

2023-2024 SSSP BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8, 2024; 11:45AM – 4:45PM (EDT)

LE CENTRE SHERATON MONTRÉAL HOTEL, MONTRÉAL, QUEBEC, CANADA

MEETING CONDUCTED IN-PERSON WITH SELECT ATTENDEES VIA ZOOM

ITEM #1 – CALL TO ORDER

President Mary Bernstein called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm.

ITEM #2 – INTRODUCTIONS

Members Present:

Mary Bernstein, President

Rose Brewer, President-Elect

Anthony A. Peguero, Vice-President

David J. Luke, Vice-President-Elect *Z

Glenn W. Muschert, Secretary

Heather E. Dillaway, Treasurer

Kristen M. Budd, Board Member *Z

David G. Embrick, Board Member

Barbara Katz Rothman, Board Member

Cameron T. Whitley, Board Member

Shiv Issar, Board Member, Student Representative *Z

Giovanna Follo, *Ex-Officio*, Chairperson, Council of the Divisions

Shannon Carter, *Ex-Officio*, Incoming Chairperson, Council of the Divisions

Annulla Linders, Outgoing Editor, *Social Problems*

Kelly J. Sittner, Incoming Editor, *Social Problems*

Nancy Mezey, Chair, Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee *Z

Claire M. Renzetti, Chair, Program Committee *Z

Sarah Levine, Publisher, Humanities & Social Sciences, Oxford University Press

Anick Desrosiers, Chair, Local Arrangement Committee

Elroi J. Windsor, Executive Officer

Michele Koontz, Administrative Officer & Meeting Manager

Rachel Cogburn, IT Specialist

*Z indicates participant present by Zoom

ITEM #3 – ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Board adopted the agenda as presented.

ITEM #4 – FINANCES – REPORT FROM THE TREASURER

Treasurer Heather E. Dillaway reported on the Society's financial status. The big picture is that the Society is in a financial crisis, one which reaches the level of an existential threat to the long-term existence of the organization. The year 2024 has not been as bad as predicted, yet there is a concern that the SSSP continues to operate at a deficit since 2018 with the exception of approximately \$35,000 surplus in 2021. In August 2023, the Budget, Finance, and Audit (BFA)

Committee projected a budget shortfall of approximately \$245,500 for 2024. Although the deficit for 2024 remains to be seen, the current projected deficit is c. \$182,500 (this is not yet counting realized and unrealized investment gains or losses for 2024). The Society has sufficient funds in reserve (as of December 31, 2023 valued at c. \$895,600); however, the longer-term concern is declining revenue streams in membership dues, journal revenue, and the generation of revenues. Committees and sub-committees are in action to control all costs as feasible. A significant financial situation is the predicted decline in revenue anticipated in the publication of *Social Problems* with Oxford University Press. Discussion ensued concerning the Society's socially responsible investments.

ACTION: The Board approved the report of the Treasurer.

Part A : LBMC Client Service Communication Letter

Part B: 2023 Audit Report

The results of the audit were clean, with no unusual findings.

ACTION: The Board approved the 2023 Audit Report.

Part C: Report from the Chair of the Budget, Finance, and Audit (BFA) Committee

BFA Committee Chair Nancy Mezey delivered the report from the BFA.

ACTION: The Board approved the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee's report.

The BFA Committee proposed that the Society consider hiring a financial advisor who would receive payment exclusively in proportion to the earnings generated by the returns generated. The recommendation is to create an ad hoc committee comprised of the Treasurer, a member of the BFA chosen by the BFA Committee, and 1-2 Board members selected by the Board. The committee will 1. consider financial advisors who are willing to work for a performance-based fee schedule as the Society currently has NO ability to compensate another staff member in any other manner, 2. review SSSP's current investment policies and standards and make recommendations to the BFA and the Board as to any necessary changes to those policies and standards. Such recommendations will consider both the dire financial situation and the mission of SSSP to help increase revenues and reduce the growing yearly deficit, 3. research, wherever possible, how other social justice and social science professional organizations manage their portfolios.

