

**Society for the Study of Social Problems
Environment and Technology Division Annual Business Meeting**

29 July 2025, 1900-20:15pm UK Time
MS Teams

In Attendance:

Angus Nurse (Chair, Minute taker)¹

Erica Jablonski

Marko Salvaggio

Tanesha Thomas

Clare Cannon

I. Introductions

II. Update from Angus Nurse, Division Chair

AN noted a few pieces of business to go through in terms of updates from the Chair. One of the main updates to discuss was some of the work going on behind the scenes to try and save the divisions' money and address financial challenges facing SSSP. At a recent meeting of the division chairs the reports of two task forces were presented and recommendations from these form part of the agenda for this E & T business meeting. One of the helpful clarifications from the recent chairs meeting was to hear Elroi clarify that the biggest area where SSSP needs to save money, is on the number of panels at the conference. EJ noted it was not just the overall cost of the conference, but the confirmation that the number of panels and break-out rooms makes a difference to the space that SSSP needs to book for the conference. AN noted that there's an issue for the Division to discuss around how many panels we actually have/need at the conference and to also discuss the issue that the divisions perhaps need to cut the overall; number of sessions and be clear about the number of panels and possible issues around consolidating the divisions.

III. Student Paper Award

- a. No award was made this year. The division had two finalists but unfortunately the paper that the panel selected as the potential winner was ineligible because

¹ These minutes of the meeting provide a summary of the discussion rather than being a verbatim transcript.

it wasn't included in the conference program as required by the prize's eligibility rules.

- b. AN noted that one of the tasks the Chair has to complete around September time is to confirm the details of the paper prize for the next year. AN suggested that both the newsletter call and the website required explicitly clear language to all students who are going to submit for the paper prize that they need to commit to attending the conference.
- c. AN thanked Marko Salvaggio and Jonathan Tollefson for serving with him on the student paper award panel. It was noted for the minutes that Marko has already graciously agreed to serve again for next year's prize. Another volunteer was required. Jonathan has also been invited to serve again, and we await his response.

Tanesha Thomas volunteered on the meeting chat and the meeting notes that Tanesha, Marko and Angus agreed to be on the panel with thanks to both Tanesha and Marko noted.

ACTION: AN to review and revise the website prize wording and newsletter call for papers to clarify and reinforce the eligibility requirements of the paper prize.

IV. **2026 Annual Meeting – Division-Sponsored Sessions**

- a. AN identified sessions for next year's meeting as an issue for this business meeting to discuss. AN advised that the Division could have a maximum of two sole sponsored sessions and up to five co-sponsored sessions. The evidence is that co-sponsored sessions are more successful.

The meeting reflected on possible interpretations of the 2026 New York conference theme *Resisting Colonization of Lifeworlds*. [The Society for the Study of Social Problems | 2026 Annual Meeting Program Theme](#)

EJ noted that the theme reflected issues of conquest and that there are these formal structures that maybe benefit the few, particularly those on top who are invading or permeating the individual life and eroding our original, communal, beneficial, mutually beneficial relationships. MS identified that the theme seems to think about issues in terms of both a macro and micro aspect. So, in that literal sense of colonization of places, but also on more of the micro level, thinking of things like how maybe our work environment could be colonized by certain bureaucracies or regulations or new rules under the current administration in the US, for example.

The theme could also consider how even thinking about social media and the influence of that is a site of colonization. The theme arguably makes connections between broader ways of being colonized in these smaller, intimate spaces that we're a part of.

AN suggested one thing that occurred in considering the theme from an E & T division perspective was perhaps the colonisation of Environmental Protection by neoliberal market driven thought, and the colonisation of Environmental Protection in respect of the conflict between the demands of the market and the needs of protecting the environment.

b. Proposed panels

The meeting discussed the number of panels and considering the discussion around conference attendance and finances decided on the following as conference panels for E & T in 2026.

1. Colonization of Environmental Protection (Sole Sponsored, Angus Nurse as possible Presider)
2. Restrictions on Environmental Activism (possibly co-sponsored with the Crime and Justice Division, Marko Salvagio as possible presider)
3. Teaching Environmental Sociology (possibly co-sponsored with sociology, social work and social policy)
4. Solving Environmental Problems using Indigenous and Marginalised Knowledge (possibly sponsored with Critical Race and Ethnic Study, Tanesha Thomas as possible presider)
5. Environment and Technology in Teaching (sole sponsored)

ACTION: The Division Chair will reach out to relevant other division Chairs in respect of the proposed co-sponsored sessions.

V. **Select a New Division Chair for E & T**

AN advised the meeting of the need to select a new Chair as he comes to the end of his term in 2026. A request for candidates was raised at last year's Division meeting and AN advised that the Division had missed the spring 'window' for an election, but the next window would be November to submit names of possible chairs to Michele/SSSP Admin. As Chair AN had reached out to one of the candidates who had previously indicated an interest in standing as Chair. Members attending the meeting

were also asked to let the Chair know of any suitable candidates so that the Division could submit names in time to hold an election and the Chair can shadow and support the person in time for a hand over at next year's conference.

ACTION: The Division Chair will send out the requisite emails to further solicit candidates and organise an election with submission of candidates to the Fall deadline.

