

Report from the Executive Officer – 2026
Prepared for the Board of Directors by Elroi Windsor
July 28, 2026

This year represented the beginning of my second three-year contract with SSSP. It has been an honor to serve this organization as the Executive Officer. Over the last few years, I have grown more confident in my understanding of how SSSP must adapt to meet the needs of our changing times. We can no longer proceed with business as usual. Our organization and our global society demand actions that build a sustainable future.

Since our 75th anniversary meeting in 2025, SSSP members have been busy reflecting on where we have been and what we can do to last another 75 years. I have contemplated the question of how SSSP can thrive under increasingly challenging circumstances. We are changing how we do things, revising what doesn't work and considering how we do the work better, or do it differently. With the insights of our members, we are always entertaining creative alternatives that will sustain our work. My report this year provides an overview of what I see as SSSP's most critical challenges, as well as opportunities for change. I offer sincere gratitude to my colleagues and close with four action items that relate to SSSP's current contexts.

Opportunities for Change amidst Ongoing Challenges

Financial challenges remain a top priority. The past few years of reports from the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee and SSSP's Treasurer beg our attention. Consequently, the Board of Directors has been reducing SSSP's expenses in prudent ways, and continues to do so. We have made changes, some more difficult than others, but always necessary for the preservation of the Society.

To address budget shortfalls, we are thinking strategically about how we can expand our existing revenue streams while developing new ones. Several committees and individuals have hosted diverse virtual events for members to expand the benefits of belonging to SSSP. In 2025, the Development Committee continued effective fundraising initiatives, receiving a slightly higher total from donors compared to 2024, which had already tripled the amount from 2023. This past April, I attended the Oxford Journals Executive Summit, which highlighted trends in academic publishing, showcased innovative publishing tools, and presented ideas for addressing ongoing geopolitical challenges. Key takeaways from the Summit informed Action Items 2 and 3 below.

Declines in membership warrant critical reflection in many ways. SSSP's Divisions have worked for years to consider ways they can combine efforts and rethink their budgets. Similar attention to the organization of SSSP's committees can also help preserve members' time and alleviate administrative burden, especially when there are fewer people available to do a lot of the work or when committees with multiple members have

minimal tasks. To better respect and preserve the time volunteered by SSSP members, committees could be restructured. Conversations have begun under the leadership of President Sarah Jane Brubaker and have included an examination of awards committees and their potential for consolidation. I have had other discussions with members of the Anti-Harassment Committee, the Accessibility Committee, and the Transnational Initiatives Committee on possible reconfigurations as a Committee on Community Accountability. The Permanent Organization and Strategic Planning Committee would be a reasonable place to assess committee restructuring, which I recommend as Action Item 4.

Importantly, SSSP has reached a point where we are reevaluating the organization's staffing structure. This past year, the Board established an Ad Hoc Paid Position Restructuring Committee to assess the tasks associated with the positions within the Administrative and Executive Offices. This process aligns with the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee's efforts to review the organization's budget and identify areas where expenses can be reduced. However, reviewing personnel costs differs from other budget-cutting exercises because this process involves people – people who have been devoted to the organization for many years, even decades. I know that the volunteers involved in this difficult task will take a humanistic approach that aligns with SSSP's values and prioritizes the people behind these positions as much as possible. They understand the need to face the realities of our organization within this current climate. Beginning in August 2026, SSSP will have a staff structure of two full-time administrative positions, two part-time administrative positions, and one part-time executive position. From my vantage point, SSSP can adapt to the times, investing in a structure that supports strategic direction and visionary work alongside efforts to sustain day-to-day operations.

With Gratitude

As we prepare to attend the 76th Annual Meeting of SSSP, I am excited to witness how participants engage with the theme of “Resisting Colonization of Lifeworlds” chosen by our President, Sarah Jane Brubaker. I am hopeful we will “build and sustain community through solidarity, love and mutual care, and participatory engagement in civic life” within the communities that SSSP represents. This year's Program Committee delivered stellar opportunities both in person and online. I am impressed by their work, chaired by Hadi Khoshnevis, with members Victor Tan Chen, Zehra Sahin Ilkorkor, and Atticus Wolfe. With gratitude to the compelling sessions organized by our Division leaders, I know we will continue to work on behalf of our mission – a steadfast commitment to pursuing social justice.

Throughout the year, many SSSP members volunteer their time to shape our organization. I thank these volunteer members who serve on committees and extend special appreciation for everyone working in SSSP leadership – Board members, Officers, the *Social Problems* editorial team, and Chairs of Divisions and Committees.

