

To: SSSP Board of Directors  
From: Val Leiter, Chair, Bylaws Committee  
Re: Annual Report of the Bylaws Committee  
Date: July 17, 2017

The Bylaws Committee considered six proposed bylaw changes over the past year, four of which addressed the composition of several committees, one of which addressed the duties of the President and Vice President, and the last eliminated pronouns from our organizations bylaws. One amendment addressed technological changes (bringing the bylaws into line with current practices), four were taken on at the request of the board, and the last amendment was proposed by myself as chair of the committee.

I would like to thank my fellow committee members, Héctor Delgado and Tracy Dietz for their quick and helpful work on the committee, and Michele Koontz for her excellent and constructive guidance throughout the process. Their good collegueship and responsiveness made the following policy changes on pp. 1-5 of this report possible.

**The following actions were approved by the board in 2016-2017 and in the general election and are now in effect:**

#### **ARTICLE VI, SECTION 9. Elections Committee**

##### **Current Wording:**

The President in consultation with the Committee on Committees shall nominate a Chairperson of the Elections Committee. In consultation with the Chairperson, the President shall nominate three or more members who reside in the same geographic area as the Chairperson to serve as committee members. The Chairperson and the committee members shall be appointed by the Board of Directors. The Elections Committee itself, as a committee, shall make no nominations. It shall be guided in its actions solely by the nominations it receives from the Nominations Committee and petitions it receives from the membership. Its duties shall be to contact the nominees, supervise the conduct of elections and of referendums on policy and legislation, and to certify the results thereof. (See Article VIII, section 5 for detailed description of duties and activity.) The ways in which such elections and referendums are initiated and held are outlined below in Article VIII.

##### **Proposed Wording:**

The President in consultation with the Committee on Committees shall nominate a Chairperson of the Elections Committee. In consultation with the Chairperson, the President shall nominate three or more members ~~who reside in the same geographic area as the Chairperson~~ to serve as committee members. The Chairperson and the committee members shall be appointed by the Board of Directors. The Elections Committee itself, as a committee, shall make no nominations. It shall be guided in its actions solely by the nominations it receives from the Nominations Committee and

petitions it receives from the membership. Its duties shall be to contact the nominees, supervise the conduct of elections and of referendums on policy and legislation, and to certify the results thereof. (See Article VIII, section 5 for detailed description of duties and activity.) The ways in which such elections and referendums are initiated and held are outlined below in Article VIII.

**Rationale for the change:**

Since all voting is conducted online and we no longer mail election ballots, it is no longer necessary that committee members reside in the same geographic area as the Chairperson.

**ARTICLE VI, SECTION 27. Committee on Social Action**

**Proposed Wording:**

**The Committee on Social Action shall consist of the Vice-President as Chairperson, two Division Chairs selected by the Council of Division Chairpersons at the previous year's meeting, and two members in consultation with the Committee on Committees and appointed by the Board of Directors.**

**Following criteria specified by the Board of Directors, the Committee shall have the responsibility of proposing social actions to the Board such as writing letters and opinion pieces; clarifying and refining resolutions before the resolutions are discussed by the Council of Division Chairs; and exploring ways in which the Society can be more action oriented by connecting with organizations locally, nationally, and globally.**

**Rationale for the proposed wording:**

At the 2015 Board of Directors Meeting, the Board voted to turn the ad hoc committee into a permanent committee in order to devote more attention to more concrete and concerted ways in which the Society can perform social justice work.

**ARTICLE VI, SECTION 28. Kathleen S. Lowney Mentoring Award Committee**

**Proposed Wording:**

**The Kathleen S. Lowney Mentoring Award Committee shall consist of a Chairperson, a Chairperson-elect and two current members of the Teaching Social Problems Division. The Chairperson-elect and other members shall be nominated by the President-Elect in consultation with the Committee on Committees and appointed by the Board of Directors. They shall serve during the President-Elect's term as President. The Chairperson-elect shall serve as a member of the committee during the year prior to becoming the Chairperson.**

**Following criteria specified by the Board of Directors, the Committee shall have the responsibility of identifying an outstanding faculty member or**

**community activist who recognizes the value of quality mentoring relationships between mentor and mentee and/or mentoring programs especially those for undergraduate or graduate students and/or for social activists, particularly for younger scholars and activists. The goals of effective mentoring should include: fostering sensitivity and understanding of significant problems of social life; encouraging understandings of institutional inequalities and strategies for overcoming them; promoting problem centered social research and/or social activism. The award will be given to a scholar, activist, or a program that demonstrates these goals by: creating and implementing innovative mentoring approaches; and/or creating and implementing innovative mentoring programs; and/or involving peers and mentees in publications, grants, and conferences, as well as readily sharing knowledge of such opportunities. Monies for this fund shall come from contributions from members, allocations by the Board of Directors and other sources.**

**Rationale for the proposed wording:**

Members of the Society wish to honor Kathleen S. Lowney by creating a new annual mentoring award in her name that would be given to an outstanding faculty member or community activist who has recognized the value of quality mentoring relationships between mentor and mentee and/or mentoring programs especially those for undergraduate or graduate students and/or for social activists, particularly for younger scholars and activists.

