

July 19, 2019

To: SSSP Board of Directors

From: E. Brooke Kelly, Chair

SSSP 2019 Annual Meeting Program Committee

Re: SSSP Program Committee Report 2019

Theme: Illuminating the SOCIAL in Social Problems

I have enjoyed serving as the Program Chair at the request of President Nancy J. Mezey. As stated in her program statement, the theme of the 2019 conference—Illuminating the SOCIAL in Social Problems—is inspired by the work of the late Allan G. Johnson and “a call for social justice theorists, empiricists, practitioners, activists, policy makers, and analysts, to draw deeply and widely on sociological teachings to illuminate the social in all aspects of social problems.”

Since this is my first time serving as Program Chair, it has been a learning experience for me. Michele Koontz, Administrative Officer and Meeting Manager, and Kelsey Arnold, Assistant to the Administrative Officer, have made the job so much easier. I cannot stress enough how pivotal Michele is to making the program, and arguably SSSP, come together smoothly, and she always does it with such patience, kindness, and grace. Throughout this year, I have heard the same sentiments and gratitude echoed by others as well. I would also like to acknowledge and thank Héctor Delgado, Executive Officer; Rachel Cogburn, IT Specialist; and Caitlin Mize, Graduate Research Associate and Webmaster. They did important work behind the scenes to make this year’s conference possible. I am also grateful to the Program Committee: Yvonne M. Luna (Northern Arizona University), Derron O. Wallace (Brandeis University), and Stephani Williams (Northern Arizona University).

The local arrangements committee, chaired by Keumjae Park (William Paterson University), was also helpful. I am grateful to last year’s Program Committee Chair, A. Javier Treviño (Wheaton College), for his encouragement and sharing his expertise with me at the meeting in Philadelphia. Lastly, I thank Kristen M. Budd, Chairperson, Council of Divisions, and the chairs of the various divisions for sponsoring thematic sessions and offering their own engaging sessions in the spirit of this year’s program theme.

Based on Michele Koontz most recent information on this year’s SSSP program from the online session management system, there were originally 857 papers submitted on January 31, 2019. As of July 19, 2019, there were a total of 727 papers submitted using the online submission process and 52 papers added by session organizers for a total of 779 conference papers. At this point, there are 996 registrants for this year’s conference. A total of 44 program participants were removed from the program for failing to register despite numerous reminders. Currently, there are 168 sessions on the program. Four sessions were cancelled. In total, there are 2 plenary sessions, 38 thematic sessions, and 7 special sessions. There were 68 sessions that were co-sponsored.

The program continued a session initiated last year by former Chair of the Program Committee, A. Javier Treviño, and Sarah A. St. John: “Networking Event: Interdisciplinary Collaboration for Publishing.” Other notable offerings included, “New Directions in Theory and Research among Advanced Undergraduates,” organized by Chris Wellin, and “The Academic Job Market,” organized by Héctor L. Delgado. Some of the thematic sessions included, “Illuminating Social Problems Through Art,” organized by Johanna Foster,

and “Illuminating Micro-Aggressions,” organized by Stephani Williams. President Nancy J. Mezey organized a session, “Presidential Perspectives on Current Social Problems.” Other sessions organized by members of the Program Committee include, “Comparative and International Perspectives on the Black Middle Class,” organized by Derron Wallace and “Immigrant Youth: The Social Facets of Being (Un)American,” organized by Yvonne M. Luna and Jennifer K. Wesely.

The Program Committee arranged two film screenings: “Voices of the Lumbee,” a documentary film that tells the story of economically depressed Robeson County, North Carolina, home of the Lumbee Tribe, the largest non-federally recognized American Indian tribe in the U.S. The film maker, Michele Fazio, will lead a discussion after the film’s screening. “America; I Too” follows the stories of three arrested and detained undocumented immigrants who must navigate the Immigration Courts system to fight impending deportation. Writer and Director Anike L. Tourse will lead a discussion following the film. Two one-day workshops were offered on Community-Based Participatory Action Research and Institutional Ethnography.

