

TO: Board of Directors, Society for the Study of Social Problems

FROM: Lorna Rivera, Chair of 2005 Racial/Ethnic Scholarship Award Committee

DATE: June 25, 2005

RE: 2005 Racial/Ethnic Minority Scholarship Award Committee Report

This report summarizes the work of the 2005 Racial/Ethnic Scholarship Award Committee. The 2005 Committee Members were: Patrick Akard, Chris Baker, Adriana Bohm, Hoan Bui, Luis Fernandez, Angie Moe (Chair-Elect), Lorna Rivera (Chair).

Overview of Applications

The committee is pleased to announce that **Robert John Duran**, a Ph.D. Candidate at University of Colorado-Boulder, is the winner of the 2005 Racial/Ethnic Graduate Scholarship Award. Mr. Duran received an average of 15.29 points (out of 16) and he was listed in the top three by all committee members (six of whom ranked him the No. 1 candidate). In second place was Elvia Ramirez, who averaged 14.57 points, and was also identified by all committee members in the top three (3 members ranked her #2 and 4 ranked her #3). In third place was James Thing (avg. 14.25 pts., 4 out of 7 ranked him in top three.) Committee members believe that there were many talented and deserving candidates!

In 2005, the Committee reviewed 27 complete applications (the application deadline was February 1, 2005). Committee members received a three-ring binder of the 27 applications the week of February 15th. The Committee’s deadline to complete reviews and submit the “top three ballot” and “ratings criteria sheets” was June 1, 2005. This year, the Committee used a different rating scale with “expanded” criteria. Two Committee members propose we revise the second criterion to better assess applicants that have not completed the requirements for the Ph.D. (See “Recommendations” below.)

Of the 27 applications evaluated by the committee, 20 were from women and 7 were from men. 12 of the applicants were African American, 8 were Latino, 6 were Asian, and one Pacific Islander. We received 11 more applications than last year; (In 2004, 16 applications were evaluated, 8 women, 8 men, 6 African American, 6 Latino, 1 American Indian).

2005 Racial & Ethnic Background of Applicants	<u>N=27</u>	
African American	12	
Latino	8	
Asian	6	
Pacific Islander	1	
Gender		
Women	20	
Men	7	

Committee Recommendations

The Racial/Ethnic Scholarship Award's application form states "advanced graduate students preferred." We ask applicants, "Have you completed the major requirements for the Ph.D. (yes or no), if yes, submit a copy of a dissertation prospectus". We also now require a budget. Applicants that are not advanced doctoral students score very low on criterion #2, "Scholarship (25%) a) potential contribution/impact of study; b) proposed budget." Some applicants had not yet chosen a research topic, while others submitted lengthy proposals. We propose that the 2006 Committee revise this criterion to fairly assess applicants that are in the early stages of their doctoral work.

Unfortunately, we had two applications from students who were enrolled in Masters programs. Because these applicants were not in doctoral programs, they also scored very low on criteria related to advanced doctoral work. We recommend that SSSP make it clear that Masters students cannot apply for the award. Also, the process to verify "completed" applications should check whether applicants are enrolled in a doctoral program.

We recommend continuing the practice of having the materials sent to the main SSSP office, where staff can determine if applicants meet the qualifications. We recommend keeping the same deadline, February 1st, with a receipt date deadline (rather than post-mark date deadline). We received one complaint from a late applicant who did not understand this policy.

The Chair proposes that SSSP consider the merits of completing applications on-line. We received many emails inquiring about the on-line application process (such as emails confirming receipt of emails). Currently, applicants can complete only the application form on-line, they cannot attach documents, and still need to submit hardcopies of the remaining materials. Some applicants were confused as to whether they had to submit a hardcopy of the on-line application with their completed packets. We received 43 on-line applications (the application forms), but only 27 completed packets. (Note that in 2004, 40 applications were received via web, and only 16 were completed.) Is this something we need to address?

Because the award was advertised in the newsletters of some international sociological associations, the chair received several inquiries from non-US citizens (mostly in UK, Canada, India) who wished to apply for the award. The chair recommends we add a "frequently asked questions" and answers to the website. The following are sample questions we received:

2005 Frequently Asked Questions

- How can I find more information about the SSSP's Racial/Ethnic Minority Graduate Scholarship?
- Do you have to be a U.S. Citizen to apply for the SSSP Minority Scholarship?
- How many students apply for the scholarship each year?
- Do SSSP applicants need to have defended their dissertation in order to be considered for the scholarship?
- Can the award be used to support the writing process after the research stage is completed?
- How formal should the statement regarding applicant's dissertation research be? Does it need to be the official prospectus approved by the graduate program?
- Is there a requirement to the length of the personal statement?
- Is there a specific form for the letters of recommendation or does it have to be on letterhead?
- If I am not selected can I apply next year?

The Chair will forward a draft of this report for the Committee's review and feedback. Copies of the Final Report will be submitted to the Board of Directors at the SSSP Annual Meeting. On August 12, 2005, the Committee plans to meet for lunch at SSSP. Minutes from the meeting, as well as electronic copies of award-related documents will be forwarded to Angie Moe, the 2006 Chair by the end of August.

I wish to express special thanks to Denise Knight and Michele Koontz for their valuable assistance throughout the year. Also, many thanks to the hardworking members of the 2005 committee for their timely submission of work, their excellent ideas, and dedicated service to SSSP.