



THE UNIVERSITY OF
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KNOXVILLE

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Annual Report to the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, 2021

Stephanie Bohon
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The Department of Sociology at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville and the Society for the Study of Social Problems has enjoyed a long and productive relationship. We are pleased that we have been the home of the Executive Office since 1990 and remain the home of the Administrative Office. Most of our faculty and graduate students are members of SSSP, and several of our faculty have served on a variety of SSSP committee positions over the years. We attend the society's yearly conference, and several of us have published in *Social Problems*. (In fact, as I write this, one of our faculty have a forthcoming paper in this journal.) This year I serve as President of the Southern Sociological Society, and I look forward to continuing our work with SSSP to emulate your society's harassment model. I support the relationship between UTK Sociology and SSSP without reservation.

I became Head of the Department of Sociology on August 1, 2020, replacing long-term Head and SSSP Project Director, Jon Shefner. Jon remained on as SSSP Project Director until Spring 2021. In January, our senior departmental administrative assistant, Nancy Loftis, retired and was replaced by Jill Baker as Business Manager. We are currently working to hire another administrative assistant to fill Jill's role that was vacated with her promotion. Jill and I are both new, and we have made some mistakes and will probably make some more, but we hope not to make any of the same mistakes twice. Also, despite these changes, my work with Michele Koontz and Héctor Delgado, to date, has been positive and productive, and we anticipate that this will continue with a new front office.

Other transitions are occurring as I write this report. First, Michele, Hector, and I have been working with the UT administration to negotiate the 2022-2026 contract. Second (and related), UT is transitioning to a new budget model. This new model has created some complications about the uncertainty of cash flows under the new model as well as the need to cost account for some items that previously were not given a value (such as office space) which has complicated cost share. All of this is further complicated by the financial uncertainties generated by COVID. Despite this, negotiations appear to be moving forward, and we are quite hopeful that they will continue smoothly. One item that Jill and I have asked for from SSSP is the provision of tuition for the graduate assistant in lieu of a direct payment to the Department (which is, then, used to pay tuition). Such a change will reduce the administrative burden of shifting funds. Third, the University of Tennessee reclassified all staff, which placed the three UT staff members funded by the SSSP contract with UT into greater salary ranges. We are hoping to use the contract negotiation process to shift more of the money received by your staff into salary, reducing the amount paid directly by SSSP.

The Department of Sociology is grateful to SSSP for providing support for a graduate student by funding a SSSP graduate research assistant. We evaluate graduate students

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annually, and I am pleased to report that Zaina Shams is progressing on track and is scheduled to defend her master's thesis this summer. She is continuing in our PhD program and has committed to continue to work for SSSP. We are delighted with her progress and pleased that SSSP is satisfied with her work products. One item that I would like to work through with Michele is a way to allow Zaina to get some classroom teaching experience prior to completing her doctorate. Generally, this is not a problem, because students on 20 hour/week assistantships are allowed to work 40 hours/week during summers (in other words, they can work two simultaneous 20 hour/week jobs). In the past, we have been able to give SSSP GRAs like Lisa East, Sarah Henricks, and Douglas Oeser summer teaching opportunities, and that has not interfered with their SSSP assistantships. However, because Zaina is on a visa, her work hours are limited. This is not a problem we need to resolve now, but to ensure Zaina's marketability when she completes her PhD, we need to develop a solution over the next year. I look forward to working with Michele and Hector on this.

Although there are many changes to which we will have to adjust, I appreciate this opportunity to work more closely with SSSP and continue a relationship that has been mutually supportive.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephanie A. Bohon', written in a cursive style.

Stephanie A. Bohon
Department Head