

# Disabilities Division

Society for the Study of Social Problems

## Statement from the Chair

Val Leiter

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Happy spring!

We are fortunate to have two wonderful candidates for co-chair of our division, Alexis Bender and Laura Lorenz. Thank you, Alexis and Laura, for your willingness to run and serve our division. They have each provided brief biographical sketches which are included here, in advance of the formal ballot later this spring.

I hope that everyone will consider running for a SSSP-wide office. It would be terrific to have representation from our division in other parts of the organization. SSSP is very open to learning about how to address disability issues better and we can assist them by providing advice through leadership positions. For example, in the past year, SSSP added the option for members to make a contribution to an accessibility fund for the annual meetings, to help pay for accommodations that go beyond what the organization can afford.

This was the direct result of advocacy by one of our division members.

The annual call for resolutions has not yet gone out to divisions, but that's no reason why we have to wait to consider possible resolutions. SSSP asks each division to develop at least one resolution each year, which will be put before the council of chairs and the membership at the annual meeting in Las Vegas. I'm happy to brainstorm with you about any ideas you may have. Perhaps something you read or see about disabilities in the next month or so will catch your attention and spur you to think of a resolution. If that happens, feel free to e-mail me with your idea.

Finally, I would like to thank Jeremy Brunson, for his work as co-chair on behalf of the division in the past year. I know that I leave the division in good hands in August.

I look forward to seeing you in Las Vegas. So many sociologists in such a weird place—it should be the best people watching ever!

Best,

Val Leiter

Renewing your SSSP membership soon? There is now an opportunity to make contributions to the SSSP accommodations fund, to help pay for accommodations for participants with disabilities at the annual meetings. Look for this new way to contribute to accessibility on the on-line renewal system.

## Call for Nominations

Nominations are open for candidates to run in the 2012 General Election. We will be electing a President-Elect, a Vice-President Elect, regular and student members of the Board of Directors, members of the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee, Committee on Committees, Editorial and Publications Committee, and the Membership and Outreach Committee. Please consider nominating a colleague or yourself for one of these offices by completing the online nomination form (<http://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/pageid/1082/>).

Nominations should include a brief description of the nominee's SSSP involvement and other relevant experiences. The Nominations Committee will meet at the Annual Meeting in Las Vegas, NV. All nominations should be submitted prior to June 15, 2011. The Board of Directors will approve the slate of candidates for the 2012 General Election on August 21, 2011. If you have any questions, please contact Stephani Williams directly at [stephani.williams@gmail.com](mailto:stephani.williams@gmail.com)



## The Lurie Institute for Disability Policy Announces New Postdoctoral Research Training Program in Disability Policy

The Lurie Institute for Disability Policy is pleased to announce the availability of a new post-doctoral research training program in disability policy research. We invite applications from qualified candidates for one- or two-year fellowships. Advanced training is available under the mentorship of the nationally-recognized faculty of the Heller School for Social Policy and Management. This disability policy postdoctoral training program is part of the Heller School's intellectually vibrant community. Qualified candidates are invited to join a community that thrives on rigorous research, interdisciplinary collaboration, and supports the mission of knowledge advancing social justice. A range of exciting research opportunities is available to fellows, including investigations of the health and well-being of children and adults with disabilities and their caregiving families.

The primary goal of this fellowship is to prepare scholars to conduct rigorous research that can be applied in today's complex policy environment. Training of post-doctoral fellows will include immediate engagement in an existing research program coupled with opportunities to develop skills in preparing grant proposals, managing research projects, developing scholarly articles and scientific presentations and disseminating findings to advocates and policy makers. Fellows will also have the opportunity to develop their own independent research programs.

Applicants must have received their doctoral degrees within the past three years. Applicants with earned doctorates in disability studies, economics, public health, public policy, social work, and sociology are particularly encouraged. Fellowships are available for one or two years.

Competitive stipends are available, based on experience. In addition, fellows are eligible to enroll in Brandeis University's health and dental insurance programs. The position also includes a travel fund to support the presentation of the fellow's scholarship at scientific conferences.

Applicants should submit a curriculum vita and two letters of reference. Copies of relevant publications and a brief, 1-2 page statement of research experience and fellowship goals must be provided for full consideration. Review of applications will begin immediately; appointment dates are flexible.

