

# **Accessibility Committee 2017 Annual Report**

Prepared by:

Sara E. Green, Ph.D.

University of South Florida

Committee Chair

July, 2017

In consultation with Accessibility Committee members: Dana Greene (Chair-Elect); Allison Houston; Michael Johnston; Hannah Liebreich; and Deborah Little.

The SSSP Accessibility Committee continues to work with SSSP staff to ensure that the annual meetings are accessible and welcoming to scholars and students with disabilities. In 2016-2017, the Accessibility Committee engaged in the following activities:

1. Review and approval of the SSSP Accessibility Guidelines and Services and supportive materials;
2. Review of the accessibility plans for the 2017 Annual Meetings at the Bonaventure Hotel in Montreal;
3. Review of the accessibility plans for the 2020 Annual Meetings at Park Central Hotel in San Francisco as part of the contract review process;
4. Review of the results of the 2016 Annual Meeting Survey relevant to accessibility issues.
5. Review and actions taken in response to complaints received by committee members during the year.
6. Review of actions taken in response to accommodation requests received from 2017 program registrants.

### **SSSP Accessibility Guidelines and Services and Supportive Materials.**

With guidance from past committees, SSSP has developed the strong set of accessibility policies described below:

## **Accessibility Guidelines and Services**

### **Checklists for Program Participants, Presenters, and Session Organizers**

SSSP strives to make our annual meeting as accessible as possible. The Accessibility Committee has developed written guidelines to maximize access for all program participants.

**Visual Materials:** Presenters have the primary responsibility for ensuring the access of the materials which they share with their audience. If visual material is presented, you should be sure that either yourself as the speaker or another appropriate person reads or orally describes the overheads or other visual material for blind or low-vision participants.

Handouts of your paper can be useful adjuncts to any presentation. If employed, these materials must also be made accessible to all by making them available in alternate formats. Therefore, you should have a few copies in large (18 point font) print and be prepared to share them in electronic form. (Reasonable efforts on your part and a willingness to relay additional materials at a later date to attendees at your session are certainly acceptable.)

**Air Quality & Service Animals:** Please refrain from wearing any scented products to respect participants who may be sensitive and/or allergic to these types of chemicals. Unless you yourself use a service or therapy dog or other credentialed assistance animal, we ask that you not bring companion animals to the book exhibit or areas where SSSP members are presenting.



**Seating Arrangements:** Rooms will be arranged for wheelchair access, but chairs do get moved around. When you arrive at a session, please choose a seat or space that does not block a door or aisle. Do not be afraid to move chairs for each other. Also, please do not block the hallways. We all do some session hopping, so leave room to allow all people to come and go during a session.

**Sign and Voice Interpreting:** There may be American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter(s) present during your session. Please do not block the view of the interpreter especially if audio-visual aids are in use. Lights should not be lowered to a degree that would interfere with sign interpretation or lip reading. During discussion periods, be sure the interpreter can hear you and keep up with you. Please be aware that some people may have great difficulty understanding what you are saying (particularly when there is competing background noise) and that some concepts/terms used in the academic language may be unfamiliar to interpreters. Whether you are a member of the audience or are communicating with someone using an interpreter, give your attention to the person using the interpreter, not to the interpreter. In order to facilitate the work of interpreters and facilitators and for other logistical purposes **all program participants must send a copy of their paper to the session presider and/or discussant by June 30.**

**Audio Equipment:** Presenters with soft voices should request the use of a microphone so that their presentations will be more easily audible. Please speak clearly and in a reasonable tone into the microphone (especially with proper nouns). An FM audio loop system may also be provided to attendees upon request. This may involve a separate microphone from that used by the general public address system. If one is in use, try to minimize extra noise as much as possible.

**Discussions:** All speakers should state their names in discussions, whether speaking from the session panel or from the audience. Please be patient and be prepared to have your discussant interrupt you to ensure effective ASL interpretation or use of an FM Loop or a microphone if necessary.

We appreciate your efforts in ensuring that everyone can have a great conference experience. If you need accommodations (including microphones for presenters with soft voices) in order to present your paper or have any questions or concerns, contact Sara Green, Accessibility Committee Chair, [sagreen@usf.edu](mailto:sagreen@usf.edu) and Michele Koontz, Administrative Officer & Meeting Manager, [mkoontz3@utk.edu](mailto:mkoontz3@utk.edu) no later than June 30.

