

2023–2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS ZOOM MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 2024, 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM (EST)

VIRTUAL MEETING CONDUCTED VIA ZOOM

ITEM #1 – CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

The meeting was called to order by President Mary Bernstein at 1:01 pm.

ITEM #2 – INTRODUCTIONS/ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Mary Bernstein, President

Rose M. Brewer, President-Elect

Shirley A. Jackson, Past-President

Anthony A. Peguero, Vice-President

David J. Luke, Vice-President-Elect

Glenn W. Muschert, Secretary

Heather E. Dillaway, Treasurer

Meghna Bhat, Board Member

Kristen M. Budd, Board Member

Ebonie L. Cunningham Stringer, Board Member

David G. Embrick, Board Member

Barbara Katz Rothman, Board Member

Foroogh Mohammadi, Board Member, Student Representative

Shiv Issar, Board Member, Student Representative

Giovanna Follo, *Ex-Officio*, Chairperson, Council of the Divisions

Shannon Carter, *Ex-Officio*, Chairperson-Elect, Council of Division Chairs

Annulla Linders, Editor, *Social Problems*

Nancy Mezey, Chair, Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee and Chair, Revenue Generating Committee

Lauren Eastwood, Parliamentarian

Elroi J. Windsor, Executive Officer

Michele Koontz, Administrative Officer and Meeting Manager

Rachel Cogburn, IT Specialist

ITEM #3 – ADOPT (REVISE) AGENDA

The Board adopted the agenda as presented.

ITEM #4 – REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT

President Mary Bernstein greeted the Board and proceeded with the agenda.

ITEM #5 – REPORT FROM THE BUDGET, FINANCE, AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee Chair Nancy Mezey highlighted that the primary point of the report is to communicate that the SSSP's current financial situation is untenable while providing pathways to correct the situation. The Board thanked the BFA Committee for its outstanding work and detailed suggestions to correct the SSSP's financial situation.

PART A. Increase Annual Meeting registration fees by 65% (Lines 4305-4319 and 4322). The decision to increase Annual Meeting registration fees was not made lightly. However, the one area that can have the most significant impact on an increased revenue stream is the Annual Meeting. The last time the Board of Directors increased annual meeting registration fees was for the 2013 annual meeting (over ten years ago), and the time is now to increase fees. With the proposed increase, the cost of attendance is considerably lower than the cost of attending comparable meetings (e.g., ASA, SWS, ABS, etc.). The Society cannot afford to subsidize members' attendance at the annual meeting. Loss to the organization would be too great if annual meeting registration fees were not increased.

ACTION: The Board approved increasing Annual Meeting registration fees by 65% (Lines 4305-4319 and 4322).

PART B. Reduce to \$0 the following items regarding the Annual Meeting (Lines 5224, 5425, 5430, 5465, and 5475).

Catering costs for editorial boards and committees are currently not a viable financial option for the Society. The BFA Committee urges the Board to eliminate these costs and develop zero-sum ways of thanking editorial boards and committee members.

- Line 5224: Editorial Board Luncheon onsite catering cost of \$1500
- Line 5425: Editorial & Publications Committee onsite catering cost of \$1250
- Line 5430: Permanent Organization & Strategic Planning Committee & Annual Meeting Expenses onsite catering cost of \$750
- Line 5465: Nominations Committee onsite catering cost of \$250
- Line 5475: *Agenda for Social Justice* Editorial Luncheon onsite catering cost of \$500

ACTION: The Board approved reducing to \$0 the following budget items regarding the Annual Meeting (Lines 5224, 5425, 5430, 5465, and 5475).

PART C. Cut the Division Sponsored Projects (Line 5498) in half.

Until the Society's financial picture dramatically improves, the BFA Committee recommends reducing the Division Sponsored Projects budget from \$5,000 to \$2,500. The cut allows Divisions to organize sponsored projects in a reduced financial manner.

ACTION: The Board approved cutting the budget for Division Sponsored Projects (Line 5498) in half.

PART D. Provide Rooms at the Conference Hotel, not Stipends (Line 6010).

By offering stipends for awards, the Society reduces the incentive for people to attend the annual meetings. To incentivize award winners to attend the annual meetings, the BFA Committee proposes that the Society offer complimentary hotel rooms instead of a stipend, thus encouraging greater attendance at the annual meetings. While line 6010 is the only line the BFA Committee recommends changing, the Committee urges the Board of Directors to examine all monetary awards and change the reward structure to hotel room incentives (or other incentives to attend the meetings) as soon as possible.

ACTION: The Board approved providing up to \$500 to stay at the conference hotel instead of stipends (Line 6010).

