

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

FROM: Jim Holstein; Chair, Editorial and Publications Committee

RE: 2007-2008 Editorial and Publications Committee Report

DATE: 31 July 2008

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The Editorial and Publications (E&P) Committee conducted extensive business by e-mail during the 2007-2008 year. The major items considered include the following:

- ***Social Problems* editorial transition**

Ted Chiricos and Amy Wharton navigated the editorial transition very adroitly, consulting with the E&P Committee several times along the way. All evidence suggests that the transition has gone very well and that the new editorial offices are up and running smoothly.

- **Electronic submissions of manuscripts to *Social Problems***

As part of the transition process, Ted and Amy conferred about changes and updates that would be propitious at the change-over. The main item that emerged was the adoption of a more efficient, automated manuscript processing system. The *Social Problems* editorial staff had been working with a very nice system developed by David Smith and his staff at UC Irvine, but it was becoming increasingly apparent that more sophisticated and efficient systems were being developed and implemented.

After consulting with Amy and her staff, Ted conducted research into the availability and feasibility of commercially available manuscript processing systems. From his perspective, *MsCentral* (provided by ScholarOne) seemed to be the most promising.

Since the use of any commercially provided system—including *MsCentral*—would involve a processing fee, this was more than a simple procedural matter for the editorial office. In this instance, *MsCentral* would require approximately \$20 per processed manuscript, plus a one time start-up fee. *Social Problems* has long prided itself on operating without a submission fee, which distinguishes it from all of its major competitors. With the costs of publication rising, however, a change here seemed inevitable.

After considerable e-mail discussion of the pros and cons of adopting *MsCentral*, and with further research by Ted, the E&P Committee voted unanimously to recommend the following:

1. *Social Problems* will adopt the electronic manuscript processing system provided by *MsCentral*/ScholarOne.
2. The SSSP should authorize payment of a one-time start up fee of \$1,850.
3. *Social Problems* will institute a submission fee for manuscripts of \$20. This is paid to ScholarOne and will have no financial impact on *Social Problems* or SSSP budgets. [This recommendation was subsequently revised at the 2007-08 meeting. See below.]
4. The implementation of the new system should be completed by June 1, 2008, so the new editorial offices can have *MsCentral* in place from day one. [It is currently in place.]

5. The E&P Committee agreed to discuss related issues further at the 2008 meetings, including the cost of submission, waivers of submission fees for particular groups, payment modalities, and the current accepted manuscript production fee.

- **Editor of *Social Problems Forum***

At the 2007 meeting, the E&P Committee began the search for an editor for *Social Problems Forum* beginning in 2009. Current editor, Ken Kyle generously volunteered to serve another term. The E&P Committee requested budget proposals from Ken for the next three years (see *Social Problems Forum* editor's report). In an extensive e-mail conversation and vote, the E&P Committee unanimously recommended the reappointment of Ken Kyle for a second three year term. Thanks to Ken for a job well done and best wishes for a bright future.

- **Announcements in *Social Problems Forum***

In the spring, Ken Kyle approached the E&P Committee for advice regarding requests to publicize professional journals in the *Forum's* "News of Note" feature. On e-mail, the Committee discussed the appropriateness of allowing publishers to publicize journals and other publications in this venue. It was the unanimous opinion of the Committee that such request should be treated as requests to advertise in the *Forum*, and should thus be considered under the current advertising guidelines.

- **Permission to reprint items from *Agenda for Social Justice***

In May, the SSSP offices received a request for permission to reprint an entry in the *Agenda for Social Justice: Solutions 2008*. Since we had no explicit policy regarding this issue, the Committee carried out a discussion on e-mail and unanimously recommended the following provisional policy (to be reconsidered at the 2008 meeting):

Permission to reprint entries in the agenda for the *Agenda for Social Justice: Solutions 2008* will be granted to all authors. Typically there will be no charge, but this will be resolved on a case by case basis.

Any republication will be accompanied by the following acknowledgment:

This article originally appeared in the Society for the Study of Social Problems "Agenda for Social Justice: Solutions 2008," edited by Robert Perrucci, Kathleen Ferraro, JoAnn Miller and Glenn Muschert, 2008. Knoxville, TN: Society for the Study of Social Problems.

<http://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/323>

**At the 2008 meeting, the E&P Committee conducted the following business:**

- The Committee heard and considered reports from UC Press regarding the publication and circulation of *Social Problems* and the negotiations for new contract to publish the journal. Rebecca Simon and Rebekah Darksmith assure the SSSP that *Social Problems* is doing well and that subscriptions are holding their own in bad economic times. The press is proposing a modest (10%) increase in subscription price. This will still leave *Social Problems* as one of the least expensive journals in sociology. UC Press is pleased with the new contract, as is the Committee. [See UC Press reports to the Board of Directors.]
- UC Press proposed a change in the paper used to print *Social Problems*. A new stock will be white, not the traditional buff color. The new stock is more environmentally friendly, less expensive and lighter (hence less expensive for mailing). The Committee unanimously recommends that the switch be made starting with the first issue of 2009. The change will be

prominently announced and an emblem will be displayed on the back cover indicating that *Social Problems* has made the change for environmentally sound reasons.

- The Committee heard the annual report from Ken Kyle, editor, *Social Problems Forum*. The newsletter is doing very well. Ken raised several items for discussion regarding cost saving measures. Most relate to reducing the number of printed pages delivered to members. The Committee unanimously recommends that *Social Problems Forum* discontinue the paper printing of the following items, which had previously been required: 1) annual auditor's report, 2) annual budget, 3) minutes of the annual business meeting. These items will continue to be published electronically, with links noted in the newsletter and on the SSSP web site. The Committee recognizes that some of these measures may require changes in the by-laws, and recommends such necessary changes. The Committee also recommends that the editor conscientiously attempt to streamline the newsletter, especially regarding calls for papers, calls for nominations, "News of Note" and other informational features. The objective is to reduce production and mailing costs while maintaining the diverse functions of the newsletter.
- Amy Wharton and Ted Chiricos, editors, *Social Problems*, delivered annual reports. The journal is doing very well and the editorial transition has gone smoothly. Ted has implemented the new electronic manuscript submission process, and so far, so good. The Committee thanks Amy for a job very well done and Ted for taking up the mantle.
- The Committee revisited the new submission fee policies for *Social Problems*. In order to cover all cost from *MsCentral*, and to subsidize submissions from a limited number of scholars working under severe financial constraint, the Committee recommended a raise in the submission fee. The editorial office also introduced the possibility of electronic billing, which would be very advantageous to the editorial office as well as the SSSP office. This would cost approximately \$50 per month. In light of our discussion, the Committee unanimously recommends that *Social Problems* charge a \$25 per manuscript submission fee, and that we implement an on-line payment system at the editor's earliest possible convenience. This fee may be waived on a case-by-case basis (determined by the editor), generally in response to financial exigencies. The Committee also recommends that the current "Production Fee" (\$50) be discontinued for SSSP members who have manuscripts accepted for publication, since the cost of production have decreased with the increasing use of e-mail. *Social Problems* will continue to charge non-members a \$100 production fee for non-members who have papers accepted. [See above.]
- The Committee discussed SSSP policy regarding reprinting SSSP publications other than *Social Problems*. It was unanimously recommended that the chair of the E&P Committee should review all requests and routinely grant permission without charge for reprinting such material in appropriate outlets. Proper attribution should accompany all republication.
- Jim Holstein was elected committee chair for 2008-09. Part of the charge for 2008-2009 will be to begin the search for the next editor of *Social Problems*.