**The following materials have been developed to support these policies and are attached as an appendix to this report.**

**Checklist for Program Participants:**

[http://www.sssp1.org/file/2017AM/Accessibility\\_Checklist\\_for\\_Program\\_Participants\\_2017.pdf](http://www.sssp1.org/file/2017AM/Accessibility_Checklist_for_Program_Participants_2017.pdf)

**Checklist for Presenters:**

[http://www.sssp1.org/file/2017AM/Accessibility\\_Checklist\\_for\\_Presenters\\_2017.pdf](http://www.sssp1.org/file/2017AM/Accessibility_Checklist_for_Presenters_2017.pdf)

**Checklist for Session Organizers:**

[http://www.sssp1.org/file/2017AM/Accessibility\\_Checklist\\_for\\_Session\\_Organizers\\_2017.pdf](http://www.sssp1.org/file/2017AM/Accessibility_Checklist_for_Session_Organizers_2017.pdf)



In 2017, the Accessibility Committee reviewed and made minor revisions to these materials which were then posted on the web-site and sent to program participants in targeted email blasts. It is a testament to the important work of previous members of the Accessibility Committee that a representative of *Sociologists for Women in Society* contacted the SSSP Accessibility Committee for assistance in developing their own accessibility policies and enhancing inclusive practices at their meetings. SWS cited the positive reputation SSSP has developed for their inclusive practices in making this request. We forwarded the SSSP policies and supporting documents to SWS for use in their efforts.

### **Accessibility plans for the 2017 annual meetings at the Bonaventure Hotel in Montreal.**

Michele Koontz has been assured by the Bonaventure Hotel that the following accessibility features will be in place for the 2017 meetings in Montreal:

1. The hotel will provide one gender-neutral (unisex) restroom which will also be wheelchair accessible on the convention floor. A sign will be placed on the door and on an easel outside the restroom.
2. Wheelchair attendees will use wheelchair lift to access the meeting space on the Banquets Level where 95% of the meeting space is located. For those staying at the hotel, the room key will activate the lift. Those not staying at the hotel will need to be assisted by a hotel representative. Michele will provide the hotel with our meeting hours so that an employee can be available to assist with the lift. A sign will be placed on an easel beside the lift with the phone number to call for assistance (hotel line and operator extension).
3. The Montreal Bonaventure Hotel has five accessible sleeping rooms, all of which have been reserved for our attendees. The hotel also features an accessible entrance and all meeting spaces are accessible. Please note that the Fitness Room is not accessible.
4. In addition, SSSP offers the Comfort Zone.

Full description of the 2017 Annual Meetings Accessibility Provisions can be found at: <http://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/pageid/1864> and are included in the Appendix.

### **Accessibility plans for the 2020 annual meetings at Park Central Hotel in San Francisco as part of the contract review process.**

After reviewing the materials forwarded to the committee by Michele Koontz, the committee asked the following questions about accessibility-related issues. Michele's Koontz's answers appear in bold below each question:

1. Are the registration areas and all meeting rooms easily accessible through regular elevators (not staff or freight only elevators or single person lifts that must be operated by staff)? **Yes, plus the meeting space is self-contained on two floors.**
2. Will the gender neutral restroom also be ADA compliant and large enough to accommodate wheelchairs? **Yes**
3. Do they use an atmospheric scent, and if so, can the scent be turned off during the meetings? **The hotel does not use atmospheric scents.**

4. Are there forms that folks with service dogs will need to fill out at check in, or proof of certification papers that they will be asked to show in order to check in? **The hotel welcomes pets. There is a \$100 non-refundable cleaning fee for up to two pets, up to 25 pounds each. Those bringing a service dog will not have to complete any paperwork nor show proof of certification papers when they check-in.**

5. Are there grassy areas near the hotel that service dogs can use? **I failed to ask about grassy areas, but will do so now.**

6. Will 5 ADA guest rooms will be enough. Do you know how many we've used in the past? **Yes, 5 ADA guest rooms will be enough. Usage varies from year to year.**

### **Results of the disability-related results of the 2016 Annual Meeting Survey**

The following item was included in the Annual Meeting Survey which was sent to all SSSP members after the 2016 meetings in Seattle.