ACTION: The Board approved the creation of the ad hoc committee to search for a financial adviser for the Society. The ad hoc committee is composed of the Treasurer, a member of the BFA, and an additional one or two members of the Board. The new adviser will be in place within six (6) months.

The BFA Committee proposed a 40% increase in membership dues. Discussion ensued.

ACTION: The Board approved a 40% increase in membership dues, to start in 2025.*

*Note: While the Board approved the increase, it can't go into effect without approval at the business meeting or by electronic ballot of the total membership as per Article III, Section 2 of the by-laws, "The Board of Directors may, by a majority vote of its total voting membership, propose changes in the membership dues of the Society. All such proposed changes shall be submitted for ratification at the annual business meeting of the Society. They shall take effect if approved by a two-thirds vote of the business meeting. If they fail of approval by a two-thirds vote, the Board of Directors may submit the proposed changes to an electronic ballot of the total membership, and they shall take effect if approved by a majority voting in the electronic ballot. The electronic ballot shall remain open for sixty days and the results tabulated and verified by the Elections Committee."

The BFA Committee recommended the creation of new membership categories. Discussion ensued with some Board members.

ACTION: The Board approved the creation of new membership categories:

- **Sustaining Member Diamond (\$3,000+).**
- **Sustaining Member Platinum (\$2,500).**
- **Sustaining Member Gold (\$2,000). Current sustaining members will retain this title.**
- **New income category of \$150,000 & up (\$425).**
- **The Board improved an increase in Departmental Memberships fees to \$200, which includes three student memberships.**

As a cost-savings initiative, the BFA Committee recommended removing the Society's membership from the AAAS Science & Human Rights Coalition.

ACTION: The Board approved to discontinue the Society's membership to the AAAS Science & Human Rights Coalition.

The BFA Committee recommended the creation of a virtual open access session.

ACTION: The Board approved the creation of an Open Access Information Session for the Membership, to involve OUP representatives, select librarians, and knowledgeable members to participate.

As a cost-saving effort, the BFA Committee recommended removing the stipend for the Local Arrangements Committee (LAC) Chair. The Board will revisit the duties of the LAC Chair.

ACTION: The Board voted, effective in 2026, to remove the stipend for the Local Arrangements Committee (LAC) Chair and cover only tour review related expenses up to \$500.

The BFA Committee suggested exploring the financial aspects of moving to digital/online-only publishing of *Social Problems*. This item is on the agenda for the August 11, 2024, Board meeting.

The BFA Committee noted that the 75th Annual Meeting scheduled for 2025 is an opportunity for fundraising.

ACTION: The Board approved the creation of an ad hoc fundraising campaign focused on the SSSP 75th Anniversary Annual Meetings in 2025. President-Elect Rose Brewer will bring a proposed committee list to the Board for approval.

The BFA Committee recognized Susan M. Carlson's significant contributions to the SSSP in roles including Treasurer, BFA Chair and Committee member, Investment Advisor, and Interim Executive Officer.

ACTION: The Board approved a special recognition to honor Susan M. Carlson for her contributions and work with the Society over the last three decades. The Board approved Susan M. Carlson as the inaugural Diamond Sustaining Member in this new membership category.

The BFA Committee recognizes the following unfinished business charged by the Board: Due to time constraints and the prioritizing of complex financial matters, the BFA recognizes and understands the Board's charge from the January 2024 Board meeting to develop a schedule of percentage increases for both the annual meeting registration and membership dues. Over the next year, the BFA will consider several schedules that will help keep up with inflation, not overly burden SSSP members, and help maintain the financial health of the Society. Upon reviewing options and agreeing on a schedule of increases, the BFA will present a recommendation to the Board.

ACTION: The Board recognized and approved the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee's report regarding SSSP investments.

PART D: Presentation of the 2024 Amended Budget

Nancy Mezey presented the 2024 amended budget.

ACTION: The Board approved the 2024 amended budget.

