

2023 SSSP Student Report

August 1, 2023

Shaonta' Allen (Outgoing Representative)
Shiv Issar (Current Representative)
Foroogh Mohammadi (Incoming Representative)

Old Business:

- Transition Meeting: Outgoing Representative, Shaonta' Allen, and Current Representative, Shiv Issar, met immediately following the 2022 SSSP Annual Meeting to discuss roles and responsibilities.
- Outgoing Representative, Shaonta' Allen, and Current Representative, Shiv Issar have successfully co-organized two special sessions (on academic publishing and the non-academic job market respectively) for the 2023 SSSP Annual Meeting.
- Student Member Meeting - April 21, 2023:
Current Student Representative, Shiv Issar, chaired the 2023 student member meeting on April 21, 2022. Three student members attended (aside from Shiv), over different intervals during the time of the meeting. During the meeting, the primary benefits of student membership in SSSP were discussed (in a way that was similar to last year), and the floor was opened for attendees to provide feedback and suggestions (see summary of meeting below).

Summary of 2023 Student Member Meeting:

The following topics emerged as points of conversation during the 2023 Student Member Meeting:

- Mentoring Program:
 - There were concerns about the effectiveness of the mentoring program, as all attendees stated that they found it underwhelming. These trends have persisted and carried over from previous years. Student complained of having had little to no interaction with their mentors at all.
 - The application process for mentoring programs needs improvement so that it can help students convey their preferences to the mentoring committee as effectively as possible.
 - Students suggested having mini biographies or more information about different mentors on the website (i.e., a "mentor database" of sorts) to make informed choices about the kind of mentors that they might want (or have been allocated). Such biographies should contain information about the extent to which a mentor would be available (over the year), what their approach to mentoring is like, and the extent to which they are willing to make time for a mentee and assist them as per

- their needs. In short, a more robust mentor system is desired; one that would allow students to specify preferences for mentors (or certain kinds of mentors) in advance.
- Beyond the “meeting mentor” and the “year-long mentor” systems, proposals were made for establishing an ad hoc system that would allow students to sign up for short fifteen-minute zoom calls with individuals in the mentor database for an office-hours style meeting. Mentors in the database could allocate a certain number of sign-ups for a month and a sign-up sheet could be set-up accordingly.
 - Students mentioned that they did not know how to be more involved within their respective sections, and that there seemed to be some level of opacity regarding the ways in which they could be more involved.
 - Periodic Member-Run Workshops:
 - Students expressed interest in periodic (preferably monthly) workshops focused on specific topics by SSSP members.
 - Suggested topics included structuring CVs for the job market (academic & non-academic), navigating the hiring process (teaching demos, job talks, negotiations of offers etc.), improving teaching pedagogies (or using certain pedagogical approaches), specific research methods (quantitative and qualitative), academic publishing, grant-writing, scholar activism, etc. If a small budget of \$3600 were set aside for a year, it should be possible to incentivize members to propose and eventually conduct a monthly workshop for a small honorarium of \$300.

New Business:

Based on the feedback and suggestions received during the 2023 student member meeting, the following action items were identified:

- Mentoring Program Improvement:
 - Following the feedback from the 2022 and 2023 student meetings, it is clear that the Committee on Mentoring needs to work on developing a more effective mentoring program that is more in line with the needs and wants of student members.
 - The mentoring program application needs to be enhanced in order to accommodate students' preferences for mentors, and a mentor database needs to be established. A simple PDF file consisting of biographies and the desired information (stated on the previous page of this report) could suffice for the latter.
 - The committee on mentoring needs to consider working on setting up an ad hoc system that would allow students to sign up for short fifteen-minute zoom calls with individuals in the mentor database for an office-hours style meeting. Sign-up sheets for each mentor could be included in the mentor database.
- Periodic Workshops:
 - SSSP could organize monthly member-run workshops on various topics of interest to student members.
 - Suggested topics have been listed above.

- Resource/Networking Platform:
 - Based on student interest, the student representatives will explore establishing a networking space (e.g., GroupMe, Slack, Discord) for student members to connect and collaborate. This was suggested in 2022 but had not been established. The Current and Incoming Student Representatives will work on this after the 2023 SSSP Annual Meeting.

- All of SSSP's sections need to re-evaluate how to involve student members and communicate new protocols and opportunities to them.

- Student Conference Sessions/Workshops:
 - The Current and Incoming Student Representatives will collaborate to determine feasible conference sessions and workshops for the 2023 annual meeting based on the suggestions from the student meeting.

- Student Newsletter:
 - During the 7/27/22 E-Board meeting, the possibility of establishing a student newsletter was discussed. This had not been set up between 2022-23, nor had the utility of a student newsletter been discussed any further during the 2023 student meeting. For now, this suggestion is being suspended, pending any further interest in this project.

Transition Meeting - 2023:

- A transition meeting is scheduled between the Current Representative, Shiv Issar, and Incoming Representative, Foroogh Mohammadi, to be held soon after the annual meeting over Zoom.