

**SSSP Membership Committee Report**  
**Submitted by: Kimberly J. Cook, Chair**  
**Submitted to: SSSP Board of Directors**  
**Annual Meeting, Boston, August 2008**

I. Membership as of June 2008

We have established a new dues structure that took effect for the 2008 membership years. While this has been widely supported by the membership of the Society, it has also generated some membership loss. During the year, when the executive office received messages of concern from members, a letter was sent to those concerned members with an explanation about our process and policies regarding membership dues. SSSP membership is currently at 1591, which is down slightly from this time last year (it was 1772). The largest category of dues paying members is, as in the past, among our student members (576), where their dues rate is \$30. The second largest dues category is the range from \$45,000 to \$54,999 (dues rate is \$120) where we have 170 members. The third largest dues category is the \$85,000 and up bracket where the dues rate is \$210, and we have 135 members. Especially notable is the “first time professional member” category (dues rate is \$45) where we have 121 members.

Our membership is predominantly based in the United States (91%) and Canada (5%). The Special Problems divisions with the largest memberships are as follows:

1. Poverty, Class, and Inequality (539)
2. Racial and Ethnic Minorities (440)
3. Conflict, Social Action, and Change (349)
4. Social Problems Theory (332)
5. Crime and Juvenile Delinquency (301)

Overall, the divisions appear to be doing well with their memberships.

II. Membership Recruitment Efforts

A. This year’s targeted recruitment drive produced predictable results: it cost more (\$3,506) than it generated in new membership dues (\$875), for a net loss of \$2,631. Six of the twelve new members were specifically generated from the following targets:

- i. Ph.D. granting departments which are not SSSP members: (3 new members generated)
- ii. Letter to SSSP members in Ph.D. granting departments: (1 new member generated)
- iii. SSSP 2007 members asked to recruit new members: (1 new member generated)
- iv. Pacific Sociological Association Annual meeting: (1 new member generated)

- B. Web-based payment of membership dues continues to increase (58%) as compared to snail-mail payments (39%). Three percent of our members are 'sustaining' or 'emeriti' and therefore do not renew their membership. It seems that online membership will eventually replace snail mail memberships as we continue to promote online payments.
- C. For the 2008 annual meeting we on the membership committee are attending social functions of the following groups:
  - i. International Coalition Against Sexual Harassment
  - ii. Association for the Sociology of Religion

At the time of this writing (July 7, 2008), we are still planning our other commitments to attend social functions of the following groups:

- i. American Sociological Association (and some of its sections)
- ii. Association of Black Sociologists
- iii. Critical Sociology
- iv. Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction
- v. Sociologists for Women in Society

We aim to attend as many as possible in order to distribute our brochure and to encourage like-minded colleagues to join SSSP.

### III. Recommendations

As chair of the membership committee for one year, and having served on many other committees for the Society, I respectfully recommend that the structure and function of the membership committee be revised. With understandable consideration given to regional coverage, it is my opinion that such regional considerations may now be obsolete in the global age. Since the membership levels are always critical to the overall health of the Society, I recommend that the Board consider revising the by-laws accordingly in order to produce more continuity and more deliberate responsibility as we plan for the future.

I would like to thank members of this committee, and the staff of the executive office for keeping us on task.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kimberly J. Cook, Chair