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July 27, 2024

TO: SSSP Board of Directors  
FROM: Claire Renzetti, Program Committee Chair, 2024 SSSP Annual Meeting  
RE: 2024 Program Committee Report

SSSP President Mary Bernstein appointed the following members to the 2024 Program Committee (PC): Claire Renzetti, Chair; Ligaya Lindio McGovern; Raja Staggers-Hakim; and Dolores Trevizo. Dr. Bernstein's meeting theme was "Toward a Sociology of Violence." The PC met with Dr. Bernstein via Zoom three times before the paper submission deadline of 1/31/24.

Michele Smith Koontz provided data on online submissions, registrations, and cancellations. By the submission deadline of January 31, 2024, 446 papers were submitted through the online submission portal, and an additional 7 papers were submitted by session organizers for a total of 453 submitted papers. By July 27, 2024, 436 papers remained: 368 online submissions and 68 organizer submitted papers. Session organizers added 61 papers after the January 31<sup>st</sup> deadline.

There are 113 sessions on the program (not including three cancelled sessions): 4 plenary sessions, 39 thematic sessions, and 11 special sessions. There are 45 co-sponsored sessions, and 8 new sessions were added to accommodate extra papers by session organizers who received too many papers for a single session. Thirty-nine sessions had to be cancelled because they did not receive enough papers by deadline.

As of July 27, 2024, 535 people had registered for the meeting: 480 program participants and 55 non-program participants. Twenty-three program participants were removed from the program for failure to register by the extended deadline of July 1, 2024. Consequently, two sessions were cancelled and the four remaining papers were placed in existing sessions.

The PC solicited organizers and/or participants for 7 of the sessions held at every annual meeting (e.g., Networking and Navigating at SSSP; Publishing Tips from the Editors of *Social Problems*). In addition, the PC proposed 8 additional sessions, 7 of which are on the program. The American Sociological Association Retirement Network selected long-time SSSP member, Barbara Katz Rothman, to deliver their "Life in Sociology" lecture at the 2024 ASA Annual Meeting and SSSP co-sponsored that session, which will be held at the ASA conference site.

In compliance with Board requirements, the PC also organized 2 Author Meets Critics sessions. One of these was an invited session (with the authors of *Murdertown, USA*). The second was selected following a call to the membership for nominations of books published in 2022 or 2023. In response to that call, we received 12 nominations, but 2 were disqualified because the nominators were not current SSSP members; current SSSP membership is required for AMC book nominators. The PC reviewed the 10 eligible books and selected *Lethal Intersections: Race, Gender, and Violence* by Patricia Hill Collins. Initially, Dr. Collins accepted our invitation to participate in the PC-sponsored AMC session, but subsequently had to withdraw for personal reasons. We then invited the author of the book that received the second most votes from committee members, but that individual had already decided not to attend the meeting this year. Consequently, there is only one PC-sponsored AMC session on the 2024 program and only one other AMC session organized by a division. As we were working on the AMC sessions, I received an email from a SSSP member asking that we consider offering more AMC sessions at the annual meeting. This individual was unaware that divisions could also organize AMC sessions as part of their allotted number of sessions. However, we agree that more AMC sessions would be beneficial, and we encourage the Board to consider ways to increase the number of AMC sessions at the annual meeting (see Action Item #1 below).

During the course of our work, the PC also encountered some confusion about the ability of the Transnational Initiatives Committee (TIC) to organize sessions. The TIC is an active part of SSSP and brings a global perspective to our meetings. Consequently, we recommend that the TIC be allocated 2 sessions on the program each year; the TIC Chair should be designated the sessions organizer, although they may delegate this role to another TIC member (see Action Item #2 below).

As PC Chair, I also received an outside request from a member for space to hold a book launch. Michele Smith Koontz indicated that space is available on Sunday, 8/11, following the conclusion of the last sessions on the program (all sessions end by 4:10pm; but we have rooms reserved until 6:10pm). We consulted President Mary Bernstein and Executive Officer Elroi J. Windsor, who approved granting this space request, but who also shared our concern about setting a precedent that could result in a flood of future requests. Therefore, we propose a process for handling such requests in the future (see Action Item #3 below).

Finally, on behalf of the PC, I extend our thanks to Administrative Officer Michele Smith Koontz, and her assistant, Kelsey Whitaker, for their help throughout this process. They knew the answers to all our questions and replied quickly to our many email queries. What's more, they always did so professionally *and* warmly, making our job not only easier but more enjoyable. Thanks also to Executive Officer Elroi J. Windsor for their assistance along the way. We are also grateful to President Mary Bernstein for entrusting us with the critically important responsibilities under the auspices of the PC.

## **Action Items for the Board**

### **Action Item #1:** Increasing the number of AMC sessions at the annual meeting

Currently, the PC is authorized to organize 2 AMC sessions for the annual meeting (please see the current policy [here](#)). Both may be organized using a call to the membership for nominations, although we chose to organize one ourselves and select the second from members' nominations. Although divisions may also organize AMC sessions as part of their allotted number of sessions, few appear to do so. The PC believes that AMC sessions are an excellent way to diversify the meeting program as well as generate discussion around timely and critically important issues in keeping with the mission of our organization. We therefore ask the Board to consider ways to increase the number of AMC sessions at the annual meeting – for example, by authorizing the PC to organize more AMC sessions within its session allocation; by mandating divisions to use *one* of their allocated sessions for an AMC session.

### **Action Item #2:** Allocation of sessions to the Transnational Initiatives Committee (TIC)

Given that the TIC is an active group within SSSP and brings an important global perspective to the organization, the PC recommends that the Board clarify the role of the TIC in the annual meeting and allocate 2 sessions on the annual meeting program each year to the TIC. We further recommend that the TIC Chair be designated as the organizer of these sessions, although the Chair should be free to delegate that responsibility to another TIC member.

### **Action Item #3:** Establishing a procedure for reviewing and responding to requests for space during the annual meeting

The PC recommends that the Board establish a procedure for reviewing and responding to outside requests by SSSP members for space for special events during the annual meeting. We recommend that such requests be reviewed by the Program Committee Chair, the Administrative Officer, the President, and the Executive Officer on a case-by-case basis, with requests being granted on the basis of the time and space availability as well as the merits of the event for which the space is being requested.

### **Action Item #4:** Clarifying the wording for exemption eligibility

Each year, the Program Chair and the Administrative Officer receive requests by program participants to be exempted from paying SSSP dues and the meeting registration fee. However, the current wording of our exemption eligibility policy has led to some confusion as to whom is eligible. The relevant paragraph reads as follows:

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; (emphasis added)

The confusion arises because we never know if the person requesting the exemption was *invited* to serve on a panel or make a presentation as opposed to submitting a paper they wish to present.

For instance, one request we received was from a co-author of a paper that had been submitted by a grad student who is listed as first author; the co-author (second author) on the paper works for a non-profit and, therefore, requested the exemption. In addition, the wording in the paragraph above may lead some to think that non-program participants may request an exemption as well.

Consequently, the PC recommends that the Board revise the wording of this specific exemption eligibility criterion by first, changing the word Individuals to Program participants, and second, by crafting verbiage that makes it clear that only program participants *invited* by a session organizer to serve or present is eligible for the exemption. We also recommend that the Board consider limiting these exemptions to only one individual – the paper presenter – when there are multiple authors on the paper.