

## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEETING MANAGER

Michele Koontz

August 1, 2025

### I. 2025 ANNUAL MEETING

I am pleased to report that **439 attendees** have registered for the annual meeting.

- 207 (**47%**) are professionals
- 211 (**48%**) are students/unemployed/emeritus
- 21 (**5%**) are exempt from paying meeting registration

This year's attendance is lower than in recent years. For comparison (at the time of my report):

- 535 in 2024 (Montréal)
- 579 in 2023 (Philadelphia)
- 480 in 2022 (Los Angeles)
- 769 in 2021 (fully virtual)
- 120 in 2020 (half-day complimentary virtual)
- 995 in 2019 (New York City)

We have scheduled:

- 83 sessions with 322 papers
- 11 panels featuring 52 panelists
- 3 critics, and
- 1 plenary speaker

In comparison, the 2024 meeting featured 113 sessions with 436 papers, 9 panels with 37 panelists, 7 critics, and 1 plenary speaker.

This year, several registrants have contacted our office after the July 15<sup>th</sup> deadline date to say that they can no longer attend and would like their registration fee to be carried over to the next year.

#### ACTION ITEM:

Add "nor will registration fees be carried over to a future Annual Meeting" to the last sentence of the current policy.

#### Current Refund Policy

**ANNUAL MEETING:** Registration fees will be refunded to persons who notify us that they will not attend the Annual Meeting prior to July 15. Once the participant packets have been prepared, processing costs have occurred.

Unfortunately, under no circumstances will SSSP issue refunds for no-shows **nor will registration fees be carried over to a future Annual Meeting.**

### II. 2025 HOTEL ROOM RATES

SSSP received a favorable sleeping room rate of \$229 single/double, \$254 triple, \$279 quad plus tax per night.

Our contract includes a performance clause allowing the Society to avoid attrition damages if **80%** of the contracted **715-room block** is picked up – equivalent to **572 rooms**.

To maximize hotel booking opportunities, the Palmer House extended our cut-off date twice (from 7/7 to 7/15, then to 7/25). On July 23, 2025, we achieved our peak pickup: **575 rooms (80.42%)**. However, due to cancellations, the current pickup is **556 rooms (77%)**. Based on historical data, there will be continued slippage between the cut-off date and the actual meeting.

Thanks to the Board’s earlier decision to move forward with the Palmer House as the site for the 2027 Annual Meeting, contingent upon securing the 2025 attrition waiver, the Society will not incur attrition penalties. Without this contingency, SSSP would have been responsible for covering unfilled rooms and potentially lost hotel concessions.

**III. 2025 MEMBERSHIP DUES**

As of July 31, 2025, **total membership** (including lapsed members) is **1,458**, reflecting a **9.44% decline** (152 members) compared to the same time last year. **Current membership** (2025+) is **855**, down **21.42%** (233 members) from 2024.

<u>7/31/25</u>	<u>7/31/24</u>	<u>7/14/23</u>	<u>7/16/22</u>	<u>7/19/21</u>
2025+: 855	2024+: 1,088	2023+: 1,079	2022+: 1,202	2021+: 1,467
2024: 603	2023: 522	2022: 599	2021: 747	2020: 412
<b>Total: 1,458</b>	<b>Total: 1,610</b>	<b>Total: 1,678</b>	<b>Total: 1,949</b>	<b>Total: 1,879</b>

This trend mirrors national patterns of declining professional association membership and may be compounded by economic challenges and reduced institutional support.

**IV. REASONS FOR DECLINE IN ANNUAL MEETING REGISTRATION, MEMBERSHIP DUES, AND HOTEL ROOM PICKUP**

Several factors have contributed to the decline in registration, membership renewals, and hotel room pickup in 2025.

First, the current global political climate, particularly concerns among Canadian and other international scholars about traveling to the United States, has understandably impacted attendance. Additionally, the persistent lack of institutional travel funding continues to be a major barrier for both professionals and students wishing to attend the Annual Meeting.

Because many program participants traditionally renew their membership when registering for the conference, the lower registration numbers have also led to a decline in membership renewals – despite ongoing recruitment and retention efforts.

