

To: SSSP Board of Directors

From: Lee Scholar-Activist Committee 2008-2009

Lisa Anne Zilney, Chair

Kathy Asbury, Member

Richard Dello Buono, Member

Submitted: July 12, 2009

### **Applications and Funding:**

The committee was informed by Michele Smith Koontz via email of the following:

“The committee has \$4,000 to allocate. Once your committee has determined the award amounts, please send me a list of each applicant’s email address and approved award amount. I will contact each applicant via email and inform him/her of their award amount and ask them to confirm their participation at the 2009 annual meeting before I process and mail their checks. I will need to notify all applicants if their application was accepted/rejected no later than May 15, 2009. I hope to hear from you soon. Please let me know if you have any questions.”

After some discussion among committee members, we decided to give priority to individuals meeting the following criteria:

- SSSP membership;
- Participation at the annual meeting; and
- Residing in a less developed country.

A total of 8 individuals applied for funding this year. Of these, 3 applicants did not meet one of the criteria outlined above (2 applicants were employed at American higher educational institutions and 2 applicants were not on the SSSP program). In addition, 2 students applied who later realized they had applied for the wrong award.

After in-depth discussion, the committee decided to offer equal amounts of funding to the remaining 4 applicants, each from a less developed nation (Chile, Argentina, Philippines, and Bangladesh). Finally, Jimena Arias Feijoo (Argentina) declined the award because she was unable to attend the SSSP. As such, her \$1000 allotment was divided equally among the remaining three applicants.

Awardees:

Name	County	Award
de la Barra, Ximena	Chile	\$1000+\$333.34=\$1333.34
Arias Feijoo, Jimena	Argentina	\$1000- could not attend – award distributed to other applicants
Veloso, Diana Therese M.	Philippines	\$1000+\$333.33=\$1333.33
Getaneh, Zelelem	Bangladesh	\$1000+\$333.33=\$1333.33

**Future Direction of the Award:**

In January 2009, I was contacted via email by Steven Barkan to have the committee consider the future direction of the Lee Scholar Award. His request was as follows: “I’m writing you as chair of the committee. One of the proposals arising from the SSSP 2007 retreat was that “the foreign scholars and community activists fund be separated into two grants programs so that specific money is available for community activists and/or [foreign scholars] to attend the annual meeting.” The Executive Office recommended that I ask your committee to come up with specific criteria to define who would be eligible as community activists and foreign scholars respectively to receive travel awards. Could you and your committee please do so and make a formal recommendation to the Board in August concerning these criteria? Fyi, I’ve also asked the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee to suggest the amount of money that could be used to fund these awards.”

A follow-up email from Steve Barkan provided the recommendation of the BFA in this regard: “To follow up on this, I had asked the BFA committee to recommend specific amounts to be allocated for foreign scholars and community activists respectively. Here is their reply (from Fran Pestello: The BFA has discussed this request via email and proposes that given the cost of international travel that we do a 3:1 split on the funds with \$3,000 going to the foreign scholars grant program and \$1,000 to the Community Activists grant program. Please let me know, if you need any additional response from the Committee. I hope this recommendation will be useful to your committee as you discuss the possibility of having two separate grant programs.”

As the committee reflected on the purpose of the award and potentially qualified applicants, we reviewed the he Call for Applications for this year’s Lee Scholar Activist Support Fund which read as follows:

“The Society for the Study Social Problems established the Lee Scholar-Activist Support Fund to help bring foreign scholar-activists to the Annual Meeting. The specific purpose is to facilitate scholarly participation by persons engaged in research related to labor, gender, race-ethnicity, less advantaged countries, and other struggles. More generally, the purpose of this fund is to

foster cooperative relations among persons and organizations engaged in applying sociological findings to confront social problems and create social change. Consistent with past practice, some preference may be given to applicants from less advantaged countries where access to foreign exchange is often more limited.”

The Call for Applicants seemed to suggest that the applicants should be foreign scholars (as implied in the first line). So, I requested from Michele Smith Koontz additional information that was contained about this fund from the by-laws, which reads as follows:

“SECTION 16. **Lee Scholar-Activist Support Fund Committee - The purpose of this fund is to help defray expenses of scholar activists attending the Annual Meeting. Particular emphasis is given to supporting the attendance of foreign scholar activists.** The Lee Scholar-Activist Support Fund Committee shall consist of a Chairperson, a Chairperson-elect and one other member. The Chairperson-elect and other member shall be nominated by the President-Elect in consultation with the Committee on Committees and appointed by the Board of Directors. They shall serve during the President-Elect's term as President. The Chairperson-elect shall serve as a member of the committee during the year prior to becoming the Chairperson. The Committee shall have as its responsibility the development of a fund to help defray the expenses of attending the Society's Annual Meetings by scholar-activists. Following criteria specified by the Board of Directors, the Committee shall be responsible for allocating the monies raised for the fund, which shall come from contributions by members, allocations by the Board of Directors and other sources. This fund was established by the Board of Directors to honor Alfred McClung Lee and Elizabeth Briant Lee.”

So it seems clear that while the by-laws lean toward the support of **activists** (with particular attention given to those from foreign nations), the Call for Applicants tended to lean toward the support of **foreign scholars** (and not necessarily ones doing advocacy work). Michele Smith Koontz did stress that the by-laws and announcement need to be consistent.

Tom Hood also weighed in as our committee was about to consider the matter. “The A.M. Lee Fund and the Scholar-Activist Fund were established in the same year. The A.M. Lee Student support fund supports students who wish to attend the meetings. The Scholar-Activist support fund recognizes that some persons who are very supportive of the objectives of SSSP work in non-profit organizations for very low salaries and whose employers (the non-profit organizations) have limited if any travel funds available to help them with costs of attending a meeting. As the fund grew in visibility some chairs recognized that persons in countries with depressed or less well developed economies had scholars who were working for change in those societies based on scholarship. These appeared particularly needy and the committees seemed to make fairly large awards to enable these foreign scholar activists to attend. Bottom line: encourage students both foreign and domestic to apply for the A.M. Lee Fund. Encourage scholar activists both foreign and domestic to apply for the Scholar Activist fund.”

Committee Thoughts and Recommendation: Although the committee is fully and personally aware of the financial constraints of travel in today’s trying economic times, we believe the spirit of the award was to infuse the SSSP annual meetings with a foreign presence brought by scholars whose financial situations are far more constrained than our own. Members of the SSSP benefit

enormously from the scholarly and personal contribution of foreign scholars/activists at the annual meeting, and as such, the committee is making a recommendation to the Board to make the Lee Scholar Activist Award an award SOLELY for FOREIGN scholars! While in the past this “preference” has been made informally by the chair of the committee, it is our recommendation that this be formalized in a change to the by-laws and in a change to the Call for Applicants for next year. This committee absolutely recognizes the importance of individuals from non-profit organizations and other activist organizations at the annual meeting and suggests that perhaps an alternate award be set up to support the attendance of domestic activists at the annual meeting. We strongly believe however that the Lee Scholar Activist Award should be restricted to foreign scholar-activists for the years going forward.

Lisa Anne Zilney, Ph.D. on behalf of the committee