



COLLEGE of ARTS & SCIENCES
Department of Sociology
901 McClung Tower
1115 Volunteer Blvd.
Knoxville, TN 37996-0490
Phone: (865) 974-6021
Fax: (865) 974-7013
<http://web.utk.edu/utsocdep/>

Annual Report to the Budget, Finance and Audit Committee of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, 2016

Jon Shefner
Professor and Head
Department of Sociology
University of Tennessee

The Department of Sociology at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) and the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP) continue to enjoy a long and productive relationship. We have been the home of the Executive Office since 1990, and remain the home of the Administrative Office. Most, if not all, of our faculty and graduate students are members of SSSP, and several faculty members have served on a variety of SSSP committee positions over the years. I am very pleased we have been able to successfully negotiate the ongoing contract so that SSSP Offices will stay at UTK Sociology for the next five years. As both a long-standing member of the SSSP, and as department head, the relationship is one that I support without reservation.

My work with the Administrative Office staff (Michele Koontz, Sharon Shumaker, Marisa Stone, and Doug Oeser) and the Executive Officer (Héctor L. Delgado) continues to be both positive and productive. They do an excellent job and they operate in a very professional manner. Our senior departmental administrative assistant, Nancy Loftis works closely with Michele on budgetary matters in the Department. Michele has a very good working relationship with both Nancy Loftis and our other administrative assistant, Shirley Martin. We are pleased that SSSP employed one of our graduate students (Doug Oeser) as its GRA over the past two years, and we are happy to help in any way in selecting his replacement.

We will keep our eyes on increasing costs the Department is paying to house SSSP. Several contracts ago, SSSP generously agreed to include money in the budget that was to be used for additional departmental compensation. Since 2006, the University of Tennessee has failed to pay the SSSP GRA tuition, despite its contractual commitment to do so. The new contract carries no such obligation; I have been entirely unsuccessful in getting UT administration to contribute to the tuition waiver. Since 2006, the department has paid for the GRA's tuition. At this point, with increases in tuition and even with the Society's decision to add a small amount of money to last year's expenses, the majority

of monies provided for the Department's use by the Society are now devoted to paying the GRA's tuition. The amount the Department devotes to tuition varies with the classload the student assistant takes, but the general slope is up. As department head, I've had a number of conversations with Michele Koontz and various SSSP officials regarding this issue. The current resolution appears to be that we will address the issue over time, as costs increase. With increasing fees, and with our stagnant budget, I am sure we will continue to discuss this issue.

I continue to have an excellent working relationship with the Administrative Office staff and the Executive Officer, and fully expect that will continue. We very much appreciate the Society's willingness to support our resistance to the TN State Legislature's effort to strip funding from the campus Office of Diversity and Inclusion. The Department continues to benefit greatly from hosting the Administrative Office, and I look forward to this longstanding and very positive relationship continuing, and working with the Executive Officer and the Administrative Office this next year.