

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

From: Ted Chiricos, Outgoing Editor, *Social Problems*

Re: 2010-11 Annual Report

Date: July 12, 2010

This report documents the activities of the editorial offices and staff at Florida State University from June 1, 2010 to May 31, 2011.

### Editorial Office

Our third year benefited from the excellent service of Amy Jo Woodruff as Production Editor, and Kristin Lavin as Managing Editor. Amy Jo came to us from Amy Wharton's staff and SP is most fortunate that her extraordinary talents and experience will continue on Becky Pettit's new editorial team. Kristin, who is a Ph.D student at Florida State University assumed her role on June 1, 2010 when Cyndy Caravelis Hughes moved on to her new assistant professor position. Kristin previously served SP as an Editorial Assistant for two years and the transition of responsibilities was seamless. We have also received great service from Courtenay Miller and Christi Falco as Editorial Assistants. 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.

At this point, with my editorial service ended, I wish to express my deepest thanks and appreciation to Amy Jo, Cyndy, Kristin, Courtenay and Christi for their extraordinary service to the journal and for making my life so much easier than I could have imagined. And Michele Koontz Smith cannot be thanked adequately for all that she has done for us during my tenure.

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

### Budget

The editorial office operated within the approved budget this year.

### Manuscript Central

With the start of our 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.

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 257 new submissions this year should have produced a residual sum of just over \$1,400 which is available to defray submission costs for those requesting such assistance (three requests in three years) or for whatever other purposes SSSP deems fit.

### Editorial Transition

In March of this year, Incoming Editor Becky Pettit from the University of Washington and her Managing Editor, Erin Powers came to Florida State University for two days of transition planning. The meetings were fruitful and productive and it is apparent that the transition is proceeding with considerable ease.

### Manuscript Submissions and Processing

As the attached table indicates, there were 257 new submissions this past year. This compares to 302 and 308 for the previous two years and an average of 241 for the six years prior to that. There was a fairly substantial reduction of submissions in April and May as the editorial transition approached. This was not surprising inasmuch as new submissions in those months would almost certainly not be resolved in the term of the outgoing editor. Revised submissions totaled 82 compared with 78 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 is comparable to levels that were described to me by former editor 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 three years, we received only one complaint about a deflected paper, though four individuals over that time period did request a \$25 submission fee refund, which I paid out of pocket.

In early discussions with our associate editors, the decision was made to try to have 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 3.3 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, 2010 to May 31, 2011

<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	26	26	7.3	7.2*
Revise & Resubmit	36	46*	82	23.0	113.0
Reject	61	11	72	20.2	122.1
Deflect	135	0	135	38.2	9.8
<b>Total Decisions</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>88.7</b>	<b>62.1</b>
Currently Under Review	25	15	40	11.3	
<b>Total Submissions</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

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

**Acceptance Rate: 7.3%**

**Reviews Per Manuscript (original submissions): 3.3**

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

Reviewers Solicited: 903  
Reviews Completed 364  
Reviewer Complete Rate: 40.3%