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EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS

Educational Problems Division Newsletter of the Society for the Study of Social Problems

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Greetings From the Chair...

Winter is upon us and we can reflect on our accomplishments as we gear towards the spring. We also can think about our exciting conference in San Francisco. The 2008 Presidential election made history as Barak Obama became the first African American elected President of the United States. Yet, in San Francisco we will be discussing "Race, Ethnicity, and the Continuing Problem of the Color Line." Perhaps we have already solved the problem of race or perhaps our work is beginning anew...

Despite the woes of the economy, we in the academy must remain optimistic. For those of us charged with teaching future leaders, we must always believe that there is a better tomorrow. At our annual meeting in Boston, colleagues participated and presented provocative essays, papers and findings that provided for much discussion and debate. A good time was had by all!

The Call for Papers for next year's annual meeting is listed on page 3 of this newsletter. There is a new online submission process. Sharon, Sarah and Michele have worked very hard with programmers in developing this new process—thank you! I encourage you to submit your paper and share your knowledge with the academy and the public. Information regarding the Student Paper Competition can be found on page 4. In the past we have had great contributions by students and we hope to keep that tradition going!

It is also time to elect a new Chair of the Division. Please send me your nominations. As always, self-nominations are accepted. This is a dynamic Division and I would like to encourage you to serve the Division as Chair!

Please send me any news or information that you would like to share with the Division. I wish you and your families safe and pleasant holidays!

Otis Grant, Division Chair (2007-2009)

Race, Ethnicity, and the Continuing Problem of the Color Line

59th Annual Meeting of the Society for the Study of Social Problems

August 7-9, 2008

San Francisco, CA

FUTURE MEETINGS...

2010 ~ Atlanta, GA

2011 ~ Chicago, IL

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The President-Elect and the Promise of Education

~ Otis B. Grant, *Indiana University South Bend*

Barack Obama's campaign for the Oval Office began with the publication of his book *The Audacity of Hope*. The book represented a self-fulfilling prophecy. Throughout the campaign he was considered the underdog, with virtually no chance to win the Presidency. Notwithstanding, the media socially constructed Obama to be the symbolic (re)representation of Martin Luther King, Jr., and it is from this post-structural realm that Obama's optimistic leadership can provide a space from which teachers can tap into their inexhaustible well of hope and optimism.

Policy makers and the general public demand high student achievement, decreased dropout rates, and other positive "outcomes." As a policy maker, Obama envisions schools that truly care about students and provide them with individualized opportunities to learn and develop. Accordingly, his "audacity of hope" must manifest into means of production and tangible goals.

Hope has always been a mainstay in the Black community. For African Americans hope is a belief, that in spite of evidence to the contrary, the circumstances of a people, and the will of a nation can be transformed into something that the Founding Fathers envisioned, but could not actually achieve. Like Dr. King, teachers believe in hope and much to the chagrin of those who sought

to oppress, teachers have dared to put their actions towards those hopes. Indeed, it is the notion of hope, fostered by teachers and coupled with organized resistance that led to woman suffrage, the end of slavery and Jim Crow, the rise of the middle class, and the election of the nation's first African American President. Teachers spreading hope have led to the ending of wars and the founding of nations. As many a tyrant can attest, never underestimate the power of a teacher.

A new President usually initiates education reform which is subsequently posed in political ideology. President George W. Bush engaged in education reform with his No Child Left Behind initiatives. For Obama, the question is simple: What does he have to offer us beyond hope? Here, there is evidence that suggests his initiatives might encompass a broader range of reform policies. This is because Obama's vision suggests a broader, more diverse range of citizenry. His political posture is more likely to highlight America's (pre)disposition to focus on childhood, adolescence, and the less fortunate. Though such presumptions actualize more acutely for those socially constructed to be more valuable than others, it does nevertheless, provide a solid foundation and the symbolic interaction to envision a more hopeful future. A mere symbol perhaps, but teachers have created miracles out of much less.



Educational Problems Division Sponsored and Co-Sponsored Sessions 2009 Annual Meeting Call for Papers

Sessions

Session 40: Teaching About Race in the Color-blind Era (THEMATIC)

Organizers: Kristine Macomber and Sarah Rusche

Session 30: Representing Disabilities in Social Problems Textbooks

(co-sponsored with Disabilities, Social Problems Theory and Teaching Social Problems)

Organizer: Kathleen Lowney

Session 41: Teaching About Crime and Juvenile Delinquency

(Program Committee sponsored; co-sponsored with Crime and Juvenile Delinquency, Law and Society, Racial and Ethnic Minorities and Teaching Social Problems)

Organizer: Otis Grant

Session 42: Teaching About Human Rights

(Program Committee sponsored; co-sponsored with Global, Law and Society, Poverty, Class and Inequality, Racial and Ethnic Minorities and Teaching Social Problems)

Organizer: Otis Grant

Session 43: Institutional Technologies of Education

(co-sponsored with Institutional Ethnography)

Organizer: Lois Andre-Bechely

New online submission process!

Go to www.sssp1.org for SSSP Online Submission procedures.

Deadline for submissions: January 31, 2009.

2008 STUDENT PAPER COMPETITION

Call for Papers

The Educational Problems Division announces its **2009 Graduate Student Paper Competition**. Papers must address a contemporary educational problem and may be empirical or theoretical in nature. Authors must be current graduate students or recent graduates with conferral dates no earlier than January 2009. Only unpublished, single-author papers will be considered. Papers must not exceed 30 double-spaced pages (excluding notes, references, tables and figures). All papers must include a 150-200 word abstract and be prepared for anonymous review with the author's name and institutional affiliation appearing only on the title page. Winners will receive a small monetary prize, student membership in the SSSP, conference registration to the 2009 SSSP annual meeting and a complimentary ticket to the awards banquet at which all winners will be recognized. The recipient will also have the opportunity to present the paper at the 2009 SSSP conference held in San Francisco, CA.

All papers must be submitted electronically (as an attachment) to the Division Chair, Otis Grant (ogrant@iusb.edu). Please include your name, institutional affiliation and contact information in the body of your email.

Deadline for submissions: May 15, 2009

2009 CALL FOR PAPERS

NEW ONLINE SUBMISSION PROCESS!

The Call for Papers for the 2009 Annual Meeting is now available. All Conference submissions must be received electronically via this online submission process. All papers must be submitted by midnight (EST) on January 31, 2009 in order to be considered. See page 3 of this newsletter for the Call for Papers and visit www.sssp1.org for more information.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS—EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS DIVISION

Call for nominations!!! Now's the time to be bold!! Come, lead our Division!!!

Our Division is currently soliciting nominations for Division Chair.

Please send nominations to Otis Grant (ogrant@iusb.edu) by February 15, 2009.

Self-nominations are welcomed!

Of Special Interest...

Social Problems Journal Now Online!

Social Problems is now available online for all SSSP members. Visit www.sssp1.org for complimentary access... All versions from 2001 to current are available!

Manuscript submission process... *Social Problems* has implemented an all electronic manuscript submission process.

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2009 General Election Candidates

Biographical data is provided for each candidate for elected positions. The General Election ballot will be distributed on March 15, 2009. Members can vote until midnight (EST) on April 15, 2009.

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Be sure to check out the SSSP website at www.sssp1.org for employment and fellowship opportunities!

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For more information regarding the Educational Problems Division, please contact:

Otis Grant

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Indiana University South Bend

ogrant@iusb.edu

