



Society for the Study  
of Social Problems  
*In Pursuit of Social Justice*

Report to the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP) Board of Directors  
Budget, Finance, and Audit (BFA) Committee  
Mid-Year Meeting

July 23, 2025

The BFA Committee conducted its mid-year meeting on June 9, 2025. Based upon our agenda and discussions, the BFA Committee remains concerned about the immediate, short, and long-term financial health of the Society. Therefore, the BFA Committee is requesting that the Board of Directors consider and act on the Action Items requiring immediate attention as they affect the financial health and solvency of the Society. As in previous reports, the BFA Committee urges the Board of Directors to act now in making the necessary increases in revenue streams and decreases in expenses that are within the Society's immediate control.

The Administrative Office, BFA Committee, and Board of Directors have worked extremely hard to reduce the deficit in 2024 and 2025. Nonetheless, significant annual deficits are now commonplace due to consistent declines in membership, operating losses on in-person annual meetings, rising personnel costs, and uncertain revenue from the journal, *Social Problems*.

- **Membership Dues Income**

Income earned from membership dues has decreased over the past several years, and it is doubtful that this income will increase in current or future years unless proactive measures are taken. Increasing membership dues at regular intervals will aid in reducing annual deficits but not erasing them.

- **Annual Meeting Costs**

As of July 15, 2025, the 2025 annual meeting is projected to operate with a deficit of approximately \$74K: expected income \$93,068 vs. expenses \$167,497, which amounts to roughly a \$172 subsidy per attendee (432 registrants as of July 11). Registration reminders were frequently generated, the Administrative Officer/BFA trimmed Chicago costs (receptions, catering, technology) where possible, and they are actively leveraging costs for future meetings. Ultimately, unless more members attend annual meetings or we hold meetings less regularly, we will continue to run significant deficits for these meetings, which is financially unsustainable.

- **Staff Cost of Living Increases**

We continue to evaluate how the Society can respond to ongoing cost of living increases for Administrative Office staff that are in part driven by UTK. For the 2025 budget, the BFA agreed to partially cover the minimum salary increases that were set by UTK effective July 1, 2025. The BFA recommended a 1% salary increase for the administrative office staff and declined to match the graduate assistantship increase specifically because the compensation for the graduate assistant would exceed the salary package for the Society's IT specialist. The BFA will continue to re-evaluate this in 2026 as personnel salaries will remain an ongoing concern.

- **OUP – Social Problems**

While *Social Problems* has stayed competitive and earned the Society additional revenue this year, a continual dip in traditional journal subscriptions is typical in the current publishing environment and the publishing world continues to undergo major transitions. We may see some years with higher royalties than expected, but journal income will remain unreliable beyond the minimum levels negotiated with OUP. It is important to note that the one-time OUP signing bonus has been beneficial in reducing our projected 2025 deficit. If we did not receive this signing bonus this year, our projected 2025 deficit would be much larger.

In order to cover operational expenses for the Society, we continue to liquidate funds regularly from several of the Society's money market and mutual funds accounts. If the Society continues to operate at a deficit, we will deplete assets and be unable to operate in our current form in the very near future.

The projected 2025 budget (which is included in the meeting materials) is projected to generate:

- \$599,087 **Revenue**
- \$769,119 **Expenditures**
- \$170,032 **Deficit\***

\* The projected deficit would be nearly twice as large if we had not received the one-time only OUP signing bonus.

**NOTE OF GRATITUDE:** The BFA Committee thanks the SSSP Administrative Office for their amazing assistance in gathering and analyzing the pertinent financial data as well as their insights, guidance, and meticulous attention to and care of the SSSP budget.

**THE BFA COMMITTEE PRESENTS THE FOLLOWING ACTION ITEMS:**

**ACTION ITEM #1:** The BFA Committee recommends revisions be made to the existing divisional criteria used in the process for sunseting divisions. The BFA Committee recommends adding the following divisional requirements to the *Society's Operations Manual*: (1) Annual Meeting sessions should have at least 10 attendees per session; and (2) at least 25% of division members attend the Annual Meeting. We recommend that the sunseting process be implemented effective immediately.

**Rationale:** Over time, some divisions have experienced persistent declines in membership, scholarly output, and/or Annual Meeting participation. When divisions field sparsely attended sessions or send only a small fraction of their membership, those unrecovered costs must be covered by the Society's reserves—a pattern that is unsustainable. Without a clear mandate to retire or merge these underperforming divisions, the Society expends disproportionate staff time, budget, and attention on divisions that no longer advance its mission. This also contributes to our need for more meeting spaces and larger hotels.

**ACTION ITEM #2:** The BFA recommends to the SSSP Board of Directors that beginning in 2028, membership dues shall be increased by a minimum of 20% every three years. The proposed dues increase will be submitted for a vote by SSSP membership in the year prior to the anticipated increase.

**Rationale:** Projected operating costs for the Society have risen 4–6 % annually over the past decade, outpacing the flat-lined dues schedule. A predictable, dues increase schedule is not only fairer to our membership but also essential to meeting our operational costs and reducing our deficit.

**ACTION ITEM #3:** The BFA recommends to the SSSP Board of Directors that effective in 2027, Annual Meeting registration fees be increased by a minimum of 20% every three years, in the year prior to the anticipated increase.

***Rationale:*** If we continue to hold in-person meetings that are partially subsidized by the Society, we continue to deplete Society financial resources and put the Society's long-term financial health in jeopardy.

Respectfully submitted,

**Sarah E. Castillo**

Chair, Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee - Society for the Study of Social Problems  
Graduate Student and Research Statistical Consultant, University of Tennessee Knoxville  
castillo@utk.edu