PART E. Require those who receive travel fund awards from the Society to stay at the Conference Hotel (Lines 8010, 8020, 8025, and 8060).

The Society has a contractual obligation with the Annual Meeting venue to meet a required room block. When offering travel funding to members, the BFA Committee argues that those recipients should support the Society in return by staying at the SSSP-designated hotel. Such a stipulation is not currently stated in the award announcements, so if approved, this change would go into effect in 2024. Note that the Board did not decide on Line 8020 and tabled the discussion of this item to appear on the subsequent Board meeting agenda (February 8, 2024).

ACTION: The Board approved requiring those who receive travel fund awards from the Society to receive up to \$500 to stay at the conference hotel (Lines 8010, 8025, and 8060) starting in 2024.

PART F. Charge the BFA Committee with determining an increase in membership dues. Similar to annual meeting registration fees, determining membership dues is within the purview of the Board of Directors; however, those attending the Annual Business Meeting of the Society must approve the dues increase by a two-thirds vote at the SSSP Business Meeting.

ACTION: The Board charged the BFA Committee with determining an increase in membership dues.

PART G. Charge the BFA Committee to develop a schedule of percentage increases for the annual meeting registration fees and the membership dues. The BFA Committee discussed the value of creating a percentage increase schedule for annual meeting registration fees and membership dues. Creating such a schedule ensures that increases become automatic and incremental, thus preventing large jumps in increases for our membership, ensuring increased revenue for the Society, and preventing additional work for the BFA Committee and the Board of Directors.

ACTION: The Board charged the BFA Committee to develop a schedule of percentage increases for the annual meeting registration fees and the membership dues.

PART H. Charge the BFA Committee to conduct an in-depth yearly analysis to determine our financial solvency and challenges.

While the BFA Committee chose to engage in an in-depth budget-balancing endeavor this year, the Committee is not charged to do so every year. Given the annual change in the BFA Committee's composition, adding this responsibility to the charge of the Committee will be helpful to moving forward.

ACTION: The Board charged the BFA Committee to conduct an in-depth yearly analysis to determine the Society's financial solvency and challenges.

ITEM #6 – REPORT FROM THE AD HOC REVENUE GENERATING COMMITTEE CHAIR

Ad Hoc Revenue Generating Committee Chair Nancy Mezey highlighted the details of the committee report, the point of which is to reconfigure the committee structure to work more effectively. This involves dissolving the current committee and creating another in its place. In addition, the committee shares the BFA Committee's concerns about drawing from the Society's reserves to stay solvent.

PART A. Dissolve the current Ad Hoc Revenue Generating Committee.

The current ad hoc committee faces two significant challenges: 1) The current committee is based on positions that are filled by people who rotate every year, thus creating a lack of stability on the committee, and 2) those who are committee chairs are not necessarily experts in fundraising or development work. The structure of the recommended committee above reduces these challenges.

ACTION: The Board dissolved the current Ad Hoc Revenue Generating Committee in its current form and recrafted a similar Ad Hoc Development Committee comprised of the Executive Officer and the Treasurer, as well as SSSP members (both selected/solicited and volunteers) who are known for their expertise or who have a proven record of development work (e.g., as evidenced on a CV and cover letter).

PART B. Empowering a New Ad Hoc Development Committee.

The Society's financial losses are significant. The trend of losing members, having fewer members attend annual meetings, and facing challenges in the world of journal publishing all mean that the Society's financial problems will worsen over time if we remain complacent or stick with "business as usual." The Committee has offered essential and viable recommendations, but their work must continue consistently and long-lasting, drawing on proper expertise and ideas.

The new Ad Hoc Development Committee would focus on six areas:

1. Support the BFA's recommendations to increase fees and dues.
2. Pay the financial advisor a percentage of earnings, not a flat fee or salary.
3. Collaborate with other organizations.
4. Hold the annual meetings in smaller and less costly cities and venues.
5. Develop a strategic fundraising and gift-giving campaign.
6. Seek grant funding to support specific projects and initiatives.

ACTION: The Board of Directors empowered a new Ad Hoc Development Committee to continue to work on the Action Plan outlined in the current Ad Hoc Committee's Report, exploring options and possibilities. By the February 8, 2024, Board meeting, Executive Officer Elroi J. Windsor and Treasurer Heather E. Dillaway will provide a proposal for the process, including a procedure for identifying members of the Ad Hoc Committee.

ITEM #7 – DISCUSSION IN FAVOR OF OR IN OPPOSITION TO THE MEMBER-PROPOSED STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF PALESTINE

President Mary Bernstein started a conversation about the member-proposed statement concerning Palestine.