These challenges reflect broader trends impacting academic associations and highlight the continued need for strategic planning, inclusive outreach, and adaptable meeting formats moving forward.

**V. ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES**

SSSP remains committed to ensuring that the Annual Meeting is as inclusive and accessible as possible for all participants.

In advance of the conference, all registrants were invited to submit accessibility requests by the June 30 deadline to facilitate full participation. Two formal requests were received:

- A request for wide, high-capacity seating in a meeting room where a presentation was scheduled
- A dietary request for gluten-free options for a registrant’s guest

This information was shared with Dr. Rahsaan Mahadeo, Chair of the Accessibility Committee, for appropriate follow-up.

To promote accessibility and inclusion across the conference, written guidelines were posted on the SSSP website and distributed to all program participants. These guidelines addressed topics such as accessible presentations, visual materials, air quality & service animals, accessible seating, sign and voice interpreting, audio equipment, and fostering inclusive discussions.

The Board voted to offer the opportunity for remote presentation, with paid registration, for people who have a

disability and people who have a medical condition for which a medical professional would advise against in-person attendance. Seven program participants will be participating remotely under this policy.

Additionally, the Board recommended that those who have registered and are fearful of traveling to submit a written copy of their paper(s) to be distributed and read at their scheduled session(s). Five participants opted to have their papers read on their behalf.

### **Area of Rescue Assistance**

Clearly marked Areas of Rescue Assistance will be established on all levels of the conference space. In the event of a hotel evacuation during meeting hours, hotel staff will check these areas for attendees requiring assistance.

### **Comfort Zone**

The Comfort Zone will be located in the Congress Room on the 3rd floor. This space is available to all attendees, no matter where they are staying. Attendees are encouraged to use this room to unwind or recharge and will be asked to please silence all devices and refrain from phone conversations, meetings, or social gatherings in this space.

### **All-Gender Restrooms**

All-Gender Restrooms will be provided as follows:

- 3rd floor Friday-Sunday
- 5th floor Thursday-Monday
- 6th floor Thursday-Saturday

Additionally, a permanent one-person, all-gender restroom is located on the 6th floor. Men's restrooms and women's restrooms will also be available on the 3rd floor. All attendees are welcome to use the restroom that best aligns with their gender identity. Signage will clearly mark these facilities, and registration workers will help ensure signage remains intact throughout the meeting.

### **Lactation Room**

A Lactation Room will be located in the Harvard Room on the 3rd floor. This private space is designated for attendees with young children to privately care for their children's needs. Babies, nursing or not, are welcome in sessions. This room is not available for conversations or meetings.

## **VI. ANNUAL MEETING EXEMPTION POLICY**

Twenty-one annual meeting exemptions were requested and granted this year (20 in 2024, 17 in 2023, 11 in 2022, and 27 in 2021).

### **Current Exemption Policy**

All session participants (except for those listed under "b" below) must be current members (they may join on acceptance of their presentation) of the Society and must register for the annual meeting by June 1. Persons failing to register by June 1 will have their presentations deleted from the program.

The Administrative Office processes all qualified exemption requests for conference registration in the order received. In addition, the Program Chair notifies the Administrative Officer when they approve a direct request.

All exemption requests must be submitted by May 15. Exemptions from paying registration fees will be considered for:

1. Non-students who are unemployed and/or receiving monthly financial assistance to meet living expenses.
2. Program participants from community, labor, and comparable organizations working on social problems or social justice issues who have been invited by a session organizer to serve on a panel or to make a presentation. The exemption applies only to one individual – the paper presenter – when there are multiple authors on the paper.

3. Non-U.S. and non-Canadian scholars residing in economically disadvantaged countries who without these funds would be unable to attend the meeting.
4. Co-authors of papers who will not be attending the meeting. One of the co-authors must be a paid registrant. Both co- authors must pay if both expect to attend the meeting.
5. Persons excused by direct request of the Program Chair.

## **VII. AUDIO-VISUAL**

LCD projectors and screens will be available for all traditional sessions. Papers in the Round, Works in Progress, Research Feedback Forum, and Critical Dialogue sessions will not have audio-visual equipment.

