<div align="center">

Executive Summary
Report prepared for the SSSP Retreat, Roosevelt Hotel, New York City, Aug. 8, 2007

</div>

Preface
The Retreat Planning Committee developed two strategies to seek input from members. The first was to design a survey that would ask members to share their experiences as members of SSSP and provide recommendations for changes they would like to see in the structure, governance, and other aspects of the Society. The second was to conduct interviews with former presidents and officers as well as several members who have recently become active on committees or in elected positions to offer their views on the changes and continuity in SSSP. Our thanks to all members who took the time from their busy lives to answer what turned out to be a very long survey and those who participated in the interviews. Members of the Ad hoc Retreat Planning Committee were Donald Cunnigen, Tom Hood, Valerie Jenness, Michele Koontz, Nancy Naples (Committee Chair), Claire Renzetti, and Sandra Cheldelin who will serve as facilitator for the Retreat.

Introduction
The process of gathering data from SSSP members was almost as illuminating as the results from the survey and interviews. We began by discussing the best way to gain input from the membership and to highlight different groups within the membership, such as students, long term members, members who had been long term members whose memberships had lapsed for a number of years, members who regularly attended the annual meetings, and members who rarely attended the meetings. We also wanted to ensure that we solicited feedback from members with different racial ethnic backgrounds and those at different stages of their careers. As we started to make a list of the different categories, we realized that a survey would best survey our purposes. However, we also wanted to include as many open-ended questions as possible in order for the membership to share their priorities, recommendations, and concerns with us. The process of constructing the survey was also a collective one and the result was a very long survey. This contributed to a low response rate and a great deal of missing data. However, the responses we received from those who spent the time to complete the survey were quite varied and very useful for the goals of the Retreat Planning Committee. In short, the survey results provided non-generalizable insight to the committee The insight gathered through the surveys was complemented by insights provided in the interviews. Although neither source of data was designed to be generalizable, both sources served our purposes and combined they covered considerable territory.

The main theme that runs through both the interview and survey data is that members value SSSP's commitment to social justice and would like to see SSSP both continue and expand as an organization that is "more critical, more cutting-edge, more political than ASA." Most expressed a desire for SSSP to be more "out there." As one interviewee explained, "I think the only area of improvement is in becoming a more central player in important national debates and policy."

A number of respondents emphasized the importance of working closely with other academic organizations especially ASA, SWS, and ABS. While a number of respondents mentioned this point, they also stressed the continued need for SSSP to be in the forefront of social

<div align="center">

1

</div>

justice activism. However, some expressed concern that, in the words of one former SSSP president, SSSP has had "less cutting-edge leadership (which it once had in large amounts) cajoling, urging, and pressuring sociologists to adopt a 'liberation sociology' perspective that seeks to make this society and others much more humane."

While many members shared an interest in expanding SSSP's visibility in the larger field of national political debate and international social justice activism, some felt that SSSP should provide greater leadership and support at the local level. While most members we interviewed supported an expansion of SSSP's role as an activist scholarly organization, one interviewee pointed out another dilemma that was also raised by some of the survey respondents; namely, the concern that SSSP's intervention in policy debates should foreground "social science expertise" rather than become purely an expression of political views. Another interest raised by the members we interviewed was the desire to see SSSP expand its interdisciplinary focus.

Another theme found in both the interview and survey data relates to the sense of solidarity and camaraderie that many feel through the SSSP, especially when they attend the annual meetings. However, as many respondents pointed out, SSSP "needs to be more diverse racially." Among the many suggestions provided to encourage this goal was to charge the Strategic Planning Committee "to better address racial and ethnic disparities and racial biased attitudes and behavior within *The Society*" and collaborate with scholars with expertise in this area to "establish a curriculum or a series of workshops where theorizing of racial and other inequalities is fostered." Another recommendation was to increase funding for the Minority Scholarship Award, ensure that committee members are" knowledgeable of the racial and ethnic disparities faced by people of color in the U.S.," and increase representation of scholars of color on the scholarship committee.

Finally, a number of respondents felt that SSSP should make "a greater effort to . . . connect with progressive NGOs" and become "an active voice in championing research and practice."

