

## SSSP: 2019 Membership Survey Results Announced

November 8, 2019

Dear Members,

Five years ago, the Board of Directors voted to conduct a membership survey every five years to assess how well the SSSP was meeting the needs of its members. [Click here](#) to view the results of the most recent survey. First, our thanks to those of you who completed the survey. Your views are of paramount importance to us, and in this cover memo I will address some of them. First, however, I want to thank the administrative office, led by Michele Koontz, for the amazing work, recognized by the membership, that they do day in and day out. We were heartened by the fact that only 4% expressed dissatisfaction with membership benefits, 93% of members planned to renew their membership, and 92% of members said they would recommend the organization to others. Despite the high marks, however, I will focus principally on areas or issues in which some members expressed disappointment/concerns or feel we need to improve.

Let me begin with the resolution on the rights of Palestinian scholars in Israel. The resolution was narrowly defeated. Several members expressed frustration or disappointment either with the voting process or the fact that a social justice organization chose not to support a resolution in support of academic freedom for Palestinian scholars. Regarding the process, the Board created an ad hoc committee to examine the current process, and to modify if necessary, to ensure that it is as fair as possible. Regarding the second point, I want to share with you portions of conversations I had with members who voted *against* the resolution. Several condemned what was happening to Palestinian scholars in Israel, and in that respect supported the resolution, but they did not believe that the correct action by the Society was a universal boycott of Israeli institutions of higher education or academic boycotts in general. Others who condemned the treatment of Palestinians outlined in the resolution had yet other reasons for not voting for the resolution. I am not addressing this here to reignite a debate on the issue, but rather to note that the defeat of the resolution was more nuanced than simply a failure to support Palestinian scholars in Israel.

Another issue that came up, which we hope to address, is whether we are doing enough to keep members apprised of job opportunities in a timely manner. According to a few members, providing mentoring and professional development advice are areas in which we need to improve as well. There were some who believed that divisions were not active enough and could do a better job of communicating and involving members. (I should note, however, that some division chairs are disheartened by the lack of participation by their division members.) Related to this, were some concerns about

whether we are doing a sufficiently good job of responding to individuals who wish to volunteer and informing members of the benefits of membership.

One other area identified by a couple of members, and which we will take another look at, is the difficulty for new members to meet people in the organization. One individual characterized the organization as “cliquish,” observing that at receptions people tend to talk with people they know. The new member breakfast is one way in which we try to address this issue, but we will think about other ways to address it – and are of course open to suggestions. Others expressed concern about the cost of being a member and attending annual meetings. We want to assure you, that we, i.e., the Executive Officer, the Administrative Office, the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee, and the Board of Directors, always strive to keep costs down.

Finally, there were some members who believe that we as an organization should be more action oriented – beyond the occasional letters and resolutions. Toward that end we are in the process of developing two new pages on our website. One is on Human Rights, where we hope to provide individuals with ways in which they can address issues of human rights, either through their research, or through direct action, and with opportunities for the Society to act. The Society is an active member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Science and Human Rights Coalition, along with 25 other organizations. The AAAS has resources and expertise that should prove invaluable to us. The other page we hope to create is a vehicle to inform and solicit support from members on issues that require quick action. We are in the initial stages of developing both, so we are open to suggestions, as we are to other ways in which the Society can engage in more direct action.

Please feel free to contact me directly should you have any questions or concerns, [hector.delgado49@gmail.com](mailto:hector.delgado49@gmail.com). If your concerns require anonymity or confidentiality, I am happy to provide both.

Most sincerely,



Héctor L. Delgado, Ph.D.  
Executive Officer  
[hector.delgado49@gmail.com](mailto:hector.delgado49@gmail.com)

2019 Membership Survey Results:

[https://www.sssp1.org/file/2019\\_Membership\\_Survey\\_Results.pdf](https://www.sssp1.org/file/2019_Membership_Survey_Results.pdf)