

July 7, 2010

To: SSSP Board

From: Glenn W. Muschert, Chair SSSP 2010 Annual Meeting Program Committee

Re: SSSP Program Committee Report 2010

Words of Thanks:

I was truly honored to serve as Chair of the Program Committee for the 2010 Annual Meeting of the Society for the Study of Social Problems. Looking at the program and imagining the scholarly exchanges that will occur during the planned sessions is truly gratifying, and I am grateful to have this opportunity to serve my fellow SSSP members. However, the Program Committee could not have organized this program without the help of those in the SSSP office. My work and that of the other Committee members benefitted greatly from the assistance, support and guidance provided by Michele Koontz and her staff, Sharon Shumaker (Administrative Assistant and Webmaster) and Sarah Hendricks (Graduate Research Associate). In particular, Michele worked tirelessly, with much of her work being behind-the-scenes, to give the program coherence and structure. I am grateful for Michele's patience and support, as she truly serves as a crucial lynchpin of our Society's functioning. In addition to her other duties, Sarah was a tremendous help in following up with all meeting participants who were exempted from paying the registration fee. She also took care of refunding registrations fees of participants who were not able to attend the meetings and updating on-line references to their papers appearing in the program.

I also want to express appreciation in acknowledging the contributions of the other members of the Program Committee. In all, the Program Committee organized/sponsored 25 sessions. Specific thanks go to Paul Steele, David Levinson, and Henry Brownstein (Program Committee members) who organized, presided, and acted as discussants for a variety of sessions. Though not part of the Committee, other colleagues when asked also assumed roles as organizers, presiders, or discussants, including Chris Wellin, Robert Grantham, Ebonie Cunningham, John Galliher, and Ted Brimeyer. Last but not least, I'm grateful to SSSP President JoAnn Miller for setting the program theme, and for suggesting and organizing several thematic sessions. JoAnn also provided valuable support and guidance throughout the entire process. I am grateful to you all.

On-Line Submission System:

This year was the second year in which the specially-designed SSSP submission system was in use. This year's Committee is grateful to computer programmer, Janice Tocher, and the SSSP office staff for making the software user-friendly. From the Program Committee point of view, the system functioned very effectively.

Recommendation: The Committee recommends the continued use of the on-line submission system.

Per Division, 3 Regular Sessions, 7 Co-Sponsored Sessions, and 1 Tables in the Round Session

As recommended by the SSSP Executive Committee, the number of sessions proposed per division was defined as follows: Each Division received 3 regular sessions (at least one of which was required to be a thematic session). In addition, each division was allowed to propose a maximum of 7 co-sponsored sessions. Finally, as a trial run, JoAnn Miller approved that each Division be awarded a "Papers in the Round" session in which to place additional "roundtable-type" sessions. Nine (9) Divisions organized these "Papers in the Round" sessions, some of which had multiple roundtables.

Recommendation: The Committee recommends that the Society solicit feedback regarding the success of this year's "papers in the round" sessions. If these are successful, we can continue to offer these. This helps us get more names/sessions on the program, and help us deal with issues of space pressure. In addition, reducing the number of allowed co-sponsored sessions could help to expand the use of papers in the round sessions.

Papers Accepted to the Program:

As of 7/06/10, there were 411 papers on the program. Of these, 340 were submitted via the on-line system by the 1/31/10 deadline for submissions. Due to disaster conditions in some parts of the country (specifically, those in the Mid-South states who were without power for many days prior to the deadline), the Program Committee continued to allow the acceptance of additional papers for a reasonable grace period. Judging by the data collected via the on-line system, the breakdown of paper submissions is as follows:

- Accepted by 1st Choice Organizer: 219
- Accepted by 2nd Choice Organizer: 27
- Paper Entered By Organizer: 92
- Paper Accepted from Repository: 50
- Paper Moved to Session: 23

Management of Submissions after the Deadline Passes:

The Program Committee continued receiving submissions after the deadline, a process managed by the program chair up until early July. All papers received after the submission deadline ultimately were successfully placed in relevant sessions. In all, approximately 5 papers were placed in this manner. (I apologize that I did not keep precise records.) This was accomplished by maintaining a list of cancellations, and matching that list with the late submissions. This was a successful process, because it brought more names onto the program, and utilized meeting space that was already dedicated.

Recommendation: The Committee recommends that future Program Committees continue to maintain a list of cancellations and late submissions. Place late submissions in sessions that have had cancellations. This can continue up to early July.

Sponsoring Sessions with Other Associations:

This year's program included four sessions co-sponsored with the Association of Black Sociologists. All four sessions are on the SSSP program, and two take place in SSSP meeting space, while two take place in ABS meeting space. This cross-sponsorship of sessions should help build and maintain ties between our associations. On the other hand, we were unsuccessful in attempts to organize joint sessions with the American Sociological Association, because those colleagues responsible for organizing the sessions at ASA did not respond to our invitations for joint-sponsorship.

Recommendation: The Committee recommends that future program Committees continue to invite co-sponsorship with ABS and other interested associations.

Film Sessions:

As usual, the program committee organized three film sessions. Drawing from films of independent or alternative filmmakers is the best way to go, as they are most often happy to have the film shown at the SSSP and to waive screening fees. For one of the independent films ("Eating Alaska"), we were successful in getting the filmmaker to attend the screening. For the film "Ain't I a Person?*" (*with Apologies to Sojourner Truth), we were fortunate to have an alternative session. The filmmakers are SSSP members, and they will screen their film in progress, after which they will solicit the feedback of the SSSP members. In addition, the Committee organized a session involving media personnel, the topic

of which was to discuss how the SSSP membership might communicate beyond our typical academic, classroom, and activist channels.

Recommendation: If possible, such hybrid sessions and interactive film sessions might be of potential interest to the membership. The Committee recommends exploring more hybrid-type sessions.

Honoring the Recommendations of the Executive Office:

During the 2007 board retreat, those in attendance made recommendations for the inclusion of 3 types of workshops and sessions in future programs. These recommendations were: “(1) workshops for graduate students and other individuals on negotiating the academic job market. (2) a session specifically on social action, highlighting the work of the Social Action Award winner; (3) a panel featuring Minority Scholarship Award winners from past year(s).” This year’s Program Committee tried to implement the 3 recommendations. (1) We continue to offer workshops related to professional development. (2) We offer a session centered on the Social Action Award winner. (3) We did not hold a session for the past winners of the Minority Scholarship Award, because the past winners did not express an interest in presenting at such as session and/or had already participated in a similar session at the 2009 meetings.

Recommendation: The program committee agrees that initiatives 1 & 2 should continue, however it seems that initiative 3 is not viable.

Exemptions Granted:

To date, 12 exemptions have been granted for presenters meeting any of the SSSP’s standard criteria. These criteria include: (A) Non-students who are unemployed and/or receiving monthly financial assistance to meet living expenses may request a waiver of registration fees to participate on the program. (B) Individuals from community, labor, and comparable organizations working on social problems or social justice issues who have been invited to serve on a panel or to make a presentation. (C) Non U.S. and non-Canadian scholars who are from less advantaged countries. (D) Co-authors of papers who will not be attending the meeting. One of the co-authors must be a paid registrant. Both co-authors must pay if both expect to attend the meeting. (E) Persons excused by direct request of the Program Committee Chair.

Separating the Program Committee and the Personal Mentoring Program:

For the first time this year, the Personal Mentoring Program operated separate from the Program Committee.

Recommendation: This separation seems appropriate, and the Committee recommends the continued separation.