

## **Areas of Research and Scholarship Excellence Nomination**

**Title: Women in Politics, Organizations, & Society (WIPOS)**

**Category: Areas of Existing and Emerging Excellence**

### **Co-Leads:**

- Mary Layton Atkinson, Associate Professor, Political Science and Public Administration, CLAS
- Jill Yavorsky, Assistant Professor, Sociology and Organizational Science, CLAS

### **Additional Collaborating Academic Units and Faculty:**

- **Department Economics**
  - Lisa Schulkind, Assistant Professor
- **Department of Political Science**
  - Frederico Batista Pereira, Ph.D, Assistant Professor
  - Amber Knight, Assistant Professor
  - Jaelyn Piatak, Associate Professor
  - John Szmer, Associate Professor
  - Jason Windett, Associate Professor
- **Department of Sociology**
  - Anne-Kathrin Kronberg, Assistant Professor
  - Kendra Jason, Assistant Professor
  - Lisa Slattery Walker, Professor
- **Department of Communication Studies**
  - Margaret M. Quinlan, Associate Professor

**Keywords:** women; intersectionality; leadership and organizations; diversity; politics and policy

## Executive Summary

**Background.** Despite gender progress over the last several decades, women continue to face inequalities in nearly every major U.S. institution (government, corporate and nonprofit organizations, health care, religion, etc.). Women are underrepresented in leadership roles across organizations and politics, face significant wage and promotion gaps, and perform the majority of unpaid labor in society. As the urban research university in the state and in the midst of a “shecession” (an economic downturn disproportionately affecting women), we intend to bring scholars together across campus to elevate our work, join forces, and serve as a resource to advance women in leadership and society across the nation.

Taking an interdisciplinary approach, this future collaboration will employ diverse qualitative and quantitative methodologies and promote new partnerships among university political scientists, sociologists, economists, and communication scholars. Specifically, our collaboration will focus on the following key aims: 1) identifying barriers that women face in achieving economic mobility and rising to political and/or organizational leadership positions; 2) advancing intersectional theories and empirical understandings on how such barriers differ by race, class, disability, sexuality and other statuses; 3) uncovering contexts and pathways to political and organizational leadership for diverse groups of women; 4) examining the impact of women legislators on public policy, and the impacts of public policy on women’s lives, and; 5) developing organizational and public policies that improve the status of women through work with community.

**Unique Distinction and Excellence.** This collaboration will draw on the many strengths and contributions that this cluster of scholars have made to gender scholarship over the last decade, and builds on these talents and resources. Individuals on this proposed team have already gained international recognition, published in top-tier social science journals, secured significant national grants, and received widespread media attention. Their work together and separately has contributed to important literatures in politics, policy, leadership, and organizational diversity.

The uniqueness of this cluster will be in bringing together top scientists in these areas, tackling these issues with an intersectional perspective, and partnering with multiple PhD programs and community leaders to develop and implement initiatives to advance the status of women. This cluster would bridge scientific inquiry across public policy and organizational science PhD programs, along with multiple disciplines (sociology, economics, communication studies, and political science). Bringing together scholars from different disciplines to work on shared research interests has the potential to crosspollenate their work, lead to the development of new theories, and foster the development of new solutions to a range of problems related to gender inequality. Interdisciplinary teams seeking grants are also more competitive in many instances. Given their extensive mentoring experience in their respective graduate programs, the team would integrate graduate students into the initiative, thereby training future generations of scholars in this area and advancing the overall goals of the group. Broadly, this team will contribute to and advance UNC Charlotte becoming a thought leader and resource hub on women in politics and policy, organizations, and society both within the Charlotte community and across the nation.

### **Evidence of Strength and Excellence**

**Publications and Awards/Honors.** The members of this team are adept at publishing in internationally recognized outlets. Collectively, they have published over 125 peer-reviewed articles. For instance, Drs. Atkinson and Windett have published work on women in congress (individually and together) in top outlets such as the *American Journal of Political Science*, *Political Behavior*, and *Policy Studies Journal*, promoted by both scholarly and main-stream media outlets (like the *LegBranch Blog* and the *New York Times*). Yavorsky has published on gender inequality in the labor market in leading social science journals, such as *American Sociological Review*, *Social Forces*, *Gender & Society*. Walker has published dozens of articles in top journals on the status effects of gender, including research on leadership. Amber Knight has published articles at the intersection of gender studies and critical disability studies in *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, as well as several pieces of intersectional scholarship at *Politics, Groups, and Identities*. Frederico Batista's work on public opinion and gender has appeared in prestigious outlets like *The Journal of Politics* and *Political Psychology*.

The cluster has been recognized for their top-notch scholarship through various prestigious awards. A few examples include: Yavorsky was a finalist nominee (one of 15 from over 2,500 articles considered) for the 2020 Rosabeth Moss Kanter International Award for her 2019 study published in *American Sociological Review*. Jason Windett's paper, "Follow the Leader: Prominent Female Politicians and the Emergence of Women Candidates for Public Office," received the *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* Best Paper Award in 2017. Jaclyn Piatak's paper, "Weathering the Storm: The Impact of Cutbacks on Public Employees," received the 2019 best paper award from *Public Personnel Management* and highlights the consequences of economic downturns for the employment of women and minorities.

