

## **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEETING MANAGER**

**Michele Koontz**

**August 6, 2016**

### **I. 2016 ANNUAL MEETING**

I am pleased to report that 913 attendees have registered for the annual meeting. Of those registered, 436 (48%) are professionals, 439 (48%) are students/unemployed/emeritus, and 38 (4%) are exempt from paying meeting registration. Previous years' attendance (at the time of my report) was 916 in 2015 (Chicago); 807 in 2014 (San Francisco); 991 in 2013 (New York City), 698 in 2012 (Denver), 696 in 2011 (Las Vegas), 563 in 2010 (Atlanta), 663 in 2009 (San Francisco), 731 in 2008 (Boston), and 726 in 2007 (New York City).

We have 177 sessions scheduled with 708 papers, 58 panelists, 3 workshop facilitators, and 1 plenary speaker. Last year, we had 173 sessions scheduled with 730 papers, 41 panelists, 2 workshop facilitators, and 1 plenary speaker.

Attendees are able to register one guest for a nominal fee. Each guest will receive a name badge (name only, no affiliation). Any guest wanting full access to sessions or special events and a program packet must register individually and pay the full non-member registration fee or the full membership dues and member registration fee. Program participants are not eligible for the guest registration fee. We have 22 guests registered. Last year at this time, 15 guests had registered. The guests are not included in the total number of registered attendees.

### **II. ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES**

SSSP has taken steps to meet the special needs of our attendees with disabilities. Written guidelines were distributed to all program participants to urge and assist them to be increasingly creative and conscious in their inclusiveness. We requested that all attendees refrain from wearing scented products. The hotel has agreed to have the fragrance system turned off, for housekeeping to use unscented products in the bathrooms on the meeting space levels, and to place a chair and small table in the Gender-Neutral Restroom. Unless an attendee uses a service or therapy dog or other credentialed assistance animal, we asked that they not bring their companion animals to areas where conference attendees are presenting.

Attendees were able to request accessibility services to facilitate their full participation in the annual meeting. We received six requests from conference attendees. The requests include wheelchair accessibility, fragrance-free and chemical-free spaces, service animal accommodations, chairs with backs, lactation room in the hotel, and conference name badges for partners or personal care attendants who are accompanying attendees and assisting them.

Since 2010, members and meeting registrants have been able to donate to the Accessibility Services Fund when they register. This year, contributions of \$310 were received (\$270 in 2015; \$275 in 2014; \$566 in 2013; \$225 in 2012; and \$235 in 2011).

The Westin Seattle Hotel has a gender-neutral restroom located near the Westlake Boardroom on the Westlake Level.

The Comfort Zone will be located in the Baker Room on the Mezzanine Level. This space will provide a quiet environment for conference attendees to relax, reflect, and re-energize. This space is available to all conference attendees, no matter where they are staying.

The Accessibility Committee requested that QR code be added to the final program. The code can be scanned with your device's QR Code Reader/Scanner for information on accessibility services and guidelines.

### **III. ADVERTISING EFFORTS**

In an effort to increase advertisements in the final program, a personalized letter was sent to those who advertised last year. In addition, seventy-two publishing companies were contacted. An additional letter was sent to seventeen publishing companies participating in the book exhibit. A letter was sent to 142 Ph.D. granting departments and 72 M.A. granting departments. Finally, a congratulatory letter was sent to all of the publishers of the C. Wright Mills finalists encouraging them to advertise.

Ads were placed in the final program by Kendall Hunt Publishing, New York University Press, Russell Sage Foundation, University of Cincinnati, University of Colorado Denver, University of Houston, University of Kentucky, University of North Carolina Wilmington, University of South Florida, University of Wisconsin Press, University Press of Kansas, and the Virginia Commonwealth University. In addition, we offered to put an insert in each registrant's conference bag for a fee. The New Press placed an order. As a result of these efforts, \$3,950 in advertising revenue was generated. Last year, eight ads were sold and one insert was placed, totaling \$2,550.