PART E: 2024 June Balance Sheet

Nancy Mezey discussed the 2024 June Balance Sheet to provide the Board with the most up-to-date financial information.

PART F: 2024 June Income Statement

Nancy Mezey discussed the 2024 June Income Statement to provide up-to-date financial information.

ITEM #5 – REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Elroi J. Windsor presented the report of the Executive Officer (EO). The EO spoke about the experience of completing a full calendar year, which is helpful to understand the ebb and flow of duties for the EO position. The EO gave a word of gratitude to the Administrative Office staff and many members for their assistance and support. There are some key issues. First, there was a lot of activity concerning *Social Problems*, including conducting a publisher search and renewing the contract with OUP. The EO noted the social action developments in the past year, including the handling of member-generated resolutions and activities of the SSSP's Anti-Harassment Committee. The SSSP must invest in its members by probing how people stay engaged. The EO pointed to the Permanent Organization and Strategic Planning Committee, which is developing draft values and mission statements for the SSSP. The EO noted the financial challenges faced by the Society and mentioned appreciation for those undertaking practical action to keep the organization financially sound.

ACTION: The Board approved the Executive Officer's report.

Part A. Report from Dr. Stephanie Bohon, SSSP Project Director

The EO commented on the letter from Dr. Stephanie Bohon, Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology at UTK, and the SSSP Project Director.

Part B. Discuss the 2024 Membership Survey

The EO spoke about the upcoming membership survey, which is crucial to understanding the interests and needs of the Society's members.

Part C. Update on the new Ad Hoc Development Committee

The EO spoke about the activities to recruit additional members with financial expertise and/or a proven record in development work.

Part D. Update on the new OUP Contract

The current contract with OUP will expire on December 31, 2024. The SSSP has received the new contract and is set to finalize it this fall season.

Part E. Discuss the Future of the SSSP

The EO commented on the future of the SSSP, including the direction(s) in which the Society should move. There is a high level of interest among members to craft a pathway forward for the Society.

Part F. Announcement of the 2024 General Election Results

President-Elect (2024-2025); President (2025-2026) Sarah Jane Brubaker

Vice-President-Elect (2024-2025); Vice-President (2025-2026) Clare E. B. Cannon

Secretary (2024-2025) Glenn Muschert

Treasurer (2024-2025) Heather E. Dillaway

Board of Directors (2024-2027) Tamara G.J. Leech, Janelle M. Pham, and Claire Renzetti

Board of Directors: Student Representative (2024-2026) Rafia Javaid Mallick

Anti-Harassment Committee (2024-2027) Angie Beeman

Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee (2024-2027) Stephani Williams

Committee on Committees (2024-2027) David Brunsma and Emily Schneider

Editorial and Publications Committee (2024-2027) Kristen M. Budd and Jerry A. Jacobs

Membership and Outreach Committee (2024-2027) Felicia Arriaga and Michael O. Johnston

Membership and Outreach Committee: Student Representative (2024-2027) Abass Muhammed

Part G. Announcement of the 2024 Proposed By-Laws Amendments Election Results

Article VI. Section 32. Justice Committee: Approved

Article VII. Section 6. Setting Mail Ballots for Membership: Approved

Article XIII. Section 1. Voting: Approved

Article XIV. Section 4. Voting on Proposed Resolutions: Approved

Article XV. Timely Statements. Section 1. Proposing Timely Statements to the Membership: Approved

Article XV. Timely Statements. Section 2. Membership Voting on Proposed Timely Statements: Approved

Article XV. Timely Statements. Section 3. Statement for Handling Matters Needing an Immediate Response: Approved

Article XV. Timely Statements. Section 4. Actions Resulting from Approved Proposed Timely Statements and Immediate Responses: Approved

ITEM #6 – REPORT FROM THE EDITORS OF *SOCIAL PROBLEMS*

Part A: Report from the Outgoing Editors of *Social Problems*

On behalf of Outgoing *Social Problems* Editors (Annulla Linders, Earl Wright II, and Derrick R. Brooms), Annulla Linders reported on the status of *Social Problems*, with special recognition to those on staff who play essential roles. The editors are now at the end of their second term as co-editors (2021-24). The journal is in a good state, with the running of the journal in the hands of the new editors.

