

Annual Report to the Budget, Finance and Audit Committee of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, 2017

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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, Rachel Cogburn, Marisa Stone, and Bethany Nelson) 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 understand Michele was not satisfied with the current GRA, and is selecting a replacement. We have tried to be as helpful in that search as possible.

We continue to keep our eyes on increasing costs the Department is paying to house SSSP. As you know, UT Office of Research and Engagement no longer pays for the GRA tuition and fees. Although SSSP at one time included money in the budget that was to be used for additional departmental compensation, that money now goes to pay the SSSP GRA tuition. I tried to renegotiate this issue with SSSP during last contract negotiation, and seek more compensation, but that was unsuccessful. At this point, with increases in tuition we are now paying more than the sum provided for the Department's use by the Society in order to pay the GRA's tuition. The amount the Department devotes to tuition varies with the classload the student assistant takes, but so far this year

we have paid \$11,044, and summer tuition will be at least \$1800. That means that we will be paying at least \$1244 for the GRA tuition out of our own budget, and receiving no money for the Department's use, as was originally intended.

This situation is, quite frankly, unsustainable. I had offered to diminish my own stipend if SSSP was willing to help, but quite honestly I am now unwilling to do so without firm commitment to help by SSSP. I find this situation unfortunate, because as I understand it, SSSP is pulling in more income than it has in the past. The pay for all SSSP employees based in UTK Sociology has increased, so I am mystified at the unwillingness of SSSP to recognize that we need additional money for the GRA. So I am asking for the Society to pay us at least \$1800 that is coming out of our departmental pocket, and to offer a bit more as was originally intended.

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. But the fiscal situation will need some resolution soon, as we will not be able to cover the extra costs incurred by the GRA.