

# BROOKINGS

**Carol Graham**

Leo Pasvolsky Senior Fellow,  
Global Economy and Development Program

1775 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
telephone 202.797.6000  
fax 202.797.6004  
web brookings.edu

December 2, 2022

ISQOLS Community  
c/o ISQOLS Office

Dear Colleagues, Friends, and Members of the Board,

I write to thank all of you for giving me the opportunity to work with you and learn from you over the past two years. I feel honored to have had the chance to serve in this capacity and very lucky to have had support and contributions from so many of you. While “I could not have done it without you” seems cliché, in this case it is not only true, but it is what held us together during odd and challenging times which included severe limitations on our typical activities and meetings due to the COVID crisis.

We collectively learned a great deal in the process, including the advantages and disadvantages of organizing and meeting virtually. What I am convinced of, though, is that as a group with such a wide a reach across world regions and academic disciplines, we have benefited a great deal from the capacity to continue our work on-line and the benefits that has in terms of including more people who are far away from each other and/or constrained in the funds that they have available for travel. This proved particularly important, in my view, to generate greater attendance and participation from young scholars.

While we lost from the limits to in-person contact, we gained from experience with new kinds of virtual activities, which for the most part yielded higher levels of participation than in-person meetings would have. These have resulted in vibrant webinar and other lecture series that will continue, even as travel becomes more feasible again.

We could not have done any of this without the incredible dedication, skills, and creativity of our wonderful Executive Director, Jill Johnson. And if I say I could not have done it without you to our wonderful membership, I have to say it twice in the case of Jill. I have loved working with her and thank her for how much she has done for ISQOLS, not just in the past two years, but since she took over as Executive Director almost a decade ago. We have gone from barely having a balance sheet to having a healthy endowment that has managed to emerge relatively unscathed from the recent market volatility. This has allowed us to start a new post-doctoral fellowship program, with Emma Pleeing as the inaugural post-doc (congratulations to Emma!). In addition, we are starting a Working Paper series which we hope will add to the

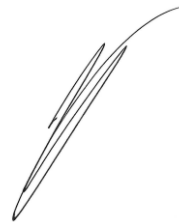
intellectual activity of ISQOLS and allow rising young scholars to get feedback on promising work (and we also hope that old dinosaurs like me also contribute to the series).

We managed to pull off a successful fully virtual conference in 2021 and a hybrid conference in Vermont in 2022. We could not have done that without the efforts of many, but I want to recognize Jill in particular, as well as Martijn Burger, our next president, for his efforts and intellectual guidance in organizing and implementing the virtual conference tools, as well as our University of Vermont colleagues, especially Kelly Hamshaw, for making the hybrid conference such a success. Kudos to all of them!

In the two years I have served as President, more than anything else, I have benefited from interactions with you, from our seminars, webinars, and wonderful conference, and from seeing increased interest in research on quality of life and wellbeing among more people and across more disciplines and, importantly, especially among young people. It is the ability to think beyond the usual boundaries and parameters, to learn from those with different tools, skills, and perspectives and backgrounds that makes ISQOLS such a rich and unusual society. And so does ISQOLS's tradition of collegiality and mutual respect for those differences.

I leave you in very good hands, with Jill continuing in her critical role and with Martijn taking over as president. Best of luck to them (although they do not need it!). I plan to stay actively involved in ISQOLS and, at least initially, will edit the new Working Paper series. Again, thank you all for giving me both the opportunity and the support that was so critical to taking it on. Best wishes for the holidays and I am sure that you will be hearing soon after from Martijn and Jill.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Carol Graham', written in a cursive style.

Carol Graham  
Leo Pasvolsky Senior Fellow  
The Brookings Institution  
College Park Professor  
University of Maryland