Presenters and/or session organizers must bring their own laptop and necessary adapters (e.g., Apple or HDMI connection cords) for all traditional sessions. SSSP does not supply laptops or cables. However, thanks to the generosity of one of our members, a laptop will be available at the registration desk for those who opted not to travel with electronic devices due to safety concerns.

To avoid disruptions, we recommend saving presentations to a thumb drive in the event presenters need to use another participant's computer. Powered speakers for audio will not be available for any sessions, so we strongly discourage including short video clips, as it will be difficult for the audience to hear them – particularly for accessibility purposes.

Internet access will be available in all meeting rooms. To preserve bandwidth for participants presenting remotely under accessibility accommodations, we will ask attendees to refrain from high-bandwidth activities (e.g., streaming videos or holding Zoom meetings) during sessions.

In accordance with my Meeting Manager duties, I am to secure a minimum of three audio-visual bids. This year, four companies were contacted. Two responded with proposals; one declined due to the complexity of union labor pricing and the number of vendors receiving the RFP, and one did not respond.

After reviewing the proposals, the most favorable quote was submitted by Encore, the in-house A/V provider. Their proposal included complimentary basic Wi-Fi in all meeting rooms and a 40% discount on equipment rental. Following successful negotiations, the total projected A/V cost is approximately \$38,000.

As previously noted, seven program participants will present remotely in accordance with SSSP's accessibility policy. The additional cost of supporting remote presentations (including the use of a Meeting Owl Pro video conferencing device and a simple wired internet connection in five meeting rooms) is approximately \$2,000. This cost is in addition to the LCD projector package (approximately \$560 per room), bringing the total cost for remote-accessible sessions to \$4,800. Each session organizer is responsible for providing a Zoom link to the remote presenter.

### **Historical Audio-Visual Costs:**

- 2024 (Montréal): \$28,183 (USD)
- 2023 (Philadelphia): \$33,662
- 2022 (Los Angeles): \$34,543
- 2019 (New York City): \$31,518

## **VIII. AWARDS CEREMONY**

The Awards Ceremony will include the presentations of the Arlene Kaplan Daniels Paper Award, Beth B. Hess Memorial Scholarship, C. Wright Mills Award, Doris Wilkinson Faculty Leadership Award, Indigenous Peoples' Social Justice Award, Joseph B. Gittler Award, Kathleen S. Lowney Mentoring Award, Lee Founders Award, Racial/Ethnic Minority Graduate Fellowship, Thomas C. Hood Social Action Award, and the Student Paper Competition winners.

Thanks to the Board's earlier decision to send each student paper competition winner and the Beth B. Hess Memorial Scholarship Fund winner an electronic certificate, this saved time and money.

All major award winners and all Mills finalists were mailed a plaque last month. These individuals will be acknowledged in a slideshow presentation at the Awards Ceremony and on our website. Additionally, an abstract of each student's winning paper will be posted on our website along with their contact information.

Each student paper winner received complimentary student membership and meeting registration (courtesy of SSSP) and a monetary stipend (courtesy of their division). It is the Division Chair's responsibility to recognize their winners, honorable mentions, and outstanding scholarship award winners at their divisional business meeting, in their division newsletter, and on their division's social media accounts. Division Chairs are responsible for obtaining plaques for their honorable mentions or outstanding scholarship award winners, if desired.

## **IX. CATERING**

During contract negotiations, the hotel agreed to a 10% discount on the food and beverage (F&B) prices. The F&B minimum is \$40,000. When factoring in 11.75% state tax, 8% service charge, 10.25% admin tax, and 18.5% gratuity, the total is actually \$55,628. This year, the Society will spend approximately \$64,000, including taxes and fees.

Catering prices have been exceptionally high this year. While attendees may not be aware of these costs, I want the Board to understand the challenges I face in planning the menu for each catered event. Most of our attendees are health-conscious, and many follow vegetarian or vegan diets. I spend considerable time crafting menus that are both cost-effective and inclusive of these dietary needs.

While I view catering as an opportunity to showcase the hotel's culinary offerings and accommodate our attendee's dietary needs, our limited budget makes this difficult. Some attendees assume that receptions will offer enough food to replace a full meal, but that is simply not feasible within our catering budget.