In closing, I would like to bring 3 topics to the Board of Directors for consideration.

1. Limit the number of co-author papers: Currently, there is no limit to the number of co-authored papers that one individual can have on the program. Creating a program without scheduling conflicts becomes challenging, especially when individuals with multiple co-authored papers also have other roles, such as division chair, serving in an elected and/or appointed position/s, and presenting a sole-authored paper/s. I request that the Board discuss the possibility of placing a limit on the number of co-authored papers.

2. Designate Presiders in Critical Dialogue Sessions as Presider and Discussant: Currently, there are three roles designated for participation in sessions: organizer, presider, and discussant. Presiders are defined as follows and essentially are tasked with keeping track of time for the session.

Presider: Presiders ensure that sessions run smoothly. Presiders make sure that session participants stay within their allotted time. Sessions last 1 hour and 40 minutes, unless noted otherwise. Presiders should alert the session participants to how long they will have to present their papers and make sure they provide materials to discussants whenever one is on your session prior to the Annual Meeting. Presiders should remember to leave time for questions and answers at the end of the session. We recommend that presiders bring index cards to sessions that indicate how much longer the session participant has left within their allotted time (i.e. cards that read 5 minutes, 2 minutes, and 0 (zero)). To encourage broad participation during the open discuss period, presiders should be careful not to let an audience member excessively monopolize the time by essentially making their own ad hoc presentation.

In critical dialogue sessions, the role of presider differs from this description and is currently specified in the description of the critical dialogue session:

Critical Dialogue Sessions: This format includes short (5 minute) presentations by up to 8 authors followed by facilitated dialogue that critically explores connections among the papers. The audience will have an opportunity to participate in the dialogue as well. Emphasis is placed on exploring interesting connections between papers with a broadly similar theme. The hope is that both presenters and the audience will have an opportunity to make new and deeper connections from their own unique insights and presented ideas. **The presider has an important**

role of moderating and facilitating the dialogue, while being sure that presentation times are followed.

In a critical dialogue, the presider serves more than the regular role of presider (keeping track of time). Per the description above, they are really serving as both a presider and a discussant (described below):

Discussant: Discussants should remember that their tasks are both to reflect on the papers or summaries you should have received prior to the session, and to lead the subsequent discussion by raising interesting points or asking questions gleaned from the presentations. It would be a good idea for each discussant to contact your presenters to make sure you receive some written material prior to the conference, so you have more time to prepare your remarks.

In order to clarify what's expected of the person presiding over and facilitating discussion of the critical dialogue session, I respectfully ask the board to consider and discuss designating that role as **presider and discussant**. Such a designation could help clarify this role for the Critical Dialogue session. It would not conflict with the current explanations of presider and discussant. It could also provide those fulfilling this role with more legitimacy when they list the task on their CV.

3. Removing Individuals from Program Earlier for Non-Payment: As Program Chair, I was amazed at how very many reminders individuals were given about their failure to register by the deadline for program participants and how little effect the reminders seemed to have. For example, this year there were 47 people on the list who hadn't yet registered by the deadline. Eight reminders went out to each of them. Despite all of those reminders, all but two of them were eventually removed from the program for not registering anyway. According to SSSP guidelines, Michele Koontz is only required to send out three reminders, but the practice has been to send out more than twice that number. If fewer reminders were sent out, then cuts to the program could be made earlier, in mid-June, for example, instead of early July. Doing so could make it easier for the Program Committee to reorganize the program and may help produce a cleaner program. (When individuals are dropped from the program later, this leaves sessions with less than the required number of papers, and it gets more challenging to redistribute papers and/or combine sessions as the meeting approaches.) Such a change doesn't necessitate a policy change. However, Michele and I discussed it and wished to bring it to the board for discussion and feedback.