

SSSP Program Committee Report Submitted July 20, 2004

We are pleased with the enthusiastic response to the 2004 SSSP program theme and believe the forthcoming meetings will continue the Society's tradition of critical, innovative scholarship and social commitment. We have learned much during the past year and make the following recommendations to the 2005 committee:

1. **Committee Communication:** Communicate early, communicate often. The work of the program committee is considerable, especially in the spring. Plan your spring schedules to do nothing but SSSP in mid-March. Michele needs the completed preliminary program by the third week in March, and information from division chairs arrives in early March.

Note: Michele organizes all the division-sponsored sessions. She is amazing, and you will likely come to view her as your personal savior.

2. **Division Chairs:** The role of division chairs is crucial. This year they have worked quite independently and contributed greatly to the program creation. When the new program chairs and president meet with the division chairs, be prepared to answer any questions they have about how their divisions fit with the program theme. This is also a time when you can ask them if they have any concerns or ideas about the overall program.

Encourage the division chairs to have at least four papers in every session and to identify presiders and discussants when the sessions are submitted. Also, let them know they can have extra sessions if they create thematic sessions.

3. **Direct Submissions to Program Committee:** Many paper proposals were sent directly to the program committee and careful coordination is needed. It may be best if one member of the committee accepts responsibility for coordination (ideally, a member with secretarial support at her/his institution).

If you receive numerous papers that do not fit into established themes and want to include them in the program, form potpourri sessions.

4. **Presiders/Discussants:** Especially for the new sessions we created, we needed many presiders and discussants. The most direct approach is to recruit your friends, students and colleagues to serve.
5. **Alternative Formats:** There is strong support for formats in addition to conventional paper presentations, but it is challenging to implement them. Personal contact may be the best approach. The alternative formats include, but are not limited to:

Performances: Contact and recruit people; try to convince them to commit to doing something for the meetings.

Photography: Again, use your personal contacts to see if people will contribute to a photography exhibit. Michele is available to help with the logistics. This year, it will be in the registration/book exhibit area, but you may want to consider a separate room or a session where artists discuss their work. (This was quite successful at the 2003 meetings.)

Films: This takes time but is the alternative format over which the committee has greatest control. Begin early.

Poetry and Music: It doesn't appear that many people noticed our call for participants in the preliminary program. Thus far, only three people are committed to reading poetry and no musicians have come forward. If you decide to continue this format, you will need to make direct contact with potential participants or those who would know somebody who'd like to participate, if you decide to continue this.

6. **Co-sponsored Sessions:** This is a collegial way to build collaborative relationships with other organizations. The president (AKA Gary) will probably meet with ASA, ABS, and SWS and may seek the help of the program chairs. Designated liaisons are also very helpful (e.g., Cecilia Menjivar with ASA this year).
7. **External Support:** The president will take the lead, but assistance from the program committee may be desired. Two examples are:

Gary will request funds from his institution (Northwestern) to help support our meeting. ASU provided support in 2003, but this year NAU was not able to help us. Michele can provide solicitation letters from previous years.

Contact Paula Dressel to see if the Annie Casey Foundation will sponsor a plenary session. (She may be at this year's meetings.) They couldn't do it this year, but maybe next year they'll be in a better situation to provide funding.

We wish you the best in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,

Peg Bortner, Stephen Pfohl, Danielle Egan, and Cecilia Menjivar