Results of SSSP Retreat Survey
Demographic and Membership Information
- 567 of our 2093 members responded to the SSSP Retreat Survey, which accounted for a 27.1% response rate. Of those who responded, 62.4% are women, 35.2% are men, and 1.9% reported a transgendered or other identity/expression
- 47.4% were between the ages of 31 and 50, 13.2% reported being under 30 years old, 33.3% of respondents were between 51-65 years, and 6.2% reported being over 65 years.
- 74.1% self-identified as white/Euro-American, 8.4% identified as Black or African American, 5.3% self-identified as Hispanic or Latino/a, 2.9% identified as Asians, 9.1% of self-identified as being of an other race/ethnicity or of a mixed race/ethnicity.
- 88.3% reported an academic affiliation, while 5% of respondents indicated they worked for a non-profit organization. The remainder of the respondents indicated that they worked for a for-profit, government, or other organization.
- 53% reported joining SSSP between the years of 2000-2007.
- 37% reported being very active or somewhat active within the organization.

- 62.4% said they attended SSSP meetings regularly (at least once every three years) while 37.6% reported that they rarely attended meetings.
- 63.5% of respondents reported that their attendance at annual meetings has stayed the same since they have become members.
- Of those who reported that their attendance has declined noted that the most common reason for this was the increased costs for travel and hotel.
- Of those who attend or have attended annual meetings, 12.4% present papers yearly, 19.8% respondents reported presenting papers at SSSP annual meetings almost yearly, and 30.2% reported presenting at least once in the past three years.
- 37.8% respondents said they had rarely presented papers in the past three years.
- 68.7% reported that they had not participated in any committee within SSSP.
- 84.2% had not served in an elected position within SSSP.

The Executive Office
- 65.2% were either not very familiar or not familiar at all with the role of the Executive Office.
- Of the 266 respondents who had opportunities to contact the Executive Office, 74% stated that the staff answered their questions very well or adequately. Only 1.9% of respondents stated that their questions were not answered very well.
- Of the 24% who selected "Other" as a choice, the vast majority of those responses stated that in fact they had had no contact with the Office.
- Of those who did comment, the majority of those were usually in praise of Michele Koontz' work within the Executive Office.
- Only 2.9% believed that the responsibilities of the Executive Office should be increased while 12.6% felt that responsibilities should not be expanded and 84.7% of respondents stated that they did not have enough familiarity with the role of the Executive Office to offer an answer.
- Many stated that it does "quite a bit already" and "seems to be working fine like it is."

The Nominations Process
- 34.4% reported that they were very familiar or somewhat familiar with the nominations process, while 62.6% of respondents indicated that they were not very familiar or not familiar at all with the nominations process.
- 86.9% of 322 respondents felt that the current process of identifying candidates who were representative of SSSP membership rated it as was very effective or somewhat effective.
- 13.0% felt that the process was either not very effective or not effective at all. Of those who rated the process to be ineffective or not very effective, respondents generally offered very practical advice including the need to diversify who gets nominated.

Ranking of SSSP's Efforts to Diversify Membership
- 16.9% of all respondents rated SSSP's efforts to increase diversity within the organization as very effective and 64% rated these efforts as somewhat effective.
- 19.1% rated SSSP's efforts as either not very effective or not effective at all.
- Results differ when respondents are separated by self-identified race/ethnicity.
- A total of 16 Latino/a members, 26 Black/African Americans, and 9 Asian Americans responded to the survey. Of these 53 respondents, 19% rated SSSP's overall effort to

diversify membership as very effective and 49% rated the organization's efforts as somewhat effective. However, 17 (32%) rated SSSP's efforts as either not very effective or not effective at all.

- Because self-identified racial/ethnic minorities gave SSSP's overall efforts to diversity the membership lower scores than did the entire pool of respondents.Latino/a, Black/African American, and Asian/Asian American respondents listed similar dimensions of diversity that are of greatest concern to them including:
    - Lack of international representation of non-American members.
    - Paternalistic treatment of graduate students and some people of color.
    - Lack of racial/ethnic minorities in elected office and in key committees.
    - Lack of inclusiveness of members of color.
    - Lack of outreach to minority graduate students.
- Respondents had positive as well as negative comments in regards to diversity issues within SSSP. Among the more positive comments were the following:
    - "Race. In my opinion, SSSP has done a better job at addressing these complicated issues than any other organization I know."
    - However, as another respondent wrote: "Although SSSP strives to be inclusive, somehow the message doesn't seem to be getting out."

Greatest Impediments to Achieving Greater Racial/Ethnic Diversity
- External factors included:
    - Racial/ethnic compositions of our universities.
    - Various structural/social issues external to SSSP.
    - Lack of minorities in academia in general.
    - The restrictive nature of 'Sociology' as a discipline.
- Internal factors mentioned included:
    - Lack of outreach to minority graduate students.
    - Not enough participation of non-academic members.
    - Public relations/exposure (or lack thereof).
    - Paternalistic treatment of racial/ethnic minorities.
    - SSSP as a "liberal, white" organization.
    - Lack of outreach to minority graduate students.
    - Competition with other professional organizations.
    - Failure to engage with concerns facing racial minorities outside academia.

