

**Report from the Executive Officer – 2025**  
Prepared for the Board of Directors by Elroi Windsor  
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As I write this annual report, I continue to feel a sense of urgency for our organization, and an optimism about where we might go. Throughout this past year, SSSP has implemented some changes that were necessary to help secure our future. This report provides an overview of highlights from the last year with an eye toward future growth. I conclude with expressions of gratitude and an action item for the Board of Directors to consider.

**Hallmarks of 2024-2025**

Happy birthday SSSP! I am thrilled to serve as SSSP's Executive Officer during the momentous occasion of our organization's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This is a tremendous accomplishment for any non-profit, and I pay homage to our elders and ancestors who built this organization. I hope we all take time to reflect on how far we've come.

This year represents the third year of my three-year contract. During this period, I have spent considerable time attending to financial matters and engaging with members about how SSSP might adapt and shift in the future to respond to the world in which we live. As we all know, we are facing a profound level of authoritarianism and genocidal violence. State and corporate attacks on higher education, scholarly research, and freedom – bolstered by a pervasive culture of white supremacy – threaten to upend the very work that SSSP is founded on.

But there is hope – because everyone involved in SSSP, everyone on the side of justice, has a role to play. We can fight back. We are getting organized and we will resist these attacks just as those who came before us did.

➤ **Financial Concerns**

The financial status of SSSP continues to keep me up at night. It remains true that our spending is not sustainable. The Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee (BFA) has kept a watchful eye on our budget, noting expenses that can be trimmed while looking for opportunities to increase revenue. The BFA has worked with the Board of Directors to ensure that we turn around our deficit by increasing membership dues and annual meeting registration rates, both of which are income-based and offer greater support for students and lower-income members.

Despite our ongoing deficit, I am confident that SSSP will turn around our financial challenges. We have already made strides to this end, including welcoming a new Financial Advisor, Ellen Rapier, from The Oak Tree Group, to get our investments on track. Ellen brings two decades of expertise in socially responsible investing, is committed to social justice, and is a longtime volunteer board member for The Charis Circle, the nonprofit programming arm of Charis Books and More, the oldest feminist bookstore in North America. The Council of Divisions has also considered creative ways to address the budget shortfall. Some divisions have merged – a strategy that not only

helps to reduce costs for the organization but also preserves the energies of members. With limited volunteer labor, division consolidations help foster greater participation in division service and better attendance at division sessions. Another promising development is that revenue from publishing our flagship journal, *Social Problems*, has been a little higher than projected. I am cautiously optimistic that this trend will hold, despite continued challenges within the academic publishing industry. Finally, we had a successful fundraising initiative last year. The Ad Hoc Development Committee led efforts that more than tripled the amount of donations in 2024 compared to 2023.

Still, we are not yet in the clear. We have a ways to go before we can feel comfortable again. I ask that you pay attention to the recommendations from the BFA and our Treasurer and bring your creative ideas to generate revenue. Let's keep righting this ship.

➤ **Looking Forward and Insights from the Membership Survey**

As we enjoy this 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, let's look to the future to ensure our organization stays strong. Incoming President Sarah Jane Brubaker has proposed a thought-provoking annual meeting theme: Resisting Colonization of Lifeworlds. I hope our community of scholar-activists start thinking about sessions and projects that align with this topic in preparation for gathering in New York City in 2026.

Importantly, moving forward depends on aligning our practices with our values. This year, we sent out the periodic Membership Survey, designed to be distributed every five years to members. We took time to overhaul the survey to ensure it captured the emergent issues and the ideas forwarded by members. It felt critical to get out a high-quality, thorough survey that captured current issues and sought to address challenges. Drawing on efforts within the Council of Divisions, the BFA, and the Permanent Organization and Strategic Planning Committee (POSPC), the 2025 survey contained new content related to division restructuring, funding ideas, and mission and values statements.

