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**From:** Leonard Gordon [mailto:Len.Gordon@asu.edu]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 29, 2010 6:11 PM  
**To:** jmliller@purdue.edu; Koontz, Michele Smith  
**Cc:** Tracy Dietz; John Galliher; barkan@maine.edu; hector.delgado49@gmail.com  
**Subject:** FW: SSSP User's Guide Committee: A Need for a New Committee Chair to Help Fully Develop the Guide

Dear Joann and Michele,

I appreciated the information on the SSSP Board Meeting on Friday, August 13<sup>th</sup> and plan to be there. Below are ideas advanced at last year's SSSP Board Meeting. There were other ideas advanced by User Guide Committee Members Tracy Dietz and John Galliher:

- Tracy noted the usefulness of providing detailed information about our Society's commitment to various groups, including the locale of each year's Meeting. She noted that it would be a good way of identifying the history of member involvement by stating the sponsorship of various awards, and how it applies to new members as the kind of activities and commitment that attracted them to the Society.
- John noted development of a new mentoring format which could be included in a User's Guide. In the past the Society has had a time and place for individual mentoring opportunities with members who volunteer for that. I have done that and it can be useful one-on-one. John has in mind an interesting special session-type time and place in which seasoned faculty members could meet with graduate students and new faculty in one session-type setting to discuss ways to be a successful academic in the Society's mode of addressing pressing social issues and problems. That could also lead to one on one between students and faculty.

On going beyond these suggestions and last year's User's Guide draft ideas, below, I find that a number of factors have precluded my best intentions:

- Most importantly, being appointed for a fourth year as dean of the ASU Emeritus College has exceeded my time allotment that I planned on spending on the User's Guide. Our membership has expanded from an initial 157 when the College was established in 2005 to now almost 400 members with extensive on campus and community programming.
- Just when the Spring Semester was lightening up, a fellow went through a red light and totaled my Subaru with me in it. While his insurance covered everything, that took me some time to fully recuperate.
- Long delayed visits to my and my Dorthy's children and grandchildren in Oregon and Arkansas have taken place and another family trip is coming up to Montana.

I am on the SSSP program related to the ASA Task Force I chaired on hate and bias acts on college and university campuses. As I did on that task force, I was hoping I could draft a full SSSP User's Guide as I had previously fully developed the ASA task force report. My current commitments are such that I will not be able to draw up a full SSSP User's Guide or continue as chair of the committee. The User's Guide idea developed when Steve Barkan was president is a great one. I would be pleased to respond to drafts of others but am not in a position to take the lead.

I look forward to being at and seeing you at the Meetings. Tom Hood's tribute is well deserved and the Society is fortunate to now have Hector Delgado in that central SSSP role.

Len

Leonard Gordon  
Dean, Emeritus College  
Old Main 102  
Arizona State University  
Tempe, Arizona 85287-3002  
(480)965-0002

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**From:** Len Gordon

SSSP User's Guide Draft Ideas

Charge to the Committee from SSSP President Steve Barkan: To develop a SSSP User's Guide for new and recent members of the SSSP with the aim of being beneficial to them and to increased member activity support for advancing the aims and purposes of the Society. Some ideas on how to accomplish this charge:

- A User's Guide would usefully be large enough to contain **readable information on the nature and purpose** of this activist academic scholar Society while small enough to fit into a file for convenience and ready access. An appealing cover, symbolic of the Society's focus such as on some Social Problems text books, and engaging commentary would increase the usage of the Guide.
- An **engaging historical sketch of the SSSP's vibrant history** would be a way to arouse interest in the content. We could start with the emergence of the SSSP out of the ASA in 1951 following the social traumas of the Great Depression of the 1930s and the destruction of millions of lives during World War II. While sociology as epitomized by the ASA focused on the legitimate role of sociology in the academy of colleges and universities, there was an emerging concern with advancing policy oriented activist sociological scholars in addressing social problems that adversely affected the life chances of millions of people. This opening section could note that the founding members were also leaders in the ASA and nationally recognized scholars – noting that founders and the first four presidents of the SSSP Alfred McClung Lee, Ernest Burgess, Herbert Blumer, and Arnold Rose were also all presidents of the ASA as well. A sense of the early academic struggles to establish the SSSP could be addressed including confronting the repressive McCarthy period of the '50s, scholarship during the Civil Rights Movement, and Vietnam War protest periods, to now more than a half century of being part of the academic community that systematically addresses the policy and programmatic research that has become the basis for advancing equal rights and opportunities in our society.
- Providing **information on how SSSP committees and standing divisions** have developed over the years through the interests and initiatives of SSSP members. This would be a good place to give at least selected committees and divisions that have attracted many SSSP members to become involved to their academic benefit and that of the Societies. A few committees could be highlighted that epitomize what the Society represents, e.g. the C. Wright Mills Award Committee and the Joseph B. Gittler Award Committee. Having chaired those two committees, I recall how affective the statements about the awardees were to young members. An excerpt or two from the awardees gets at the human element in how we advance what our Society is about. As I thought about the User's Guide, the award letter to Valerie Jenness for the Gittler Award came to mind. I think that her award letter really communicated well why activist sociological, and other disciplinary, activist scholars are attracted to the SSSP. I would add some award quotations as the one to Valerie which stated: "Professor Jenness's work addresses all stakeholders, which is everyone, as she advances her research insights on an interdisciplinary basis. Her work encompasses quantitative and qualitative research methods and she engages multiple disciplinary perspectives including history, political science, theories of law, and her discipline of sociology. The wide usage of her work is indicated by a letter for the California Governor sent to Professor Jenness in which the Governor noted: 'We are using your guidance in establishing a continuum of programs that addresses the need of inmates and paroles and helps them return to their communities

as productive, positive citizens' (February 22, 2008).” In my view, a few excerpts like this present our Society’s story beyond a listing of committees and divisions, which will gain more attention when that kind of communications is part of the User’s Guide.

- **Providing information on the SSSP’s creation of standing committees and divisions in areas of membership interest and welcoming participation in ones of special interest to a new or recent member.** In this section, there could be a sampling of committees – like the C. Wright Mills Award Committee and the Lee Founders Award Committee that reflect the essence of the SSSP, as do the Divisions as those on Conflict, Social Action, and Change, Community Research and Development and specialty divisions as Educational Problems and Drinking and Drugs (they often overlap as we know). There would need to be commentary on committees and divisions that are open to volunteer membership and those that are appointed by the SSSP President, while noting how a new member may be in contact with chairs and members of the various committees and divisions. This is a prime area for early involvement of new and recent members.
- A final User’s Guide section could usefully **relate how the SSSP’s historical origin** (referring back to the historical sketch noted as the opening section) **was from its inception an innovative one in addressing sociological interests in making significant research based policy and programmatic headway to significantly address the resolution of varying social problems and also to advance SSSP members’ academic advancement** to further achieve that aim. Examples could be provided. In the social problems research area, the sociological advancement of research that was used to advance rights could be related w/a prime example being the 1954 *Brown vs. Topeka* case in which the Supreme Court rejected the “separate but equal doctrine in the 1896 *Plessey vs. Ferguson* case constitutionally sanctioning racial segregation. Here a brief commentary on the testimony given by one of our key founders and second SSSP president Alfred McClung Lee would be of great interest to many new and recent members. On the advancement of member academic advancement interest, we could include some commentary on the innovation began in I believe 2006 on “speed mentoring” with established SSSP sociologists meeting with doctoral students and new Ph.D.s beginning their careers. These connections can continue after the Annual Meetings when the mentoring processes begin and have benefits for the young members and the continued long term prospects of the SSSP.