*The SSSP strives to ensure that meeting facilities are accessible to all, including people with disabilities, health challenges, or other differences. If you had any accessibility difficulties or if you noted something that could be a problem for others, please share that information here. If you wish to inform us of some accommodation or access that worked particularly well, we would welcome that feedback as well. Also, please feel free to contact the Chair of the SSSP's Accessibility Committee*

A total of eight survey participants entered text responses to this item.

|   |
|---|
|   |
| I have hearing loss and it is helpful if all presenters would use amplification.  |
| I have a chronic intestinal illness so knowing restroom locations and ensuring adequate restrooms per floor is a must. You guys did MUCH better than ASA in this regard - bathrooms were easy to find and there was more than one per floor.  |
| No concerns.  |
| I would strongly recommend that consideration be given to the accommodations offered. I stayed at the Westin during this year's meeting. The hotel was lovely, but did not offer much in the way of in-room accommodations (microwave, refrigerator) that are necessary to allow both families and graduate students to participate in the conference while on a budget. This lack of accommodations was especially surprising since the hotel cost over \$200 a night (with taxes etc). I honestly had better in-room accommodations at the airport hotel we stayed in before we came to the conference... |
| None.   |
| larger meetings need a microphone, especially where shy students who don 't speak up are presenting   |
| The all-gender bathroom was great and clearly labeled this year. Thank you!   |
| NA  |

As can be seen from the text box above, responses were generally very positive. Of the eight responses, two indicate that the participant had no concerns, and one said that the question of accessibility was not applicable to her/him. Two others were positive



comments about the availability, accessibility and/or signage directing participants to restrooms. One of the three negative comments/suggestions for change is that SSSP select hotels that provide in-room micro-waves and refrigerators in order to help keep costs affordable to graduate students and lower income participants. The other two negative comments are about presenters who do not speak loudly enough to be heard. This continues to be an issue of concern that does not seem to be adequately ameliorated by the instructions given in our accessibility documents and instructions.

This item will again be included in the 2017 Annual Meeting Survey.

### **Actions taken in response to complaints received by committee members during the year.**

In addition to gathering suggestions from the annual survey, members of the Accessibility Committee sometimes receive personal communication about accessibility-related issues faced by annual meeting participants, either during or after the annual meetings. In 2016-2017, a member of the committee received one complaint from a graduate student who was "deeply offended" by one of the "fun ribbons" that poked fun at OCD which the student identifies as having. In pursuing this issues, we learned from Michele Koontz that SSSP has been selling "fun ribbons" for \$1 each since 2012. The ribbons are purchased as a set from Marco, <https://www.marcopromotionalproducts.com/Product/Assorted-Fun-Ribbons-wRibbon-Case-H1-FUNPACK-145468.htm>. While there was not an OCD ribbon in the set purchased for the 2016 meetings, there may have been one included in a set purchased in a previous year that could have been sold in 2016. Michele Koontz has offered to go through the ribbons before August, 2017 to make sure that all "OCD" ribbons, or those that make fun of other disability diagnoses, are removed.

### **Review of actions taken in response to accommodation requests received from 2017 program registrants.**

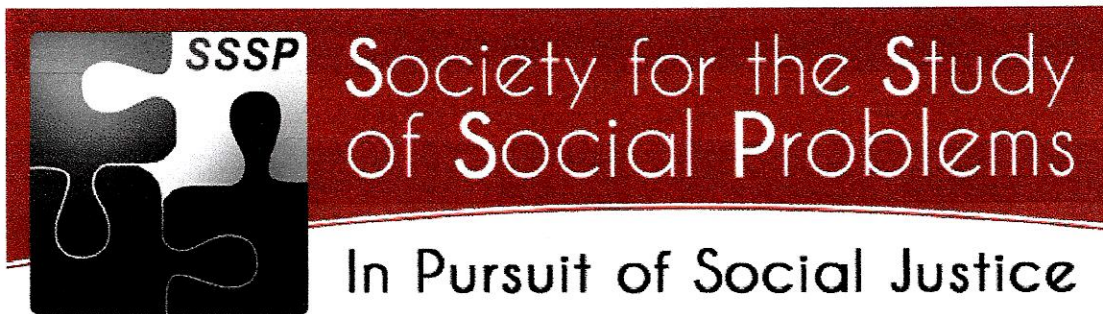
Six registrants completed the accessibility service section when registering, Michele Koontz followed-up with each person and copied the Accessibility Chair on all responses. Requests were accommodated to the extent possible within the provisions of the SSSP accessibility services approved policy. All those who made requests were also invited to attend the Accessibility Committee meeting at the 2017 annual meeting.

None of the requests made at registration indicated the need for SSSP to provide an interpreter or attendant. We received no accommodation requests from presenters or session organizers prior to the June 30 deadline.

**The SSSP Accessibility Committee is very grateful to Michele Koontz for her continuing efforts to make SSSP a disability friendly scholarly environment and its annual meetings accessible to disabled scholars and students. Her work makes the work of the Accessibility Committee both easy and rewarding. We also thank SSSP President, Donileen Loseke and the members of the 2017 Board of Directors for their commitment to the support of the full inclusion of disability scholarship and scholars with disabilities in the life of the organization.**

*The Accessibility Committee will hold its annual meeting on Friday, August 11 from 10:30am–12:10pm in the Outremont Room on the Banquets Level of the Bonaventure Hotel. All those interested in or with concerns about the inclusion of people with disabilities in SSSP are very welcome to attend!*





### **CHECKLIST FOR PRESENTERS**

SSSP strives to make our annual meeting as accessible as possible. The Accessibility Committee has developed a checklist to help meet written guidelines to maximize access for all program participants.

