

2024 SSSP Student Report

July 29th, 2024

Shiv Issar (Outgoing Representative)

Foroogh Mohammadi (Current Representative)

Rafia Mallick (Incoming Representative)

Old Business:

- Transition Meeting: Outgoing Representative, Shiv Issar, and Current Representative Foroogh Mohammadi met online following the 2023 SSSP Annual Meeting to discuss roles and responsibilities.
- Current Representative, Foroogh Mohammadi, has successfully organized a special session (on academic publishing) for the 2024 SSSP Annual Meeting, which will be held in Montreal.
- Student Member Meeting - April 26, 2024:

Current Student representative, Foroogh Mohammadi, chaired the 2024 student member meeting on April 26, 2024. Two student members (aside from Foroogh) attended the meeting. During the meeting, these points were discussed:

- Primary benefits of student membership in SSSP.
- The resources for student support, i.e., the Student Mentoring Program.
- The opportunity for student travel awards for the annual meetings.
- Student paper awards associated with various divisions.
- Workshops and mentoring programs.

Then, the floor was opened for attendees to provide feedback and suggestions (see a summary of the meeting below).

Summary of 2024 Student Member Meeting:

The following topics emerged as points of conversation during the 2024 Student Member Meeting:

- The attendees were all new members of the SSSP from Canadian Universities. They mostly posed questions about the ways SSSP can be beneficial to them as well as the ways they can get involved with the SSSP. The student representative listed the answers and shared some links with the members.
- Both students were international students, and they posed difficulties in getting a U.S. visa in order to attend the annual meetings in the United States. The visa process is costly, time-consuming, and disproportionately difficult for students from non-Western countries as well as remote areas. They both mentioned that they need to travel to major Canadian cities to apply for a visa, which may take up to two years before their appointment with the U.S. embassy. Also, the associated costs are often not recognized to be reimbursed for these students.

New Business:

Based on the feedback and suggestions received during the 2024 student member meeting, the following action items were identified:

- A more effective communication of the SSSP community with (student) members: SSSP can seek effective ways to enhance the sense of community for students, especially international students. This issue is reflected in the attendance at the 2023 (three students) and 2024 (two students) student member meetings, too. Also, the fact that the new members from Canada were unaware of the Mentoring Program and the other ways to get involved with the SSSP shows that there is a need to improve and strengthen the communication of the SSSP with members from various geographical locations. SSSP

can plan new ways to connect with student members, especially outside of the United States and improve a sense of community for the members who are not based in the United States. For instance, including scholars from different parts of the world and encouraging them to become active members of the SSSP would strengthen the SSSP networks beyond the United States borders.

- Facilitating the communication between the student members:

There is a disconnect between students from the U.S. and Canada. SSSP needs to implement new ways for students to connect regardless of their geographic locations. The annual meetings are one of the most effective ways, but they are not enough. Online workshops or online speaker series can be effective in connecting students beyond the annual meetings. Also, including student members in various Divisions can improve student engagement in the Society.

- Addressing the Accessibility Issues in Relation to International Students:

All of SSSP's sections need to re-evaluate how to involve international student members and communicate new protocols and opportunities to them. In this, the various forms of inequalities, especially in relation to geographical location, nationality (i.e., Muslim Ban and exclusion of certain people from entering the U.S.) and other forms of inequality, must be taken into consideration.

Also, the Mentoring Program can be expanded to include scholars from outside of the United States. This way, non-U.S.-based students will be more interested in the mentoring program, and the program would also be more effective for diverse students.

- I would like to echo a point from the 2023 student meeting and point out the necessity of establishing a student-based Resource and Networking Platform:

Based on student interest in the 2023 meeting, the student representatives will explore establishing a networking space (e.g., GroupMe, Slack, Discord, etc) for student members to connect and collaborate. This was suggested in 2022 and 2023 but had not

been established. The Current and Incoming Student Representatives will work on this after the 2024 SSSP Annual Meeting.

Transition Meeting - 2024:

- A transition meeting is scheduled between the Current Representative, Foroogh Mohammadi, and the Incoming representative, Rafia Mallick, to be held soon after the annual meeting over Zoom.