

SSSP Membership Committee Report  
 Submitted by: Aimee Van Wagenen, Chair  
 Submitted to: SSSP Board of Directors  
 Annual Meeting, Atlanta, August 2010

I. Membership as of June 2010

Total paid current membership in SSSP is currently 1394, down 9.8% from this time last year (N=1546). Combining current paid members with 2009 members who have not yet renewed, membership is currently at 2061, which is down 6.5% from this time last year (when it was 2203). The largest category of dues paying members is, as in the past, among our student members (520), where their dues rate is \$30. The second largest dues category is the \$85,000 and up bracket where the dues rate is \$210 (146 members). The third largest dues category is the range from \$45,000 to \$54,999 (dues rate is \$120) where we have 129 members. This year, we have 102 “first time professional members” (dues rate is \$45). This is a 22.7% reduction from last year, when we had 132 members in this category. A likely explanation for the decrease in overall membership is the continuing effects of the U.S. recession.

Our membership is predominantly based in the United States (92%) and Canada (5%). The Special Problems divisions with the largest memberships are as follows:

1. Poverty, Class, and Inequality (n=684)
2. Racial and Ethnic Minorities (n=631)
3. Conflict, Social Action, and Change (n=482)
4. Social Problems Theory (n=394)
5. Crime and Juvenile Delinquency (n=369)

These “top five” have remained in this order for the past 3 years.

II. Membership Recruitment Efforts

This year, Michele Koontz, Héctor Delgado, Sharon Shumaker, and Sarah Hendricks worked with UC Press Marketing Materials Coordinator Joe Tobin to revamp the membership outreach strategies the Society has used in the past. In so doing, we have heeded the recommendations of this committee from prior years and have continued to move away from costly mail-based membership outreach campaigns in favor of targeted online and e-mail campaigns.

While moving away from costlier strategies, we still spent more this year on our membership outreach campaign than the revenue that we generated. On the up side, we had a net loss on our membership campaign of only \$606 this year compared to a loss of \$6,783 of loss last year. On the down side, we recruited a smaller number of new members this year (26) compared to last year (51). Costs and yield of various elements of the campaign are further detailed below.

<b>2010 Promotion Summary</b>	
	<b>Total</b>

<b><i>motion Summary</i></b>	
Total Expenses	\$1,791.24
Total Members Received	26
Total Dues Revenue Generated	\$1,185.00
<b>Promotion Costs Not Covered by Campaign</b>	<b>\$606.24</b>

A. Smaller print campaign. 1000 flyers (900 left over from last year) were sent to 8 professional meetings to date (compared to 22 last year), with three more scheduled this fall. These include 6 regional meetings (Eastern Sociological Society, Midwest Sociological Society, Pacific Sociological Association, Southern Sociological Society, Southwestern Social Science Association, and Western Social Science Association) and 5 national meetings (Justice Studies Association, American Society of Criminology, Association of Black Sociologists, and Sociologists for Women in Society's winter and summer meetings). A total of \$788 in printing, postal, and insert fees was paid to distribute the brochures. Two new members were generated, resulting in \$240 in dues revenue and a net loss of \$548 for this portion of the campaign.

B. E-mail blast to rented lists of faculty. We purchased approximately 2700 e-mail addresses of social science faculty from Market Data Retrieval for a direct e-mail marketing campaign. The cost was \$1,003. The campaign resulted in 343 opens of the e-mail, 61 hits on the web promotion link, 3 new members to date, and \$120 in dues revenue. This portion of the campaign operated at a \$883 loss.

C. Website membership promotional links. We solicited testimonials from current members and in conjunction with UC Press designed two membership promotional links on the SSSP website: one designed for graduate students (<http://www.sssp1.org/gradpromo/>) and one designed for general membership (<http://www.sssp1.org/extras/MembershipPromo/JoinToday/>). Links highlighted the low cost of membership for students or first time members, included a bulleted list of membership benefits, and included photos from past annual meetings. There was a \$25.00 set-up fee for these two webpages.

D. Graduate student recruitment e-mail blast. In January of 2010, we sent an e-mail blast explaining the benefits of graduate student membership to graduate advisors of Ph.D. granting departments, directing recipients to the newly designed graduate student promotion link. 20 new graduate students joined using the link, resulting in \$795 in membership dues revenue.

E. E-mail blast to recruit a friend. On April 19, we sent an e-mail blast to the membership encouraging everyone to recruit a new member. The e-mail blast directed folks to our new membership promotion link at the website. This has resulted in 1 new member to date and \$30 in dues revenue.

C. Membership Brochure Redesign. In April, we engaged the UC Press Marketing Materials Coordinator Joe Tobin in a redesign of the membership brochure. Key changes were to cut down on the amount of text and to eliminate the membership application from the brochure now that 71% of the membership joins or renews on-line. We think the new brochure is a significant improvement and hope it will soon reap benefits.

## II. Recommendations

Operating at a loss with our print/mail campaigns reflects our previous experience and further underscores the need to replace print/mail campaigns with e-mail and online ones.

Thanks to the members of this committee and the staff of the Administrative Office for doing the heavy lifting on this year's new campaign strategy and implementation.

Respectfully,  
Aimee Van Wagenen, Chair