



Society for the Study of Social Problems

In Pursuit of Social Justice

Presentation to the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP) Board of Directors
Budget, Finance, and Audit (BFA) Committee Report
August 11, 2021

On July 13, 2021 and August 3, 2021, the BFA Committee met virtually to discuss the proposed budget for the Society for the 2022 calendar year. The Society has seen the negative financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic largely through the cancellation of the last two in-person annual meetings and a corresponding decline in membership and membership dues revenue resulting in a projected budgeted net loss of \$ 225,547 for 2022. Nonetheless, continued strong performance of *Social Problems* and related earnings, as well as a well-balanced financial portfolio and significant cash reserves have enabled the Society to remain financially solvent.

In discussing the 2022 budget and 2022 annual meeting, the BFA came up with a number of recommendations that we would like the Board of Directors to consider. These recommendations are based on the fiduciary responsibility of the Board of Directors to utilize SSSP resources in alignment with the priorities and purpose of the Society. The recommendations are as follows:

- To renegotiate the contract with the hotel for 2022, the Society will be required to give up some meeting room space. In turn, there will need to be a reduction in the number of overall sessions and/or limiting the number of other meetings that require space. Accordingly, the BFA committee recommends holding committee meetings and divisional business meetings virtually in advance of the meeting. Not only does this save money, it eliminates the concerns of committees meeting in rooms that are less desirable, allows for more accessible meetings, and frees up committee members during the annual meeting to participate in more sessions. We think the Board of Directors should also consider conducting some or all of their meetings virtually for the same reasons.
- A second recommendation to address the possibility of reduced meeting space is to change the current policy of limiting submissions to four submissions per person (one sole-authored, two co-authored, and one sole-authored critical dialogue). We recommend the board limit the number of submissions to two per person, regardless of submission type. While we recognize limiting submissions in this way this could be a concern for graduate students on the job market or assistant professors working toward promotion and tenure, we noted that most high-quality submissions are accepted at the

SSSP annual meeting, so those individuals could still do two presentations at the annual meeting that would be worthy of adding to their curriculum vita.

- We discussed having an opening plenary (as we are doing for the 2021 annual meeting) and the related consequences in terms of its impact on the number of sessions available for the annual meeting. The BFA does not recommend creating an opening plenary as there is no precedent for this in our Society aside from the 2021 virtual Annual Meeting.
- In negotiating with the hotels, the BFA recommends prioritizing keeping the lactation and comfort rooms. While we understand this may involve more cost, we believe these expenses would align with the SSSP priorities.
- The SSSP administrative office shared a proposed Early Bird Registration Rate schedule for the 2022 annual meeting, with \$ 10 discounts for members and student members if they register by June 1. The BFA Committee recommends adopting this Early Bird Registration Rate to incentivize early registration and help get a better sense for attendance and related revenue estimates for the annual meeting.
- We discussed the future of the budget items for the Executive Officer (EO), given that the current EO's resignation is effective after the 2022 annual meeting. As it is currently structured, the EO is paid 20% of their salary at their primary employer; this is not consistent with how the Society pays its other staff, who are paid based on their position responsibilities. Accordingly, since the new EO will be doing the same work as the current EO and should not be penalized if their primary occupation offers a lower wage, we recommend a set compensation structure for the EO that is not dependent on the salary of their primary occupation and that is similar in amount to the current compensation. Specifically, we recommend, as reflected in the 2022 budget, a salary of \$ 25,000 with 25% (\$ 6,250) budgeted for fringe benefits. Additionally, if the next EO requires a course buyout, we recommend budgeting a buyout in an amount not to exceed \$ 7,500 for a course buyout (consistent with the course buyout payment to the editors of *Social Problems*). Under the accounting principle of conservatism, we've included the \$ 7,500 in the 2022 budget.

There was some collective discomfort among the BFA Committee in submitting a proposed budget with a loss this substantial to the Board, however, given the strong financial position of the Society (with over \$ 1,000,000 in reserves), the unprecedented circumstances of the global pandemic, the fact this proposed budget is quite lean as a result of the BFA Committee's diligent efforts to reduce costs, and a lower budget deficit than what was originally projected, we submit this budget to the Board. The BFA has consistently worked to reduce costs in the last few years, and additional reductions in expenses will become increasingly painful as our largest remaining expenses are related to the salaries and fringe benefits of the SSSP Executive Officer and administrative staff; we strongly recommend focusing efforts on increasing revenues. While the significant cash reserves exist to allow us to weather financial storms like the one we are currently in, we caution that continued losses of this magnitude can not be sustained. The BFA

supports the idea that the budget should reflect the priorities of the Society, and difficult decisions will be required of the Board of Directors if these substantial deficits continue.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David J. Luke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" being the most prominent.

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