**Funding Success.** The team has secured impressive grants. Windett is the Co-Principal Investigator on three NSF grants, totaling more than \$4 million in awards. Szmer is a Co-Principal Investigator for the project, "Collaborative Research: Judicial Diversity and Appellate Decision Making," supported by the NSF (\$276,825). Walker has attained, in total, 7 NSF grants totaling over \$1.1 million plus numerous internal grants. Jason has multiple current and completed grants focused on examining the connections between work, health and caregiving for older women and men of color (\$23,000, NIH; \$264,953 Southminster Inc; \$187,830 National Institute of Aging). Kronberg is Co-Principal Investigator for the project "Firms and gender differences in job mobility," supported by the German Research Foundation (€186,950). Schulkind is a Co-Investigator on two externally funded grants and Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator on a number of internal grants, with internal and external grants totaling nearly \$600,000.

**Media Attention/Reach.** Together, the team has an impressive media record and reach to the masses. For example, Yavorsky has written multiple op-eds on workplace inequality for the *Conversation* and *Slate* that have been collectively read by about 200,000 people and conducted multiple live interviews (CBC Radio, MSNBC, and NPR Marketplace) with hundreds of thousands of viewers/listeners. In addition, nearly every peer-reviewed article Yavorsky has published over the last 5 years has been covered by top media sources (e.g., *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, CNN). Atkinson has also been featured in top media outlets like the *New York Times* and been a feature panelist on *Charlotte Talks*. Windett has seen his research highlighted

by national press, such as the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. Szmer regularly gives invited talks and media interviews related to judicial appointments, court rulings, and the constitution. Walker's work has been featured in a range of news outlets, from local nightly newscasts to the BBC.

**Engagement with External Entities.** The team members regularly leverage their expertise in gender, politics and organizations to contribute to broader conversations in the community. For example, Piatak is working with national organizations, like the Points of Light Foundation and Mint Museum to examine diversity, equity, and inclusion in their organizations. Piatak also regularly shares her research with local associations and groups, such as the Metrolina Volunteer Administrators, the local nonprofit human resource manager group, and the Central Piedmont Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration. Yavorsky regularly partners with corporations and other local organizations (e.g., Levine Museum of the New South; Charlotte Regional Business Alliance) to deliver presentations on issues of diversity and equity.

**Contribution to Student Education and Research Training.** The team members teach on subjects related to gender, politics, and/or organizations at the undergraduate and graduate levels (Organizational Science PhD Program; Public Policy Program). They also have extensive experience mentoring and training master-level (sociology) and doctoral students (Doctorate of Business Administration; Organizational Science, Public Policy) in these areas. All of the team members regularly incorporate graduate students into their research and publish with students, including in papers where graduate students are the lead author. Together, they have served on or chaired nearly 200 committees for undergraduate, master's and doctoral theses.

**How Additional Resources.** Bringing these researchers together under the umbrella of a single initiative will allow the university to showcase the vast amount of high-level scholarship being done in this area. Additional resources could be used to build this reputation in the following key ways: 1.) Host a biennial conference on Women in Politics, Organizations and Society that brings together scholars working in these areas to share their research and learn about the work being done at UNCC. This could be done in conjunction with the Women + Girls Research Alliance; 2.) Establish a speaker-series that brings nationally recognized scholars to campus to share their research and network with our faculty and graduate students. 3.) Establish certificate programs within existing doctoral programs (Public Policy, Organizational Science, Public Health Sciences) and master's programs (M.S. in Economics, M.S. in Management) for the study of women in politics, organizations, and leadership. 4.) Establish formalized partnerships with local, regional, and national corporate, non-profit and political organizations. 5) Hire a post-doc to aid in writing grant applications for WIPOS projects.

**Synergies of the Team that Enable Great Impact.** There are existing overlaps between the research agendas of scholars in different units that could be synergized by this initiative. For instance, Knight (Political Science) and Quinlin (Communication) work in the area of health disparities, gender and disability. Piatak (Public Administration), and Walker and Yavorsky (Sociology) have research on gender and leadership. Kronberg (Sociology) has studied judicial agenda-setting, while Szmer and Windett (Political Science) study courts and the identity of justices--complementary areas. Establishing the WIPOS initiative will help to connect researchers from different disciplines working in similar thematic areas.

### **Alignment with Regional and National Priorities**

Given recent social justice movements and the fact that COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted women and people of color, the urgency of initiatives and priorities surrounding gender and racial equity, particularly in politics and economics, has grown around the world. Our area aligns with key regional, national and international priorities and supports the mission of the university.