### **Subsidized and Hosted Beverages**

SSSP subsidizes the cost of wine, beer, and non-alcoholic beverages at the Arrival Meet & Greet Reception and the Welcoming Reception, allowing attendees to purchase drinks at a reduced price. A complimentary open bar will be provided at the Division-Sponsored Reception. This year, 17 out of 20 Divisions contributed a total of \$3,075 from their approved budgets to support this event.

#### **Reception Examples:**

##### **Arrival Meet & Greet Reception (Thursday)**

*75 guests*

Cheese Display

Harissa Roasted Cauliflower Display (vegetarian/vegan)

Butler Passed Hors d'oeuvres: Four options (includes vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free)

**Food: \$8,223 | Cash Bar: \$1,122 (SSSP subsidy) | Total: \$9,345**

##### **Welcoming Reception (Friday)**

*100 guests*

Flatbreads Station (includes vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free)

Crudit  Station

Butler Passed Hors d'oeuvres: Two options (vegetarian/vegan)

**Food: \$8,824 | Cash Bar: \$1,295 (SSSP subsidy) | Total: \$10,119**

##### **Division-Sponsored Reception (Saturday)**

*130 guests*

Pasta Station (includes vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free)

Butler Passed Hors d'oeuvres: Two options (one vegetarian)

8 dozen cupcakes (vegan/gluten-free options available)

Small symbolic cake

**Food: \$9,788 | Cupcakes/Cake: \$1,139 | Hosted Bar: \$4,017 | Total: \$14,944**

### **Daily Hospitality Offerings**

We will also offer a complimentary continental breakfast each morning, along with hot/cold beverages and afternoon snacks. “Grab and Go” items include granola and energy bars, individual chips, and/or fruit and nut trail mix.

- Thursday: 2:00pm-6:00pm (**50 guests, cost \$2,513**)
- Friday: 8:00am-10:00am (**70 guests, cost \$4,118**) and 2:00pm-4:00pm (**50 guests, cost \$2,347**)
- Saturday: 7:00am-9:00am (**50 guests, cost \$2,942**) and 2:00pm-4:00pm (**50 guests, cost \$2,347**)
- Sunday: 8:00am-10:00am (**50 guests, cost \$2,942**) and 2:00pm-4:00pm (**30 guests, cost \$1,637**)

Given the Society’s financial difficulties and increasing food and beverage costs, we can no longer provide the same level of food and beverage options at the conference.

### **ACTION ITEM:**

Given the significantly increased cost of food and beverage and the expectation from some attendees that receptions should provide a full meal, the Board is asked to consider establishing a formal statement or guideline to clarify the purpose and scope of catered receptions (e.g., light refreshments vs. full meals) and AM/PM breaks. This would help manage expectations and support budget planning for future meetings.

### **PROPOSED LANGUAGE FOR BOARD APPROVAL:**

In recognition of rising food and beverage costs and to promote responsible budgeting and transparent communication, the Board affirms that receptions held during the Annual Meeting are intended to offer light fare and refreshments, not full meals. Morning and afternoon breaks will likewise feature modest offerings (e.g., coffee, tea, and light snacks). This guideline will be shared with meeting attendees in advance to set appropriate expectations and will help future planners align catering decisions with budgetary realities.

### **X. CHILDCARE MATCHING OPPORTUNITY**

Three registrants requested participation in the childcare matching opportunity. On July 1, an e-mail was sent to them listing the names, e-mail addresses, and number, identified gender, and ages of the child(ren) of the other registrants requesting participation in the service. In addition, we provided registrants with contact information of a local professional childcare provider.

Please note the following important details:

- SSSP does not vet anyone on the list, nor do we provide direct childcare services.
- The information is shared solely to facilitate communication among interested registrants.

### **XI. EXHIBIT INFORMATION**

The Scholar’s Choice will once again be organizing and managing our book exhibit without cost to the Society. Members interested in having their book displayed were instructed to contact their publisher. Please note that publishers pay a fee to display with The Scholar’s Choice and may not have the marketing budget necessary to honor all requests, particularly for older titles.