In addition to SSSP's volunteers, I remain grateful to work with a team of committed professional 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). These individuals make everything easier, often behind the scenes, and I appreciate their dedication. My best wishes are extended to Rachel Cogburn as she transitions into retirement after dutifully serving SSSP for nearly 10 years.

Concluding Thoughts

People often suggest to me, "SSSP should [fill in the blank on some kind of action]." My response is often, "Great – here's how you do that." I say this because SSSP is not an amorphous, abstract entity. It is a community of people who have the tools to make changes. You are SSSP. We are SSSP. SSSP is a member-driven community that belongs to all of us. I am always happy to illuminate the pathways for members to make change.

Right now, the American Sociological Association is facing a boycott of their 2026 Annual Meeting organized by Sociologists for Palestine. Countless scholars are participating, and some of those who felt disenfranchised reached out to SSSP for help. I feel tremendous gratitude to work with SSSP leaders who answered that call and provided space to accommodate those who were participating in the boycott. That kind of allyship represents the heart of what SSSP stands for. And as we envision what our scholar-activist organization can become, incoming President David Embrick's 2027 Annual Meeting theme – "Building Communities for Radical Change" – sounds like exactly what we need.

I hope that everyone participating in SSSP's Annual Meeting hears something inspiring, finds something joyful, and feels moved to act in pursuit of social justice.

Action Items from the Executive Officer

Action Item 1: The Board of Directors should draft a policy on recording SSSP meetings.

- *Proposed Language:*

Official meetings within the SSSP, either in-person or virtually, shall not be recorded using audio or video technology, or within software platforms, including the use of automatic meeting transcriptions and AI-generated technologies. With the approval of the President or meeting Chair, exceptions may be granted only for the Secretary or note-taker who may audio-record the meeting to foster accuracy in drafting meeting minutes, such that these recordings are kept on a personal device and deleted upon the approval of the minutes.

Rationale:

The Covid era facilitated greater comfort with virtual meetings and associated technologies. Advances in technologies have been accompanied by increasing concerns about privacy and surveillance amidst rising threats to academic freedom and civil liberties. In addition, the Executive Officer is aware of questionable practices within virtual meetings that warrant review. To protect the confidentiality of SSSP business and the activities of SSSP members, SSSP needs a policy that limits audio- and video- recording of its activities.

Action Item 2: Add the Executive Officer as a non-voting, ex officio member of the Editorial and Publications Committee.

Rationale:

Income from publications represents a significant portion of the Society's revenue. Rapid changes in the academic publication industry demand attention. Involving the Executive Officer in this Committee ensures that financial considerations for the Society are interwoven with the Committee's attention to scholarly qualities of publications work. The Executive Officer can share insights from the Oxford Journals Executive Summit in more directly applicable ways, complementing the existing participation of the Chair of the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee, who serves as a voting, ex officio member.

Action Item 3: Institute quarterly meetings between the Executive Officer, the Editor(s) of the *Social Problems* journal, and the journal publisher.

Rationale:

Historically, publishing *Social Problems* provided reliable revenue to the Society, which allowed the journal Editor(s) to operate without much attention to the financial implications of their publishing decisions. However, recent changes within the academic publication industry have significantly impacted journals' potential for revenue generation. These changes mean that professional

organizations like SSSP can no longer rely on publishing as a predictable source of income. Instituting regular meetings between the Editor(s), the Executive Officer, and the publisher allows more opportunities for dialogue and collaboration such that financial impacts can be considered alongside the publication visions of the Editor(s). Regular meetings also help the Editor(s) and Executive Officer discuss innovations presented within publisher forums, such as innovations, tools, and insights presented at the Oxford Journals Executive Summit.

Action Item 4: Charge the Permanent Organization and Strategic Planning Committee (POSPC) to consolidate committees within the organization.

Rationale: With dwindling membership, the Society would be better served by making more efficient use of volunteers. Revising committees aligns with existing consolidation efforts among SSSP's Divisions and reduces staff labor by requiring fewer points of contact.

The charge is best suited for the POSPC, whose duties from the By-Laws include: "...a) the critical survey of the functioning of the Society; (b) the development of proposals for the improvement of the organization and operation of the Society; (c) the examination of the distribution of functions between volunteer members and paid staff for more effective achievement of organizational objectives; (d) initiate the process of planning for new goals and future development for the Society...."