

Society for the Study of Social Problems
Editorial and Publications Committee Report

Rogelio Sáenz, Chair, 2018-2019

August 11, 2019 FINAL

Attendees:

Loretta Bass, David Embrick, Shirley Jackson, Valerie Leiter, Annulla Linders (Co-Editor), Pamela Anne Quiroz (Outgoing Editor), Rogelio Saenz (Chair), A. Javier Treviño, Earl Wright II (Co-Editor)

The Editorial and Publications (E&P) Committee meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. on August 9, 2019. David Embrick and Shirley Jackson are new members of the E&P Committee, with the two outgoing members being Jackie Krasas and Heather MacIndoe.

Summary of 2018-2019 E&P Committee Activities

During 2018-2019, the Committee was engaged in three activities:

1. The Committee provided feedback on the Oxford University Press' 2019 Marketing Plan for *Social Problems*.
2. The Board of Directors charged the Committee with making a recommendation concerning the submission fee and publication fee policies of *Social Problems*. This charge included finding out information about the original purpose and intent of the fees and the particular language in the contract with Oxford University Press pertaining to the fees.
3. The Committee also has responsibility for discussions regarding the next editorship of *Social Problems*.

Report from Annulla Linders and Earl Wright II, *Social Problems* Co-Editor

The Committee received the report from the Co-Editors (Annulla Linders and Earl Wright II) and expressed appreciation for their work and that of their Editorial Team.

The Committee's conversation with Anna and Earl was relatively brief and focused primarily on the rising impact factor of *Social Problems* and the reduction in the time associated with the review process. The Committee again thanked Anna and Earl for their important work and dedication to the journal and for building on the important successes of Pamela Quiroz, the previous editor.

Report from Social Media Committee

The Committee received the report from the Social Media Committee and expressed appreciation for their work and especially that of Trenton Haltom, the Committee chair.

The Committee's conversation with Trenton focused primarily on the significant increase in the presence of the journal and its articles in social media (particularly in Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, as well as the impressive Altmetric scores), the visibility and significance of the virtual issues, and the authors' attic. In addition, there was some discussion of possible ways to increase further the visibility of articles published in earlier volumes of the journal. One of the ways in which such articles are gaining visibility is through their inclusion in the virtual issues. The Committee also recognized the important collaboration between the Social Media Committee and the Oxford University Press marketing section, which is helping increase the presence of the journal and its articles in social media and related sources.

Report from Michael Blong, Brittany Hobson, and Aly Brunson of Oxford University Press

The Committee received the report from the team from Oxford University Press. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the report and the work that OUP is doing to market the journal as well as to increase its usage, visibility, and citations.

The conversation with the OUP team focused on a few areas. For example, there was some discussion of the transition of journals in general, including *Social Problems*, from traditional subscriptions to consortium approaches involving collections and sets of journals by groups of libraries. In addition, there was some discussion on how to make the SSSP membership more aware of the important materials being developed, such as the virtual issues and the authors' attic. Furthermore, there was some discussion on the increasing importance of usage as an indicator for librarians as they make subscription decisions on particular journals. There was also some discussion on the editors of *Social Problems* wanting to see a slight increase in the number of articles published in the journal while maintaining the high quality of the journal associated with an acceptance rate in the 8% range. Michael Blong indicated that OUP would be glad to work with the editors to expand the journal's page budget. Finally, there was a good amount of discussion on open-access with some Committee members expressing concern over the potential for hierarchies or inequalities between institutions with major resources and those with more limited resources along the lines of citations and access of articles in open-access outlets.

Recommendation Regarding *Social Problems* Publishing Fee Policy

The Board of Directors made the following action item for the 2018-2019 E&P Committee:

ACTION: The Board charged the Editorial and Publications Committee with investigating current practices regarding submission and publication fees for academic journals in related academic fields, and requests suggestions for best practices and any potential changes advisable in current policy.

In addition, the E&P Committee was asked to find out the intent and purpose of the submission fee and the publication fee as well as the language of the OUP contract pertaining to fees.

The Committee collected information from the current and previous editors regarding the purpose and intent of the fees. It appears that fees came into existence no later than 2011. While there is no concrete information on the intent and purpose of the fees, it is speculated that

they were instituted to help with administrative-related expenses associated with submissions, to ensure that authors submitted quality manuscripts, and for the generation of funds for SSSP. In addition, Oxford University Press indicates that the existing fees were carried over into the OUP contract and these funds are part of the royalties that SSSP and OUP share.

The Committee also collected information from selected journals (the 13 ASA journals and the top-25 ranked sociology journals based on the Journal Citation Reports) to determine how many of these charge submission fees and publication fees. Of these there are 35 unique journals, including *Social Problems*, used in the analysis. Twelve of the 35 journals charge submission fees with the fee being \$25 except in one case (*American Journal of Sociology* which has a fee of \$30). In addition, only two journals (*Social Problems* and *Socius*) charge publication fees. Yet, the general rule is that all of the journals provide options for open-access publishing and some charge fees for printing color graphics.

The Committee first considered the publication fee. The Committee recognized the following points regarding the journal's publication fee: 1) the amount of publication fees collected is fairly small with the amount being approximately \$600 in a given year; 2) the number of authors that opt to join SSSP rather than pay the publication fee is relatively small (a range of 25 to 32 persons in a given year); 3) there is an administrative burden associated with the payment and processing of the publication fees; and 4) hardly any journals (in the group of journals we examined: only *Social Problems* and *Socius*) charge a publication fee. With these points in mind, Shirley Jackson made the motion that "We dispense with the publication fee." Loretta Bass seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously in support of the motion. The Committee notes that this recommendation will need to be part of the SSSP discussion with OUP concerning the new contract in 2020.

The Committee next considered the submission fee. A couple of points were raised to inform the conversation: 1) the amount of funds generated by the submission fee is substantial (approximately \$7,000 in a given year) and 2) there are numerous journals on the comparison list that charge a submission fee (12 of the 35 on the list). The discussion led to little support for the elimination of the submission fee. However, there is a sense that SSSP should periodically monitor the need for the submission fee.

***Social Problems* Editorship Renewal/Search**

The Committee discussed the next editorship of *Social Problems*. The Committee finds the work of the current editors to be commendable with the journal being in excellent hands. A discussion took place with Anna about the possibility of her and Earl doing a second term as editors of the journal. Anna responded that they believe that "new blood" is very important for any journal, including *Social Problems*. Anna indicated that, in the event of a failed search for a new editorship, she and Earl would be favorable to continue the editorship until an editor(s) could be found. The committee continued its discussion on the editorship of the journal. Shirley Jackson made a motion that "We issue a call for a new editor of *Social Problems*." David Embrick seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The Committee subsequently made minor changes regarding dates and years to the earlier document that was used to conduct the previous call for a new editor (attached).

Election of New E & P Committee Chair

The Committee engaged in a discussion concerning the new Chair of the Editorial and Publications Committee for 2019-2020. Loretta Bass made the motion that "Shirley Jackson become the new Chair of the Editorial and Publications Committee." Pamela Quiroz seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously voted in favor of the motion.

Expected work tasks for the Committee during the upcoming year will focus significantly on conducting the search for the new editorship of *Social Problems*.

The meeting was adjourned as 1:35 p.m.