

## MEMORANDUM

To: The Board of Directors of The Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP)  
From: Alfonso R. Latoni, Chair, 2013 Racial/Ethnic Minority Graduate Scholarship Committee  
RE: SSSP 2012-2013 Racial/Ethnic Minority Graduate Scholarship Committee Report  
Date: July, 2013

The members of the SSSP 2012-2013 Racial/Ethnic Minority Graduate Scholarship Committee are: Hoan N. Bui (University of Tennessee), Chair-Elect, Sandra Lee Browning (University of Cincinnati), David G. Embrick (Loyola University-Chicago), Peter Ibarra (University of Illinois, Chicago), Pamela Leong (Salem State University), William A. Lugo (Eastern Connecticut State University), Rita Shah (Elizabethtown College), and Alfonso R. Latoni (National Institutes of Health), Chairperson.

**APPLICANT POOL:** The SSSP Administrative Office received nineteen applications by the deadline. One was incomplete and the Chairperson informed this to the applicant. Thus, the committee evaluated eighteen (18) applications. Last year's committee evaluated nineteen (19) applications. This year's applicants reflected the following demographic profiles:

**Sex:** Thirteen (13) women (72.3%) and five (5) men (27.7%).

**Race/Ethnicity:** There were seven (7) Hispanic/Latino(a) candidates (39%), one (1) Asian American candidate (5.5%), and ten (10) Black/African American candidates (55.5%).

**Matriculating Year:** Most of the applicants were in their final year or two of their Ph.D. programs, and several had been attending for more than six years.

**Academic Discipline:** The overwhelming majority of the applicants (fourteen) were from the discipline of Sociology (78%). One candidate was in Criminal Justice (5.5%), one in American Studies (5.5%), one in Education/Anthropology (5.5%), and one in African American Studies (5.5%).

**ROLE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE:** As always, the committee relied heavily on the organizational and logistical support and expertise of Michele Smith Koontz; and on the exceptional administrative help from Elizabeth Ashley (Lisa) East. This was the first year that all application materials were posted and filed in a SSSP secured web-based site; and no binders or paper printed materials were mailed to the committee. Both, Michele and Lisa were incredibly outstanding in constructing and making the on-line review process a seamless one. The committee is very pleased to report that this practice should continue as per the success of its first-ever implementation.

**SELECTION PROCESS:** After receipt of the instructions for accessing the applications via on-line from Lisa East, the Chairperson emailed to the committee the criteria rating sheet and definitions from prior evaluation periods, and proposed a time line for the committee to complete its task. The committee scored all eighteen applicants accordingly. The overall scores of all eight committee members were used. The votes were tallied by the Chairperson. There was one clear winner and strong candidate for whom all members were in agreement in their 20 (points) plus range scores. The maximum total points (overall score) a candidate can receive per committee member is 27. The overall scores for each candidate were added and **Fernando Cortés Chirino**, from the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Irvine, **emerged as the winner**.

Fernando was followed by **Edelina Muñoz Burciaga**, also from the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Irvine, and for which there was, as well, strong agreement among the eight committee members. Several committee members, including the Chairperson, proposed that Edelina receive an Honorable Mention, and that she be an Alternate in the event that Fernando could not accept and benefit from the award. Additionally, a few committee members proposed second and third Honorable Mentions, because Edelina was followed very closely in overall scores by two others. Subsequently, the Chairperson conveyed to the full committee the following three scenarios and asked for preferences from each member:

1. The 2013 SSSP Racial/Ethnic Minority Graduate Scholarship Award goes to the highest score and we do **one (1)** Honorable Mention/Alternate to the second highest score.
2. The 2013 SSSP Racial/Ethnic Minority Graduate Scholarship Award goes to the highest score and we do **two (2)** Honorable Mentions/Alternates to the second and third highest scores.
3. The 2013 SSSP Racial/Ethnic Minority Graduate Scholarship Award goes to the highest score (177) and we do **three (3)** Honorable Mentions/Alternates to the second, third, and fourth highest scores.

Each committee member emailed to the Chairperson her/his preferred scenario (1, 2, or 3), and the Chairperson then emailed back the result (strongest preference) to the Committee and submitted to the Administrative Office the final committee recommendation, which follows:

**The majority of the committee members recommend the following:**

1. That the award be conferred to the individual that obtained the highest overall score. This is Fernando Cortés Chirino from the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Irvine.
2. That an Honorable Mention Scholar be presented to the individual that obtained the second highest overall score. This is Edelina Muñoz Burciaga from the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Irvine. Edelina should also be considered as an Alternate to receive the award in the event that Fernando is no longer interested or, for any other reason, cannot benefit from the award.

Michele Smith Koontz and Lisa East were of immense assistance in drafting and sending the official letters to each candidate on behalf of the Chairperson. Fernando Cortés Chirino enthusiastically accepted the award and will attend the Awards Reception at our annual meeting on Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> August.

Last, but not least, several committee members noted concern that most of the applicants had no substantial or sustained relationship with the SSSP. This is a salient concern if one of our goals is to attract more applicants who are connected to the organization, or just attract more students to the SSSP, in general. From past experience, I can recall only a few in other year's candidate pools that demonstrated this. The 2011 committee report queried about the need to keep this in the scoring criteria. It remained as a scoring criteria for 2012 and 2013.

On behalf of the 2012-2013 SSSP Racial/Ethnic Minority Graduate Scholarship Committee, I wholeheartedly thank the Board for this opportunity to do such important and crucial work for the SSSP. It was the Committee's pleasure to serve.