

Report of the 2018-2019 Local Arrangements Committee (LAC)
Annual Meeting Dates: August 9-11, 2019
Location: The Roosevelt Hotel, New York, NY, USA

Final Report Date: July 10, 2019

Chair: Keumjae Park (Professor of Sociology. William Paterson University of New Jersey)

Committee Members:

Nga Than (Doctoral student. Graduate Center, CUNY)

Melanie Lorek (Adjunct Professor. CUNY, and Fordham University)

Sophie Foster-Palmer (Undergraduate student. New York University)

This report, submitted to the Board of Directors of SSSP, describes the activities and decisions by 2018-2019 Local Arrangement Committee.

Tasks Assigned to LAC

The 2018-2019 LAC Committee was asked to fulfill the following responsibilities to assist 2019 Annual Meeting in New York City:

1. Accompany President Nancy Mezey and Meeting Manager Michele Koontz on the 2019 final site visit;
2. Organize wheelchair accessible walking tours for the 2019 annual meeting;
3. Compile a list of local colleges and universities and contact persons to be mailed the meeting promotional material;
4. Write Welcome to New York message and Welcome message for graduate students to be included in the preliminary and final program and published on the annual meeting website;
5. Compile a list of free public events in New York City during the annual meeting period;
6. Provide walking directions between the Roosevelt Hotel and the ASA meeting sites which are Sheraton New York Time Square Hotel and Hilton Hotel Midtown;
7. Assist in the proofreading of the conference programs;
8. Write a Press Release statement for the 2019 annual meeting;
9. Provide a written committee report to the Board meeting in July, 2019.

NOTE: The Board decided that restaurant guides are no longer necessary as there are highly effective smart phone apps available. Therefore, 2018-2019 LAC decided not to create a restaurant guide.

1. Final Site Visit

On Friday, November 9th, 2019, Nancy Mezey, Michele Koontz, and Keumjae Park met with staff at the Roosevelt Hotel for the final site visit. During the site visit, Mezey, Koontz, and Park toured the conference floors, discussed and finalized various logistical issues, and examined accessibility for various meeting spaces. Keumjae Park participated in the meeting with the hotel staff and assisted the President and AO in making decisions on the final details.

After the tour and meeting with the Roosevelt Hotel staff, president Nancy Mezey, AO Michele Koontz, and Keumjae Park reviewed the proposal of walking tour ideas by LAC. The proposal at this time included 6 tour ideas with descriptions of pros and cons for each item. Before putting together the proposal, LAC committee members had discussed various options first during their in-person meeting in Philadelphia in August of 2018, and then via follow-up email communications. Based on the recommendations by the committee members, Keumjae Park spent August, September and October of 2018 researching social justice themes in New York City history, visiting various landmarks in Manhattan, and taking a few commercially available walking tours. New York City offers many areas worthy of walking tours. However, very limited number of subway stations with elevators, narrow/uneven streets in many areas, and heavy pedestrian traffic in the city presented special challenges to people traveling on wheelchairs. First, traveling to and from a potential tour site presented a huge challenge, as none of the tour companies we had contacted offered hotel pick-up services on accessible buses; the walking tour group would have to rely on MTA buses. Second, as Keumjae took part in several walking tour programs in the city, she observed that there frequently were blocks missing curb ramps, with uneven surface, and on-going construction. Due to the significant difficulties with accessibility in this crowded city, we determined that the tours would have to be at a location either walking distance from the hotel, or directly on a MTA bus route which does not require transferring. This condition unfortunately forced us to exclude many landmarks and historical neighborhoods. With these considerations in mind, we decided on two tours: 1) African Burial Ground Monument and Exhibit, and 2) The Grand Central Terminal.

2. Walking Tours

After the tour idea was finalized on November 9th, Keumjae Park contacted relevant organizations that offer walking tours (i.e., the United States Park Service, and Orpheo USA.) and made reservations for group tours for two dates:

- African Burial Ground National Monument
A park ranger guided tour (20 people)
Saturday, August 10 (10am-2pm)
- The Grand Central Terminal
A docent guided tour (25 people)
Sunday, August 11 (10am-12pm)

The African Burial Ground Tour is provided free of charge by the U.S. Park Service. The fees charged to the participants will be used for the round-trip bus tickets and the rest is to be donated to the U.S. Park Service. Keumjae Park rode on the MTA bus #55 from 42nd street bus stop to the downtown site of African Burial Ground to check accessibility; the bus is wheelchair accessible

and the Monument is close to the bus stop, making the transportation fairly accessible. On the day of the tour on August 10, Keumjae Park and graduate student committee member Nga Than will escort the group on #55 bus to and from the Monument.

