

# ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEETING MANAGER

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July 31, 2024

## I. 2024 ANNUAL MEETING

In an effort to increase the annual meeting income stream, the Board of Directors (Board) approved increasing registration rates by 65% on January 11, 2024. The last time the Board increased annual meeting registration fees was for the 2013 annual meeting.

- **Early bird registration** (valid until June 1):  
\$272 for members and \$83 for students/underemployed/ emeritus members
- **Pre-registration** (valid June 2-July 18):  
\$289 for members and \$99 for student/underemployed/ emeritus members
- **On-site registration** (valid August 8-11):  
\$330 for members and \$116 for students/underemployed/ emeritus members

I am pleased to report that **535 attendees** have registered for the annual meeting. Of those registered, 284 (**53%**) are professionals, 231 (**43%**) are students/unemployed/emergitus, and 20 (**4%**) are exempt from paying meeting registration. Previous years' attendance (at the time of my report) was 579 in 2023 (Philadelphia), 480 in 2022 (Los Angeles), 769 in 2021 (fully virtual meeting), 120 in 2020 (1/2-day complimentary virtual meeting), 995 in 2019 (New York City), 905 in 2018 (Philadelphia), and 1,018 in 2017 (Montréal).

We have 113 sessions scheduled with 436 papers, 9 panels with 37 panelists, 7 critics, and 1 plenary speaker. In 2023, we had 114 sessions scheduled with 426 papers, 15 panels with 69 panelists, 10 critics, and 1 plenary speaker.

## II. 2024 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Compared to one year ago, total membership (including last year's members who have not yet renewed) is down 4% (68 members); however, current membership (2024+: 1,088) is up 0.83% (9 members). More people joined/renewed leading up to the July 18<sup>th</sup> conference registration deadline. In addition, we had several new advisory editors join/renew this month.

<u>7/31/24</u>	<u>7/14/23</u>	<u>7/16/22</u>	<u>7/19/21</u>	<u>7/17/20</u>
2024+: 1,088	2023+: 1,079	2022+: 1,202	2021+: 1,467	2020+: 1,099
2023: 522	2022: 599	2021: 747	2020: 412	2019: 916
<b>Total: 1,610</b>	<b>Total: 1,678</b>	<b>Total: 1,949</b>	<b>Total: 1,879</b>	<b>Total: 2,015</b>

## III. ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES

SSSP is committed to making our annual meeting accessible to all. Written guidelines were posted on our website and distributed to all program participants to urge and assist them to be conscientious in their inclusiveness. The guidelines emphasized accessible presentations, visual materials, air quality and service animals, area of rescue assistance, accessible seating, sign and voice interpreting, audio equipment, and discussions.

The Board voted to offer the opportunity for remote presentation, with paid registration, for people who have a disability and people who have a medical condition for which a medical professional would advise against in-person attendance. Five program participants will be participating remotely.

Attendees were invited to request accessibility services to facilitate their full participation in the annual meeting. Three registrants completed the accessibility services section when they registered. One requested a sensory room for overstimulation, one requested wheelchair accessible seating, and one informed us that they may need to present remotely. This information was shared with Dr. Alan Santinele Martino, Accessibility Committee Chair, so he could follow-up with them.

### **Area of Rescue Assistance**

An Area of Rescue Assistance has been established and will be clearly marked with signage on four levels of the conference space. In the event of an evacuation during meeting hours, hotel staff will check these areas for attendees who require assistance.

### **Comfort Zone**

The Comfort Zone will be located in Salon 3 on Level 2. This space provides a quiet environment for conference attendees to relax, reflect, and re-energize. This space is available to all conference attendees, no matter where they are staying. Attendees are encouraged to silence their devices and refrain from talking on cell phones in this area. This space should not be used for committee meetings.

### **All-Gender Restrooms**

The All-Gender Restrooms will be located on Levels 2, 3, and 4. These restrooms will be available for use by all persons, regardless of their gender identity. The All-Gender Restrooms will be marked with door signage. Please help make these facilities and the meeting an inclusive space for trans and gender non-conforming attendees by respecting the rights of everyone to use them.

Registration workers will ensure that signage remains in place while taking attendance at sessions and meetings.

### **Lactation Room**

The Lactation Room will be located in Salon 2 on Level 2. This quiet space is designated for use by conference attendees requiring a private space for nursing needs. Attendees are encouraged to silence their devices and refrain from talking on cell phones in this area. This space should not be used for committee meetings.

## **IV. ANNUAL MEETING EXEMPTION POLICY**

Twenty annual meeting exemptions were requested and granted this year (17 in 2023, 11 in 2022, 27 in 2021, 0 in 2020, and 23 in 2019).

