there is a pyramidal hierarchical structure of most universities. It's tough to think of how you could get an arrangement that would cut across it. And something you're thinking about today, hiring new faculty outside traditional disciplines. Are departments going to want to do it or aren't they? And if they are, are they going to make appropriate accommodations?

So if academic institutions are going to undertake any degree of interdisciplinarity, they're going to have to think about how to make those work outside of the traditional model with respect to helping their faculty succeed, how to facilitate collaborations and teamwork, how their graduates are going to be better prepared for their careers wherever they may be, and how new faculty are going to succeed if they're going to be involved in interdisciplinary work. Thank you.

MR. WILSON: Thank you very much. Those were terrific contributions. I promised the panel they could have a chance to respond to each other, but I'm very eager to involve the audience. Does anybody on the panel want to say (audio break). In that case, let's open it up.

(Laughter) Let's get some comments and questions from all of you. As I said, please use the microphone and introduce yourself as you speak. Nobody?

MS. SAPIRO: We couldn't have been that clear.

MR. WILSON: We'd also just be interested in your own experiences. You don't have to—

Q: Hello. Thank you for this presentation. I'm Nancy Baker. I'm the department head of government at New Mexico State University and we're a program with a couple of Master's degrees. We don't have a doctoral program. But one of the things I've noticed, we do have faculty who are very interdisciplinary in some of the methodologies they use, and when students are trained, one of them—a bright, bright Master's student with training and doing sort of almost cultural anthropology to see how politics were working out in this indigenous community in southern Mexico—she's had a very difficult time getting accepted by a Ph.D. program.

Challenges for Institutions

- Rewarding interdisciplinary graduate education by faculty
- Rewarding interdisciplinary research, particularly for young faculty
- Overcoming resistance or inertia
- Hiring new faculty outside traditional disciplines

Conclusions: Academic Institutions

Institutional changes are needed for

- Success of faculty involved in interdisciplinary graduate education
- Facilitating collaborations and teamwork
- Graduates to be better prepared for careers inside and outside academia
- Success of new faculty involved in interdisciplinary research

I'm puzzled by this. She's one of our top Master's students, very bright, has taught for us even now that she's got her Master's degree as an instructor. Is there a resistance from Ph.D. programs to bring in students at the Master's level who have more of a broad interdisciplinary preparation and what can we do about it?

MR. WILSON: Thank you. Let's collect a number of comments and then I'll ask the panel to respond. The gentleman over there.

Q: I'm Ron Petite from Bryan College. We're a small school in Dayton, Tennessee. Our total enrollment is 750. The politics and government department is interdisciplinary. We draw on history, economics, philosophy to give the students a breadth of learning. The degree program is specifically Bachelor of Arts, so that we can bring in as much of classical education as possible.

Now, my question is—I'm very imbued with the interdisciplinary approach, and I liked so much the presentation on the IGERT. Are there funds available, programs available, to support interdisciplinary programs at the undergraduate level? Thank you.

MR. WILSON: Thank you. Just come up to a microphone

Q: Okay, good. Jim Stoner, LSU. I was asked about two weeks ago by my dean to make a presentation at a retreat or boot camp for department chairs from different disciplines about evaluating interdisciplinary research. I'm at a large state university that's eager to build up its statistics for "U.S. News and World Report," and that kind of thing.

And so the question comes up, how do you count interdisciplinary publications? How do you evaluate those things? We had some interesting comments from the fellow in math, who has interdisciplinary work with engineers, and it quickly flushed out that different disciplines have very different cultures about both how they do publications and then how they count others' publications. That's when I learned about this interdisciplinary working group.

I also learned that they didn't have the report that I'd hoped that I could grab for the (unintelligible) but I did make use of Axelrod's presidential address from last year, which has been published in *Perspectives on Politics*, and got an interesting reaction from other disciplines. They didn't have anything they knew of in a similar vein. So in essence, political science seems to be thinking about this question of interdisciplinarity.