PM Press will be exhibiting again this year. They amplify the voices of radical authors, artists, and activists. Their aim is to deliver bold political ideas and vital stories to all walks of life and arm the dreamers to demand the impossible.

Bristol University Press, and its imprint Policy Press, will not be exhibiting this year. However, they are sending some materials to be displayed and are offering a 50% discount off Sociology titles throughout August.

### **XII. MOBILE APP**

Based on the Board’s decision to no longer print programs, it is essential to provide a mobile app that is easy to use. Given our positive experience with Core-Apps in the past, we contracted with them for our mobile app needs. IT Specialist Rachel Cogburn has worked tirelessly to customize the mobile app to assure its ease of use.

### **XIII. ONE-DAY WORKSHOPS**

On Monday, August 11, one workshop will be held on-site and one workshop will be held virtually.

#### **Community, Research, and Practice Workshop**

9:00am–12:00pm

50 registrants – workshop is free with SSSP conference registration

#### **Institutional Ethnography Workshop**

10:00am–1:00pm

52 registrants – workshop is free

### **XIV. WALKING TOURS**

SSSP offered two walking tours. Both tours are wheelchair accessible:

#### **Pilsen Public Art Tour**

Friday, August 8, 9:30am–1:30pm

Limit 10 people; 9 tickets sold

Cost: \$30 (includes transportation)

#### **Pullman National Park Walking Tour**

Saturday, August 9, 8:45am–1:00pm

Limit 10 people; 7 tickets sold

Cost: \$32 (includes transportation)

As in previous years, tour ticket sales remain low. While the original participant limit was 30 per tour, it was reduced to 10 to better reflect current demand. President Rose M. Brewer has graciously agreed to allocate a portion of the funds raised through the Fundraising Campaign Committee for the SSSP 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual Meeting to offset expenses not covered by ticket revenue. Were it not for this, the Society would have had to cover the difference.

Last year, the Board of Directors 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.

#### **ACTION ITEM:**

Given the consistent challenges with low ticket sales and the significant time and effort required of the Local Arrangements Committee to identify wheelchair-accessible social justice walking tours, I recommend that the Board consider discontinuing the walking tours at future Annual Meetings.

### **XV. LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE CHAIR**

Since the stipend for the LAC Chair has been removed moving forward, the duties need to be modified. I have included my suggestions below:

#### **Hotel (NO LONGER NEEDED)**

- Meet with the President and the Meeting Manager during the final site visit (date TBD, late October or November).

#### **Program (KEEP THIS SECTION BUT HAVE ONE “WELCOME TO THE CITY” FOR EVERYONE)**

- Write a brief “Welcome to the City” to be included in the preliminary and final program by March 1. Include a list of free public events over the annual meeting dates. The welcome should acknowledge respectfully, if it is the case, that the city in which the meeting is being held, sits on indigenous or tribal lands.
- Recruit a graduate student to write a brief “Welcome to the City-The Student Edition” to be included in the program by March 1.
- In addition to the land acknowledgement, SSSP will make a financial contribution to an organization (preferably an organization run by Indigenous or Aboriginal peoples) doing social justice work on behalf of

Indigenous or Aboriginal peoples in the city or metropolitan area where our annual meeting is held. The award is called the Indigenous Peoples' Social Justice Award. The LAC will have the task of identifying a local organization or organizations and making a recommendation to the Board of Directors, including disclosing fully, if appropriate, any connection that a committee member has with said organization(s). The deadline for the LAC's recommendation is March 15 and the Board of Directors will make the final decision by April 15. The Executive Officer and the Administrative Officer will assist as needed. The recipient(s) of the award will be invited to attend the Awards Ceremony and speak for up to 10 minutes about the organization's mission and crucial work. The award amount is \$2,500, which can be given to one organization or shared by two organizations. The Board of Directors is of course free, preferably in consultation with the Budget, Finance, and Audit (BFA) Committee, to approve a more modest or greater amount, if applicable.

- Offer suggestions about special activities in the host city during the annual meeting by March 1.

