

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEETING MANAGER

Michele Koontz

July 19, 2021

I. 2021 IN-PERSON ANNUAL MEETING CANCELLATION

On November 23, 2020, the Board of Directors cancelled the 2021 In-Person Annual Meeting, and moved to an all-virtual annual meeting in light of the American Sociological Association's cancellation of their in-person meeting and given their concern for our member's health and safety. This move was facilitated by the fact that we were planning for a hybrid meeting, with both in-person and virtual sessions.

The Board approved contracting with "Pathable" as the platform for the virtual annual meeting on February 12, 2021. The platform provides pathways for communication and encourages engagement through small-group sessions, small group private meetings, virtual breakout rooms, webinars, private messaging, and chat features. There will be several free unprogrammed timeslots with live video meetings (Zoom links) for those who want to use them. Using the small group private meetings, registrants will be able to invite other registrants and schedule live video meetings throughout the conference. These meetings can be one on one or with up to 30 meeting participants.

We are very fortunate to have Rachel Cogburn as our IT Specialist, as she took the lead in guiding the Board as we navigated the uncharted waters of planning a virtual annual meeting. She has worked tirelessly to assure that this meeting is a huge success. We are indebted to her for her efforts.

II. 2021 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Membership numbers are down ~ 7.24% (136 members) if you look at the 2019+ membership from one year ago compared to today's 2020+ membership.

July 19, 2021

2021+: 1,467

2020: 412

Total: 1,879

July 17, 2020

2020+: 1,099

2019: 916

Total: 2,015

Current membership (2021+: 1,467) is higher than current membership was one year ago, but 2019 members are not renewing like we have seen in the past. We are seeing a higher percentage of members renew from 2018 and earlier as well as first time memberships.

III. 2021 VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING REGISTRATION

In an effort to increase attendance by keeping registration rates low, the Board of Directors approved the virtual annual meeting registration rates as follows: an early bird registration rate of \$95 for members and \$40 for students/underemployed/emeritus members (valid until June 1); pre-registration of \$110 for members and \$50 for student/underemployed/emeritus members (valid from June 2-August 3); and same-day registration of \$125 for members and \$50 for students/underemployed/emeritus members (valid from August 4-7).

I am pleased to report that 769 attendees have registered for the virtual annual meeting. Of those registered, 380 (49%) are professionals, 362 (47%) are students/unemployed/emeritus, and 27 (4%) are exempt from paying meeting registration. Previous years' attendance (at the time of my report) was 120 in 2020 (1/2-day complimentary virtual annual meeting), 995 in 2019 (New York City), 905 in 2018 (Philadelphia), 1,018 in 2017 (Montreal), 913 in 2016 (Seattle); 916 in 2015 (Chicago); and 807 in 2014 (San Francisco).

Over four days from August 4-August 7, we have 123 sessions scheduled with 466 papers, 55 panelists, 5 critics, and 8 plenary speakers. Several of these events will occur at night (3 Film Exhibits, An Evening of Book Panels, After Talk Social Gathering, and Poetic Justice: Poetry Slam & Open Mic Night). Prior to the 2020 Annual Meeting cancellation, there were 154 sessions scheduled with 752 papers, 50 panelists, 11 critics, 3 workshop facilitators, and 1 plenary speaker. At our last in-person meeting (2019), we had 168 sessions scheduled with 773 papers, 46 panelists, 3 workshop facilitators, and 1 plenary speaker.

IV. ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES

SSSP continues to take steps to meet the needs of our attendees with disabilities. Written guidelines were posted on our website and distributed to all program participants to urge and assist them to be increasingly creative and conscientious in their inclusiveness. The guidelines emphasize accessible presentations, visual materials, captioning, sign and voice interpreting, video and audio, and discussions.

Attendees were invited to request accessibility services to facilitate their full participation in the annual meeting. Two registrants completed the accessibility services section when registering, but did not request any accessibility services.

All sessions and evening activities (with the exception of film exhibits) will take place in the Zoom platform. Each Zoom meeting host will have the option to provide live automated speech recognition (English only) displayed in closed captioning that participants can choose to view.

Since 2010, members and meeting registrants have been able to donate to the Accessibility Services Fund when they register. This year, contributions of \$360 were received (\$0 in 2020; \$305 in 2019; \$440 in 2018; \$470 in 2017; \$310 in 2016; \$270 in 2015; and \$275 in 2014). This money is deposited in a separate savings account (available balance: \$8,489).

V. VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING EXEMPTION POLICY

Twenty-seven annual meeting exemptions were requested and granted this year (0 in 2020, 23 in 2019; 35 in 2018; 24 in 2017; 38 in 2016; 22 in 2015; and 15 in 2014).

Current Exemption Policy:

All virtual session participants (except for those listed under “b” below) must be current members (they may join on acceptance of their presentation) of the Society and must register for the annual meeting by June 1. Persons failing to register by June 1 will have their presentations deleted from the program.