I have to say for Ms. Sapiro, the women's studies people immediately picked up on the importing and exporting and said, "This is boundary drawing," and all of that, so they're listening. They asked me to send them copies of the articles and all of that. So I'm curious what you find works or what are the challenges about the evaluation of research outside of the disciplinary specialty?

MR. WILSON: Let's take another question, and then I'll get some panel responses. Well, let's take another two in that case, and then we'll get some panel responses.

Q: Jeremy Lewis from Huntingdon College, a little tiny college in Montgomery, Alabama. We ran a very successful interdisciplinary liberal arts symposium for all freshmen involving three-quarters of our tiny faculty, and the one I directed was on the theme of justice which suited political science and other disciplines. We had team-teaching, and then

after getting a commendation from SACS, a re-accreditation of course, then the budget was cut. (Laughter) And the administration changed over and became politically incorrect, so we've abandoned in favor of the traditional call and it's much lamented by many alumni.

We're going up for SACS again and we have to come up with a quality enhancement plan, and everybody's suggesting a liberal arts symposium, but with a different name, or any number of different names. So what I'm interested in is bringing it back in another guise with some sort of funding, with external support, because it's not going to come back with the limited resources available, so whether it's NSF or other independent foundation support, that kind of thing, I wonder if there are sources we could use.

Q: Ilja Luciak from Virginia Tech. We have a new interdisciplinary Ph.D. program, of which we are one of the lead departments together with history, philosophy and interdisciplinary studies. It's on the social, political, ethical and cultural thought.

And my question or the advice that I'm seeking is, this was an idea that came out of political science. We are very much invested in it. Three of our 19 tenured (applicants?) are applicants in this Ph.D. program. The problem I have as chair is that we have 1,100 undergraduates that we need to teach, and I wonder what advice you could give in terms of how to become more effective in convincing the dean and the provost in terms of what the contribution is that we are making to the university and to the common goal. This is sort of the struggle we are having.

MR. WILSON: Let me get some reactions from the panel, and then we'll have another round of questions and comments. Who would like to go first? We just go down the table. Lynne, do you want to start?

MS. FORD: The questions are different, but I think they converge, right? So one set of questions is where do the resources—where else can there be resources? There's the marvelous IGERT program. I'm one of many people who has failed to get that funding. It's an amazing program, but where are the resources particularly for undergraduate? And there is also the question of really a range of how do you mobilize the internal support, whether from deans and provosts or so forth, or from the university?

I think that unfortunately, the resource answer for most of us is going to be—it either has to be generated by a real discussion of priorities inside and not just this sort of we love all these new fields, which I think is what a lot of universities are doing, but it has to be real. And as somebody pointed out, you can get changes of administration and the flavor-of-the-month changes, and we all face that at every level. I could face the same. I happen to work for a president who really cares about this. It could be different.

So I think one of the things is actually holding your deans and provosts and presidents' feet to the fire about if you want this, what does that really mean, not in terms of saying, oh, my God, oh, my God, we can't do this because we're doing too much, but how are we going to do this together, and, at least, getting a taskforce together to think about what are the true barriers at your particular institution.

For me, for interdisciplinarity and finding the resources for the programs I'd love to do, it's part of what I do as a dean who's out on the road doing development. I'm afraid that's

the answer and that again then means the backing from whoever it is that your institution that gets involved with that, but I spend 20 to 30 percent of my time on the road out there trying to find graduate fellowships and chairs and everything else. And that's also where I expect I will get some large portion of whatever funding I can get that I can then hand over to some of these interdisciplinary efforts.

I think in terms of the evaluation and how do you count the quality, we face that all the time in political science anyway, because we're one of these disciplines where we have book sub-fields and article sub-fields and multi-author and single author and all of that. And I'm not sure, in general, we're doing the best job we could with that, let alone what to do for interdisciplinarity, but I think the questions are much the same.

It's getting a good handle on what are the most prestigious journals. How do you measure impact? How do you measure originality and finding the way to do it, and then compiling that explicitly and making the argument within your department, but then also with deans or your review committees or whoever else. I think that, again, is the question of gathering and developing the evidence that says here are the measures of quality that we're going to use.