#### **Local Promotion (NO LONGER NEEDED)**

- Special efforts need to be made to encourage attendance from local colleges and universities within the area. A spreadsheet including the name, address, and e-mail address of a contact person from each institution should be forwarded to the Administrative Officer by October 15. The Administrative Office will distribute meeting related announcements to each contact person.
- Share ideas on how to encourage students and faculty from local institutions to attend the annual meeting.

#### **Media (NO LONGER NEEDED)**

- Prepare a general press release (condensed version) in advance of the meeting (at least 4 weeks prior) to be circulated to select area media and area colleges and universities. The President, Executive Officer, and Administrative Officer must approve the press release before it is circulated.

#### **Other (KEEP)**

- In order to protect the integrity of the Society, members of a committee, or the Board of Directors, must disclose any conflict of interest or even the *appearance* of a conflict of interest to the other members of the committee in any process involving the awarding of funds or anything else of value to an individual or group. The Committee Chair will then discuss the conflict or the appearance of the conflict with the Executive Officer, to determine the appropriate next step, which may be to require said member to withdraw from the process entirely or some portion of the process. Click [here](#) to access the policy.
- Assist the Accessibility Committee Chair and the Administrative Officer with contacting the Center for Independent Living regarding accessibility services, if needed.
- Prepare and present a report to the Board of Directors (on the pre-meeting day) outlining your activities during the past year.

#### **Other (NO LONGER NEEDED)**

- Discuss your report to the Board of Directors with the incoming Local Arrangements Committee Chair and the incoming President during the annual meeting, outlining your activities during the past year.

#### **ACTION ITEM:**

The Board is asked to approve the proposed revision of the Local Arrangements Committee (LAC) duties, reflecting the removal of the LAC Chair stipend. The revised responsibilities streamline the committee's scope, eliminating hotel, media, and local promotion duties, while maintaining program-related contributions and the selection of a recipient for the Indigenous Peoples' Social Justice Award. If approved, the Board is also asked to authorize updating the SSSP By-laws accordingly, with changes presented to the membership for a vote in the 2026 General Election.

#### **BY-LAWS EXCERPT: ARTICLE VI, SECTION 13:**

The Local Arrangements Committee shall consist of a Chairperson and at least three members residing in the local area where the Annual Meeting is to be held the following year. The President-Elect shall nominate and the Board of Directors shall appoint the Committee Chairperson. In consultation with the Committee Chairperson, the President-Elect shall nominate and the Board of Directors shall appoint the other committee members. The duties of the committee shall be to assist the Program Committee and Administrative Office in preparation for the Annual

Meeting of the Society. Specific duties include: **Identify a local organization or organizations for the Indigenous Peoples' Social Justice Award and make a recommendation to the Board of Directors; write one Welcome to the City; assist the Administrative Office in the preparation of a guide to the locality of the Meeting; arrange for volunteers to assist in the registration process at the Annual Meeting;** provide referrals to local services available; arrange special activities in keeping with the theme of the Annual Meeting.

#### **XVI. REGISTRATION REMINDERS**

The Board approved a policy requiring program participants to register by June 1 in order to remain on the program. The Board also requested that program participants receive at least three reminders prior to the June 1 deadline.

This year, the Administrative Office sent four targeted e-mail reminders to program participants and twice asked session organizers to contact their participants who had not registered. Additionally, Program Chair Assata Zerai sent an e-mail encouraging registration.

On July 9, the Administrative Office sent a final, personalized message to twenty-eight paper authors and their session organizer(s), stating that failure to register by July 15 would result in removal from the program. On July 15, twenty-four program participants were removed for non-registration.

Although SSSP is a voluntary association, the growing number of missed deadlines and follow-up efforts—across many organizational functions—has raised concern. This year, in particular, there has been a notable increase in the number of reminders needed to obtain responses from leaders and members alike.

#### **XVII. REGISTRATION WORKERS**

Six graduate student members will work at the registration desk. In exchange for working 12 hours, they will receive a complimentary shared hotel room for the nights of August 7-9.

#### **XVIII. ROOMMATE MATCHING OPPORTUNITY**

Twelve registrants expressed an interest in the roommate matching opportunity. On July 1, an e-mail was sent to them listing the names, affiliations, and e-mail addresses of those willing to participate in order to facilitate roommate matching.