All exemption requests must be submitted by May 15. Note: This year, foreign scholar exemption requests were considered by the Transnational Initiatives Committee. Exemptions from paying registration fees will be considered for:

- a. Non-students who are unemployed and/or receiving monthly financial assistance to meet living expenses may request a waiver of registration fees to participate on the program;
- b. Individuals from community, labor, and comparable organizations working on social problems or social justice issues who have been invited to serve on a panel or to make a presentation;
- c. Co-authors of papers who will not be attending the meeting. One of the co-authors must be a paid registrant. Both co-authors must pay if both expect to attend the meeting; or
- d. Persons excused by direct request of the Program Co-Chairs

VI. VIRTUAL AWARDS CEREMONY

The Virtual Awards Ceremony will include the presentations of the annual SSSP awards (Arlene Kaplan Daniels Paper Award, Beth B. Hess Memorial Scholarship, C. Wright Mills Award, Doris Wilkinson

Faculty Leadership Award, Indigenous Peoples' Social Justice Award, Joseph B. Gittler Award, Kathleen S. Lowney Mentoring Award, Lee Founders Award, Racial/Ethnic Minority Graduate Fellowship, and the Thomas C. Hood Social Action Award) and the Student Paper Competition winners.

Each student paper competition winner, all major award winners and honorable mentions, and all Mills' finalists were mailed a plaque earlier this month. These individuals will be acknowledged in a slideshow presentation on our website. In addition, an abstract of each student's winning paper will be posted on our website along with their contact information.

Each student paper winner received complimentary student membership and meeting registration (courtesy of SSSP) and a monetary stipend (courtesy of their division). It is the Division Chair's responsibility to recognize their winners, honorable mentions, and outstanding scholarship award winners at their virtual divisional business meeting, in their division newsletter, and on their division's social media accounts. Division Chairs are responsible for obtaining plaques for their honorable mentions or outstanding scholarship award winners, if desired.

VII. BOOK EXHIBIT

The Scholar's Choice will again be organizing and managing our book exhibit without cost to the Society. Members interested in having their book displayed were instructed to contact their publisher. Please keep in mind that the publishers pay a fee to display with The Scholar's Choice and may not have the marketing budget necessary to honor all requests, particularly for older titles.

Bristol University Press, and its imprint Policy Press, publisher of *Social Problems in the Age of COVID-19 Volume 1: US Perspectives and Volume 2: Global Perspectives*, *Agenda for Social Justice: Solutions for 2020*, and the *Global Agenda for Social Justice* will be exhibiting again this year. All Sociology books will be offered at a 50% discount for the duration of the virtual annual meeting.

VIII. OPTIONAL ONE-DAY VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS

On Tuesday, August 3, two virtual workshops will take place.

Community-Based Participatory Action Research Workshop

(Sponsored by the Community Research and Development Division)

8:45am–4:30pm (Eastern Time)

22 registrants paid \$75 and 29 registrants paid \$25 (Total 51 registrants paid: \$2,375)

Advancing Activist Scholarship and Engaged Pedagogy in Promotion and Tenure Workshop

(Sponsored by President Corey Dolgon)

1:00pm–4:00pm (Eastern Time)

10 registrants paid \$10 (Total paid: \$100)

On Sunday, August 8, one virtual workshop will take place.

Social Impact <-> Social Change: Storytelling Workshop

(Sponsored by President Corey Dolgon)

1:00pm–4:00pm (Eastern Time)

50 registrants paid \$10 (Total paid: \$500)

Institutional Ethnography Workshop – Cancelled on 7/14

(Sponsored by the Institutional Ethnography Division)

IX. REGISTRATION REMINDERS

At the 2014 Annual Meeting, the Board of Directors approved a policy that program participants will be dropped from the Annual Meeting program, if they do not register by June 1 of that year. The Board requests that program participants receive at least three notices prior to the June 1 deadline for registration.

The Administrative Office sent four targeted e-mail reminders to program participants and asked session organizers to contact their participants who had not registered and urge them to register. In addition, Program Co-Chairs Saher Selod and Woody Doane sent two e-mails urging program participants to register. Prior to removing those who didn't register, I sent a targeted e-mail reminder and a personalized e-mail to the paper author(s) and the session organizer(s). On July 6, a total of 19 program participants were removed for failure to register despite multiple reminders. In 2019, a total of 45 program participants were removed from the program.

X. SPONSORS

A special thanks to our sponsors for their financial contributions to program activities: Association for Humanist Sociology; Bristol University Press | Home of Policy Press; *Critical Sociology*; Oxford University Press; and Stonehill College, Tom & Donna May School of Arts & Sciences.

XI. 2022 ANNUAL MEETING FORMAT

The Board of Directors discussed the format for next year's meeting (in-person only, virtual-only, or hybrid) and approved an in-person only format. Each Division can propose three Division-sponsored sessions and no more than seven co-sponsored sessions.

XII. CLOSING COMMENTS

I was very fortunate to work with President Corey Dolgon; Program Co-Chairs Saher Selod and Woody Doane; Executive Officer Héctor L. Delgado; Assistant to the Administrative Officer Kelsey Whitaker; Information Technology Specialist Rachel Cogburn; and Graduate Research Associate and Webmaster Zaina Shams. I am grateful for their invaluable contributions, as we navigated the virtual world. I can't say enough about their hard work and dedication to the Society.

Finally, I would like to thank you, the Board of Directors, for giving me another opportunity to serve as meeting manager. It has been a privilege to work alongside you this year. On October 19, I will celebrate my twenty-ninth anniversary with SSSP. I have been blessed to serve the organization under the guidance of many outstanding leaders.

ACTION ITEMS FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS' CONSIDERATION

- A. Require session organizers to submit a session description for each session.
In order to attract attendees to sessions, it is advantageous that a brief session description be included. The description should provide an overview of the session, highlight the theme or overall message, and be kept to 1,200 characters or less.
- B. Continue offering Early Bird Registration at future annual meetings.
If approved, Michele will work with the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee to determine the registration rates and bring them to the Board for final approval.