ACTION: The Board approved the Outgoing Editors of *Social Problems* report.

Part B. Report from the Incoming Editors of *Social Problems*, Including Proposed 2024-2025 Advisory Board

On behalf of Incoming Editors (Andrew S. Fullerton, Michael A. Long, Rachel M. Schmitz, and Kelley J. Sittner), Kelley J. Sittner provided perspective from the newly acquired role. Discussion ensued regarding the timing of the transition.

ACTION: For the next transition of Editorship of *Social Problems*, the Board approved that the outgoing editorship would end on June 30th, while the incoming editorship would start on June 1st of the same year.

ACTION: The Board approved the Incoming Editors of *Social Problems* report.

ACTION: The Board approved the amended list of the proposed 2024-2025 Advisory Board for *Social Problems*, stipulating that those whose membership has lapsed will be reminded to become current members.

Part C: Report from the *Social Problems* Social Media Committee Chair

The Board packet included the Report from the Chair of the Committee on Social Media, Mi'Chael N. Wright.

ACTION: The Board approved the report of the Committee on Social Media.

ITEM #7 – REPORT FROM OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Publisher Sarah Levine, Oxford University Press, presented the report from Oxford University Press (OUP). The out-going editorial team left the journal in very good stead, and OUP is effectively cooperating with incoming editors. Discussion ensued.

ACTION: The Board approved the *Social Problems* publisher's report.

ITEM #8 – REPORT FROM THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE CHAIR

Program Committee Chair Claire Renzetti presented the highlights of the report. The report mentioned several concerns, which the Board considered. One concern involved increasing the number of Author Meets Critics sessions per year organized by the Program Committee. Discussion ensued. The Program Committee will communicate its concern to next year's Program Committee. Another issue involved requests by the Transnational Initiatives Committee to organize sessions at the Annual Meeting. Another concern involved the Program Committee fielding ad hoc requests for space during the annual meetings, specifically related to individuals or groups requesting a session or other space.

ACTION: The Board approved establishing a procedure for reviewing and responding to requests for space during the annual meeting. Such requests shall be reviewed by the Program Committee Chair, the Administrative Officer, the President, and the Executive Officer on a case-by-case basis, with requests being granted based on the time and space availability as well as the merits of the event for which the space is being requested.

Another concern involved ambiguity in wording for exemption eligibility. The current wording reads, "Individuals from community, labor, and comparable organizations working on social problems or social justice issues who have been *invited* to serve on a panel or to make a presentation" (emphasis added).

ACTION: The Board approved clarifying the wording for exemption eligibility, as follows. The revisions shall, first, change the word Individuals to Program participants, and second, craft verbiage that makes it clear that only program participants invited by a session organizer to serve or present are eligible for exemption. The change specifies that the exemption applies only to one individual – the paper presenter – when there are multiple authors on the paper.

ACTION: The Board approved the report of the Program Committee.

ITEM #9 – REPORT FROM THE LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE CHAIR

Anick Desrosiers, Local Arrangements Committee (LAC) Chair, presented the highlights of the report. The Committee mentioned several suggestions and recommendations for future meetings concerning sessions and tours. The Board urges future LACs to consider the current recommendations and suggestions.

General Action Items: 1. Respect Indigenous Communities: Include and value Indigenous elders in key moments of the SSSP gathering, ensuring they are not tokenized. 2. Awareness of Power Dynamics: Be mindful of power dynamics and language inclusivity on the territories we gather on, ensuring inclusivity for academics, students, and community members in all relevant official languages. 3. Local Initiatives: Plan sessions on local initiatives, research, and communities. 4. Encourage Local Participation: Create a special fund to encourage local participation in the SSSP meeting and facilitate membership.