**Please note the following important details:**

- SSSP does not vet anyone on the list and cannot make roommate recommendations.
- If they have specific preferences (e.g., sharing a room with a fellow student), they must inquire directly with potential roommates.
- SSSP does not assign or pair roommates together.

#### **XIX. SPECIAL EVENTS TO COMMEMORATE THE 75TH ANNUAL MEETING**

In recognition of this important milestone, the Program Committee organized an Opening Plenary entitled, “SSSP at 75 and the Reorder of Things: From Oppositional Beginnings to Resisting Elite Capture” on Thursday evening.

Registrants will receive a complimentary 75th Anniversary Annual Meeting decal – courtesy of the Ad Hoc Fundraising Campaign Committee – when they pick up their registration packet.

Commemorative SSSP merchandise was available for purchase through July 17.

#### **Available Items**

- [T-Shirt](#) – \$22 each (63 sold)
- [Button](#) – \$3 each (30 sold)

No extra t-shirts were ordered; however, a limited number of extra buttons will be available for purchase at the

registration desk. Please note: All SSSP merchandise sales are non-refundable, regardless of the circumstances. To further commemorate the occasion, attendees are invited to enjoy the 75th Anniversary Photo Opp area. In addition, celebratory cupcakes (regular, vegan, and gluten-free) and a small symbolic cake will be served during the Division-Sponsored Reception.

## **XX. SPONSORS**

A special thanks to our sponsors from the Ad Hoc Fundraising Campaign Committee for the SSSP's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual Meeting for their financial contributions to program activities: Elbert P. Almazan, Asad L. Asad, Rose M. Brewer, Walda Katz-Fishman, Shirley A. Jackson, Frank Ridzi, Mary Romero, Anna Maria Santiago, and Joachim Savelsberg. We would like to extend our appreciation to our valued program sponsor: MDPI.

## **XXI. WORKING OUTSIDE ACADEMIA**

Sixteen registrants indicated that they work outside of academia and are interested in connecting with others in similar positions. On July 1, an e-mail was sent to them listing the names, affiliations, and e-mail addresses of those working outside of academia.

## **XXII. UPDATE ON THE HOTEL SELECTION FOR 2027**

I am currently in negotiations with the Palmer House, a Hilton Hotel, for our 2027 Annual Meeting. In order for the hotel to waive sleeping room performance (attrition) on the 2025 contract, the 2027 contract must be signed by August 27, 2025.

## **XXIII. CLOSING COMMENTS**

I worked with Maddy Coleman, Senior Sales Manager, to negotiate our hotel contract and amend the Schedule of Events. Some breakout rooms listed in the original contract were double-booked by another group, and Maddy offered us alternative space on the 3rd floor. In my professional opinion, this space is more attractive. Maddy was extremely professional and easy to work with, and she expressed sincere appreciation that the Society selected the Palmer House, a Hilton Hotel for our 2025 and 2027 Annual Meetings.

I worked closely with Dani Reed, Senior Event Manager, to:

- finalize catering for all food functions, meeting room set up, audio-visual requirements, and signage
- order the twenty complimentary welcome amenity vouchers (per our hotel contract)
- arrange for four complimentary round-trip transportation transfer to/from O'Hare or Midway Airport

Dani is highly knowledgeable and offered creative tips regarding menu selection and meeting/reception setups. She has also been extremely responsive throughout the process.

Additionally, I worked with Brenda Oceguera, Room Coordinator, to:

- secure our VIP and staff sleeping room needs and assist with amendments or cancellations as needed

It was a true pleasure to work with President Rose M. Brewer; Program Chair Assata Zerai; Local Arrangements Chair Kayla M. Martensen; Executive Officer Elroi J. Windsor; Assistant to the Administrative Officer Kelsey Whitaker; Information Technology Specialist Rachel Cogburn; and Graduate Research Associate and Webmaster Helen Wilds. I am deeply grateful for their invaluable contributions – their dedication and hard work made this meeting possible.

Finally, I would like to thank you, the Board, for giving me another opportunity to serve as Meeting Manager. It has been a privilege to work alongside you this year. I look forward to continuing this service next year in New York City under Dr. Sarah Jane Brubaker's leadership.