The Grand Central Tour is to be provided by Orpheo USA which is the official tour company contracted by the MTA Metro-North Railroad. Participants' fees will cover the payment to Orpheo USA. The Grand Central Terminal is walking distance from the conference hotel. Keumjae Park took a dry run of the path from the conference hotel to the Terminal, and determined that the most accessible route was to exit the 45th street entrance of the hotel, turn right onto Vanderbilt Avenue, and walk straight on Vanderbilt to the GCT southwest entrance at the corner of 42nd Street and Vanderbilt Avenue. On August 11, Keumjae Park will lead the group to the Terminal.

3. List of Local Schools

The LAC was asked to create a list of colleges and universities in the region so that AO can send promotional materials for the 2019 Annual Meeting. We decided to cover all 2- and 4-year colleges/universities in the larger New York Metropolitan region and divided it into six sections: 1) New York City 5 boroughs, 2) Upstate NY and Long Island, 3) New Jersey, 4) Connecticut, 5) Eastern Pennsylvania, and 6) Flagship state institutions and very large size universities in MD, RI, and MA. Nga Than created a Google document and compiled the list for New York City. Keumjae Park completed the other sections. The comprehensive list of schools included information for 189 institutions in the Northeast corridor. It was submitted to AO around November 20, 2018.

4. Welcome to New York message and Welcome message for Graduate Students

Keumjae Park (LAC Chair) wrote "Welcome to New York!" for the 2019 Annual Meeting website. It was reviewed and approved by President Nancy Mezey. AO Michele Koontz provided proofreading. It was posted on the meeting website around February 25, 2019 with the help of Caitlin Mize, Graduate Research Associate & Webmaster.

Nga Than, a doctoral student of sociology at the Graduate Center, City University of New York (CUNY), wrote an inviting "Welcome to the Big Apple-the Student Edition" message for students. With the help of Caitlin Mize, Graduate Research Associate & Webmaster, it was published on the conference website around March 5, 2019.

5. List of Free Public Events in New York City

New York offers cultural experiences like no other and there are plenty of free and low-cost activities during August, which SSSP members and family can truly enjoy. President Mezey and AO Koontz had recommended putting together information on public performances and other events in New York city during the conference period. Keumjae Park searched a wide range of Internet resources and compiled a list of notable summer events which included block fairs, movie and performances in public parks, lesser known museums and special exhibitions, landmarks and parks outside Manhattan. The list was posted in late January of 2019 on the Annual Meeting webpage under the link, "Public Summer Events in New York City." The information has been updated in March and in July, 2019. Because accessibility varied widely depending on the site, and the webpage informed the members to individually check accessibility

at these events and locations; for this purpose, links to each event/location were provided on the webpage.

6. Directions between SSSP Meeting and ASA Hotels

Walking directions between the SSSP conference hotel and the two ASA conference hotels were created by Keumjae Park using Google map information. It was forwarded to AO around February 22, 2019. Keumjae Park confirmed the route by walking it in person on April 10, 2019. The route was generally accessible. While there were a few spots with construction activities, bumpy surface, and heavier volume of pedestrian traffic, these were judged to be avoided by taking the other side of the street. For people seeking accessible public transportation, the walking directions webpage also included directions using MTA buses.

7. Proofreading of the Conference Programs

LAC Chair Keumjae Park participated in the review and proofreading of the preliminary conference program in May, 2019 and will proofread the final conference program later this month.

8. Press Release

Keumjae Park wrote a press release statement to be forwarded to local news outlets in early July 2019. The statement was reviewed by the President and AO, and approved by President Mezey with small revisions. The Press Release statement is to provide information about SSSP and its Annual Meeting in August to New York City public audience. In addition, a list of local media outlets, including online and print newspapers, radio stations, and TV channels, was compiled by Keumjae Park and Nga Than.

9. The 2018-2019 Local Arrangement Committee Final Report to the Board

A final report was written and shared with the 2018-2019 Board members around July 10, 2019. The report is to be presented in person to the Board on August 8, 2019.

10. Acknowledgments

LAC chair Keumjae Park wishes to thank committee member Nga Than (a graduate student at the Graduate Center, CUNY) who has been particularly helpful during this year. The Local Arrangement Committee also express special thanks to Administrative Officer Michele Koontz and Caitlin Mize for their suggestions, feedback, and always prompt and reliable help. We appreciate 2018-2019 President Nancy Mezey's guidance and feedback on all of our work this year.

Respectfully submitted,

Keumjae Park
Chair, 2018-2019 Local Arrangement Committee