REPORT of the Permanent Organization and Strategic Planning Committee 2003

The main issue confronting this committee is the retirement of Tom Hood from his position at the University of Tennessee. In 2004 he will move to Professor Emeritus.

Tom Hood has agreed to continue as Executive Officer of SSSP, for which we are profoundly grateful. Some adjustments will need to be made in the contract, but we have every reason to anticipate a smooth transition.

In the immediate future, we will be renegotiating the contract with the University. The money spent on releasing Tom from teaching duties will no longer be required, but some financial recompense, for both Tom and for the University will be needed. The details of this should be worked out by the Budget, Finance and Audit committee, but something along the lines of what Tom has suggested in his report to us seems appropriate.

In terms of longer range planning, we have more serious thinking to do. We have been very, very fortunate indeed to have Michele Smith Koontz as our Administrative Officer. She has brought the organization to a point where the job of the Executive Officer is no longer as daunting as it once was, making some shifts possible. We may be able to think now of moving on at some point in the future to a more honorary position for the Executive Officer (with perhaps an appropriate change of title) and strengthening the Administrative Office. It is necessary that the office be run through a university but there is no need at all for any particular geographic office. Michele Smith Koontz has demonstrated that the office can run perfectly well from a site removed geographically from the Executive Office.

The proposal offered by our committee then is the following:

We renew the contract with the University of Tennessee with Tom Hood continuing on and so there are essentially no changes, other than some savings of money, for the next two to three years.

We renew our earlier commitment to provide a permanent Part-Time Employee to the Administrative Office, to work under Michele Smith Koontz’s guidance. This was approved some years back but never implemented. While Graduate Assistants are good to call on for short-term assistance, we need a more stable, professional clerical staff than is provided by the students, whose interests and concerns are (appropriately!) elsewhere.

We ask that in the next few years we change the description of the Executive Officer, emphasizing the aspects of the job that involve professional, sociological expertise: liaison between officers, board and other organizations; serving as a source of organizational memory; advising on the ethical and political issues that face us in society-sponsored activities. These are the points that Tom Hood has found increasingly central in his work, as the administrative office has grown more competent and less in need of oversight. While the Administrative Office moves to a permanent part-time employee rather than a graduate assistant, some graduate assistance should remain with the Executive Officer.

When we go on to look for a new Executive Officer -- in perhaps three years or so -- we can do so with this newer job description. And if we can keep the EO at the University of Tennessee, that would of course make some things simpler. But if we have to move it, we simply need to be quite clear that wherever the Executive Officer is located, the Administrative Office remains fully staffed and continually operating. That too will be a task of the Budget, Finance and Audit Committee, writing a new contract that maintains the Administrative Office through whichever University we may move on to.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Katz Rothman, Chair of the Permanent Organization and Strategic Planning Committee