

To: SSSP Board of Directors

From: Kelly L. Patterson, Chair, Permanent Organization and Strategic Planning Committee (POSPC)

Re: Annual Report of the POSPC

Date: July 11, 2017

The POSPC was charged by the Board of Directors (Board), in consultation with the Administrative and Executive Officers, to explore the advantages and disadvantages of continuing our relationship with the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK). At the 2016 committee meeting, we discussed how to undertake this study and came up with five questions:

- What are the legal implications?
- What are the needs of the organization and what is the best way to meet those needs?
- What is the Society's current relationship with the UTK?
- What are other organizations doing?
- What are the financial implications?

Of these 5 questions, 2 will be answered by other entities. Legal implications will be addressed by our legal counsel and financial implications will be addressed by the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee.

The SSSP Executive Officer presented data to the committee, regarding the recent renewal of a five-year contract with the UTK to host the Administrative Office from 1/1/17 to 12/31/21 as well as describing the organization's relationship with UTK. He also provided detailed information on the fringe benefits of the Administrative Officer, Administrative Assistant, IT Specialist, and half-time Graduate Research Associate (GRA).

The primary question we are exploring is whether or not we will continue our affiliation with UTK and how our decision will impact the Administrative Office staff and GRA. One of the main issues that has come up that will impact our decision is how it will affect Michele's retirement. Michele can retire from UTK after 30 years of creditable service (October 19, 2022). However, since she participated in the TCRS retirement plan for 7 years, unused sick leave can be applied toward her time of service. She currently has 14 months of sick leave. Based on this, she could retire as early as August 2021 from UTK, not from SSSP. As long as she does not work for UTK or other Tennessee state agency after retirement, she can continue to work full-time for SSSP even if we choose to sever our relationship with UTK.

After an engaged discussion, it is clear that we want Michele to have the opportunity to retire from the UTK with full retirement benefits. She can do this if we choose to uphold the contract until 12/21. Therefore, 12/21 is an ideal time to sever our contract with UTK if we choose to do so, and in the interim we can investigate and plan for a transition to a new organizational model.

A new organizational model may include the elimination of the GRA position. Michele has trained, supervised, and mentored 15 graduate students since 1992. The transitioning of students in and out of the GRA position creates an additional workload for Michele. So it has been determined that the administrative work of the Society can be done more efficiently and effectively with a completely professional and more permanent staff. This can be achieved by not affiliating with a university or by affiliating with an institution that does not require a GRA position. In fact, one option we could explore is to remain with UTK with no GRA position and reduce the departmental compensation paid to the Department of Sociology. The final decision will be made by the Board in consultation with Michele.

Other questions were brought up about the credibility/legitimacy of affiliating with a university and the costs to SSSP of severing ties with UTK. After lengthy discussion, we did not see credibility/legitimacy as being an issue since many other reputable organizations have no university affiliations. Additionally, it appears that becoming independent (not affiliating) would be a wash, but we will consult an HR specialist to determine if this is the case in the near future.