

To: SSSP Board of Directors and the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee
From: SSSP Transnational Initiatives Committee, John Dale (Chair), Richard Dello Buono, Hector Delgado, Alison Griffith, Tom Hood, Shirley Jackson, and Javier Trevino
Date: August 15, 2014

Re: Report from the Ad Hoc Transnational Initiatives Committee

At last year's SSSP Conference in New York, we held a mini-conference around the theme, "Re-Imagining Human Rights: The Challenge of Agency, Creativity, and Global Justice." Richard Dello Buono and David Fasenfest played an advisory role, and John Dale and David Kyle co-organized the conference. paid a \$500 stipend to Michelle Koontz to help offset the cost of her administrative assistance in organizing the hotel conference rooms and registration. The Board of Directors and the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee agreed to provide us with space within the Westin Hotel to hold this conference on the day following the regular sessions of the Annual Meeting.

In addition to the SSSP and the journal of *Critical Sociology* who originally agreed to co-sponsor the conference, Dale and Kyle garnered co-sponsorship and raised an additional \$3500 from the Section on Human Rights of the American Sociological Association, George Mason University's international Consortium on Global Problem Solving and Office of Global and International Strategies, University of California, Davis' Office of University Outreach and International Programs and Department of Sociology, University of Connecticut's Human Rights Institute. These funds enabled them to provide \$1000 to offset the keynote speaker's (Camilo Pérez-Bustillo and Karla Hernandez Mares) travel expenses from Mexico, and to pay for the hotel costs of making available AV equipment and coffee for participants during the proceedings. The conference was a terrific success with over 100 attendees, including academics, graduate students, and activists from countries around the world. To access the program with a full list of panelists and presentations, visit <http://www.sssp1.org/ReimaginingHR> .

John Dale and David Kyle, serving as Guest Co-Editors, are currently reviewing seven article submissions from this conference for a special issue of *Critical Sociology*, helping to disseminate the work and identity of the SSSP's commitment to fostering the development of transnational research with serious implications for progressive, egalitarian social change, public policy and social justice.

Following the conference, John Dale created a database of these conference participants (including also registrants) with an eye toward following up with international participants in particular. The Committee has been maintaining this database moving forward, enabling us to contact them and encourage their future participation – including their involvement in co-organizing panels around topics of transnational interest, serving on award committees, attending the SSSP's annual Award Banquet, and contributing to the SSSP newsletter.

Next Year in Chicago, the Transnational Initiatives Committee would like to bring four graduate students from four different continents to participate in the SSSP Annual Meeting. [For example, we already have identified potential graduate students from places like University of Yangon, (Mynamar); a small polytechnical University in Oaxaca, Mexico with ties to the Autonomous University in Mexico through a Nobel prize-winning team of climate change scientists;

University of Malta (an EU country located between Sicily, North Africa, and the Mediterranean countries); and University of Kenyatta (in Kenya, Africa), who might make good candidates]. We also plan to invite eight additional international students from universities within the United States and Canada to attend and participate. We have discussed with the Global Division an agreement to have a critical dialogue panel on “transnational connections” spotlighting the work of the four graduate students from different continents, with a “fishbowl” audience of the 8 international students studying at Universities in the U.S. and Canada starting the first round of questions following and extending the critical dialogue. and then opening up discussion to the wider audience. They have expressed great enthusiasm for this idea.

We also want to organize a workshop for the 12 international students to discuss broader themes linking their work and helping them to think about framing together a transnational problem that could become the basis of a theme for individual or collaborative publications that they could submit to journals or publishers.

We are asking the Board of Directors and the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee to give us \$5000 to help defray the costs of travel for the four foreign graduate students from outside the United States and Canada whom we would invite. Our understanding is that, in addition, they may be exempt from paying conference fees.

The Transnational Initiatives Committee also will be aggressively seeking matching funds for this amount during this year to build on this commitment from the Board. We already have identified potential matching funds for a graduate student from Myanmar through Partnership for Change and the Social Innovation Fund, and potentially the Open Society Foundation as well.

The aim of this initiative is to increase the numbers and participation of international graduate students from within and outside the United States and Canada to the SSSP each year. Many of these graduate students in the United States and Canada come from universities whose graduate departments have conference travel funds to support them. We want to create events, panels and service opportunities within the SSSP that contribute to a more welcoming environment and reputation for fostering transnational research and activism that includes the perspectives of collaboration with scholars and activists living outside the United States and Canada. We think that international graduate students represent a relatively untapped resource for contributing greater vibrancy and transnational understanding to all of the divisions within the SSSP.

Respectfully submitted,

John Dale, Chair, SSSP Transnational Initiatives Committee