The question, the very first question, about are our Ph.D. programs resistant to people with interdisciplinary background, I think that's a program-by-program answer. My guess is that it's not as much the interdisciplinary background, because I think most-the Ph.D. program I used to work in, and most of the ones I knew of, let's say, through the CIC, we all accepted people who had undergraduate degrees that weren't in political science at all because we were arrogant enough to think that no one else's education counted. So we were probably starting from scratch.

It may be the quality of what people are talking about and whether you have undergraduates who are expressing interdisciplinarity in a way that's so diffuse that the problem for the admissions committees is not that they're interdisciplinary. It's that it doesn't feel bounded enough. It feels too diffuse. It's not clear what they really want to do, or it's interdisciplinary, but focusing on an area that they don't cover it all, but I think that that is probably much more a conversation with the major Ph.D. programs and how they handle that individually. I know the one we used to be associated with-I know for a fact interdisciplinarity as a background wasn't a bar to getting in.

MR. WILSON: Carol.

MS. VAN HARTESVELDT: So first, the question about whether there is support for interdisciplinary education at the undergraduate level at the NSF, I regret to say there is not (although there is some beginning to happen in particular fields) so there's an effort now for biology and math to come together and provide some training. The "Biology 2010 Report" said that undergraduate training in biology needed to be more interdisciplinary, so some of the directorates at the National Science Foundation are finding the places that there are major interdisciplinary efforts that seem to be evolving as the disciplines evolve. There is, of course, the REU site program. REU stands for Research for—

MS. FORD: Experience for Undergraduate.

MS. VAN HARTESVELDT: —Experience for Undergraduate students. Thank you.

Sometimes our acronyms defeat us. These also are funded much out of the directorates, but we are now seeing interdisciplinary efforts come in. So these are summer programs for undergraduate students that can involve a lot of different kinds of things. So that's one thing to think about as a way to get started.

The question of how to do an interdisciplinary initiative at an institution is something that came up during our workshop last May of IGERT PIs and their administrators and some of the conclusions in these are just kind of preliminary findings. We have not yet got a final draft this report. This takes a level of strategic thinking throughout the university as to what the investment is going to be, what the faculty hires would be, where those appointments would be made.

Would they be across departments? Would they be between a department and an institute? Where would the tenure decision be made? How would the faculty contributions be evaluated? What would the space be? Would it be shared space? Would it be individual space? All these things need to be thought about first because the worst possible disincentives for anyone to do this is to have things going along, and then people being confused and failing, or judged as failing, because things weren't worked out ahead of time.

There also need to be a metrics in place ahead of time for how anyone is going to evaluate whether this initiative is successful or not and on what timetable. So I think that was one valuable set of thinking that came out of our workshops.

We, in neuroscience—I'll step out of my NSF role back to my history—have had the problem of trying to evaluate research for a long time. I came out of the physiological psychology traditional back when I was in grad school. There were the flagship APA journals. A few years after my graduation, there were 60-some different journals publishing varieties of neuroscience, and how the heck did you figure that one out, and every time you turned around, there was something new coming out.

And it is a matter, as was just said, of finding the people who have the expertise and figuring out what's good and what it isn't, and finally, and for faculty tenure and evaluation, finding those people doing similar work or related work and getting their take on things.

MR. WILSON: Neal.

MR. BECK: Yes. I guess at the tenure level, A, I think I would never hire somebody in two disciplines who's not tenured because the odds of satisfying two different departments are so low that I think a person who would take two different tenure lines in two places has to be crazy, and I wouldn't want to hire such a person. But we hire people all the time who do look more like economists. There are people from GSB or places like that.

And I don't think it's all that hard to figure out who's good at—and I think what's really great here is what Ginny (ph) said, is that we really in substance are inherently multidisciplinary disciplines. It was not very hard to find a bunch of top scholars who are recognized as the best people in political science who are really good political economists and who understand what the good economics journals are. It's not that hard to find good political psychologists to do these kinds of evaluations.

