

EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT - SSSP
Submitted by Hector L. Delgado
July 15, 2019

I wish to begin by thanking the many people in the organization who make it work by working hard and intelligently. First, I would like to thank the Board of Directors. There is just so much we can accomplish at the annual meeting and there is no way to predict what will happen between meetings that requires the Society's attention or comment. Consequently, we have to contact the Board throughout the year on important matters that often require a quick response (and vote) -- and time and time again the Board responds as required. Thank you so much for making our jobs easier and for taking yours so seriously. I also want to thank those of you who serve on committees, and especially those of you who chair committees or lead divisions. Committees and divisions are where a lot of our work gets done and therefore indispensable to the Society.

My thanks as well to Kelsey Arnold who joined us in November of 2018 as our new full-time Assistant to the Administrative Officer. She has already made her presence known. Welcome Kelsey! Rachel Cogburn, now in her third year with the Society, continues not only to do a wonderful job as the Society's IT Specialist, but her wise counsel on a wide range of issues is something Michele and I value tremendously. I want to take this opportunity to thank Caitlin Mize, our outgoing GRA and Webmaster, and to wish her the best always. She served the Society wonderfully during her two years in these capacities and will be missed. We were fortunate, however, to find another talented individual to serve as our new GRA and Webmaster - Zaina Shams. I wish to extend to Zaina the warmest of welcomes.

Last, and never least, there is Michele Koontz, our Administrative Officer and Meeting Manager. No one knows the organization better, no one has done more for the organization, and no one cares more about this organization than Michele. In fact, it's hard to think of one without the other. I simply try to stay out of her way, and when I can, I try to make her life easier. In the process, she has become one of my dearest friends.

Actions

Since the 2018 annual meeting, the Board approved a letter to the President of the United States expressing concerns about the deployment of active duty troops to the U.S.-Mexico border and the denial of asylum eligibility for refugees entering the country outside of an official port of entry. We expressed concerns that both actions would contribute to an already heightened climate of xenophobia in the United States and argued that both actions by the government raised serious questions about our adherence to the law, including international law, and commitment to human rights.

In a separate letter to the President of the United States, the Vice-President, and the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Board expressed opposition to a proposal by the Department of Health and Human Services to define gender as simply female or male, or as a biological, immutable condition determined by genitalia at birth. The letter strongly urged the President not to support proposals that limited the definition of sex or gender, and instead urged him to support the right of individuals to define their own gender identity.

In June of this year, the Board voted in favor of endorsing the National Women's Studies Association's (NWSA) statement in support of reproductive justice. In its statement, the NWSA, a professional association of feminist scholars committed to social justice, expressed its disapproval of the current attacks on reproductive choice and added their voices to the chorus of opposition.

In my capacity as Executive Officer I am called upon from time to time to write letters or to take other actions in response to resolutions approved by the membership at the annual meeting. This past year I wrote two letters. The first addressed the dangers posed by armed police on our university and college campuses - especially with the killings of community members at UC Riverside and Portland State University -- and asked for support in the call to disarm campus police nationwide. The second was a letter urging the President of the United States, leaders in the US Senate and House of Representatives, relevant Committee Chairs, and the Director of the EPA to join us in supporting the Paris Agreement and other measures, such as the *Clean Energy Just Transition Act* and the "100 by 50" Act, designed to promote and provide a rapid and managed just transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, with an emphasis on the social consequences of inaction.

Social Problems

First, let me thank Dr. Pamela Anne Quiroz, the outgoing editor of *Social Problems*, and our new editors, Dr. Annula Linders and Dr. Earl Wright II, for their extraordinary contributions to the journal and Society. I am extremely pleased to report that *Social Problems* is now ranked among the top 20 journals in all of sociology, with an impact factor of 2.789 and an equally impressive 5-year impact factor of 3.435. This is indeed great news for the journal and the Society. My thanks to everyone responsible.

Second, the Board voted to retain Oxford University Press (OUP) as the publisher for *Social Problems*. The Board relied heavily on the work and recommendations of the Editorial and Publications Committee and an ad hoc committee created precisely to determine whether we should retain OUP as the publisher of our flagship journal or to seek bids from other publishers. While the final decision was to continue with OUP for another five years, there were concerns expressed by both committees and Board that the new contract, now under review, is expected to and will address.

Staffing

At the 2018 annual meeting, the Board approved changes in Administrative Office staffing due to the increased workload from higher numbers of divisions, committees, and awards, in addition to increased demands for services by the membership. In addition to the increased workload, the Permanent Organization and Strategic Planning Committee and the Board expressed concerns over the lack of permanent professional staff necessary for cross-training. Consistent with these changes and concerns, the Board approved a new full-time professional position, an Assistant to the Administrative Officer, for the Administrative Office. The creation of this new position resulted in some changes in the relationship between the SSSP and the Department of Sociology at the University of Tennessee – Knoxville (UTK), as the Society would no longer require a graduate research assistant. Consequently, the Board approved a change in what the Society provides in exchange for the department hosting the SSSP Administrative Office and asked me to discuss these proposed changes with the Head of UTK's sociology department.

Beginning in academic year 2019-2020, the Board proposed establishing a SSSP Graduate Assistantship in the Department of Sociology (instead of the SSSP hiring a GRA). The Society would cover the actual cost for a graduate assistant's stipend at the going UTK rate for the level of the graduate assistant (i.e., the same stipend that UTK pays TAs, RAs, or GTAs) for the academic year, plus the cost of an academic year tuition waiver (fall and spring semesters). With this new arrangement a graduate student would be able to engage in research, serve as a teaching assistant, or teach her/his own class, activities that have more potential for marketability than the clerical work now done by the graduate research assistant for the SSSP. This would also eliminate for Michele the time-consuming task of training and mentoring new GRAs as she has done for 15 students over the past 25 years. Also, the Society would continue to pay a stipend to the project director plus fringe benefits. In addition, the Society would provide \$1,000 per year for the department to use as it saw fit. The Head of the department, however, did not agree to this change in the current agreement between the SSSP and UTK. Consequently, we decided to maintain the current arrangement and to revisit the issue at a later time.

Proposals

Resolutions

I will be proposing to the Board that we require a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote for any resolution to be approved by the SSSP membership beginning in 2020. In the past, resolutions have passed overwhelmingly for the most part, but in the event of a resolution on which the membership is divided, I believe that it is important, since it represents the position of the Society, that more than a simple majority of individuals support the resolution.

Program and Other Chairs

From time to time, committees are chaired by co-chairs. This typically meant extra work for the Administrative Office. What we started to do a couple of years ago was to ask one of the co-chairs to be the lead person, i.e., that one of the chairs would be the person with whom Michele and I would communicate principally. What I am proposing is that we formalize that process by adding the appropriate provision in the *Operations Manual*.

Membership Survey

In the fall you will be receiving a membership survey which we hope you will take the time to complete. Five years ago, we conducted a survey and the Board of Directors decided to do a survey every five years to help us determine what we are doing well and not so well. What you think is vitally important to us and to the Society, so we urge you to fill out the survey as honestly and thoroughly as possible when you receive it in the fall.

In Closing ...

I would like to express my gratitude once more to the membership and Board for the privilege of serving as the SSSP's Executive Officer. I retired on July 1, 2019 and I am now a Professor Emeritus (University of La Verne); but decided to continue serving as the Society's Executive Officer, with the Board's approval of course. I was not ready to sever all of my ties with academia and the important work of organizations like this one. Again thank you for this opportunity.