

## **Minutes of the Health, Health Policy, & Health Services Division 2025 Business Meeting**

July 16, 2025 – 2:00 pm EST

**Attendees:** Virginia (Ginger) Kuulei Berndt, Jennifer Bulanda, Gabby Gomez, Erica Jablonski, Deborah Lefkowitz, Liku Menberu

### **1) Announcements**

- a. We will be exploring ways to get other Division members' feedback on the SSSP efforts to potentially merge Divisions.

### **2) Introductions**

### **3) Recognition of Outgoing and Incoming Co-Chairs**

- a. Outgoing Co-Chair Virginia Kuulei Berndt, McDaniel College- thank you to Ginger for her excellent work co-chairing the Division from 2023-2025!
- b. Incoming Co-Chair Jennifer Roebuck Bulanda (2025-2027), Miami University

### **4) Recognition of Division Award Winners**

- a. Outstanding Scholarship Award Winner – Ariana Thompson-Lastad
- b. Graduate Student Paper Competition Award Winner – Gabby Gomez

### **5) Nominations for Division Positions**

- a. Initial call for nominations; another official call will be sent in Fall 2025
  - i. Graduate Student Paper Competition Award Committee – members needed
    - 1. Gabby Gomez has volunteered to serve on the Graduate Student Paper Competition Award Committee and will respond to the official Call for Members.
  - ii. Outstanding Scholarship Award Committee – members needed
  - iii. Newsletter Editor – Virginia Berndt has been serving in this role and is willing to continue. There was initially a small stipend associated with this role, which Virginia feels she no longer needs now that she is in a full-time faculty role. If a graduate student or someone who has financial need would like to serve as Newsletter Editor we can discuss reinstating the stipend.
  - iv. Co-Chair to begin in August 2026 – nominees needed

### **6) Annual Meeting Updates**

- a. 2025 Annual Meeting updates - We had so many submissions to the "Pursing Racial Justice to Improve Health Inequities" that we split it into two sessions. We are also offering a thematic session, "Insurgent Sociology in Health Care" as well as a variety of other sessions co-sponsored with other Divisions.
- b. 2026 Annual Meeting Planning – Call for organizers and/or session ideas
  - i. Members asked for more details about how sessions are decided. Our Division is allocated two sole sessions and five co-sponsored sessions. Initial decisions for 2026 sessions are made at the 2025 Annual Meeting during Council of Chairs sessions in which Divisions collaborate on co-sponsored sessions. Sessions are finalized during Fall 2025, and then the Call for Papers is released to the full SSSP membership. Topic ideas offered in today's Division business meeting will be used to inform the planning sessions at the Annual Meeting in August.
  - ii. A member asked if there will be virtual attendance option at the 2026 meeting. Currently there are not plans to offer a virtual attendance option due to the extremely high cost of an online platform and management in addition to the in-person cost.

- iii. Ideas for potential topic sessions: Caregivers, care recipients, and health; How care providers are navigating policy and structural shifts; Disability and navigation of the health care system; Home health care and current policy implications; Immigration and health care access; Broad “catchall” session that can encompass many members’ work, such as a session on health inequity; medical fatphobia/weight stigma.

#### **7) Review of 2026 Division budget**

- a. SSSP allocates up to \$600 per year to each Division. Traditionally, our Division has split this \$600 into four \$150 allocations: an award for the Outstanding Scholarship Award winner, an award for the Outstanding Graduate Student Paper winner, our contribution to the Division reception at the Annual Meeting, and a stipend for our Newsletter Editor. We have been asked by SSSP to cut costs where possible due to the financial strain SSSP is experiencing. We have eliminated the \$150 Newsletter Editor stipend, as Virginia has been serving in this role and does not feel she needs the stipend, though it could be reinstated for someone who has financial need (e.g., a graduate student).
- b. Discussion of whether we should cut the \$150 allocation for the Outstanding Scholarship Award winner, as people nominated for this award are often further along in their career and less in need of the \$150 award. Attendees were supportive of this idea. The wider membership will be asked to provide feedback on this idea before the subsequent year’s budget is submitted.

#### **8) Potential Merger of Divisions**

- a. In response to the financial stress SSSP is experiencing, one option for decreasing costs would be a merger of Divisions. Another idea is to have “clusters” with related Divisions embedded within. Clusters would decide on budgetary requests and decisions about budget allocations and annual meeting sessions would then be nuanced and dependent on the composition of the clusters. Discussion was generally supportive of Division merger where there is substantial topic and membership overlap. This discussion will continue over the coming year.

Meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Jennifer Bulanda