So I think the fact that we are not in some sense a particularly methodologically narrow discipline, I think makes it—we sort of ask—is this a good person? So how much do they publish? And in NYU, I promise you that a publication in the JPE, the *Journal of Political Economy*, is worth much more than a publication in the *American Political Science Review*. And as long as people are sort of clear about these kinds of things, that just doesn't seem to me sort of an enormous problem. But how you do it in two different disciplines, if you're in two different departments, God knows.



MR. WILSON: I interrupt with a couple of questions before—there was a gentleman who was about to—thank you.

Q: I was going to get up and announce that I'm probably from the smallest institution here until I heard from the other folks. So I guess we're in the middle. I'm at Washington

and Lee University. My name is Mark Rush. We have about 125 undergraduates and a faculty of about 10. And we actually ran into an interesting problem the last couple of years, which we're now trying to figure out what to do about. And I really want to offer this for your erudition and hear your thoughts.

We've traditionally been pretty interdisciplinary anyway. We cross-list with sociology, a little bit of philosophy. We've counted over the years—we've allowed students to take two courses outside the discipline, for example, the inter-econ sequence and count them towards the major. And then a trickle—a problem has actually started cropping up and they manifested themselves in our exit surveys. The students actually started telling us we don't know who the majors are; we don't know who the faculty is.

And when we began to track is that we found our promotion of interdisciplinary and counting a philosophy course here, a soc course there, a women's studies course there, meant that—well, two things—first, we were losing students to them in terms of butts and seats that were going elsewhere. But at the end of the day, the major itself, the political science course, is actually only about half of the major for some of these kids, and if some of these kids play their cards right, they could spend very little time actually in the department, yet still draw the political science degree.

So I've picked this up. I've been head for three years and I picked this up after a couple of surveys, and we're actually now considering making the major itself less interdisciplinary, getting rid of the cognates, kind of closing ranks, and forcing the kids back into our boat, so there's a certain esprit de corps within the department.

And so a couple of things to think about and I just wanted to hear some reactions—one is how does this strike you all, because it strikes me as almost Neanderthal, in the current context, except for the fact as a liberal arts place, two-thirds of their courses have to be taken outside the department to graduate anyway. One-third is electives; one-third

is general education, or what we call foundation and distribution requirements; then one-third is supposed to be the major.

So I just wanted to hear, has anybody else experienced this, because we find ourselves now considering going against the grain a little bit and actually sort of building walls around the major knowing, however, that the program itself, the degree to get out of the school, is actually quite interdisciplinary. Thank you.

MR. WILSON: Yes, please, Ginny.

MS. SAPIRO: I think you'll see that happening more and more if the interdisciplinarity again was not a coherent one and really, people are just taking a bunch of courses in different places. So in that, I can imagine first of all finding more way to building coherence, but there are a couple of other things. One is a major, as you were almost moving toward, when you said *esprit* is not just the courses. So one question I think a lot of us ask in our departments and programs is what are the co-curricular aspects of a major? What are the ways that we build community, regardless of exactly which of the courses that students are taking? And political science, of course, has a lot of ways we can do that.

The other is what kind of capstone experiences are there, so that you get the right shape somewhere toward is there-are you one of the places where there's a research project at the end? Can you build in something where they're sharing their research? Is there a capstone course? Is there something that they begin in those entry courses and then does it shape back to something? And thinking about those, I think can help a lot.

MS. FORD: Let me give an example of Ginny's co-curricular idea and that is, we started several years ago picking a theme for the year, and so we would do a fall lecture where we invited a local or a state-a prominent local or state figure to come and give an address related to the theme, and every student who majored in political science and every student in a political science class was invited and unusually mandated to come. And in the spring, we have a convocation of majors, the same thing. Here we're looking for a national or an international prominent figure to come and speak to the theme. And then that's linked back into the courses, particularly the capstones and the intro courses, through assigned readings or time spent with the speaker or something like that.

