

2021-2022 Society for the Study of Social Problems
Annual Report from the Membership and Outreach Committee

July 8, 2022

Chair: Janelle M. Pham, Oglethorpe University (2021-2022)

Members: Alessandra Bazo Vienrich (2020-2022); Amaka Camille Okechukwu (2020-2023); Cynthia Baiqing Zhang (2020-2023); Andrea D. Miller (2021-2024); Morena Tartari (2021-2024); Martin Jacinto, Student Representative (2020-2023); Greer Ayanna Hamilton, Student Representative (2021-2024)

As of June 30th, 2022, the following three divisions of SSSP are the largest in terms of membership (2021+):

Racial and Ethnic Minorities – 550 members
Poverty, Class and Inequality – 335 members
Conflict, Social Action and Change – 278 members

Promotional Efforts, as of July 8th, 2022:

Members of the Membership and Outreach Committee recognize the challenges the Society faces in rebounding from the pandemic, to include dips in membership and conference attendance. The Committee's charge of connecting with current and potential members through social media outlets continued this year. Committee members contributed monthly social media blasts for posting on Facebook and Twitter. The substance of these posts varied from highlights of current social problems to announcements regarding annual meeting registration. As of July 6th, 2022, the SSSP Facebook page had 4,592 followers and 4,449 "likes." It should be noted that the number of followers of the SSSP Facebook page is the same as it was for the 2020-2021 report.

The Society continues to promote membership through varied outlets, with minimal cost. As of June 30, 2022, \$81.60 in postage was spent to mail out 286 brochures – these efforts, however, did not yield any members. In addition to \$255.78 in webpage design fees, the Society spent \$337.38 this year in promotional expenses, with a total yield of 212 members, with a net promotional revenue of \$15,299.62.

Reports reveal that targeted email blasts are successful means of generating membership. On January 10, 2022, targeted emails were sent to current graduate and undergraduate student members, directors of graduate studies programs, and "renew and recruit" announcements to 2021+ members (not including graduate and undergraduate students), yielding 82 members. The two most selected options when new members are asked about how they heard of SSSP are "Other" (which refers to any other means for coming into membership other than the options provided) and referrals from current members.

Graduate Student Representative Greer Hamilton submitted a proposal for a membership initiative that would focus on highlighting the work and accomplishments of our student membership via a quarterly social media spotlight. An initial proposal of the initiative was submitted to the Board, and the Chair attended the Board meeting on April 26, 2022 to answer questions about the proposal. The Board requested additional information regarding this initiative – working with Greer, the Chair added additional information regarding the initiative to the report and resubmitted to the Board. As of the submission of this report the edited proposal has not been approved, but the Chair will attend the July 27th Board meeting to answer any additional questions regarding the proposal. Greer is to be commended for their initiative and efforts in proposing this social media spotlight of our graduate students, both as a means to support their careers and provide greater awareness of SSSP and its benefits.

Lastly, the Membership and Outreach Committee will resume its tradition of hosting the New Member Breakfast at this year's annual meeting in Los Angeles, scheduled for Saturday, August 6th from 7:15-8:15am. This is an excellent opportunity to welcome new members to the Society and provide a relaxed space for networking and mentorship. These kinds of events are a particular forte of the Society that it is hoped will result in sustained membership and onboarding of new members. As of July 7th, 35 current members have RSVP'ed to host the breakfast, while 31 new members have RSVP'ed to attend the breakfast.

Recommendations:

The Society's return to in-person annual conferences in 2022 holds the potential for sustaining long-term members and welcoming new members who will continue to participate in the Society, both during and outside of its annual meetings. One of the Society's fortes is its support and recognition of activists and community leaders who are making a difference in their communities, most notably in the awarding of the Thomas C. Hood Social Action Award at the annual conference. The work of the Membership and Outreach Committee predominantly focuses on recruitment of new members, often within academia – while this is important, it is hoped that our current membership may continue to diversify to include more non-academic members, particularly those whose work is within the communities we host annual meetings in.

The sustainment of current graduate student members as they transition into academic and non-academic appointments is also an area for sustainment of current memberships. It is hoped that the Board's approval of the graduate student spotlight will aid in these retention efforts, particularly in providing support to our graduate students on the market, along with the Society's other notable strengths in providing a welcoming and supportive atmosphere for junior scholars, such as the New Members Breakfast and Mentorship program.

The Chair would like to thank all Committee members for their time and efforts this year. A big “thank you” is also due to Michele Koontz, Rachel Cogburn, Noreen Sugrue and the SSSP Leadership for their support of the Membership and Outreach Committee's efforts this year.

Respectfully submitted,

Janelle M. Pham

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