### **Current Exemption Policy**

All session participants (except for those listed under “b” below) must be current members (they may join on acceptance of their presentation) of the Society and must register for the annual meeting by June 1. Persons failing to register by June 1 will have their presentations deleted from the program.

The Administrative Office processes all qualified exemption requests for conference registration in the order received. In addition, the Program Chair notifies the Administrative Officer when they approve a direct request.

All exemption requests must be submitted by May 15. Exemptions from paying registration fees will be considered for:

- A. Non-students who are unemployed and/or receiving monthly financial assistance to meet living expenses.
- 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 residing in economically disadvantaged countries who without these funds would be unable to attend the meeting.
- 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 Chair.

## **V. AUDIO-VISUAL**

LCD projectors and screens **will be available for all traditional sessions**. Roundtable and Critical Dialogue sessions **will not** have audio-visual equipment; however, in some cases these sessions were placed in meeting rooms designated for regular sessions in an effort to maximize space. For all traditional sessions, presenters and/or session organizers must bring their own laptop (and the connection cord if they have an Apple computer or HDMI

connection cord). Powered speakers for audio will not be available for any sessions, as such, we discourage the inclusion of short video clips in presentations due to accessibility purposes (it will be difficult for the audience to hear them). Internet access, courtesy of SSSP, will be available in all meeting spaces.

According to my Meeting Manager duties, I am to secure a minimum of three audio-visual bids. This year, I requested a bid from six companies and received two. Two companies were unable to bid because they were already booked, and two companies did not respond.

Upon reviewing the bids, the price quote submitted by Stagevision, the in-house audio-visual provider, was the most attractive. Additionally, SSSP will receive complimentary high speed internet access in the meeting space and a 20% discount on pricing. After negotiations, the total projected audio-visual charge will be approximately \$35,000 CAD.

As previously mentioned, five program participants are presenting remotely due to the Society's accessibility statement. The cost for presenting remotely is approximately \$750 CAD per meeting room. Each session organizer was asked to provide a Zoom link to the person presenting remotely.

For reference, here are the audio-visual costs from previous years:

- 2023 (Philadelphia): \$33,662
- 2022 (Los Angeles): \$34,543
- 2019 (New York City): \$31,518
- 2018 (Philadelphia): \$20,181
- 2017 (Montréal): \$16,432

## **VI. AWARDS CEREMONY**

The Awards Ceremony will include the presentations of the Arlene Kaplan Daniels Paper Award, Beth B. Hess Memorial Scholarship, C. Wright Mills Award, Doris Wilkinson Faculty Leadership Award, Indigenous Peoples' Social Justice Award, Joseph B. Gittler Award, Kathleen S. Lowney Mentoring Award, Lee Founders Award, Racial/Ethnic Minority Graduate Fellowship, Social Entrepreneurship Paper Awards, Thomas C. Hood Social Action Award, and the Student Paper Competition winners.

Each student paper competition winner, all major award winners and honorable mentions, and all Mills finalists were mailed a plaque earlier this month. These individuals will be acknowledged in a slideshow presentation at the awards ceremony and on our website. Additionally, an abstract of each student's winning paper will be posted on our website along with their contact information.

Each student paper winner received complimentary student membership and meeting registration (courtesy of SSSP) and a monetary stipend (courtesy of their division). It is the Division Chair's responsibility to recognize their winners, honorable mentions, and outstanding scholarship award winners at their divisional business meeting, in their division newsletter, and on their division's social media accounts. Division Chairs are responsible for obtaining plaques for their honorable mentions or outstanding scholarship award winners, if desired.

## **VII. CATERING**

When negotiating the hotel contract, the hotel agreed to confirm the food and beverage prices 12 months prior to our arrival date. Based on this, there was a cost savings as the hotel published new catering menus in 2024. The food and beverage minimum is \$40,000 CAD plus a 19% taxable service and administration fee, 5% GST and 9.975% QST (total \$54,728 CAD or \$39,596 USD).

We will hold the Arrival Meet & Greet Reception on Thursday evening, the Welcoming Reception on Friday evening, and the Division-Sponsored Reception on Saturday evening. The Membership and Outreach Committee will host the New Member Breakfast on Saturday morning. We encouraged all 23 Divisions to co-sponsor a joint reception instead of hosting their own. Twenty-two divisions responded that they would contribute \$4,000 toward the cost of the Division-Sponsored Reception.

SSSP will offer a complimentary continental breakfast in the morning and hot/cold beverages and snacks in the afternoon (Grab and Go items: whole fruit, granola bars, individual bags of popcorn or chips) as follows:

- Thursday: 2:00pm-6:00pm
- Friday: 8:00am-10:00am and 2:00pm-3:30pm
- Saturday: 7:00am-9:00am and 2:00pm-3:30pm
- Sunday: 8:00am-10:00am and 2:00pm-3:30pm

Additionally, SSSP will subsidize the cost of wine, beer, and non-alcoholic beverages at the Arrival Meet & Greet Reception and the Welcoming Reception. Attendees will pay a reduced amount. A complimentary open bar will be provided at the Division-Sponsored Reception.