#### **IV. ANNUAL MEETING EXEMPTION POLICY**

Thirty-eight annual meeting exemptions were requested and granted this year (22 in 2015; 15 in 2014; 39 in 2013; 29 in 2012; and 22 in 2011).

##### **Current Exemption Policy:**

All participants (except for those listed under "b." below) must be current members (they may join on acceptance of their presentation) and must register (paying the guest registration fee will not be accepted for program participants) for the Annual Meeting by June 1. Persons failing to register by June 1 will have their presentations deleted from the final program.

In order to expedite registration, the e-mail of acceptance specifies that participation is contingent on current SSSP membership and registration for the Annual Meeting. Participants may pay membership dues and registration fees online or by mailing or faxing the paper membership and meeting registration forms along with payment information.

The Administrative Office will process all qualified exemption requests for conference registration in the order that they are received. In addition, the Program Chair will notify the Administrative Officer when he or she approves a direct request.

All exemption requests must be submitted by May 15. Exemptions from paying registration fees will be considered for:

- 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 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.

**Action Item:** Héctor and I would like the Board to revise item c as follows: Non-U.S. and non-Canadian scholars who reside in less advantaged countries. Our rationale for this change is due to non-U.S. and non-Canadian students enrolled in U.S. universities requesting an exemption.

#### **V. AUDIO-VISUAL**

An LCD projector package will be available for all regular sessions. Roundtable and Critical Dialogue sessions will not have audio-visual equipment; however, in some cases these sessions were placed in meeting rooms designated for regular sessions due to space constraints and will have access to a projector and screen. Program participants were instructed to bring their own laptop (and the connection cord if they have an Apple computer or HDMI connection cord) or arrange with someone else in their session to share. During contract negotiations, Héctor and I negotiated complimentary internet access in guest rooms and in the meeting space.

After soliciting bids from five audio-visual companies (three companies that SSSP has partnered with in the past: Advanced Solutions, MCRI, and PTAV), Chase Productions, a Seattle based audio-visual company, and PSAV, the in-house audio-visual company, we signed with PSAV.

The total projected audio-visual charge is \$16,878. In 2015 (Chicago), it cost \$11,070; in 2014 (San Francisco), it cost \$16,579; in 2013 (New York City), it cost \$13,637; in 2012 (Denver), it cost \$7,694; in 2011 (Las Vegas), it cost \$12,631; in 2010 (Atlanta), it cost \$7,631; and in 2009 (San Francisco), it cost \$10,581.

## **VI. AWARDS CEREMONY**

The Awards Ceremony will include the presentations of the annual SSSP awards (Arlene Kaplan Daniels Paper Award, C. Wright Mills Award, Doris Wilkinson Faculty Leadership Award, Joseph B. Gittler Award, Lee Founders Award, Beth B. Hess Memorial Scholarship, Racial/Ethnic Minority Graduate Scholarship, and the Thomas C. Hood Social Action Award) and the Student Paper Competition winners. Each student paper competition winner and all major award winners and honorable mentions will be presented with a plaque, handled through the Administrative Office.

## **VII. BOOK EXHIBIT**

The Scholar's Choice will organize and manage our book exhibit again this year without cost to the Society. Members interested in having their book displayed were instructed to contact their publisher. Please keep in mind that the publishers pay a fee to display with The Scholar's Choice and may not have the marketing budget necessary to honor all requests, particularly for older titles.

In addition to obtaining books for the exhibit, The Scholar's Choice contacted the publishers of the C. Wright Mills finalists and obtained complimentary copies of the five books.

## **VIII. CATERING**

During contract negotiations, Héctor and I negotiated a 10% discount on 2016 catering menu pricing and a 3% rebate off all charges that appear on the master bill. The Society will spend approximately \$42,000 on food and beverage (including 23% service charge and 9.6% sales tax).

We will hold the Arrival Meet & Greet Reception on Thursday evening, the Welcoming Reception on Friday evening, and the Division-Sponsored Reception on Saturday evening. The Membership and Outreach Committee will host the New Member Breakfast on Saturday morning. I encouraged all 22 Divisions to co-sponsor a joint reception instead of hosting their own. Twenty-one divisions responded that they would and agreed to contribute \$3,630 toward the cost of the approximately \$13,000 reception. The Drinking and Drugs Division will hold their reception off-site with the ASA Section on Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco.