The guidelines are presented in full here:  
<http://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/pageid/1928/>

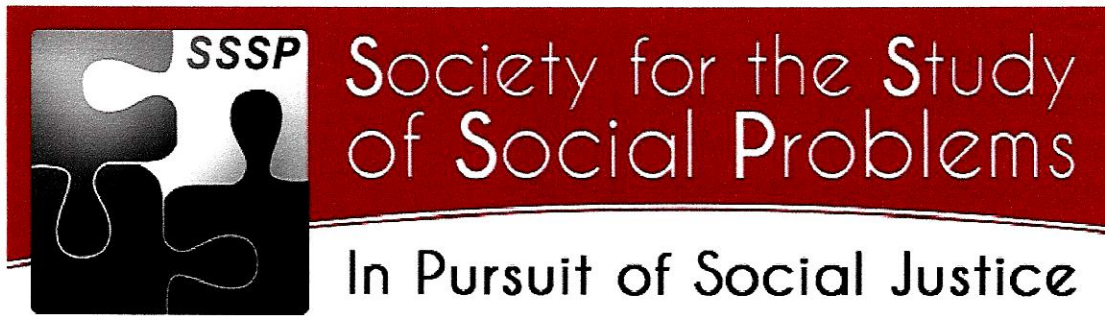
#### **Before the meeting:**

- ☐ Submit your full paper to the session presider and/or discussant by June 30th to facilitate accommodation for all.
- ☐ If you need accommodations (including microphones for presenters with soft voices) in order to present your paper, or have any questions or concerns contact Sara Green, Accessibility Committee Chair, [sagreen@usf.edu](mailto:sagreen@usf.edu) and Michele Koontz, Administrative Officer & Meeting Manager, [mkoontz3@utk.edu](mailto:mkoontz3@utk.edu) no later than June 30.
- ☐ If you are using handouts, make several available in larger font format and have an electronic copy available.

#### **During your session:**

- ☐ Read any visual aids aloud and describe any illustrations or charts. Please request a microphone if your voice is quiet, speak clearly, and say your name before presenting.
- ☐ If there are American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter(s) present, be sure the room lighting is not overly dim and that the interpreter can see you and be seen by the audience.
- ☐ Please do not wear scented products, smoke, or bring companion animals other than service animals into the conference space.





## CHECKLIST FOR PRESENTERS

SSSP strives to make our annual meeting as accessible as possible. The Accessibility Committee has developed a checklist to help meet written guidelines to maximize access for all program participants.

The guidelines are presented in full here:  
<http://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/pageid/1928/>

### Before the meeting:

- ☐ Submit your full paper to the session presider and/or discussant by June 30th to facilitate accommodation for all.
- ☐ If you need accommodations (including microphones for presenters with soft voices) in order to present your paper, or have any questions or concerns contact Sara Green, Accessibility Committee Chair, [sagreen@usf.edu](mailto:sagreen@usf.edu) and Michele Koontz, Administrative Officer & Meeting Manager, [mkoontz3@utk.edu](mailto:mkoontz3@utk.edu) no later than June 30.
- ☐ If you are using handouts, make several available in larger font format and have an electronic copy available.

### During your session:

- ☐ Read any visual aids aloud and describe any illustrations or charts. Please request a microphone if your voice is quiet, speak clearly, and say your name before presenting.
- ☐ If there are American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter(s) present, be sure the room lighting is not overly dim and that the interpreter can see you and be seen by the audience.
- ☐ Please do not wear scented products, smoke, or bring companion animals other than service animals into the conference space.



### CHECKLIST FOR SESSION ORGANIZERS

SSSP strives to make our annual meeting as accessible as possible. The Accessibility Committee has developed a checklist to help meet written guidelines to maximize access for all program participants.

The guidelines are presented in full here:  
<http://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/pageid/1928/>

#### Before the meeting:

- ☐ Remind all session presenters to submit their full paper to the presider and/or discussant by June 30th to facilitate accommodation for all.
- ☐ Remind all session presenters that if they need accommodations (including microphones for presenters with soft voices) in order to present their paper, or have any questions or concerns contact Sara Green, Accessibility Committee Chair, [sagreen@usf.edu](mailto:sagreen@usf.edu) and Michele Koontz, Administrative Officer & Meeting Manager, [mkoontz3@utk.edu](mailto:mkoontz3@utk.edu) no later than June 30.
- ☐ Remind all session presenters that if they are using handouts to make several available in larger font format and to have an electronic copy available.