#### **VIII. CHILDCARE MATCHING SERVICE**

Five registrants requested participation in the childcare matching service. On July 1, an e-mail was sent to them listing the names, e-mail addresses, and number, identified gender, and ages of the child(ren) of the other registrants requesting participation in the service. In addition, we provided registrants with contact information of a local professional childcare provider.

#### **IX. EXHIBIT INFORMATION**

The Scholar's Choice will once again be organizing and managing our book exhibit without cost to the Society. Members interested in having their book displayed were instructed to contact their publisher. Please note that publishers pay a fee to display with The Scholar's Choice and may not have the marketing budget necessary to honor all requests, particularly for older titles.

Bristol University Press, and its imprint Policy Press, publisher of the upcoming *Agenda For Social Justice: Solutions for 2024* will be exhibiting again this year. All Sociology books will be offered at a 50% discount for the duration of the annual meeting.

Kersplebedeb Leftwingbooks.net will also be exhibiting with us. They are an independent, radical publisher and distributor of left-wing literature, based in Montréal since 1998. Their project has a non-exclusive focus on anti-patriarchal and anti-imperialist politics, framed within an anti-capitalist perspective.

Parallel Cultures will be joining us as well. They are a non-profit organization that focuses on promoting cultural knowledge, enhancing self-awareness, and providing educational opportunities for vulnerable K-12 student populations. They are part of a global network of activists, organizers, and social entrepreneurs in the African Diaspora. The products featured in their booth will spotlight social entrepreneurship, resistance and sustainability in the African Diaspora.

#### **X. HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS**

All attendees will be required to follow any COVID 19-related protocols mandated by local authorities at the time of the meeting. SSSP strongly recommends that attendees receive COVID 19 vaccination in advance of participation and use masks while we are together in Montréal. As you navigate the meeting space, please do your best to help protect all of our colleagues.

#### **XI. HOTEL ROOM RATES**

SSSP received a favorable sleeping room rate of \$275 (CAD) single/double/triple/quad plus tax per night when the hotel contract was signed in January 2023. As a result of a contract clause, we were able to receive a 20% reduction in our room night commitment. We reduced our room block from 789 rooms to 631 rooms (the Society's room commitment).

As of July 26, our room pickup was 690 rooms (87% pickup of revised contracted block total). The Society will receive 17 complimentary room nights. As long as we pick up at least 631 rooms and reach our food and beverage minimum, the Society will not be charged meeting room rental.

## **XII. MOBILE APP**

Based on the Board's decision to no longer print programs, it is essential to provide a mobile app that is easy to use. Given our positive experience with Core-Apps in the past, we contracted with them for our mobile app needs. IT Specialist Rachel Cogburn has worked tirelessly to customize the mobile app to assure its ease of use.

## **XIII. OPTIONAL ONE-DAY WORKSHOP**

On Monday, August 12, one workshop will be held off-site.

### **Institutional Ethnography Workshop**

9:30am–3:30pm

13 registrants paid \$15 and 34 registrants paid \$0 (Total 47 registrants paid: \$195)

## **XIV. OPTIONAL WALKING TOURS**

SSSP is offering two walking tours. Both tours are wheelchair accessible. Tour tickets cost \$20 each.

### **The Other Old Montréal – Part West**

Friday, August 9, 2:00pm–5:00pm

Limit 20 people; 20 tickets sold

### **The Village and the Pride: LGBTQ+ History and Realities**

Saturday, August 10, 8:30am–12:20pm

Limit 20 people; 19 tickets sold

## **XV. REGISTRATION REMINDERS**

The Board approved a policy that program participants will be dropped from the program if they do not register by June 1. The Board also requested that program participants receive at least three notices prior to the June 1 deadline for registration.

The Administrative Office sent four targeted e-mail reminders to program participants and twice asked session organizers to contact their participants who had not registered and urge them to register. Additionally, Program Chair Claire Renzetti sent an e-mail urging program participants to register.

On July 8, the Administrative Office sent a final (personalized) e-mail to the paper author(s) and the session organizer(s) instructing them that they would be removed from the program for failure to register if they didn't respond by July 15. Twenty-four program participants were removed for failure to register on July 16.

## **XVI. REGISTRATION WORKERS**

Eight graduate student members will work at the registration desk. In exchange for working 12 hours, they will receive a complimentary shared hotel room for the nights of August 8-10.