**ARTICLE VI, SECTION 29. Transnational Initiatives Committee**

**Proposed Wording:**

**The Transnational Initiatives Committee shall consist of a Chairperson, a Chairperson-elect and four members, of whom at least two must be international members, each serving three-year staggered terms. In addition to the appointed members the Executive Officer shall serve as an ex officio member.**

**Initially, the Chairperson and one committee member will serve a one-year term; the Chairperson-elect and one committee member will serve a two-year term; and two committee members will serve a three-year term. Thereafter replacements will be appointed as terms expire. Unexpired terms may be filled by appointment by the Board of Directors. The committee members shall serve three-year staggered terms so that at least two members are appointed each year. The President-Elect shall nominate and the Board of Directors shall appoint a Chairperson-elect from among the committee members who have served on the committee at least one-year prior to his or her appointment and who shall serve as Chairperson of the committee during the year that the President-Elect serves as President.**

**Consistent with criteria stipulated in the by-laws governing all standing committees, the Transnational Initiatives Committee shall be reconstituted each year with a turnover membership of at least one-third, and no member may serve on the same committee of the Society, whether by election or appointment, for more than three consecutive years.**

**Following criteria specified by the Board of Directors, the Committee shall have the responsibility of identifying issues, promoting collaboration, proposing courses of action, and/or organizing events and activities that enhance the SSSP membership's understanding of transnational dimensions of social problems, and increase the active participation within the SSSP of scholars, activists, and the association's members and advocates who work and reside beyond the United States and Canada — and especially those who do so in countries outside the global North. Monies for this fund shall be allocated at the discretion of the Board of Directors in consultation with the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee.**

**Rationale for the proposed wording:**

The Transnational Initiatives Committee was formed as an *ad hoc* committee by the Board of Directors in 2011. In light of the important ongoing activity of this *ad hoc* committee, and recognition of the committee's dual purpose of enhancing the SSSP membership's understanding of transnational dimensions of social problems, and increasing the active participation within the SSSP of scholars, activists, and the association's members and advocates who work and reside beyond the United States and Canada — and especially those who do so in countries outside the global North, the Board of Directors proposed at the SSSP Annual Meeting in 2016, held in Seattle, that this *ad hoc* committee be made a standing committee. The Board of Directors also approved funding the Transnational Initiatives Committee for two years at \$4,000 each year.

**ARTICLE IV, SECTION 6. Vice-President and Vice-President-Elect**

**Current Wording:**

The Vice-President and Vice-President-Elect shall serve as voting members of the Board of Directors and other duties as assigned. Order of succession is specified in Section 10 of this Article.

The Vice-President serves as chair of the Resolutions Committee and may appoint others to assist him or her. Two candidates for Vice-President-Elect are provided by the Nominations Committee.

**Proposed Wording:**

The Vice-President and Vice-President-Elect shall serve as voting members of the Board of Directors and other duties as assigned. Order of succession is specified in Section 10 of this Article.

The Vice-President serves as chair of the Resolutions Committee and may appoint others to assist him or her. **In addition, the Vice-President serves as chair of the Committee on Social Action.** Two candidates for Vice-President-Elect are provided by the Nominations Committee.

**Rationale for the proposed wording:**

At the 2015 Board of Directors Meeting, the Board voted to turn the ad hoc committee into a permanent committee and for the Vice-President to serve as chair.

**CHANGE IN PRONOUN USAGE THROUGHOUT THE BY-LAWS**

**Current Wording:**

The existing by-laws use gendered pronouns throughout when referring to individual roles within the Society, including elected and appointed positions. The current usage is as follows:

s/he;  
he/she;  
him or her;  
his or her;  
her/his; and  
his/her.

**Proposed Wording:**

s/he will be changed to “s/he or they”;  
he/she will be changed to “he/she or they”;  
him or her will be changed to “him, her or them”;  
his or her will be changed to “his, her or their”;  
her/his will be changed to “her/his or their”; and  
his/her will be changed to “his/her or their”.

**Rationale for the proposed wording:**

These changes would add non-gendered pronouns to all occurrences of pronouns in the by-laws, using gender-inclusive language, so that all of our members’ gender identities would be represented in the pronouns used.