

Joint Statement on the 2018 Annual Meeting of the Society for Political Methodology

The Society for Political Methodology's (SPM) annual meeting for 2018 will be hosted by Brigham Young University (BYU). This site is controversial given long-strained relations between the LGBTQ community and BYU. This has chilled participation at the meeting by LGBTQ scholars, which is in turn a concern of the American Political Science Association's Status Committee for Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgender Individuals in the Profession (LGBT Status Committee), a group not affiliated with SPM. SPM's leadership gave insufficient forethought to matters of diversity when it allowed BYU to host the 2018 annual meeting.

However, in recent weeks a series of constructive, good-faith conversations among the LGBT Status Committee, SPM, and BYU have yielded what all parties believe is a positive outcome for 2018 and beyond. This joint statement highlights the important actions taken in response to this controversy.

- BYU's original plans were to host most of the conference and all of the housing at the Provo Marriott Hotel & Conference Center. In response to the concerns raised by LGBTQ scholars and their allies, BYU agreed to move all conference events to the Provo Marriott. Marriott International prohibits discrimination based on [sexual orientation, gender identity or expression](#) in all operations and it has a score of 100 (out of 100) in the [Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index](#). In addition, BYU notes that it was willing from the outset to host the entire conference at an off-site location had it been requested by SPM.
- As the host institution, BYU reaffirms its commitment to welcoming all visiting scholars, including LGBTQ scholars, in a spirit of warmth and full inclusion, and it extends campus invitations to all visiting scholars. Each party recognizes that the goals of this conference are to further scholarly exchange and professional development *for all*.
- SPM has undertaken efforts to improve its governance and attention to diversity. It is adopting a fully inclusive [statement of diversity](#) and a formal [code of conduct](#) for members at SPM events. The LGBT Status Committee endorses these changes. For future conferences, host institutions will be required to affirm these statements and conference participants will be required to sign the code of conduct. BYU has affirmed these statements for the 2018 conference.
- At this year's SPM meeting in Provo, Utah, a plenary roundtable will discuss how to make SPM more diverse and inclusive, with discussion specifically about LGBTQ issues.
- SPM and the LGBT Status Committee are co-sponsoring a roundtable about diversity in political methodology at the American Political Science Association's 2018 annual meeting in Boston. In addition, SPM is also participating in the diversity and inclusion Hackathon organized by the APSA Presidential Task Force on Women's Advancement.
- At the 2019 SPM meeting (to be hosted by MIT), SPM and the LGBT Status Committee will partner for a panel on LGBTQ issues in political methodology.
- SPM is committed to working in partnership with the LGBT Status Committee and other organizations on matters of diversity and in implementing best practices.

SPM apologizes for the way its host selection negatively affected professional opportunities for LGBTQ scholars. This was never intended and SPM promises to be more attuned to diversity and inclusion in the future. While all of us acknowledge that the controversy has been detrimental, we have worked in good faith to improve SPM's organizational governance and attention to diversity and inclusion. We encourage all scholars to attend the 2018 conference and contribute to this important dialogue on diversity and inclusion in political methodology.

Sincerely,

Jay Goodliffe, Chair of the 2018 Political Methodology Summer Meeting Program Committee
Kosuke Imai, President of the Society for Political Methodology
Jami Taylor, Chair of the APSA LGBT Status Committee