Suggestions for Achieving Greater Representation of Under-Represented Minority Students:
- Conduct outreach to community agencies where students intern or work
- Increase recruitment of minority students
- Provide greater mentorship and more scholarships
- Use Internet to communicate and assist students
- Change marketing message, re-invent image, and expand marketing of SSSP
- Assist students by providing one year of free membership
- Encourage collaboration between minority faculty members and students
- Identify minority students and send out personal invitations to join
- Include minority students in all committees whenever possible

Suggestions for Achieving Greater Representation of Under-Represented Faculty:
■ Conduct outreach and collaboration with diversity offices
■ Establish a mentorship program for under-represented faculty
■ Provide financial incentives to join and scholastic support
■ Create spaces for faculty of color to address problems they face as scholars
■ Create opportunities for networking
■ Interact more with other organizations such as ABS
■ Outreach through personalized communication to under-represented faculty
■ Ensure that under-represented faculty are in key positions within SSSP
■ Have a table at other conferences such as ABS, LASA, and AAAS
■ Target academic departments at historically Black colleges and universities
■ Include a more proactive introduction for new members of SSSP

Impediments to achieving Greater Representation of Practitioners in SSSP
■ Lack of awareness that there is "a place" for them in SSSP
■ Perceived lack of academic relevance of practitioners' work
■ Lack of familiarity with the organization
■ Lack of outreach to practitioners
■ Lack of time and/or funding
■ Overwhelming academic jargon
■ SSSP appearing to present itself as an academia-only organization

Suggestions for Achieving Greater Representation of Practitioners
Common suggestions for achieving greater representation of practitioners included a call to "make SSSP relevant to practitioners" and "develop greater, more targeted outreach and recruiting." Suggestions for doing so included:
■ Develop forums for practitioners to network with each other
■ Increase public knowledge of the field
■ Offer more direct incentives to participate in SSSP
■ Define a clearly-articulated agenda
■ Deal more with social policy as well as social problems
■ Develop a presence at other types of events and meetings
■ Revise Journal to be more open for practitioners
■ Assist unemployed practitioners in securing jobs
■ Choose themes for meetings that appeal to both academics and practitioners
■ Restructure meetings so practitioners can meet together to share common interests
■ Revise recruitment materials to have lists of community organizations to which SSSP members have ties
■ A number of respondents felt that it was important to, "…actually decide if practitioners are welcome, and, if they are, to convene a focus group of practitioners who have attended in the past and ask them why SSSP isn't compelling for those of their ilk.".

Representation of International Diversity
■ Several respondents wondered if increasing international diversity should be a primary goal.

- The most common impediments to increased international diversity mentioned concerned the cost of travel to meetings and U.S.-centric focus of SSSP.
- Visa restrictions, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the Patriot Act were also highlighted as impediments to involvement by non-U.S. based scholars and activists.
- The fact that the SSSP conferences are held primarily in the U.S. increases these factors as impediments.
- Other factors include:
    - Lack of aggressive recruitments
    - Language barriers
    - Lack of minorities having a voice in top regions of the organization
    - The treatment of marginal group members within the U.S.
    - Lack of knowledge about SSSP
- A few respondents emphasized the importance of improving "SSSP racial/ethnic diversity first and then use this growth to attract international members."
- Common responses for achieving greater international diversity included:
    - Offer a sliding membership scale or other type of financial assistance
    - Increase public knowledge of the field
    - Increase outreach and recruitment practices of international members
    - Encourage more open dialogue
    - Hold conferences outside of the U.S. more often
    - Widen international concerns/focus
    - Have more outlets for international students within the organization
    - Incorporate a vision of social problems in an international perspective
    - Publicize SSSP in more areas
    - Hold more international panels at annual meetings
    - Increase attention to comparative social problems in the Journal
    - Recruit international members to leadership positions
    - Increase links with other regions in the world (e.g. Latin America.)
    - Create spaces for comparative cross-national approaches within SSSP.

Representation of People with Disabilities and Sexual Minorities
While over 100 people answered each of these questions, the overwhelming majority of responses indicated societal issues that were reasons behind the possible lack of participation of people with disabilities.

Representation of Sexual Minorities
No respondents felt that sexual minorities were underrepresented in SSSP; however, a few questioned the use of the term "sexual minority" in the survey.

