



# Social Problems

The official journal of the Society for the Study of Social Problems

Ted Chiricos, Editor  
Kristin Lavin, Managing Editor  
Amy Jo Woodruff, Production Editor

Christi Falco, Editorial Assistant  
Courtenay Miller, Editorial Assistant

To: SSSP Board of Directors  
Editorial and Publications Committee  
Advisory Editors

From: Ted Chiricos, Editor, *Social Problems*

Re: 2009-10 Annual Report

Date: July 15, 2010

This report documents the activities of the editorial offices and staff at Florida State University from June 1, 2009 -May 31, 2010.

## Editorial Office

Our second year benefited from the continued excellent service of Amy Jo Woodruff as Production Editor, and Cyndy Caravelis Hughes as Managing Editor. Amy Jo came to us from Amy Wharton's staff and we are so grateful to have her extraordinary talents and experience on our team. Cyndy has accepted an assistant professor position and relinquished her responsibilities on May 31 of this year. Cyndy worked with me on the journal since before we assumed the editorship and I cannot say enough to express my gratitude for her tireless competence and unfailing ease of manner. Her position was assumed on June 1, 2010 by Kristin Lavin, who is a Ph.D. student at Florida State University. Kristin previously served SP as an Editorial Assistant for two years and we have already seen that the transition of responsibilities has been seamless. We have also received great service from Courtenay Miller as one of our Editorial Assistants and from Christi Falco who replaced Kristin in that position in June. I am constantly amazed at how smooth and trouble free the operation of the editorial office has been, and how few glitches have occurred, especially given the volume of submissions, reviewer solicitations and completed reviews that are involved. It is a clear testimony to the competence and commitment of these wonderful people.

The editorial office has also benefited greatly from the input and expertise of our four associate editors, Jennifer Earl (UC Santa Barbara), Charis Kubrin (George Washington) Matt Huffman (UC Irvine) and Sarah Soule (Stanford) as well as from the very generous contributions from the members of our Board of Advisory Editors.

## Budget

The editorial office operated within the approved budget this year.

## Manuscript Central

With the start of the new editorial term (2008-2009) *Social Problems* joined a substantial number of journals using Manuscript Central, developed by ScholarOne as its manuscript submission and management software. All submissions are handled electronically by this system as is much of the correspondence between authors, reviewers and the journal. Our editorial team continues to be most impressed with the efficiency of this system and I am pleased to note that the number of persons who could not effectively work with the software totals in the single digits. In those instances our staff has developed easy workarounds to help authors or reviewers with their needs

The use of MsCentral involves a \$25 submission fee which can be waived. Because the fee charged to SSSP for processing a new manuscript is \$19.50 (no charges for revised resubmissions) the society nets \$5.50 for each new submission. The 302 new submissions this year should have produced a residual sum of approximately \$1,660 which is available to defray submission costs for those requesting such assistance (three requests in two years) or for whatever other purposes SSSP deems fit.

## Manuscript Submissions and Processing

As the attached table indicates, there were 302 new submissions this past year. This compares to 308 for the previous year and an average of 241 for the six years prior to that. Revised submissions totaled 84 compared with 50 in the previous year. A given paper can be counted as more than one revised submission if it has gone through multiple revisions, reviews and decisions. Revised submissions also include “conditional accepts” which typically specify a number of final revisions to be reviewed only by the editor.

The rate of deflects is a bit higher than last year, but comports with the levels that characterized earlier editors such as Jim Orcutt, with whom I discussed this issue before assuming my responsibilities. Deflects obviously have advantages and disadvantages. From the author’s point of view the advantage is having a quick resolution which allows submission elsewhere without a long wait. I have received a number of “thank you” notes from authors grateful to receive this prompt decision. The disadvantage is the lack of detailed feedback from reviewers. From the journal’s point of view, the advantage of a deflect decision is that good reviewers are not “used up” on papers for which the editor sees little chance of publication. The reasons for deflect decisions include: (1) little or no theoretical context for the proposed analysis; (2) the paper does not deal with a social problem; (3) the paper in its current form lacks sufficient development; (4) the paper’s contribution is a bit narrow for a general interest journal like *Social Problems*.

In early discussions with our associate editors, the decision was made to try to affect an editorial outcome on the basis of three or more reviews. The norm of three is relatively common in the social sciences, and our average of 3.2 completed reviews per original submission is consistent with that. In most categories, the time to decision is close to what it has been in the recent past.

## Manuscript Traffic and Editorial Decisions

June 1, 2009 to May 31, 2010

<b>Decision</b>	<b>Original Submission</b>	<b>Revised Submission*</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent of Submissions</b>	<b>Mean Days to Decision</b>
Accept	0	21	21	5.4	6.8*
Revise & Resubmit	38	40*	78	20.2	114.0
Reject	95	11	106	27.5	120.9
Deflect	125	0	125	32.4	10.6
<b>Total Decisions</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>85.5</b>	<b>67.8</b>
Currently Under Review	44	12	56	14.5	
<b>Total Submissions</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

**\* Includes conditional accepts. Note: all final accepts are first given a conditional accept which stipulates final revisions to be reviewed only by editor**

**Acceptance Rate: 5.4%**

**Reviews Per Manuscript (original submissions): 3.2**

### **Editorial Activity – Decision Complete (all submissions)**

Reviewers Solicited: 1263  
Reviews Completed 506  
Reviewer Complete Rate: 40.1%

### **Editorial Activity – Currently Under Review**

Reviewers Solicited: 430  
Reviews Completed 139  
Reviewer Complete Rate 32.3%