

Report from the Executive Officer – 2024
Prepared for the Board of Directors by Elroi Windsor
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It has been a pleasure to serve the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP) as its Executive Officer since January 2023. Now that I have had the chance to work in the office for a full calendar year (and then some), I offer some reflections. Throughout 2023, I had the opportunity to understand the “season” of the duties associated with the position. This report includes hallmarks of this past term, some future plans, and expressions of gratitude.

Hallmarks of 2023

Responsibilities of the Executive Officer include an array of daily operational tasks along with broader ongoing work to ensure the sustainability of SSSP. Below, I highlight a few of the defining features affecting the Society.

- **Social Problems Updates**

This past year was an eventful year for our journal, *Social Problems*. We welcomed a new editorial team from Oklahoma State University: Drs. Andrew Fullerton, Michael Long, Rachel Schmitz, and Kelley Sittner. They officially began their term as editors in June of this year. I am confident that their vision for *Social Problems* will continue its rich tradition of publishing outstanding critical scholarship. They will surely benefit from the steady directions and leadership exhibited by our outgoing editorial team: Drs. Annulla Linders, Earl Wright II, and Derrick Brooms. I am grateful for their dedication to publishing excellent scholarship from diverse authors.

In addition, SSSP decided to negotiate a new contract with our journal publisher, Oxford University Press (OUP). Our contract with OUP was set to expire at the end of this year. Given the revenue stream tied to the journal and changes in the publishing industry, the Board of Directors approved opening a search for a new contract that would better position the Society in this ever-changing market. This search included a solicitation of bids from other publishers. After a careful review of promising proposals, we are pleased to continue our partnership with OUP. I cannot overemphasize how much time and effort went into this search. It was an exceptionally heavy lift for us, and I want to extend sincere thanks for the extraordinary service exhibited by the members of the Ad Hoc Publisher Search Committee: Alexis Bender, Heather Dillaway, Marlese Durr, Annulla Linders, and Nancy Mezey. In addition, I appreciate members of the Editorial and Publications Committee for their careful deliberations throughout this process: Marlese Durr, Yvonne Braun, Claire Renzetti, Alexis Bender, Luis Fernandez, Linda Waldron, Nancy Mezey, Kristen Budd, Annulla Linders, Earl Wright II, and Derrick Brooms.

- **Action and Activism**

As an organization committed to social justice, SSSP took an active role on a number of issues in the last 12 months. In December 2023, SSSP responded to attacks on sociology by submitting a Comment on the Removal of Sociology from General

Education in Florida. You can read this “Statement on Including Principles of Sociology” [here](#). Florida’s reactionary decision is just one example of regressive state and federal policies that target Black and brown communities, trans and queer folks, and poor people across the board. As political leaders try to dismantle initiatives that address racism and other systemic harms, I urge SSSP members to resist wherever and whenever possible.

Beyond these attacks, SSSP passed [Calls for an End to the Violence in the Middle East](#), which modified a statement passed by the American Anthropological Association. In April, we issued a [Statement on Campus Protests](#) regarding the repressive responses of police and university administrators to Pro-Palestinian encampments. As the global movement for Palestinian liberation carries on, I am reminded of the limitations of statements and resolutions amidst the heartbreaking material effects of genocide. I feel inspired by the activism and actions taking place in communities around the world.

As we engaged with these actions, it became apparent that we also needed to revisit our policies on and processes for proposing timely statements. For the first time in SSSP history, members submitted a petition to the Board of Directors to issue a statement. That “Statement in Support of Palestine” then went to the membership for a vote. Although the vote on that member-proposed statement was just shy of passing, the experience revealed a need for us to clarify the process. This then led to [By-Laws revisions](#), approved by the membership, which streamlined the process for issuing timely statements, and reinforced who could (the current President, Vice-President, and Executive Officer if in agreement) and who could not (the Executive Officer alone) issue statements needing an immediate response. Deciphering these processes was at times cumbersome, and I thank our Parliamentarian, Lauren Eastwood, for her keen interpretations and thorough review of *Robert’s Rules of Order* which helped guide SSSP leadership.

