July 7, 2009

To: SSSP Board of Directors

From: A. Javier Treviño, Chair SSSP 2009 Annual Meeting Program Committee

Re: SSSP Program Committee Report 2009

It was an honor and a privilege to have served as Chair of the Program Committee for the 2009 Annual Meeting of the Society for the Study of Social Problems. My work and that of the Committee members benefitted immeasurably from the assistance, support and guidance provided by Michele Koontz and her staff, Sharon Shumaker (Administrative Assistant and Webmaster) and Sarah Hendricks (Graduate Research Associate). Their help is especially appreciated since this was the year we initiated and employed a new, and improved, software package for collecting and organizing program information (about which more below). Additionally, Michele worked tirelessly, with much of her work being behind-the-scenes, to give the program coherence and structure. I cannot imagine how many hours she, Sharon and Sarah, as well as computer programmer Janice Tocher, spent identifying and working out the numerous "glitches" in the new software program. In addition to her other duties Sarah was a tremendous help in following up with all meeting participants who were exempted from paying the registration fee. She also took care of refunding registrations fees of participants who were not able to attend the meetings.

I also want to thank and acknowledge the contributions of the other members of the Program Committee. Hoan N. Bui organized all three of the Student Award Winning Paper sessions. Mitchell Berbrier submitted two sessions to the Call for Papers. Otis B. Grant organized two thematic sessions, each with various co-sponsoring Divisions. Michelle A. Harris selected and will screen 3 films for the Film Exhibit, and also invited the directors/producers of two of the films for post-viewing discussion. Karen M. McCormack chaired the Personal Mentoring Program and, to date, has matched 14 mentors and mentees. Last but not least, I'm grateful to President Steven E. Barkan for suggesting several thematic sessions, 2 of which he organized, as well as for his guidance and encouragement throughout.

As previously mentioned, this year we implemented a new software program for submissions. The software was developed specifically for SSSP by computer programmer, Janice Tocher. Michele, Sharon, Sarah and Janice worked countless hours making the online program as efficient and streamlined as possible. As such, they did all the testing on the system and suggested and implemented modifications to make the submission process easier. They also did line-by-line editing of the program.

Michele, Sarah and Sharon prepared a very thorough and informative list of FAQs. The Committee recommends that this list be used again in subsequent years to aid participants with the submission process. Regrettably, there were some people who did not consult

the list and thus did not properly follow the instructions for submission. There were 19 individuals who began the process of submission, but never completed (finalized) the process.

It should be pointed out that there were a couple of scenarios not anticipated by the software, but which will be expected next year. The first of these is that not all sessions received enough submissions. This meant that these sessions had to be cancelled. The second unanticipated issue is there was a need to shuffle papers among Division-sponsored sessions. Concerning this second matter, session organizers could move papers between their own sessions, but for reasons of security (internal control) they were not able to move papers between sessions generally. We believe that while it is important to give session organizers control of their (co-) sponsored sessions, it is also necessary that there be administrative control over the overall program.

The Program Committee makes the following 8 recommendations to the Board:

1. This year there were 15 Divisions that originally made requests for co-sponsoring more than 4 sessions. Although there will always be some Divisions that organize an abundance of sessions, other Divisions will only sponsor one or two. *In the interest of balance the Program Committee recommends that the number of co-sponsored session for each Division be limited to four (4).*

2. *The Program Committee recommends that the Board determine whether the Program Committee can/should fund leaders and speakers of workshops and sessions sponsored by the Divisions.* A related question is, Should the Program Committee fund workshops that it co-sponsors with a Division? This year 2 Divisions—the Disability Division and the Family Division—inquired about such funding. In each case, the Divisions were told that the Committee does not typically fund such endeavors and that they should seek other sources of funding.

3. During the annual retreat in October 2008 the Executive Office made recommendations for the inclusion of 3 types of workshops and sessions in the 2009 program. These recommendations were: "(1) workshops for graduate students and other individuals on negotiating the academic job market; (2) a session specifically on social action, highlighting the work of the Social Action Award winner; (3) a panel featuring Minority Scholarship Award winners from past year(s)." All 3 of the Executive Office's recommendations were implemented in this year's program.

In few instances these recommendations proved challenging to accomplish, mainly because there were no guidelines to follow. In general, however, thanks to the diligent efforts of the organizers the sessions were successfully organized and thus the Executive Office mandate was fulfilled.

As regards the first recommendation above, Kimberly J. Cook easily reprised, as organizer and presider, her very successful workshop: "Looking for Work in Academia: How to Navigate the Job Market." Ariana L. Bohm organized a panel on "Previous

Minority Scholarship Award Winners" by contacting past winners and inviting them to participate. Wendy Simonds organized the session, "Spotlight on the SSSP Social Action Award Winner." In an effort to establish one specific guideline for this particular session, the *Committee recommends that all Social Action Award winner(s) be required to attend the Social Action Award session.* This would ensure that this session happens.

4. This year there were 511 papers accepted for the program. Below is a summary of the total:

Abstract only: 343 (67%)
Abstract and paper: 61 (12%)
Paper: 72 (14%)
None: 4 (1%)
Session organizer submitted paper information (no abstract or paper): 31 (6%)

The Program Committee recommends that the Board examine the issue of whether we should move to abstract only or continue to offer the abstract/paper option. This recommendation arises from the fact that, in some cases, tables and other computations were skewed during electronic submission of complete papers. We believe that in most cases a well-written abstract suffices for the purposes of determining paper acceptance and placement.

5. This year twenty-one exemptions were granted for presenters meeting any of the following criteria: (A) Non-students who are unemployed and/or receiving monthly financial assistance to meet living expenses may request a waiver of registration fees to participate on the program. (B) Individuals from community, labor, and comparable organizations working on social problems or social justice issues who have been invited to serve on a panel or to make a presentation. (C) Non U.S. and non-Canadian scholars who are from less advantaged countries. (D) Co-authors of papers who will not be attending the meeting. One of the co-authors must be a paid registrant. Both co-authors must pay if both expect to attend the meeting. (E) Persons excused by direct request of the Program Committee Chair. The majority of these requests were made after the deadline of May 31st and all but one of the requests were approved.

The Committee recommends that, in the future, it be made clear to all who request exemptions that they must be current members of the Society in order to qualify for initial consideration of exemption.

6. The new submission process allowed session organizers to place, in a "repository," those papers which they could not use: either because they did not fit their session topic or because they were a surplus and therefore unable to accommodate them. The use of the repository system allowed a more efficient means for dealing with these papers. No repository papers were added to other already-established sessions. In the end there were 21 papers in the repository that I then placed in 5 sessions under catchall topics. In addition to these 5 sessions, the Committee sponsored or co-sponsored 21 sessions. *The Committee recommends the continued use of the repository in the future.*

7. This was also the first year that the Program Committee explicitly encouraged the formation of Tables in the Round. There were 6 roundtable sessions organized. These sessions accommodated 12 roundtables. *The Committee recommends the continued use of Tables in the Round.*

8. *The Committee recommends that the Board consider whether the Personal Mentoring Program should continue to be the responsibility of the Program Committee.* We raise this issue because the organization and implementation of the Personal Mentoring Program takes place independent of the meeting program.