On a national level, our research aligns with multiple calls for actions and policy initiatives surrounding advancing gender equity. First and foremost, our focus aligns with a national priority of the Biden-Harris administration. In January 2021, the administration created the White House Council on Gender Equality “to guide and coordinate government policy that impacts women and girls, across a wide range of issues” such as economic security, racial justice among other issues that are related to the research aims of our cluster. Second, our area aligns with multiple calls from national funding institutes that focus on inequality-related research, like NSF ADVANCE: Organizational Change for Gender Equity in STEM Academic Professions; Science of Organizations; and Russell Sage Foundation. This means that team members will have ample opportunities for funding opportunities that help meet the goals of this cluster.

On a local level, our aims align with several centers and initiatives focused on improving women’s leadership and status more generally in the Charlotte and broader NC area. For example, Mecklenburg County recently issued an Equity Action Plan for fiscal years 2020-22. Our expertise and research are squarely aligned with their goals (e.g., advancing workforce equity and inclusive engagement) and could serve as a resource for this initiative. Additionally, our expertise would be well-suited to contribute and partner with the Women’s Business Center of Charlotte, which helps women-owned businesses start and grow. Our research in areas of leadership and workplace more generally could be instrumental for understanding the challenges that local entrepreneur women face, consulting with them on these issues, and collaborating on joint projects.

As for the university, our focus aligns with key diversity initiatives in the university, including its mission to be North Carolina’s most diverse and inclusive hubs for teaching, research and service and is poised to contribute to and partner with key centers like Women + Girls Research Alliance and programs such as Women’s Leadership Development Program.

**Supporting Documents:** Names and titles (in tabular form), and a short description of the contribution or expertise of each member. Provide a two-page c.v. of participating and contributing faculty members. The list should be limited to UNC Charlotte affiliated faculty and researchers of all ranks.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Expertise</b>
Jill Yavorsky	-Assistant Professor of Sociology -Core Faculty, Organizational Science -Director, Organizational Science Summer Institute	Gender stratification; workplace inequality and discrimination; gender and leadership; divisions of labor between men and women
Mel Atkinson	-Associate Professor of Political Science & Public Administration -Affiliate Faculty, Women's and Gender Studies -Affiliate Faculty, Public Policy	Women in congress, representation, policy agendas, news coverage of female candidates, issue framing, public opinion
Jaclyn Piatak	-Associate Professor of Political Science & Public Administration -Faculty, Gerald G. Fox Master in Public Administration Program -Core Faculty, Public Policy -Affiliate, Women + Girls Research Alliance	Public and nonprofit management; Women in public sector leadership; representation and inclusion in government and nonprofits
John Szmer	-Associate Professor of Political Science & Public Administration -Core Faculty, Public Policy -Affiliate Faculty, Women's and Gender Studies	Gender and judicial decision making; gender and task assignment; intersectionality of gender, race, and age
Amber Knight	-Assistant Professor of Political Science & Public Administration -Affiliate Faculty, Womens and Gender Studies -Affiliate Faculty, Health and Medical Humanities	Feminist political thought; critical disability studies; feminist bioethics

Frederico Batista Pereira	-Assistant Professor of Political Science & Public Administration -Affiliate Faculty, Latin American Studies -Affiliate faculty, School of Data Science	Comparative politics, political psychology, and research methods with a focus on voting behavior, opinions about gender and politics, and political information.
Jason Windett	-Associate Professor of Political Science & Public Administration -Core Faculty, Public Policy -Affiliate faculty, School of Data Science	Representation in American politics with a focus on state politics, state courts, and gender and politics. Data science in public policy.
Margaret M. Quinlan	Associate Professor of Communication, University of North Carolina at Charlotte Director, Interdisciplinary Minor, Health & Medical Humanities. Affiliate Faculty, Gerontology Program Faculty Affiliate, Women's and Gender Studies Affiliate Faculty, Public Health Sciences Ph.D. Program Research Affiliate, Women + Girls Research Alliance Executive Board, Health Academy, Core Faculty, Interdisciplinary Health Psychology Ph.D. Program, Faculty Associate, Center for Professional and Applied Ethics,	<i>Health Communication</i> · the nexus of public perceptions of science, technology and medicine · women's health, especially reproductive health, social media, motherhood, parenting · practitioner-patient communication, medical expertise · narrative and aesthetics approaches to health, disability and illness
Lisa Schulkind	-Assistant Professor of Economics - Core Faculty, Public Policy	Health economics with a focus on maternal and infant health; use of applied econometric techniques to identify causal effects
Anne-Kathrin Kronberg	- Assistant Professor of Sociology - Core Faculty, Organizational Science	gender and race in the workplace, career mobility, firm practices, public policy and race
Kendra Jason	-Assistant Professor of Sociology -CLAS Race and Social Justice Advocate -Affiliate Faculty: Africana Studies, Organizational Science, Gerontology, and Public Health Sciences	Inequality (race, class, gender); Black workers, Older workers, social mobility, diversity, equity and inclusion, health disparities

Lisa Slattery Walker	- Professor of Sociology and Organizational Science - Affiliate Faculty, Women's and Gender Studies, Communication Studies	Gender in groups and teams, gender and leadership, group processes and dynamics, gender and work/careers
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