SSSP’s actions and activism must continue to align with our values and reinforce SSSP’s “commitment to publicly and explicitly combat racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and antisemitism,” as our [Anti-Harassment Policy](#) states. To this end, the Anti-Harassment Committee, under the sound leadership of Sarah Jane Brubaker, has made great strides in creating a culture where members are better equipped to respond to discriminatory and harassing behaviors that show up in our spaces. As an organization committed to social justice and accountable to our members, it is important for us to reflect the interests of our members in line with our mission. The Permanent Organization and Strategic Planning Committee is working to propose a more cohesive mission statement and values statements for SSSP. Like our partner organizations, SSSP leadership is accountable to its members, and it behooves us to take members’ feedback and engagement seriously.

- **Financial Analyses**

The Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee (BFA), Chaired by Nancy Mezey, has undergone careful analyses of the Society’s finances. Shepherded by the financial

diligence of Administrative Officer Michele Koontz, the BFA initiated difficult, but necessary, changes to the Society's spending. These decisions were informed by examining trends in revenue and expenses, illustrated in visual data created by our Information Technology Specialist, Rachel Cogburn. As these data make clear, SSSP cannot continue to increase its expenses without increasing its revenue. Our current financial trajectory is unsustainable.

With declines in revenue across the board, it is up to each of us, as members of SSSP, to reverse these trends. It is critical to do so if we want to continue enjoying the benefits of this organization. In addition to revisiting the rates of membership and meeting registration, we must also get creative by exploring alternative revenue streams.

Looking Forward

2025 marks the Society's 75th anniversary meeting. We are planning to commemorate this important milestone with some special events next year. I am excited to work with the leadership of President Rose Brewer, whose annual meeting theme of "Insurgent Sociology in a Time of Crises" is sure to draw attendees to Chicago to strategize for a more just future.

Our 75th anniversary also provides us with an opportunity to raise funds that will bolster the organization and sustain us into the future. Let's get creative. Let us not be afraid to take risks that move us beyond the status quo. As the Society faces continuous financial challenges, we will need to make important decisions that not only shield us from greater losses, but move the organization toward a pattern of growth. This will require difficult changes. Although the SSSP Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for approving changes, recommendations typically come from committees, which are of course made up of individual members. And as a member-driven organization, our Board represents members, and we have a commitment to act in ways that are consistent with our values.

To this end, I encourage SSSP members to get active in their committees, dialogue with each other, ask tough questions, and share your thoughts with SSSP leadership. I am always happy to talk with members about their concerns. Accordingly, I plan to engage members during the Town Hall at our Annual Meeting, within official SSSP business, and in conversations throughout the meetings and afterwards. This fall, the SSSP will survey members about future directions. I look forward to hearing from you. Together we can help SSSP thrive well into the future.

With Gratitude

As we prepare to attend the 74th Annual Meeting of SSSP, I appreciate the timely theme chosen by our President, Mary Bernstein: "Toward a Sociology of Violence." We have a thought-provoking program developed by Claire Renzetti, Chair of the Program Committee, with Committee Members Ligaya Lindio McGovern, Raja Staggers-Hakim, and Dolores Trevizo, as well as many different sessions organized by the Divisions that invite us to consider a wide range of scholarly projects. I thank these volunteers for assembling the engaging content that brings us together to share our ideas, critically

engage with important issues, and move toward realizing a practice of social justice. As the world around us contends with the brutal realities of ongoing violence, colonialism, genocide, and attacks on democracy, I echo President Bernstein's call for us to "draw on decades of sociological, anti-racist, feminist, and anti-colonial research to develop concrete solutions to the problem of violence."

Beyond our Annual Meeting activities, many volunteers generously offer their time to SSSP. I thank everyone who serves on committees within SSSP – your hard work helps make SSSP run. I am grateful to the exceptional service of our Division Chairs and Division Newsletter Editors, our elected Officers and Board of Directors, and the Editorial Teams responsible for publishing our prestigious *Social Problems* journal.

I am truly grateful to work alongside a team of highly competent administrative 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). Each of these people works diligently to run our organization, delivering exceptional and responsive support with efficiency and skill.

For everyone who has put in efforts to make SSSP the organization that it is today – thank you. For anyone interested in growing SSSP, I invite you to participate. Get involved and take an active role in making SSSP the organization you want it to be. All of us have a role to play, and all of us can effect change within this organization and beyond.