And that has given the department not only-students in the department a sense of community with faculty and with each other because they have the shared experience, but it's also given the department a fair degree of prominence on campus because of the figures that we brought to campus. We try to pick something that resonates. We try to set the tone for what students are talking about with each other and it has to do with their experience in political science.

Q: My name is Robert Cox, and I'm the director of the School of international and Area Studies at the University of Oklahoma, so my perspective is probably from the other side of the line. We're an interdisciplinary unit that started off with entirely joint-appointed faculty, and they cross a number of disciplines, and even a number of colleges, because we've had joint appointments in geosciences and education and management, as well as the college of liberal arts and sciences, as it's called on our campus. So I've dealt with battles with a number of different disciplines.

And in thinking through this, I've kind of thought that what really makes a difference in the relationship, when you set aside personalities and other issues, is what a discipline thinks about its educational mission and it breaks down in two ways—either they think of themselves primarily engaged in production or reproduction. And if they're engaged in production, what they do is try to educate people who are going to go out in the world and make a difference. And if they're engaged in reproduction, they want scholars at the Ph.D. level who are going to do exactly what they want; the Spanish department that only wants to produce Cervantes scholars.

But the more sophisticated ones actually do both. They understand that undergraduate education is not the same as graduate education and what they're doing at the graduate level is appropriate for placing their students in academic jobs. The ones who do it really badly are the ones who think that their undergraduate curriculum ought to build toward the Ph.D.s in their own chosen discipline. And my experience has been that those departments are impossible to work with. The ones that are really, really valuable are the ones that think broadly about what their educational mission is and how it fits into the larger university's education mission. Thank you.

Q: I think this is more of a comment rather than a question, but it gets to those issues of—

MR. WILSON: Sorry. Could you just introduce yourself?

Q: Oh, I'm sorry. I'm Karen Kedrowski from Winthrop University and my institution is very much like Lynn's. I have many faculty who want to teach in a variety of interdisciplinary courses and have the expertise and the dedication to do so, including me. However, as department chair, I find myself increasingly saying, just say no, that I cannot allow the faculty as much release time to do that because I have seen that what is harmed is the quality of instruction, especially in our introductory-level courses, which we see also as another way of recruiting students.

Certainly, we do recruit students from the interdisciplinary programs, but we are facing a very difficult time in finding qualified graduate students from local graduate programs, local professionals who have a Master's degree in a related field, who have any significant teaching experience at all. And we are not terribly interested in sacrificing our students' educational experience as somebody can do on-the-job training.

So I would implore those of you who have graduate programs to get your graduate students some real, on-the-ground teaching experience, something that they can do so that they can, in fact, walk into a class, perhaps four weeks before it starts, and be able to put together a good experience for our students, which would then enable me to release my faculty so that they can get ahead and support these interdisciplinary programs.

Q: My name is Vincent Wong from the University of Richmond. My institution is very similar to Mark's or Lynn's. In fact, I was a program coordinator of international studies before I became the department chair, so I had the perspective of both sides.

And when I was program coordinator, I was struck by the fact that many departments would put up their program improvement saying that they want to support the international studies program, but I have the job of scheduling classes. I don't have faculty. So when I

went around and asked them, okay, so we cannot spare you (unintelligible) want to teach that. I said, but you use us to get the lines, didn't you? So after I became (laughter) I actually pull up all the search advertisements just to remind them—but after I became chair, I tried to institutionalize. I think that in the past, it was very un-institutionalized and sort of based on gentlemen's agreement.

So for instance, last year, we had a globalization search. I recommended it to my department—and had to overcome some of the resistance of my colleagues—that we make it a joint appointment between political science and international studies, and work out the arrangement that this person will teach two courses per year for international studies.

