

Claire Pierson
FSA Chair Application Mission Statement

I am extremely interested in and excited by the possibility of chairing or co-chairing the FSA, both as a feminist academic and activist, and will set out here my previous experience and objectives I would pursue in this role.

I am currently a Lecturer in Politics at the University of Liverpool, my work focuses on reproductive justice and in particular abortion rights. Outside of work, I am a board member of Alliance for Choice Belfast (Northern Ireland's abortion rights activist organisation), a role which involves collaborative decision-making on strategy and identifying sources of potential funding. I have recently become a member of cara - a mentoring network for at-risk academics.

I have relevant experience in chairing and organising, between 2012 and 2016 I was the Belfast representative for the Sibéal Feminist and Gender Studies Network, an all-Ireland network of early career academics. In this role, I organised a series of networking and research dissemination events and worked to build networks between ECR's in the north and south of Ireland. In 2013, I was Chair of the organising committee for the annual conference 'Intersecting Gender' (the conference was attended by 80 ECR's from Britain and Ireland), this role involved chairing meetings, taking key responsibility for conference organisation and sourcing funding.

In my current role I am School Deputy Lead on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion which involves deputy chairing for school EDI meetings and leading a working group for our Silver Athena Swann application. I am also a member of our departmental 'Decolonising the Politics Curriculum' team, a staff-student collaboration working to recognise and respond to geographical and gendered imbalances in the teaching and production of knowledge in Politics.

In terms of this role, I see my objectives as being to maintain the excellent work of the current committee and to promote relationship building, interdisciplinary collaboration and networking, and increasing membership and funding opportunities. Overall though, I am focussed on creating supportive and intersectional spaces for feminist engagement.

I would be keen to focus on relationship building between Britain and Ireland, as someone from Northern Ireland living in England, I believe strengthening these relationships post-Brexit to be increasingly important. In addition, the study of gender is under threat globally and relationship and solidarity building with feminist scholars in at-risk areas should be a core goal of any feminist academic organisation. As noted, I have recently joined the cara network and am interested in building networks with groups to develop global relationships and mentoring opportunities.

As an ECR, I am conscious of the need to build networks and skills for the academic job market but also the need to challenge the current university environment and the marketization of education. I would organise a series of discussions in order to build interdisciplinary networks between members (and if possible, support collectives of FSA members at universities) but also focus on the ways in which ECR's can challenge and seek to disrupt current cultures rather than reproduce current working practices. In addition, I would engage relevant organisations to build skills for members - these would include funding/publication workshops or engaging research outside of academic audiences for example.

I would also see one of my key roles as ensuring the continuance of the Association through seeking expansion of membership and funding (I have a track record of securing funding which can be seen on my CV). Increasing membership and funding could be done through social media engagement, also engaging relevant member organisations of disciplines and academic departments who have gender research centres and networks. Whilst the Association's focus is on academic networks, making connections with feminist organisations and activism through events and collaborations would help strengthen reach and impact of academic work.

Thank you for considering me and please get in touch if you have any questions!

Claire Pierson (c.pierson@liverpool.ac.uk / @piersonclaire)