## **IX. CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP**

On Friday, August 19, SSSP will co-sponsor the Precarious Work: Domination and Resistance in the US, China, and the World Conference from 8:15am–7:30pm at the Seattle Central College.

On Monday, August 22, the Institutional Ethnography Division will hold a workshop from 9:00am–4:00pm at the Westin Seattle Hotel. Currently, 28 people have registered.

## **X. DONATIONS**

A special thanks to the University of California, Irvine School of Social Sciences, Department of Sociology, Center for the Study of Democracy, and the Blum Center for Poverty Alleviation and the University of Oregon College of Arts and Sciences and Department of Women's and Gender Studies for their financial contributions to program activities and to Oxford University Press for its financial contribution to the conference bags.

## **XI. MEETING MENTOR PROGRAM**

Ligaya Lindio McGovern, Lee Student Support Fund Committee Chair, coordinated the Meeting Mentor Program. Eighty mentees were assigned a meeting mentor. The 2016 Meeting Mentors are: Kathleen A. Asbury, Tim Berard, Joel Best, Samit Dipon Bordoloi, Kristen M. Budd, David G. Embrick, Louis Edgar Esparza, Luis A. Fernandez, Dana M. Greene, Arthur J. Jipson, Lloyd Klein, Valerie Leiter, Annulla Linders, Deborah L. Little, Jessica L.

Lucero, Paul C. Luken, Gloria P. Martinez-Ramos, Ligaya Lindio McGovern, Brian Monahan, Glenn W. Muschert, Naomi Nichols, Kathryn M. Nowotny, Teresa L. Scheid, Saher Selod, Wendy Simonds, Hephzibah Strmic-Pawl, John Taylor, Bhoomi K. Thakore, Chris Wellin, and Elroi J. Windsor.

## **XII. MOBILE APP**

Thanks to the hard work of IT Specialist Sharon Shumaker, we will have a mobile app for the second year. This will end our two year contract with CrowdCompass. This fall, we will solicit bids and sign a new contract for future meetings.

## **XIII. OPTIONAL TOURS**

Prior to 2015, SSSP coordinated our own tours, if tours were held. Last year, we received several complaints about the ASA co-sponsored tours not starting/ending on time. This year, there was a lot of confusion that led to added work on the Local Arrangements Committee and the Meeting Manager. In the end, SSSP offered two tours. One tour is co-sponsored with the American Sociological Association (ASA).

### **Northwest Lesbian and Gay History Walking Tour**

Friday, August 19, 10:00am–12:00pm

Ticket Fee: \$10 (limit 12)

Transportation: Public transit (includes bus fare)

Currently, 11 tickets have been sold.

### **Seattle Labor History Tour (co-sponsored with ASA)**

Sunday, August 21, 9:00am–1:00pm

Ticket Fee: \$40 (limit 10)

Transportation: Chartered Motorcoach (loading at The Westin [Westlake Drive by the Valet Entrance]: 9:00am, unloading at The Westin: 1:00pm)

This tour is sold out.

**Action Item:** While Héctor and I like the idea of co-sponsoring tours with ASA; we have little control over the logistics, including dealing with problems if they occur, as they have in the past. We believe that it may be in the SSSP's best interest to arrange our own tours. If we encounter difficulties again this year with the co-sponsored tour, we would like the Board's permission to return to organizing our own tours for future meetings.

## **XIV. REGISTRATION**

At the 2014 Annual Meeting, the Board of Directors approved a policy that program participants will be dropped from the Annual Meeting program, if they do not register by June 1 of that year. The Board requests that program participants receive at least three notices prior to the June 1 deadline for registration.

The Administrative Office sent three targeted e-mail reminders to program participants and asked session organizers to contact their participants who had not registered and urge them to register. In addition, Program Chair Yvonne Braun sent two e-mails urging program participants to register. Five program participants were granted an extension by Yvonne. On July 16, 30 program participants were removed for failure to register for the conference despite multiple attempts to remind them. Of those granted an extension, three were removed from the program. A total of 33 program participants were removed from this year's program.

