



THE UNIVERSITY OF
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KNOXVILLE

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Report to the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, 2023

Stephanie Bohon
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Department of Sociology

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*. Indeed, just yesterday I was working on travel support for five students who are excited to present their papers at the SSSP meeting in Philadelphia. I support the relationship between UTK Sociology and SSSP without reservation.

I have thoroughly enjoyed nearly three years of working with Héctor Delgado, including negotiating a new contract between the University of Tennessee and SSSP. This year I was pleased to learn of the hiring of Dr. Elroi Windsor. A few weeks ago, I collaborated with them to complete a required annual performance review for Michele Koontz, and I was very impressed with their thoroughness, leadership, and insight. I look forward to many additional years of working together.

Last year we had some issues with transitions in our front office. With the hiring of more/new staff, I believe that we have not had any problems that have impacted SSSP staff.

One change on the UT campus that can potentially impact SSSP is the university's new budget model. One consequence was that SSSP had to relinquish their office space or pay rent. However, the Department of Sociology has shuffled some offices and spent considerable resources to create a nice new meeting space in 923 McClung Tower. This space includes a state-of-the-art setup for Zoom meetings. This space is available to SSSP as needed.

A second change under the university's new budget model has been a substantial and needed salary boost for graduate students on assistantships. Last Fall, Sociology began paying their 20 hour/week graduate assistants \$18,780 annually for 9 months of service. SSSP matched that amount and restructured the GRA position to 9 months/year. SSSP also restructured their contract to pay the fees of their GRA. Beginning in Fall 2023, graduate assistantships for 20 hour/week graduate assistants will again increase to \$20,580—about \$1000 short of what our administration believes is necessary to live in Knoxville. Because SSSP is under contract, the organization is not obligated to again raise the assistantship amount. Indeed, there is already a signed contract for an

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entering graduate student for the \$18,780 amount. However, moving forward, it may be difficult to recruit the best graduate students if assistantship stipends lag those of others.

Overall, the Department of Sociology is grateful to SSSP for providing support for a graduate student by funding a SSSP graduate research assistant. Jeremy Booth is progressing on track with his nearly completed MA thesis, and he is expected to successfully defend this summer and receive his degree. Unfortunately, Jeremy has decided to leave graduate school with a master's degree. As a result, after a successful search, SSSP has hired Helen Wilds, who will be a new entry into our PhD program this Fall. She appears to have several important skills needed for this position. Additionally, she seems very excited about working for SSSP. Indeed, hers was the first signed contract I received back from the 15 students to whom we made funding offers this year. We think you will be pleased with this hire.

I appreciate this opportunity to work with SSSP and to continue a relationship that has been mutually supportive. I stand ready to assist you in any way possible, and I hope that you will not hesitate to reach out if there is more that I can do.

Thank you,

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

Stephanie A. Boon
Department Head