VI. **Division Budget**

AN advised that the Division's Budget is relatively straightforward and requested any views on whether the meeting wished to change the budget, Currently the annual budget is \$600. The Division gives a \$200 stipend to the Division newsletter's editor, Emily Burke, a cash award to the Graduate Student Paper Competition winner, which is \$150.00 and will obviously be saved this year due to the non-award. The Division also gives \$250 to the division sponsored reception at the annual meeting. The Division had already set the budget for the years through to 2026 and the meeting was asked to confirm the budget or identify any changes.

ACTION – The meeting confirmed the budget for another year with no changes. Chair has confirmed with the newsletter editor that she is happy to remain as newsletter editor for another year. Chair to check that the newsletter editor has been paid and to confirm these details with SSSP office.

VII. **Task Force Reports and Options for Membership Survey Results**

- a. Report from Task Force to Review Division Costs: Teresa Gonzalez, Honoria Guarino, Angus Nurse, Michael Branch, Raphia Mallick
- b. Report from Task Force to Make Recommendations for Division Rebranding/Consolidation: Erica Jablonski, Clay Awsumb, Tia Dickerson, Morena Tartari

The meeting discussed in overview the reports from each task force and key recommendations for addressing the financial challenges facing the society. The Division noted some of the challenges for people attending the conference in the current climate where conference budgets are often under threat and where some international colleagues are both unwilling and unable to travel to the US in the current political climate. The meeting discussed the various recommendations and whether there was merit in considering a merger with another division given the recommendation to consider further consolidation of divisions. EJ noted that in the

task force discussions there was recognition of agency being maintained for the membership to make decisions about willingness to merge, and if so with whom? AN and MS suggested that if a merger was required, the Global Division would be the most likely/compatible with the aims and focus of the E & T Division, in part because we tend to think of our core environmental problems as being global in scope, but also because the role of technology (including AI) has global implications. It was noted, however, that within the consolidation report there was mention of the Global Division linking with the Critical Race and Ethnic Study Division. If this went ahead then a merger between E & T and Global would be off the table. The meeting discussed the cut-off number for mergers noting that the original figure of 85 appeared to have been downsized to 75.

The meeting also discussed the proposal for cluster newsletters noting that this wouldn't save that much money. AN queried whether voluntarily reducing the number of conference sessions would get to the heart of the problem that Elroi had identified in respect of booking the conference venue and the space needed? EJ noted that the allocation of the same number of sessions irrespective of the size of the group risked seeming arbitrary and the Task Force report mentioned the number of sessions each group had based on the preliminary programme. The meeting noted the confirmation from the incoming President that for 2026 each division could have up to five co-sponsored sessions, but the Division would seek three based on the proposals discussed at the meeting (subject to discussions with the other divisions). The meeting was broadly in favour of the idea that less conference sessions could be booked and/or that sessions could be allocated proportionally.

ACTION: The meeting concluded that if a merger were required based on membership numbers, then a merger with the Global Division was most likely/preferred. But the views of the wider membership would be required to ensure that any merger would be acceptable and would not, in fact, lose members. The meeting also agreed to put forward the five sessions discussed as the preliminary list of sessions rather than seeking the full number of sessions (subject to Division agreement) and to see how this impacts on division representation at the 2026 conference.

VIII. **Newsletter Items and Publications**

- a. AN identified that the Division should now be seeking items for the next Division newsletter including updates on job changes, publications etc. An email will be sent out to the membership after the conference to solicit items. Any relevant materials to be sent to AN as Chair.

b. Division Publications

The division has sought ways to increase publication opportunities for its members and there has been some progress on this. - A contract has been signed for an edited collection *Key Debates in Environmental Sociology* to be published by Elgar Publications and edited by AN and Laura McKinney (former division chair). The book's chapters were primarily sourced from E & T papers delivered at previous conferences and the deadline for submission to the publisher is November 2025 with publication expected in 2026.

- A second publication, a textbook on *Teaching Environmental Problems* was proposed at the Montreal conference, with the provisional publication target SSSP's Presidential Series published by Rowman and Littlefield. Since the Montreal conference AN had contacted Rowman and Littlefield who confirmed that the SSSP Presidential series was no longer publishing. Rowman and Littlefield had also subsequently been taken over by Bloomsbury. However, Bloomsbury had expressed interest in receiving a proposal for the book and in publishing it under its environmental studies list.

- Special Issue of *Social Problems* journal – AN attended the 'Publishing with Social Problems' session at the Montreal conference and had discussed with Michael Long as a representative of the journal's editorial team the feasibility of developing a special E & T issue of the journal. Michael advised to revisit this in the new year (i.e. 2025). The meeting discussed the requirements for a special issue based on recent special issues of the journal. The discussion identified that approximately 11 papers would be required and that the quality threshold is necessarily quite high with a need to perhaps also identify a specific theme for the issue. MS volunteered to be a co-editor with AN if a special issue could be pursued. AN to contact the journal editors to identify core requirements and to then work with MS for an appropriate call for papers as required.

ACTION – AN to contact those who had identified a willingness to contribute to a textbook and to work with others to develop a proposal for Bloomsbury. AN and MS to contact the editorial team for *Social Problems* to confirm the requirements and possible timescales for a special issue and to subsequently develop the necessary call for papers from within the Division as required.

IX. Any Other Business?
None