To get broader input, I chose to open the survey to past and prospective members, not just current members. The SSSP Administrative Office distributed the survey internally via email and posts to our website and social media. Over 2000 current and recent members (2022 to present) received an email inviting them to share their perspectives. I personally sent the invitation to participate to multiple groups within my professional network, including the executive directors of regional and national sociology organizations. Ultimately, 156 people completed the survey. You can read the [2025 Membership Survey Results here](#) – a 222-page effort led by SSSP's IT Specialist, Rachel Cogburn. I thank her for her diligent data collection, analysis, and presentation. I also want to thank Shannon Carter for her leadership in getting division-related items on the survey and Sarah Castillo, BFA Chair and Qualtrics Whiz, for her expert attention to survey design. The administrative staff (Rachel Cogburn, Michele Koontz, Kelsey Whitaker, Helen Wilds) and the first SSSP undergraduate student intern, Laura Phillips, all helped to make the survey a true team effort.

Lots of thoughtful suggestions and interesting ideas were relayed in the survey. Several groups are looking through the data to make informed decisions about our future. In my opinion, any changes SSSP makes should be aligned with our mission and values. However, SSSP does not yet organize around clear, concise statements about what these are. To that end, I offer an action item at the end of the report that I believe relates to an important starting point: establishing clear mission and values statements for SSSP. These statements stemmed from the POSPC's analysis of themes from the mission statements of SSSP's divisions. As such, they reflect the heart of SSSP. The high percentages of support for them from the survey respondents suggest that we got it right.

### **With Gratitude**

As we prepare to attend the 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of SSSP, I am eager to connect with the action-oriented theme chosen by our President, Rose Brewer: Insurgent Sociology in a Time of Crises. The Program Committee, chaired by Assata Zerai, with members Melanie E.L. Bush, Walda Katz-Fishman, and Rahsaan H. Mahadeo, have put together an assemblage of engaging sessions that are sure to inspire. Along with the many division-sponsored sessions, our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting promises to move us toward both research and practice. I thank these volunteers for organizing the content that brings us together. As we face another year under violent global capitalism, I concur with President Brewer's urgency in "lifting up solidarity with communities in struggle, visioning, and worldmaking."

Beyond our Annual Meeting activities, many volunteers generously offer their time to SSSP. I thank everyone who serves on committees within SSSP, especially those who chair them. Your dedication ensures SSSP remains a member-driven organization. I am grateful to the exceptional service of our Division Chairs, our elected Officers and Board of Directors, and the Editorial Teams responsible for publishing our commendable *Social Problems* journal.

In addition to the volunteers doing the work of SSSP, I remain grateful to work alongside a hardworking and expert team of staff members: Michele Koontz (Administrative Officer and Meeting Manager), Kelsey Whitaker (Assistant to the Administrative Officer), Rachel Cogburn (Information Technology Specialist), and Helen Wilds (Graduate Research Associate and Webmaster). Each of these lovely humans delivers exceptional service and support to our organization. They all work hard to ensure everyone has what they need to support us all, during the Annual Meeting and throughout the year.

Beyond those named in this report, I want to thank everyone who is involved in SSSP. I want to encourage everyone in SSSP to resist the threats coming for us everyday. *You* are this organization. Bring your creative ideas, your fiery spirits, and your passion for justice to the table so that we can work in solidarity against what we're up against for another 75 years.

## Action Item

It is recommended that the Board of Directors adopt the Mission Statement and Values Statements as written in the 2025 Membership Survey, with two minor additions highlighted below in red, to be foregrounded in the organization's By-Laws, Operations Manual, and website.

### Mission Statement:

- SSSP's mission is to serve researchers, practitioners, **teachers**, and advocates in the pursuit of social justice.

### Values Statements:

- SSSP is dedicated to advancing social justice, addressing inequalities, and dismantling oppression.
- SSSP uses sociology **and related disciplines** for action to solve social problems and improve the world through advocacy, activism, and active engagement.
- SSSP prioritizes critical inquiry, reflection, and research to engage in evidence-based scholarship and challenge assumptions.
- SSSP recognizes the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and the interconnectedness of social problems.
- SSSP illuminates how social structures perpetuate interlocking social inequalities, highlights how power and privilege are relational, and addresses systemic barriers to social justice.
- SSSP emphasizes equity, empathy, and respect in improving the quality of life, fostering social relations, and creating a sustainable and more just world for individuals and communities impacted by social problems.
- SSSP honors our diverse community, where networks and alliances aim to amplify the voices of marginalized people.

