Social Problems

The Official Journal of the Society for the Study of Social Problems

To: SSSP Board of Directors
            Editorial and Publications Committee
            Advisory Editors

From: Amy S. Wharton, Editor, *Social Problems*

Re: 2005-06 Annual Report

Date: June 29, 2006

This report documents the activities of the editorial offices and staff at Washington State University from June 1, 2005-May 31, 2006.

Editorial Office:

Thanks to Jim Holstein and his capable staff, there was a remarkably smooth transition from his editorial office to mine. Our office was up and running by June 1, when the first manuscripts began to arrive. Sarah Chivers, a graduate student in sociology, is my editorial coordinator. Amy Jo Woodruff has taken over production editor duties from Trudy Flores. This past year I have also had assistance from sociology graduate student, Tori Byington. Tori worked as Sarah's back-up and has spent many hours updating the reviewer database. We have received great support from the University and Michele Koontz, as always, has been wonderful.

I have worked very closely this year with my three associate editors: Lisa Catanzarite, Clay Mosher, and Nella Van Dyke. They have each devoted significant amounts of time and energy to the journal and *Social Problems* has truly benefited from their expertise and judgment. Overall, my entire staff has been incredibly conscientious and professional.

In February, I was invited to visit with the journals division staff at UC Press. This was a productive trip; all of the staff at UC Press have been very helpful and my interactions with them have been positive.

Budget:

The editorial office operated under budget this year.

Manuscript Submissions and Processing:

Submissions to *Social Problems* are strong and holding steady. As the attached table shows, we processed 343 submissions during the 2005-06 year, roughly the same number as the year before. The system that we have devised for processing manuscripts is working fairly well. When a new manuscript arrives, it is assigned a "handling editor" (myself or one of the associate editors) who

identifies potential reviewers for the paper. Early on, I was the person who assigned all of the papers to a handling editor, but Sarah has gradually taken on this role. She knows each of our schedules, the number of papers each of us is working on at any given time and where they are in the review process, and our areas of interest and expertise. When reviews come in, the file goes back to the handling editor who summarizes the reviews, provides his or her own evaluation of the paper, and recommends a decision. Then, the entire file is sent to me for review. I make the final decision about the paper's fate and write the letter to the author.

Despite the fact that this system adds an extra step in the review process, our average turnaround time is only a few days longer than the year prior. Our median time to decision for manuscripts undergoing a full review is 70 days. We average 3.9 reviews per manuscript. We inherited a large and well-crafted reviewer database, which continues to grow. In addition to adding approximately 750 new reviewers this year, we have updated reviewer contact information and added additional details about reviewer specialty areas.

Our acceptance rate remains under 10 percent. At the moment, we are not working with much of a backlog, though this could change at any time.

Special Sections:

Jim's final special section on Institutional Ethnography is forthcoming in the August issue. The November issue will contain a special section devoted to the commemoration of the twenty year anniversary of Stacey and Thorne's "Missing Feminist Revolution in Sociology." This section will contain short essays by Christine Williams, Raka Ray, Judith Lorber, and Leila Rupp, with commentaries by Judy Stacey and Barrie Thorne. Joan Acker will write an introduction. The issue will contain at least three other papers exploring themes related to gender or feminist theory.   I expect that we will have additional special sections, though none have been planned at this time.

Electronic Processing of Manuscripts:

Social Problems manuscripts are now processed almost entirely electronically. We receive many electronic submissions from authors, with hard copies coming later.   We solicit reviewers via e-mail and the vast majority (roughly 90 percent) prefer to receive the paper and reviewer forms electronically. Almost all reviews are returned via e-mail. My associate editors and I also correspond this way. This increase in electronic communication has cut down significantly on mailing and copying costs.

At this point, I continue to send decision letters and reviews to authors via snail mail. I do this because it feels more personal to me, but eventually I will likely succumb to the greater efficiency of electronic communication.

Production:

As of this writing, we have produced two issues. Both issues were printed and mailed slightly behind schedule. That is, they were mailed during the latter part of the month in which the issue was scheduled to appear. These were relatively minor delays that were caused by a number of factors, including an inexperienced production editor, delays at the typesetter, and a printer error that delayed mailing.

These problems have been rectified, but there are more changes ahead. In May, UC Press ended its relationship with the typesetter who had been working on *Social Problems* for the past few years, and contracted with a typesetter in India. The new typesetter, ITC, works on a much shorter production schedule than the previous typesetter. ITC is handling the August issue of *Social Problems,* and I

expect to know more about them by the annual meetings. Cheryl Swope of UC Press requested that we work directly with her during the transition to the new typesetter, so we have not yet had any direct contact with ITC.

The first year of my editorship has gone by quickly. I have learned a tremendous amount. I continue to be impressed with the professionalism and dedication of all the people associated with *Social Problems* – the reviewers, authors, editorial team, and SSSP staff and members. Thank you, everyone.

Manuscript Traffic and Editorial Decisions

June 1, 2005 to May 31, 2006

Decision	Original Submissions	Revised Submissions	Total	Percent	Mean Days to Decision
Accept	0	29	29	9.7%	13.1
Expedite Review/ Conditional Accept	3	17	20	6.7%	62.05
Revise & Resubmit	48	7	55	18.5%	82.1
Reject	124	17	141	47.3%	74.1
Deflect	53	0	53	17.8%	9.9
Total Reviewed	**228**	**70**	**298**		**57.0**
Currently Under Review	35	10	45	13.1%	
Total Submissions	**263**	**80**	**343**		

Acceptance Rate: 9.7%

Mean Days to Decision (full review):   **72.1**
Median Days to Decision (full review):   **70.0**

Reviews Per Manuscript (for those undergoing full review): 3.9

Editorial Activity

Reviews Solicited:	2088
Reviews:	1029
Reviewer Consent Rate:	49%
Reviewers in Database:	5790 (745 added in 2005-2006)