Specific Action Items for Tours: 1. Local Experiences: Create opportunities for local members to share intimate experiences of their city. 2. Guided Tours: Plan guided tours outside of session times. 3. Fair Compensation: Increase the amount permitted for local tour guide participation while focusing on accessibility, ensuring fair wages and predictability for service providers.

ACTION: The Board approved the report of the Local Arrangements Committee.

ITEM #10 – REPORT FROM THE MEETING MANAGER

Michele Koontz, Meeting Manager (MM), reported on various issues. The MM thanked the EO, President, and Program Committee for their service. For the 2024 annual meeting, there are to-date 535 registrants. Membership remains a concern. Compared to one year ago, total membership (including last year's members who have not renewed) is down 4% (68 members); however, current membership (2024+: 1,088) is up 0.83% (9 members). Refocusing on membership, particularly re-engaging long-standing members who have lapsed should be a priority.

For this year's annual meeting, there were three requests for accessibility services. We will provide other features like an area of rescue assistance, a comfort zone, a lactation room, and an all-gender restrooms. Since we contracted with the in-house audio-visual provider, we will not be charged for internet in the meeting space. This year's exhibit will include the presence of The Scholar's Choice, Bristol University Press, and its imprint Policy Press, Kersplebedeb Leftwingbooks, and Parallel Cultures. The F&B minimum is \$USD 40K++ (c. CAD\$ 55K++). The SSSP will subsidize the cost of wine, beer, and non-alcoholic beverages at the first two receptions. A complimentary open bar will be provided at the Division-Sponsored Reception.

Summary of Hotel Selection Update for 2025. After ASA moved their conference from San Francisco to Chicago, contract negotiations with a San Francisco property were halted. RFP Process: Out of 14 hotels that responded to the RFP, only two could accommodate the meeting due to space requirements and prior bookings.

Site Visits: Conducted site visits at Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel and Hilton Chicago on May 21-22.

- Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel:
 - Pros: Close to ASA's conference hotels, suitable meeting space configuration.
 - Cons: Higher conference room rate, higher food & beverage minimum, different meeting dates (Saturday-Monday), and recent ownership change to Choice Hotels.
- Hilton Chicago:
 - Cons: Less ideal meeting space with airwalls, accessibility issues for wheelchair users. Palmer House (sister property) was offered as an alternative but has limited breakout rooms and space on a converted guest room floor.
- Marriott Marquis Chicago (conducted a virtual tour):
 - Pros: Agreed to match the lowest guest room rate and food & beverage minimum, ample meeting space, connected to McCormick Place.
 - Cons: Located 3.5 miles from Swissotel and 3.1 miles from Radisson Blu.

Discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons of each property.

ACTION: The Board approved the Palmer House a Hilton Hotel as the conference site of the 2025 Annual Meeting.

Part A. Current Annual Meeting Registrants and Membership by State/Country

Part B. Meeting Attendance, 1985-2023

Part C. Update on the 2025, 2026, and 2027 Annual Meeting Hotel Contracts

The Board discussed signing a multi-year a contract with the Palmer House a Hilton Hotel for 2027 but decided against this at this time.

ACTION: The Board approved the Meeting Manager report.

ITEM #11 – UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM 2023–2024

There was no unfinished business.

ITEM #12 – NEW BUSINESS

A. Discuss and Vote on Action Items Proposed by President Mary Bernstein:

1. The Board shall only vote on proposed resolutions at face-to-face (online or in-person) meetings.
2. The Board shall set up monthly "save the date" meetings so that time can be reserved for Society business.

President Mary Bernstein raised concerns about Board voting and meetings. The Board heard a motion that votes on proposed resolutions will occur at face-to-face (online or in person) meetings. The Board also heard a motion to set up monthly “save the date” meetings so that time can be reserved for Society business. The motion did not pass.

ACTION The Board approved that voting on proposed resolutions should be limited to face-to-face meetings (whether online or in-person).

ITEM #13 – ADJOURNMENT OF THE 2023-2024 BOARD

There being no further time, President Mary Bernstein adjourned the meeting at 5:55 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Glenn W. Muschert, SSSP Secretary.