

To: SSSP Board of Directors
From: Stephani Williams, Chair. Committee on Social Action
Date: June 13, 2023

Report from the Committee on Social Action

The Committee on Social Action received and reviewed four Resolutions – Gender-Affirming Healthcare, Guaranteeing and Furthering Socio-Economic Rights, Academic Freedom, Expression of Gratitude.

During our meeting on May 1, the committee’s discussions about the resolutions revolved primarily around concerns about the scope of the resolutions and the labor involved. On behalf of the committee, I communicated with the authors of each of the resolutions to confirm their willingness to both craft a draft of the proposed documents and to provide a list of contacts, per their resolution. In some cases, the scope of activities was too broad or inadequately defined (how would the Society provide support in academic freedom cases?), and the committee asked them to reword or narrow the set of action items.

By May 25, all authors had resubmitted the resolutions. The committee reviewed the changes and recommended their advancement to the Board.

Though there will likely always be issues with wordsmithing to clarify or narrow the scope of activities, I do believe that a simple change to the resolution’s requirements can provide clarity to all parties so that it is understood that the authors of any resolution will need to be prepared to write a draft of the correspondence and provide the necessary contacts.

One question that we might want to discuss is who will review/revise the communication drafts if a resolution passes (the Board, the EO)?

Action Item –

The resolution instructions are currently missing language specifying that the authors of the resolution must draft any correspondence and provide the contact list for dissemination. Instead by mentioning a letter from the Board, authors might infer that the Board will write any correspondence suggested in the resolution.

“In most cases, the proposed resolution should include some sort of call for viable action by the SSSP. This typically has involved a letter from the BOD directed to some public or private entity expressing concern, support, or opposition on an issue or matter”.

Recommended Action: I suggest that we provide explicit instructions so that the authors, committee members, Board, and voters all have a shared understanding of who provides the labor. This should resolve this in the future (suggested language change is highlighted).

DRAFT Language:

“In most cases, a resolution should include some sort of call for viable action by the SSSP. When the resolution calls for written communication directed to some public or private entity expressing concern, support, or opposition on an issue or matter (a letter, op-ed, etc.), the authors of the resolution will need to provide a draft of the written communication and a list of individuals/organizations to whom the communication should be distributed”.