## **XV. REGISTRATION BAGS**

Since 2004, we have purchased our registration bags from Four Star Marketing. This company has been doing business since 1972. The total price for this year's bag is \$3,181. It should be noted that Oxford University Press makes a \$3,000 donation toward our registration bags.

David A. Smith, as President, selected an Eco Grocery Shopper Tote Bag (\$3.39 each with full color front, 1 color back; plus a \$55 set-up charge and shipping) made from a non-woven polypropylene material that is earth friendly, lightweight, reusable and recyclable. This bag is made in China and printed in the United States. Prior to finalizing our order, there was some discussion that SSSP should use a bag produced domestically with union labor. Because

of the higher price (\$13.95 each with full color front, 1 color back; plus an \$80 set-up charge and shipping) and the late request, it was decided that we should go ahead with our current order with Four Star Marketing.

In preparation of this discussion, Douglas Oeser, GRA & Webmaster, asked five Fair Trade bag distributors for a price quote. Freeset USA was the only company that provided a consistent response (the others were Alburyenvirobags.com.au, Ecoduka, HAE NOW, and Topbagwholesale.com).

Freeset is a Fair Trade business offering employment to women trapped in the sex trade in Kolkata, West Bengal, India. According to their web site, 190 women are on their journey to freedom at Freeset. Their bags are made from cotton or natural/dyed jute. For comparison purposes, the bag closest to what we are using this year is made from jute fabric, commonly known as burlap. The pricing for a natural jute bag would be \$7.91 each (total \$6,723) or \$8.18 each (\$6,953) for a dyed jute bag. These prices include shipping (UPS expedited Air shipment: 6-7 days).

**Action Item:** Héctor and I would like the Board to provide some guidance on what type of registration bag should be used for future meetings. If we want the bags to be made by union or Fair Trade labor, are we prepared to send the additional funds? If the expense is too great, we have at least two other options: (1) not to insist on union or Fair Trade labor or (2) not to distribute bags.

#### **XVI. REGISTRATION WORKERS AND ROOMMATE MATCHING SERVICE**

Six graduate student members will work at the registration desk. In exchange for working 12 hours, they will receive a complimentary shared hotel room for the nights of August 18-20.

Forty-one registrants requested the roommate matching service. On July 1, an e-mail was sent to them listing the names, affiliations, and e-mail addresses of those willing to participate in order to facilitate roommate matching.

#### **XVII. WESTIN SEATTLE HOTEL**

SSSP received a favorable sleeping room rate of \$195 single/double; \$205 triple; and \$215 quadruple plus tax per night when the hotel contract was signed. Our original contracted block total was 730 rooms. On June 7, 70 rooms were added to our block at the \$279 single/double rate plus tax per night.

On August 5, our room pickup was 813 rooms. The Society will receive 20 complimentary room nights. As long as we exceed 70% of our 800 room block (560 rooms), the Society will not be charged meeting room rental.

#### **XVIII. MEETING MANAGER'S COMMENTS**

I worked closely with Stacey Browning, Meeting and Event Manager until she resigned from her position on July 22. Afterwards, I worked with Tom Weitzel, Director of Event Management. I provided them with our sleeping room list, details for VIP amenities, audio-visual requirements, catering for all food functions, meeting room set up, and signage.

I was fortunate to work with President David A. Smith; Program Committee Chair Yvonne Braun; Local Arrangements Committee Chair Sarah Diefendorf; Executive Officer Héctor L. Delgado; Information Technology Specialist Sharon Shumaker; Administrative Assistant Marisa Stone; and Graduate Research Associate and Webmaster Douglas Oeser. I am grateful for their invaluable contributions to the program. I can't say enough about their hard work and dedication to the Society.

Finally, I would like to thank you, the Board of Directors, for giving me another opportunity to serve as meeting manager. On October 19, I will celebrate my twenty-fourth anniversary with SSSP. I have been privileged to witness the growth of the organization under the guidance of many outstanding leaders. I welcome the opportunity to continue this service next year in Montreal.