## **XVII. ROOMMATE MATCHING SERVICE**

Twenty registrants requested the roommate matching service. On July 1, an e-mail was sent to them listing the names, affiliations, and e-mail addresses of those willing to participate in order to facilitate roommate matching.

## **XVIII. SPONSORS**

A special thanks to our sponsors for their financial contributions to program activities: the Department of Sociology at the University of Connecticut, Bristol University Press | Home of Policy Press, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, and the Oxford University Press.

## **XIX. WORKING OUTSIDE ACADEMIA**

Twenty-three registrants indicated that they work outside of academia and are interested in connecting with others in similar positions. On July 1, an e-mail was sent to them listing the names, affiliations, and e-mail addresses of those working outside of academia.

## **XX. UPDATE ON THE HOTEL SELECTION FOR 2025**

After ASA's decision to relocate their conference from San Francisco, Elroi and I stopped our contract negotiations with a San Francisco property and awaited ASA's announcement of a new city. When ASA announced Chicago in March 2024, we immediately started working with Marisa and Chris Crame from HelmsBriscoe on our request for proposals (RFP). Of the fourteen hotels that responded to the RFP, only two could accommodate us. Most hotels declined due to a lack of meeting space (we require 16 concurrent breakouts) or had prior bookings over our dates.

We conducted site visits of the Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel and Hilton Chicago on May 21-22.

As some of you may remember, SSSP held its 2015 Annual Meeting at the Radisson Blu. Given its close proximity to ASA's conference hotels (Swissotel Chicago and the Hyatt Regency Chicago) and suitable meeting space configuration, the Radisson Blu would be ideal. However, their conference room rate is \$10 higher per night, and their food and beverage minimum is \$15K++ higher than the other hotels. Additionally, our meeting dates would be from Saturday, August 9 – Monday, August 11, instead of our usual Friday-Sunday meeting dates. Furthermore, it should be noted that in August 2022, the Radisson Hotel Group Americas was purchased by Choice Hotels (limited service brands, i.e., Comfort Inn, Country Inn & Suites, Quality Inn, Clarion, and Main Stay Suites). While the ownership change might bring some behind-the-scenes improvements, we have been assured that the core elements that make Radisson Blu an attractive choice for conferences are expected to remain consistent.

The meeting space reserved at the Hilton Chicago was less than ideal. While it was on one level, all meeting rooms would have airwalls, and those in a wheelchair would have to use an accessible lift to access the space. During the negotiation process, we shared our concerns with the Senior Sales Director, who informed us that meeting space was now available at the Palmer House (their sister property).

While the meeting space at the Palmer House is on three levels, we would have a limited number of breakouts, and some rooms are too small to be used for traditional sessions. Additionally, one level of meeting space is on a converted guest room floor. We would also have to relocate registration on Sunday as another group has contracted some of the meeting space. Given the size of the hotel, we would be one of several groups meeting at the hotel.

Today we learned that the Marriott Marquis Chicago now has meeting space available and is very eager for our business. They have agreed to match the lowest guest room rate and the food and beverage minimum. Elroi and I will conduct a virtual tour of the meeting space on Monday, August 5. It should be noted that the Marriott Marquis is located 3.5 miles from the Swissotel and 3.1 miles from the Radisson Blu. This hotel has ample meeting space and is connected to McCormick Place.

I will update the Board further during our meeting next week.

## **XXI. CLOSING COMMENTS**

I worked with Amy O'Keefe, Senior Sales Executive, to negotiate and amend our hotel contract (lower room rate). Ms. O'Keefe was extremely professional and very appreciative that the Society selected the Le Centre Sheraton Montréal Hotel.

I worked very closely with Joyce Coll, Senior Meetings & Events Manager, to:

- secure our VIP and staff sleeping room needs and worked with her when reservations needed to be amended or canceled
- reduce our room block by 20% (per our hotel contract) to avoid paying a penalty
- finalize catering for all food functions, meeting room set up, audio-visual requirements, and signage

- order the complimentary VIP amenities (per our hotel contract)

Joyce is very knowledgeable and shared creative tips regarding menu selection and meeting room/reception setups. She was extremely responsive and a true professional.

I was very fortunate to work with President Mary Bernstein; Program Chair Claire Renzetti; Local Arrangements Chair Anick Desrosiers; Executive Officer Elroi J. Windsor; Assistant to the Administrative Officer Kelsey Whitaker; Information Technology Specialist Rachel Cogburn; and Graduate Research Associate and Webmaster Helen Wilds. I am grateful for their invaluable contributions. I can't say enough about their hard work and dedication to the Society.

Finally, I would like to thank you, the Board, for giving me another opportunity to serve as Meeting Manager. It has been a privilege to work alongside you this year. I welcome the opportunity to continue this service next year in Chicago.