

August 12, 2007

TO: SSSP Board of Directors

FROM: James Orcutt, Chair, Editorial and Publications (E&P) Committee

RE: 2006-2007 SSSP E&P Committee Report

The E&P Committee had a very busy year, which included the search for a new Editor of *Social Problems* for 2008-2011. Prior to the SSSP Meetings, the Committee considered a proposal from the Executive Office to increase the price of single back issues of the journal for SSSP members from \$8.50 to \$10.00 per issue. This proposal was unanimously supported by the Committee via an e-mail poll of voting members.

The annual meeting of the E&P Committee on August 10 in New York opened with the report of the Editor of *Social Problems Forum: The SSSP Newsletter*, Ken Kyle. He reported that the move of his editorial operation from Penn State, Harrisburg to California State University, East Bay has gone smoothly. Now at the end of his second year as Editor, Dr. Kyle has produced five issues of the *Newsletter*. His report highlights a number of new features in recent issues and plans for future innovations in the *Newsletter*, including the first-ever photo essay. He has requested no change in his current budget and has established good working relationships with staff at CSU East Bay. The Committee thanked Dr. Kyle for the excellent job he has done as *Newsletter* Editor. He has indicated his willingness to extend his editorship beyond the initial three-year term, and the E&P Committee will make a recommendation to the Board of Directors on this in the near future.

The report of the Editor of *Social Problems*, Amy Wharton, was also quite positive. Her editorial office continues to run smoothly. Her office processed over 300 manuscripts during the past year, with a median decision time of 72 days. Although a few problems occurred during the change to a new typesetter and printer, production of the two most recent issues of the journal (May and August) is proceeding on schedule. Dr. Wharton praised the efforts of her staff and associate editors as well as the assistance of Michele Koontz in the executive office. In turn, the Committee congratulated Dr. Wharton on the outstanding job she has done with the journal. We noted that *Social Problems* continues to rank as the third most influential general journal in sociology as measured by the ISI Impact Index. In sum, the current Editor will pass on the journal to the next Editor in very good shape.

Rebekah Darksmith and Rebecca Simon reported to the Committee on behalf of the University of California Press. They indicated that net revenue generated for SSSP by *Social Problems* is expected to exceed the originally budgeted figure of \$168,438 by more than \$8,000 for the most recent fiscal year. This increase in revenue occurred despite a 2.7% decline in institutional subscriptions to the journal during 2006. Ms. Darksmith and Ms. Simon outlined a number of steps UC Press is taking to increase international subscriptions, to expand online access to the journal, and to generate more revenue from advertising. All parties agree that relationships between the *Social Problems* editorial office and UC Press continue to be very good.

The main items on the meeting agenda were interviews with three finalists for the next editorship of *Social Problems*. We were fortunate to have three very strong candidates for this important position after conducting an intensive search and an initial evaluation of applicants via e-mail. Following half-hour interviews with each finalist, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend that Ted Chiricos of Florida State University (FSU) be appointed Editor for the 2008-2011. All three candidates impressed the Committee, but we believe that Dr. Chiricos has unique strengths that make him a compelling choice.

Dr. Chiricos submitted a thoughtful and thorough application to the Committee. He also submitted a detailed budget and strong letters of institutional support from his Dean and the Provost of FSU. Dr. Chiricos has a long association with SSSP and with our journal. He has published nine articles in *Social Problems*, dating back to his first publication in 1970. He has served on the editorial boards of this and other journals, and current and past editors on the Committee commented on the excellence of work as a reviewer. He is a highly regarded scholar in the field of criminology, but he strongly identifies with his doctoral discipline of sociology.

Dr. Chiricos plans to appoint several Associate Editors who can take some responsibility for the reviews of manuscripts in areas outside of his own expertise. He already has a commitment from one young scholar with impressive credentials, and he will be contacting several other potential Associate Editors at the meetings if he is appointed. Above all, he stressed his intention to keep the journal on its current course as a leading outlet for high quality scholarship on the broad range of social problems that are of concern to the membership of SSSP and readers of *Social Problems*. All signs are that he will be a first-rate editor and will assemble a productive editorial operation. We recommend him to the Board of Directors enthusiastically.

Other items of business on our agenda included further discussion of the process of soliciting bids from potential publishers of *Social Problems*. UC Press must be notified by July 1, 2008 as to whether SSSP wishes to extend or terminate the current publishing agreement. Most members of the Committee favor an initial offer to UC Press for another five-year extension which would include additional benefits to SSSP. An example would be the digitization of all back issues of *Social Problems* that are not currently in digital format (volumes 1-47). Members of the Committee also discussed other terms that might be added to the contract, such as ceilings on annual cost increases and other financial incentives for SSSP. If UC Press and SSSP could not reach agreement on these terms, then the process could be opened for bidding from other publishers. A subcommittee appointed last year by the Board of Directors is in the process of obtaining examples of publishing agreements from other journals to inform our consideration of these options.

The last item of business in the meeting of the E&P Committee was the nomination and election of a Committee Chair for 2007-2008. James Holstein was selected to assume this position for the coming year.