### Rationale:

The results of the SSSP Membership Survey demonstrated strong support for the proposed Mission Statement and Values Statements. Survey respondents voiced strong support for these statements with over 85% stating they strongly agreed or agreed with each statement, detailed below. Qualitative data reflected themes that are important to consider, but do not meaningfully challenge the premise of the statements except for the two minor revisions noted in red. Having a clear mission statement and dedicated values statements ensures that SSSP's decisions and actions are anchored in our beliefs and priorities.

### Mission Statement:

*SSSP's mission is to serve researchers, practitioners, **teachers**, and advocates in the pursuit of social justice.*

- 86.52% Supportive (~71 Strongly Agree, 15 Agree)

## Values Statements:

1. *SSSP is dedicated to advancing social justice, addressing inequalities, and dismantling oppression.*
  - 87.57% Supportive (~70 SA, 18 A)
2. *SSSP uses sociology **and related disciplines** for action to solve social problems and improve the world through advocacy, activism, and active engagement.*
  - 88.77% Supportive (~65 SA, 24 A)

### *Comments Specific to Values Statement 2:*

- I largely agree with these statements, except for the statement (#2) that states that the work of SSSP is grounded in a sociological perspective. While sociologists gravitate toward SSSP, I find the organization to be inherently interdisciplinary and draws across multiple disciplines in the social sciences and humanities.
- Many SSSP members are not sociologists so "SPSS uses sociology to solve..." should be broadened although I am a sociologist. Perhaps using the word "social sciences" or another word to capture our members that are political sciences, anthropologists etc

3. *SSSP prioritizes critical inquiry, reflection, and research to engage in evidence-based scholarship and challenge assumptions.*
  - 89.27% Supportive (~75 SA, 15 A)

### *Comments Specific to Values Statement 3:*

- I would be cautious of using language around evidence-based science. If necessary, perhaps use language like evidence-informed or empirically grounded
- Please consider using plain language for the values statements. Statements 3 and 5 are less clear than the others.

4. *SSSP recognizes the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and the interconnectedness of social problems.*
  - 90.96% Supportive (~75 SA, 16 A)
5. *SSSP illuminates how social structures perpetuate interlocking social inequalities, highlights how power and privilege are relational, and addresses systemic barriers to social justice.*
  - 87% Supportive (~72 SA, 15 A)

### *Comments Specific to Values Statement 5:*

- Please consider using plain language for the values statements. Statements 3 and 5 are less clear than the others.

6. *SSSP emphasizes equity, empathy, and respect in improving the quality of life, fostering social relations, and creating a sustainable and more just world for individuals and communities impacted by social problems.*
  - 89.33% Supportive (~67 SA, 22 A)

### *Comments Specific to Values Statement 6:*

- Values Statement 6 is quite wordy and I couldn't parse it out quickly

7. *SSSP honors our diverse community, where networks and alliances aim to amplify the voices of marginalized people.*
  - 88.07% Supportive (~72 SA, 16 A)

## **THEMES IN COMMENTS:**

The qualitative data reflected three key substantive themes on the statements. The most common theme related to longstanding tensions between the organization's focus on activism and social justice versus more academic, scholarly research. Another set of comments reacted to the current sociopolitical climate and its focus on suppressing initiatives related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Some respondents encouraged SSSP to bolden our commitments here, while others recommended de-emphasizing them. The third substantive theme recommended more attention to global aims. The remaining comments offered general agreements or compliments, technical critiques of survey design or statement language, and two miscellaneous comments unrelated to the statement. Each theme is noted below with the numerical count of comments that reflected the theme followed by a summary and the comprehensive verbatim data from the survey.

### ➤ *Substantive Theme 1: Tensions in Activism vs. Scholarship (8)*

Summary: Comments reflect SSSP's historical tensions between members who disagree over commitments to social justice activism versus academic scholarship, and what should be emphasized under each.