#### During your session:

- ☐ Keep rooms accessible to all by moving chairs as needed and ensuring entryways are not constricted.
- ☐ If there are American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter(s) present, be sure the room lighting is not overly dim and that the interpreter can see the presenter and be seen by the audience.
- ☐ Please do not wear scented products, smoke, or bring companion animals other than service animals into the conference space.





Society for the Study  
of Social Problems  
*In Pursuit of Social Justice*

## Accessibility and Social Justice

SSSP will make arrangements for sign-language interpreters, sighted guides, and other communication avenues for meeting registrants. Please use the "Accessibility Services" portion of the registration form to identify the service that you need no later than June 30. Michele Koontz, Administrative Officer & Meeting Manager, will contact you to discuss needs and possible arrangements.

Arrangements for accessibility services can become quite costly, and funds are limited. The SSSP has established an Accessibility Services Fund in order for members to be able to contribute directly to making the Annual Meeting accessibility services more affordable for attendees with disabilities. Please consider making a donation to the Accessibility Services Fund when you register.

### Hotel

The Montreal Bonaventure Hotel has five accessible sleeping rooms, all of which have been reserved for our attendees. The hotel also features an accessible entrance and all meeting spaces are accessible. Please note that the Fitness Room is not accessible. If you would like Michele to verify that your accessibility request(s) will be honored, please contact her at [mkoontz3@utk.edu](mailto:mkoontz3@utk.edu) after making your reservation. She will follow-up with the hotel to ensure that your request is honored.

### Air Quality – Smoking – Service Animals

Please refrain from wearing any scented products to respect attendees who may be sensitive and/or allergic to these types of chemicals. Smoking is not allowed in the meeting space or restaurants. Unless you yourself use a service or therapy dog or other credentialed assistance animal, we ask that you not bring companion animals to the book exhibit or areas where members are presenting.

### Comfort Zone

The **Comfort Zone** provides a quiet environment for you to relax, reflect, and re-energize. This space is available to ALL conference attendees, no matter where you are staying. Please feel free to bring your morning coffee or afternoon snack and relax, unwind, or get organized for the rest of your day. The Comfort Zone is located in the St-Laurent Room on the Banquets Level on Friday and Saturday and in the Net Café on the Banquets Level on Sunday and available during the following hours:

|           |               |
|-----------|---------------|
| Friday:   | 8:00am–6:00pm |
| Saturday: | 8:00am–6:00pm |
| Sunday:   | 8:00am–5:00pm |

### Gender-Neutral Public Restroom

A gender-neutral restroom is located near the Verdun Room on the Banquets Level. This facility is available for use by all persons, regardless of their gender identity. The gender-neutral restroom may also function as a family restroom or as a restroom for people with disabilities.

## Sessions

SSSP strives to make its annual meeting as accessible as possible. Each presentation or session should be designed and conducted with the full participation of all in mind. Therefore, the Accessibility Committee requests that all presenters [review the guidelines](#) for accessible presentations and take the necessary steps to maximize programming access to all participants.

## Airports

Wheelchair accessible transportation is available at the Montréal–Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport (YUL) for travelers with disabilities. The Air Travel Accessibility Regulations, air carriers must (on request) provide people with disabilities with assistance from the check-in counter (departure) to the general public area (arrival). For more information, visit YUL's [Adapted Services](#).

## Accessibility Information for Montreal

Travelers with disabilities will find Montreal to be among one of the most accessible destinations in Canada. Montreal Transit Corporation's information is at: <http://www.stm.info/en/access>. The Accessible Road's website is helpful: <http://www.larouteaccessible.com/en/accueil/filter/region/2>.

If a need arises on-site, we encourage you to stop by the SSSP registration desk for assistance. SSSP is committed to making the annual meeting accessible to all.

For more information on Accessibility Guidelines for program participants, presenters, and session organizers, scan the QR code or see <http://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/pageid/1928/>.



[Privacy Policy](#)

[Site Map](#)

[Website Programming](#)

The Society for the Study of Social Problems | 901 McClung Tower, University of Tennessee | Knoxville, TN 37996-0490  
Email: [sssp@utk.edu](mailto:sssp@utk.edu) | Phone: 865-689-1531 | Fax: 865-689-1534

Copyright © The Society for the Study of Social Problems, SSSP, [www.sssp1.org](http://www.sssp1.org). All rights reserved.