SSSP's Providing Context for Professional Support
- 66.4% felt that SSSP was either very effective (24.2%) or somewhat effective (42.2%) in providing a context for professional support.
- 14.5% felt that SSSP was not very effective or not effective at all
- 19.1% were not aware of any efforts to provide a context for professional support.
- A few members raised the question of whether or not "this is the 'job' of SSSP."
- Suggestions for improvement broke down into five main categories:

1. Increase in speed mentoring
2. Greater assistance for graduate students in a variety of areas
3. Assistance with finding employment for members
4. More detailed communication from the organization itself
5. Movement of the organization away from being specialized and narrow

SSSP's Fostering Scholarship that Informs Public Policy
- 79.9% of respondents felt that SSSP was very effective or somewhat effective in fostering scholarship that informs public policy.
- 20.1% rated SSSP as not very effective or not effective at all.
- Suggestions for improvement included SSSP taking a more active role outside of the academic world in which members would work with policy makers, journalists, and public officials in order to create social change.
- Numerous members also cited a need for SSSP to connect with the media in order to promote a greater understanding of social issues to a larger audience.
- A few members also noted that there should be a greater emphasis on training sociologists how to communicate effectively with non-sociologists (e.g., training on writing research reports to a more general audience or op-ed pieces).

SSSP's Efforts to Fulfill its Mission to Foster "Activist Scholarship"
- 82.6% of respondents felt that SSSP's efforts to foster activist scholarship were either very effective or somewhat effective.
- 17.4% felt that SSSP's efforts were either not very effective or not effective at all.
- Suggestions for change include more openness to different types of sessions and articles that are heavily "activist" in their types of scholarship.
- Other respondents noted that there should be more involvement from those who are actually participating in activism in order to demonstrate how such activism work "occurs" or "develops" over time.
- A number of respondents cited concerns with SSSP's academic journal in that it is "devoted largely to 'research' in a relatively traditional sense of the term," although a greater number of respondents praised the Social Problems for the quality and accessibility of the articles.
- Train members on how to turn scholarship into activist work. Learning skills from activist scholars, for example, would be a good workshop for many people to attend."
- Numerous members also cited a need for SSSP to connect with the media in order to promote a greater understanding of social issues to a larger audience.

SSSP's Providing a Context that Supports Activism
- 81.1% believed that SSSP was either very effective or somewhat effective in providing a context that supports activism.
- 18.9% of respondents felt that SSSP was either not very effective or not effective at all.
- Suggestions that respondents offered varied, but the most common suggestions were for SSSP to become more active with policy makers and those involved in applied research.
- Respondents also cited a need for SSSP to connect with the media in order to promote a greater understanding of social issues to a larger audience.

- Still others suggested that SSSP promote more community service, as well as to provide more visible and active support for socially informed and socially significant research.

Racism
- 12.1% of respondents (n = 46) reported experiencing racism in SSSP frequently or occasionally;
- 8.4% said they rarely experienced racism.
- 87.9% reported having never experienced racism in SSSP (n = 358).
- When those who reported experiences of racism were asked if elected officers or other representatives of SSSP were aware of these experiences, 12.2% answered affirmatively, 27% stated that representatives were not aware, and 60.8% of respondents stated that they do not know if representatives were aware.
- 40% (n=12) of respondents who indicated that they did experience racism reported, stated that the organization handled the situation very well; 36.7% (n = 11) answered that SSSP handled the situation somewhat well, while 23.3% of respondents (n = 7) felt that representatives of SSSP did not handle the situation very well.
- Of the respondents who self-identified as Latino/a, Black/African American, or Asian/Asian American, 76% reported that they have never experienced racism within the organization.
- Of the Latino/a, Black/African American, or Asian/Asian American who reported experiences of racism, 14% said they experienced it frequently or occasionally while 14% said that they rarely experienced racism.
- 75 % of Latino/a, Black/African American, and Asian/Asian American respondents who reported experiences of racism noted that organizational representatives of SSSP handled the situation very well or somewhat well.

Sexism
- Of the 382 members who responded to the question regarding experiences of sexism, only 6.5% reported experiencing sexism frequently (n = 2) or occasionally (n = 23). A slightly larger percentage (11%) reported rare experiences of sexism.
- 82.2% reported having never experienced sexism within the organization
- 5% of those who reported experiences of sexism responded that an organizational representative was aware of the experiences, while 95% of respondents indicated that the organization either did not know or were not sure if they were made aware of these experiences.
- Of those who answered that the organization was aware of their experiences (n = 21), 16 respondents (76.2%) rated the organization's handling of the situation as very well or somewhat well. Five respondents (23.8%) reported that the organization did not handle the situation not very well.