So therefore, this is actually easier for us for planning purposes for both department and the program and it's very easy to satisfy those two courses because some of the courses are actually political science courses, but they are counted for IS—not a perfect solution and I think that Lynn's poster should actually be drawn by the dean, but I salute you for at least having a poster. But I've started to—

MS. FORD: The dean has the poster now. (Laughter)

MR. WILSON: Thank you. Can I get some reactions from the panel?

MS. FORD: It's a great idea.

MR. WILSON: Anybody else would like to—

MS. VAN HARTESVELDT: Yes. If I can just make one comment from the workshop. It's the undergraduate teaching that is at its core pretty disciplinary versus the research ventures of the faculty, which are growingly interdisciplinary. They're a big disconnect and that is—if you're having that problem, you're not alone.

Q: Well, I have the question in—

MR. WILSON: Sorry. Can you just introduce—

Q: Oh, sorry. Bobbi Herzberg, Utah State University. And we have the issue where we've been the interdisciplinary program and got given kudos, like nice comments at all the department head meetings, et cetera, but now, there's a new initiative for interdisciplinary with money and we're having trouble getting in line, because they said, you're already doing it. (Laughter) It's really the—Professor Beck's point.

So we want to build new stuff, so it's better than before, and we're feeling like, wait a minute, we've been carrying the water for a long time. Any suggestions for—I mean, I pointed out all the great things and they all go, yes, that's great. And look at the new things we're going to do over here in another department that never did anything until there was \$1.5 million on the table. So any suggestions from those around the panel?

MS. SAPIRO: I think yelling and screaming works really well. (Laughter) My former institution, when they invented the cluster hires of bringing people in, those of us who were in things like women's studies that had been struggling for 25 years, we got the same answer. I think there's a little bit of dishonesty in all of our institutions and that's a good

example of trying to have shiny new things. And those who have sort of given blood at the office already sometimes get left behind—no good solutions.

MR. WILSON: Well, we're getting towards the end of the allotted time. I'm going to ask the panel if they'd just like to take 60 seconds each to come up with some concluding comment. No? (Laughter)

MR. BECK: I'm actually—one thing that confuses me—having spent 25 years in the UC system, which is the ultimate sort of bean-counting sort of institution—we always got credit for students in any disciplines. So in years when political science at UCSD was on the lean side and they wanted more, we would be very entrepreneurial and move people into all sorts of interdisciplinary programs and in years when we were fat, then we sort of pulled them out, but I've never heard of a department not sort of getting credit for all the students it teaches.

Maybe this is just like a (unintelligible) idea of just keeping better records and figuring out what it is you do, but most deans don't care what guise are students being taught. They basically want their students taught and they don't want a lot of parents in their office complaining the students sort of can't get seats.

MS. SAPIRO: Actually, Neal raises something that's important. You will all be aware of whether, at your place, credit goes with department of the professor or with the professor, and one of the things we did as an initiative when I was in the provost office at Wisconsin, was just invented dual-counting.

And when we're thinking about those thing—it makes life a little more complicated for administrators, but for the purposes of counting how many students you have and so forth, when you do have interdisciplinary kind of settings, you can collect information about other colleges and universities that will do the double-counting and look at in both ways, so you can watch the credit following the professor, watch it following their home department. And so you can get a better kind of thumbnail sketch of really what's the contribution of your department to the college effort and that alone can be a little bit broadening in the way your deans and your provosts might be thinking about things.

MR. WILSON: Thank you. I want to thank Lynn and Neal for being on the panel. I particularly want to thank Dean Sapiro for taking time out of a busy schedule, and above all, Carol for making the trip here from Virginia and coming up and talking about the IGERT program and that aspect of things.

I want to conclude by just saying I hope we'll see lots of you in Baltimore at the chair's conference. The themes that we've identified we know are themes that are important—like them or hate them—to a lot of departments. The first is assessment, which is something that we know is out there and coming down the road and it's the big truck, so we want to talk about it and how to deal with it. And the second theme we'll be talking about is an even more familiar theme to you, which is maintaining quality in a time of limited resources.

So hope to see lots of you in Baltimore. Thank you again, panel. (Applause)

(END)



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