PART A. Explanation of Process by Parliamentarian

Parliamentarian Lauren Eastwood clarified the process, including the voting procedure.

PART B. Discussion and Vote on Member Proposed Statement

President Mary Bernstein facilitated a conversation among Board members concerning the member-proposed statement.

ACTION: The Board did not endorse the member-proposed statement as submitted, indicating the membership should be consulted directly concerning this statement. According to SSSP By-Laws, the member-proposed statement will go to a direct electronic vote among the members.

PART C. If there is No Affirmative Vote from the Board, then Discussion of Recommendations and Additional or Alternative Proposals.

Sub-Part 1. Statement Adapted from the American Anthropological Association, authored by President Mary Bernstein

President Mary Bernstein made it clear during the meeting, that she adapted the statement, but did not “author” the statement.

ACTION: The Board approved sending the Statement Adapted from the American Anthropological Association for consideration alongside the member-submitted statement.

Sub-Part 2. Statement Adapted from the Middle Eastern Studies Association, authored by President Mary Bernstein

President Mary Bernstein made it clear during the meeting, that she adapted the statement, but did not “author” the statement.

The Board did not move to vote on this statement.

Sub-Part 3. Establish an Expedited Timeline

The Board did not move to establish a timeline, and such is already specified in the SSSP By-Laws.

ITEM #8 – ANNUAL MEETING UPDATES

Due to insufficient time, the Board did not consider this ITEM, which is now deferred to the next scheduled Board meeting, February 8, 2024.

PART A. Update on the 2024 Annual Meeting

PART B. Update on the 2025 Annual Meeting

PART C. Update on the 2026 Annual Meeting

PART D. Future of Annual Meetings

ITEM #9 – UNFINISHED BUSINESS CARRIED OVER FROM 8/20/23 BOARD MEETING

Due to insufficient time, the Board did not consider this ITEM, which is now deferred to the next scheduled Board meeting, February 8, 2024.

PART A. Needs to be Discussed

Sub-Part 1. SSSP's Prospective Partnerships: How to Invest in Applied Contexts (from 4/17/23 Board Meeting #9 Sub-Item A.)

Sub-Part 2. Discuss the Future of SSSP (from 7/17/23 Board Meeting #6 Part B.)

ITEM #10 – REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Due to insufficient time, the Board did not consider this ITEM, which is now deferred to the next scheduled Board meeting, February 8, 2024.

PART A. Action Item: Vote on Strategic Plan Proposal – Charging the Permanent Organization and Strategic Planning Committee with Developing a Strategic Plan for SSSP

ITEM #11 – NEW BUSINESS

Due to insufficient time, the Board did not consider this ITEM.

PART A. Discuss and Request Items for the February Zoom Board Meeting

The Administrative Officer will contact the Board before the February 8, 2024 meeting to solicit suggestions for agenda items.

ITEM #12 – ADJOURNMENT OF THE 2023–2024 BOARD

There being no time remaining, President Mary Bernstein adjourned the Board Meeting at 3:13 pm.

Next Board of Directors Zoom Meeting - Thursday, February 8, from 1:00 pm-3:00 pm (Eastern Time)

Minutes respectfully submitted by Glenn W. Muschert, SSSP Secretary.

ADDENDUM #1 – RECORD OF BOARD ACTIONS CONDUCTED VIA EMAIL SINCE THE AUGUST 20, 2023, BOARD MEETING.

ACTION: 8/28/23 – The Board approved the minutes from the 7/24/23 Zoom Meeting.

ACTION: 10/05/23 – The Board approved Sarah Jane Brubaker as replacement for Tracy Peressini on the Anti-Harassment Committee for the 2023-2025 term, and the Board approved Lauren Eastwood for the Parliamentarian Position Appointment for the 2023-2026 term.

ACTION: 10/25/23 – The Board Approved the revised request for meeting space for the Institutional Ethnography Division Workshop, 2024.

ACTION: 10/27/23 – The Board approved Christina Barmon will replace Soma Chaudhuri as Chair of the Kathleen S. Lowney Mentoring Award Committee for the 2023-2024 term.

ACTION: 11/13/23 – The Board approved that the SSSP will sign another 5-year contract with Oxford University Press (OUP) to publish *Social Problems*.

ACTION: 11/22/23 – The Board approved the 2024 Proposed SSSP Annual Meeting Accessibility Statement.

ACTION: 12/07/23 – The Board approved the minutes from the 8/20/23 Board Meeting in Philadelphia.

ACTION: 12/12/23 – The Board approved the Statement on Including Principles of Sociology, which will appear on the public comment portal, where members can comment.