

To: SSSP Board of Directors and the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee  
From: SSSP Transnational Initiatives Committee, John Dale (Chair), Hector Delgado, Bhavani Arabandi, and Fatime Gunes

Date: July, 28, 2016

**Re: Report from the Ad Hoc Transnational Initiatives Committee**

At last year's SSSP Conference in Chicago, the Transnational Initiatives Committee formally requested that the Board of Directors and the Budget, Finance, and Audit (BFA) Committee provide funding at the SSSP Annual Meeting (starting with Seattle in 2016) to cover the hotel's cost of providing videoconferencing technology to enable foreign scholars who cannot physically attend the Meetings to participate on panels. Not only cost of travel, but sometimes visa restrictions, can prevent foreign scholars from attending the annual meeting. The Transnational Initiatives Committee recommended that this technology be made available in at least one conference meeting room throughout the duration of the meetings. We also recommended that division chairs or session organizers wishing to use this videoconferencing technology should submit a request and brief descriptive proposal to the Transnational Initiatives Committee and conference organizers explaining why they need, and how they plan to use, this technology.

Subsequently, the Transnational Initiatives Committee worked with Michele Koontz and IT Specialist Sharon Shumaker to identify and coordinate the specific technology and costs that this proposal would entail for the 2016 Meeting in Seattle. Together, we agreed on the following option: a wired connection in one meeting room providing 3 mbps of non-dedicated bandwidth. The cost of this option was determined to be \$235.81 which would accommodate 5 sessions (for one day), and \$707.44, which would accommodate 14 sessions (for three days).

There would be no technical support available with this option so the session organizer is responsible for setting up and running the video conference session. While 3 mbps is sufficient bandwidth to conduct an informal web conference with one other person, this bandwidth is not dedicated -- meaning it would be shared among others in the conference space. The Session Organizer would be responsible for providing a laptop with a camera, microphone, and video conferencing software installed and configured such as SKYPE or Zoom. The Session Organizer would coordinate with the participant located in a foreign country to verify that they also have a computer with a camera, microphone, and video conferencing software properly configured. The connection should be tested prior to starting the session. This is not a professional video conferencing solution, but would provide organizers who requested this option with the potential to have an informal video conference. However, the quality of the video conference may be affected by the bandwidth and will vary depending on the time of day and internet traffic. Some things that could occur are intermittent screen freezes, and the audio and video may be unsynchronized at times. In November, the Board of Directors and the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee approved this request.

The following procedure was established for accommodating these requests:

- (1) the SSSP Administrative Office would provide an online form to accommodate these requests which can be sent out in an e-mail to session organizers. The form includes the Session Name, Session Organizer's Name, Contact Information, and Reason for Requesting a Video Conference.
- (2) The Chair of the Transnational Initiatives Committee then received a copy of the requests, along with the Program Committee Chair.
- (3) The Administrative Office was copied as well.
- (4) The Administrative Office sends the Chair of the Transnational Initiatives Committee a complete listing of the requests after the deadline (March 15).
- (5) The Chair of the Transnational Initiatives Committee shares a complete listing with other committee members who will be charged with selecting the sessions based on criteria established by the committee.
- (6) The results were to be shared with the Administrative Office no later than March 15 as stated above.

Unfortunately, as of March 15<sup>th</sup>, no requests for videoconferencing funding were received. The Transnational Initiatives Committee did not use any of the funding allocated by the BFA, and control of the funding reverted back to the BFA. Our hope is that with such funding in place (and announced at the Annual Meeting during the time when sessions are being proposed by Division Chairs, we will have more interest in using this technology and the enhanced possibilities for transnational participation that it affords

Also, in 2015, the Transnational Initiatives Committee requested a budget of \$5,000 to defray the cost of bringing international graduate students from the global South to the Annual Meeting in Chicago (see the 2015 Report of the Transnational Initiatives Committee). At the Annual Board of Directors Meeting in Chicago in August 2015, the Transnational Initiatives Committee prepared a request to the Board of Directors and the BFA Committee for an *annual* (rather than a one-time) budget of \$10,000 to bring to the SSSP Annual Meeting international scholars who are affiliated with universities that are located in countries outside the United States and Canada (and with priority given to countries in the global South). The purpose of this initiative is to work with the scholars to promote the SSSP in local universities in their countries to help establish a presence there. We also would work with Oxford University Press points of contact on promoting submissions from these countries to *Social Problems*. Money from this budget would also be used to host an international scholars reception (off-site), and include the Global Division and other Divisions that want to participate in the reception.

Due to time constraints during the Board of Directors Meeting, our proposal was postponed and made by e-mail following the conference. It was approved in November. The Chair was unable to organize an international panel and reception for Seattle between November and March and returned control of this year's funding to the BFA, but is preparing to do so for the 2017 Annual Meeting in Montreal, as well as to work with Oxford University Press points of contact on promoting submissions from these countries to *Social Problems*, and to work with the scholars to promote the SSSP in local universities in their countries to help establish a presence there.

Respectfully submitted,

John Dale, Chair, SSSP Transnational Initiatives Committee