Other Suggestions for Improving how SSSP Addresses Issues of Discrimination
- Have a formalized no-tolerance policy for discrimination at any level
- Continue to identify discriminatory practices and discuss them quickly and openly
- Develop workshops on addressing various forms of discrimination
- Discuss these issues within the SSSP general newsletter

- Provide more formal networking and mentoring programs which discuss issues of discrimination
- A number of responses contradicted one another. For example, many people suggested that SSSP directly attempt to recruit more people of color or under-represented people to serve on key committees; however, other respondents suggested that the organization should not directly attempt to recruit such people because it is inherently demeaning and can be awkward to the individuals involved.
- The majority of comments and suggestions received tended to demonstrate that the majority of respondents believed SSSP to be creating and actively maintaining an atmosphere of acceptance where members strove to work against types of discriminatory practices.

Changing Context for SSSP
- 77% of respondents (n = 265) felt that SSSP's overall effort was either very effective or somewhat effective
- 12.8% (n = 44) felt that SSSP's effort was either not very effective or not effective at all.
- 10.2% (n = 35) stated that they were not well-informed enough to make such a judgment.

Impediments to Change
- SSSP seems to be known only among academics and that SSSP should attempt to communicate more effectively with those outside of academia, especially with practitioners and policy makers.
- Cost was cited as one of the greatest impediments to change.
- SSSP's "old-school thinking" and the membership's resistance to change, "particularly people who have been in organizations a long time, don't always appreciate why organizations have to do things differently."
- Many respondents reported that because SSSP supports both scholarship and activism, there is a "disagreement on strategies and a lack of coordination/coalition work across interest areas."
- The majority of respondents who did answer this question, however, stated that they did not know what the greatest impediments to responding to these changes were.

Suggestions for Responding to the Increase in Use of Electronic Media
- The most common responses seemed to be in support of expanding the use of electronic media, but that SSSP should do so responsibly.
- Many respondents noted that using electronic media is acceptable for a number of reasons (conservation of paper, overall ease of use, convenience) but that newsletters should be formatted so that they can be easily read by many different types of people.
- Some respondents stated that they are unable to download large amounts of information due to their Internet connection, and some stated that they do not have access to the Internet at all, so that providing an option to receive paper copies of SSSP communications would also be helpful.

Suggestions for Responding to Increase in Costs Associated with Attending Annual Meetings
- Lower membership fees, or gain more members so that overall costs would decrease.

- "Create a fund or several small funds to provide financial assistance to students, international, and other under-represented members."
- Establish "a dedicated position for conference fund-raising, grant writing, foundation support, corporate sponsorship, and increased membership appeals."
- While some respondents thought that SSSP's link with ASA was beneficial because travel costs were decreased since one could attend two meetings held at the same place, others felt that SSSP should break its ties to ASA in order to have annual meetings at less expensive cities or at universities, where costs could potentially be much less.
- Others suggested that annual meetings be cut back and held every other year instead, while others promoted the use of telecommunications conferences or interactive television conferences.
- Another suggestion related to the idea of holding mid-year meetings focused on specific topics to provide members with the opportunity to consider a specific topic in-depth and to discuss organizational issues in a more focused and with less distraction.

One Aspect of SSSP to see Change or Not Change
- In many instances, what a large number of respondents wanted to see change within SSSP was also something that an equal number of respondents did not want to see change.
- Many respondents stated that in order for SSSP to continue, it must separate its ties from ASA to stay productive and cost-efficient. However, others also stated that SSSP should continue to meet alongside ASA because of its cost-efficiency, similarities, and ease of attendance for both meetings.
- Similarly, some members noted that SSSP meetings "are somewhat alienating to those not a member of its inner circles…I have never felt welcomed or brought into the fold in any way. This has made attending a much lower priority." However, others noted that SSSP has a "friendly, open atmosphere that accepts scholars of many varieties" and that attendance at SSSP is one of "genuine delight in scholarship and in meeting one's fellow scholars—no matter where they come from!" Thus, what is seen as a very negative aspect of SSSP to some members is seen as a very positive aspect to others.
- Other suggestions that were less controversial included the desire to see SSSP:
  - Increase diversity
  - Increase interdisciplinarity
  - Increase attendance at meetings
  - Increase outreach to both academic and non-academic circles
  - Expand its role in public policy debates.
- Aspects of SSSP that members would like to see remain the same included SSSP's:
  - Continued role as a viable alternative to ASA
  - Commitment to diversity
  - Commitment to activism
  - Responsiveness to members and its mentorship programs
  - Interdisciplinary focus.