Submit application electronically to:  
[slp@brandeis.edu](mailto:slp@brandeis.edu)

Susan L. Parish, PhD, MSW  
Nancy Lurie Marks Professor of Disability Policy and  
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## Money for Students!!

### Call for Papers Graduate Student Paper Award

**Deadline: May 1, 2011**

The Disabilities Division is pleased to announce its 2011 Graduate Student Paper Competition. Papers may be empirical or theoretical, may concern any social aspect of disability, and should not exceed 30 double-spaced pages. They should be prepared for anonymous review. Current graduate students and recent graduates (who received their degrees after December 2010) may submit a paper if it was written while still a student. Co-authored papers are acceptable as long as all the listed authors are current graduate students. Double submission to other SSSP award competitions will be disqualified. The award recipient will be required to present the winning paper at the 2011 SSSP Annual Meeting in Chicago. Thus it is strongly recommended that an abstract of the paper be submitted to a Disabilities Division session by the January 31st deadline. The recipient will receive a monetary prize of \$100, student membership in SSSP, SSSP conference registration, and a ticket to the SSSP awards banquet. Send an electronic copy of the paper (in Word format) and a cover letter identifying your graduate program to: Val Leiter at [valerie.leiter@simmons.edu](mailto:valerie.leiter@simmons.edu).

#### News of Note

Please send any news of note to Alexis Bender, newsletter editor, at [alexisbender@gmail.com](mailto:alexisbender@gmail.com) or Val Leiter at [Valerie.leiter@simmons.edu](mailto:Valerie.leiter@simmons.edu)

#### SDS annual conference information!!

[http://www.disstudies.org/conference/2011\\_conference/2011\\_conference](http://www.disstudies.org/conference/2011_conference/2011_conference)

#### Student documentary about Abelism

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lujfjhQXLfk&feature=related>

## Candidates for Co-Chair

**Alexis Bender** has been a member of SSSP since 2004. As a member of the division since its inception and the current newsletter editor, Alexis is dedicated to the division's success within the society. Alexis is a doctoral candidate at Georgia State University in Atlanta, GA and will be defending her dissertation in June. Her research focuses on the transitions and trajectories following spinal cord injury (SCI). Her Master's thesis examined the lived experiences of black and white men following SCI and she was awarded the graduate student paper award for a paper based on this research. A portion of this project, titled "Secrets and Magic Pills: Constructing Masculinity and Sexual 'Normalcy' Following Spinal Cord Injury" is forthcoming in Carpenter and DeLamater's edited book, *Sexuality Over the Life Course*. Her dissertation, titled *Patients, Partners, and Practitioners: Interactions and Meaning-Making Following Spinal Cord Injury*, examines how marital couples experience the non-normative transition to life with spinal cord injury. This is a longitudinal study of how couples negotiate the rehabilitation institution and how the institution shapes the construction of change narratives following injury. Additionally, her current research examines the structural influences in the caregiving relationship from both sides of the couple, especially early in the injury experience. Following the completion of her degree, Alexis will begin a postdoctoral fellowship with the US Army Public Health Command.

**Laura Lorenz** is a senior research associate and lecturer in the Institute for Behavioral Health of the Schneider Institutes for Health Policy, Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University in Waltham, MA. Laura studies lived experience with brain injury and psychological health using participatory visual methods and narrative analysis methods. She teaches an undergraduate course, introduction to social policy, at Brandeis under the Social Justice/Social Policy minor, and mentors graduate students seeking to learn about brain injury policy and visual and narrative methods of research and analysis in policy research. Much of her research since 2004 has focused on including the perspectives of individuals living with disabilities in policy-making and practice-improvement processes. Laura has presented and published on identity after brain injury, the patient-provider relationship, issues of voice and representation in health policy research, and the use of visual research methods to involve communities in health. Her book *Brain Injury Survivors: Narratives of Rehabilitation and Healing* is published by Lynne Rienner Publishers under their series *Disability in Society*. Laura received her PhD in social policy from Brandeis University (2008) and a Master of Education (Instructional Design/Adult Education) from the University of Massachusetts Boston (2001). She is a Certified Brain Injury Specialist (CBIS). Before coming to Brandeis, Laura worked for more than 20 years in international development as a photojournalist, writer, editor, and educator for agencies such as UNICEF, World Food Programme, CARE, and the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Laura is a member of SSSP since 2005.