Data:

- I wish SSSP would not give in to toxic people claiming to be justice warriors.
- Social Justice is a trendy term, and I wonder if there is a way to be more descriptive of what that means in practice instead of using the term "social justice."
- There has ALWAYS been a tension between people who emphasize scholarship and those who emphasize activism in SSSP. I lean heavily in the scholarship direction.
- I think the world has changed and we can not be seen as partisan hacks or ultra left ideologues or politicizers of science if we want to maintain our legitimacy and the legitimacy of our research
- Needs a stronger and more explicit anti racism message. Wish more focused on participation, democracy, organizing, . Some of mission seems technocratic.
- The current statement does not adequately discuss the centrality of the search for truth, however imperfectly defined, to scholarly research. It also doesn't discuss the need to interrogate the meaning of "social justice" itself as a situated concept with a complex history and many contested applications.
- I no longer believe in the concept of 'social' justice. I believe in justice because if we had it we would not need such social constructs and derivative ideas to fight, not for our 'human rights,' but for ALL OUR BIRTHRIGHT - you know those inalienable rights Americans love to highlight about the Constitution! SSSP does not fight for who we are, just who we 'perceive' and/or 'think' ourselves to be.
- I mostly clicked 'agree' or 'strongly agree' but to be honest - and I speak as a fairly new member - many of the statements seem somewhat aspirational (which may be the intention?). I would love to see SSSP embedded within social justice movements in the way many of these statements imply, but in my limited experience, it does seem much more rooted in academia, to the exclusion of grassroots movements, than some of these statements suggest.

### ➤ *Substantive Theme 2: Comments Related to Current Political Climate / Suppression of DEI (5)*

Summary: Members recognize the ways values are threatened, with some favoring a bold stance while others suggest concealing our focus.

Data:

- All of these values are under threat.
- Honestly, love them all. If they're going to cut funding for my participation (at my university) I suspect it won't matter what we say we are, so we might as well be loud and proud.

- Might be better in today's political climate to not use the term diverse in any mission statement as AI can find this quickly for people against diversity and target the association. Use a term like all people...
- Now that empathy and empirical reality are considered dangerous in American politics, we face a choice. Either move away from our core values in order to not make waves, or to redouble our commitments to justice and honesty when others won't.
- It seems somewhat odd that there is no acknowledgement of the specific categories of people through which oppression operates. It seems important to me at this particular moment that we reaffirm our commitments to specific groups (ie race, class, gender, disability, ethnicity, etc)

### ➤ *Substantive Theme 3: Global/International Issues (2)*

Summary: More attention needed in global aims.

Data:

- SSSP focuses on life in America with little recognition that the membership is wide and diverse with members who live and work in the Caribbean and other parts of the world, which presents an inherent difficulty of participation in events. If SSSP is intended to be an international organization, its values should also speak to that, so members can feel a sense of belonging and make their contributions against the background of cultural, ethnic, religious and geo-political differences.
- More participation and encouragement required from South / East Asia

### ➤ *General Agreement/Compliments (4)*

Data:

- good statements, well constructed
- All of these statement reflect the very heart of SSSP.
- These all represent the core values and mission of SSSP. This has been true since the founding of the organization.
- Having a clear direct mission and clear values statements are important in determining the organization's future.

### ➤ *Technical Points on Survey Design or Statement Language (3)*

Data:

- In the mission, why are teachers not included? That is why I disagree.
- Please consider using plain language for the values statements. Statements 3 and 5 are less clear than the others.
- I think it was a mistake to give "strongly disagree " as the first option. Folks doing it quickly may not notice it says disagree. Also to put agree and disagree first - agree strongly, disagree strongly.

### ➤ *Comments Unrelated to Statements' Content (2)*

Data:

- As I never could avail myself of any opportunity to participate in any of the events, I am looking forward to that
- SSSP's name seems disconnected from this mission. Has SSSP considered also aligning its acronym, e.g., the Society for Solving Social Problems?