

Official Reports and Proceedings

1999-2000 Council Minutes

Tuesday, August 15, 2000

President Joe Feagin convened the Council meeting at 2:40 p.m.

Present: Richard Alba, Catherine White Berheide, William T. Bielby, Florence B. Bonner, Diane Brown, Nancy Denton, Paul DiMaggio, Paula England, Joe R. Feagin, Richard Flacks, Michael Hout, Nan Lin, Carole C. Marks, Douglas S. Massey, Ross Matsueda, Alejandro Portes, Patricia Roos, Ann Swidler, Robert Wuthnow.

Incoming Council Members and officers observing: Elijah Anderson, Craig Calhoun, Arne L. Kalleberg, Barbara F. Reskin, Barbara Risman.

Staff: Felice J. Levine, Carla B. Howery, Phoebe H. Stevenson, Edward Murguia, Alfonso Latoni, Roberta Spalter-Roth.

1. Welcome New Members

President Feagin welcomed the newly elected officers and Council members.

2. Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The agenda was approved as presented. The minutes from the January meeting of Council were distributed for review.

3. Report of the President

Feagin expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the Program Committee, the office staff, and the Council members that resulted in a strong Annual Meeting. He noted the excellent record of attendance at the meeting this year, with the number of paid registrants projected to exceed 4700—the third largest number in ASA history. The two plenary sessions went very well, with excellent presentations and a large turnout.

President Feagin thanked the ASA staff for their quality effort in preparing for the meeting. He especially thanked Janet Astner, Director of Meeting Services, for her effective work in the execution of the meeting.

4. Report of the Secretary

Secretary Bonner reported that the Association's 1999 Audit was successful and that the ASA was found to be in compliance with accepted auditing standards. Bonner also reviewed the 1999 financial statements, noting that 1999 returned positive revenue over expenses. She indicated that membership continued to account for a significant proportion of revenues. She noted, however, that the year-end revenue in this area was slightly below budget because membership in 1999 was overall slightly below the 1998 level. Bonner indicated that subscription revenue also accounted for a large proportion of the total revenue. In addition, she pointed out that revenues from the sale of the Executive Office building and from gain on investments were sizable, and that, while these revenues were reflected in the operating budget in accordance with standard accounting prac-

tices, both were being invested in reserve accounts. Finally Bonner reported that Annual Meeting revenue was lower than budgeted in 1999 due to a lower number of registrants than anticipated. She also indicated that expenses were lower than budgeted in 1999 due to substantial efforts to contain costs, especially through savings from better planning for AV services.

Vice President Alba asked about expenditures being below budget for personnel in 1999. Executive Officer Levine indicated this amount was not a "savings" per se because the lower expenditure was due to the Executive Office engaged in a number of searches and operating at less than full staff. She indicated that, when Council approves a deficit budget, phasing in of staff is one way to help control Association spending and limit expenditures.

Council also asked about how Annual Meeting-related expenses can be analyzed, especially in terms of expenses related to meeting rooms, catering, and sleeping rooms. Council members noted that section officers were especially interested in knowing details in the context of expenses related to section operation. Levine indicated that costs in any one area are part of an overall package when the contract is negotiated and thus that it is often difficult to unravel specific costs from an interrelated set of requirements. For example, she noted that using a block of sleeping rooms is essential to getting meeting rooms without fees. She noted that section officers might benefit from more of an understanding of the elements of meeting costs.

5. Report of the Executive Officer

Levine reported that the period since Council last met has been an engaging and challenging time, including the launching of task forces, innovations in publications, preparation of successful grant applications, and important new hiring. She thanked President Feagin, Secretary Bonner, and members of Council for their continued help and support. She also officially introduced Alfonso Latoni, on leave from the University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez, who commenced his appointment in July as ASA's Director of the Minority Affairs Program. She also thanked Ed Murguia who was returning to Texas A&M University after a job well done as Minority Affairs Director. Levine reported that the renewal application for the Minority Fellowship Program to the National Institute of Mental Health was successful and would be funded at \$2.7 million over a 5-year period. She noted also that ASA has received supplemental funding of approximately \$30,000 from the National Science Foundation to hold a research conference in 2001 as part of the Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline. Levine also updated Council on the compelling and exciting work involved in moving ASA's new journal ahead and how fortunate the Association was to have Claude Fischer at the helm as inaugural editor.

Levine concluded her report by noting the comparatively strong voter turnout in the Association in general and in 2000—with 33.18 percent of the eligible members voting. She reported that there was a positive turnout as well

for the section portion of the election, even higher than the general election. This pattern is especially positive as compared to other learned societies that consider anything above 20 percent to be quite good.

6. Update on Transaction Publishers

Feagin and Levine summarized the status of Transaction Publishers' violation of the ASA rules for mailing list rental and the reaction of Transaction Publishers to Council actions to resolve the situation. Feagin indicated that the latest communication from Transaction Publishers was a letter dated July 24 from *Society* editor, Jonathan Imber. Council discussed further communication with Transaction to reinforce the importance of the ASA mailing list rental policy. Council considered the best way to achieve that goal and concluded that ASA should send a further letter asking Transaction Publishers for affirmation that ASA's policy will be followed.

Motion: Council continues to support the action taken by the Executive Officer with regard to Transaction Publishers. Carried unanimously.

7. ASA Publications

Bonner and Levine reported that ASA is working on the launch of the new general perspective journal. The discussion of a title for the journal has been evolving. A proposed title "*Contexts*" has received positive responses from potential publishers and from the Committee on the Executive Office and Budget. Bonner noted that the Publications Committee officially recommended this choice. Levine indicated that she and editor-designate Claude Fischer have narrowed the search to two publishers that have experience in magazine publishing. She reported that ASA's legal counsel, who brings expertise in publishing, intellectual property, and copyright, is also working with her to assess publishing options, frame requirements, and obtain comparable information on the two publishers. Levine expects that this work will continue after Labor Day with a written contract and first choice emerging as soon thereafter as feasible.

Motion: To approve *Contexts* as the title for the new general perspective journal. Carried unanimously.

Bonner reminded Council of *Sociological Theory* (ST) editor Jonathan Turner's earlier request for more pages and possibly more frequent publication. Council at the time approved the additional page allocation but asked that Turner report back with regard to his outreach efforts. Bonner indicated that Turner gave a detailed report to the Committee on Publications on the status of his efforts. Bonner indicated that thus far this year there have been positive indications about the articles and authors that have submitted to ST.

8. Appointment of Two Task Forces

Levine reviewed for Council the background on two new task forces—the Task Force on the

(continued)

Advanced Placement Course in Sociology for High Schools and the Task Force on an ASA Statement on Race. She recalled for Council that inclement weather in January had preempted Council completing its deliberations on these proposed task forces. She reported that in the interim she, past Vice President Pat Roos (Chair of the Council subcommittee on task forces), and President Feagin had discussed how best to proceed and that President Feagin supported issuing a call for nominations and self nominations for these task forces so that Council could be positioned in August to nominate a slate. Levine further reported that the call was in the July/August issue of *Footnotes* and that nominations had arrived before the Annual Meeting. She noted that, with turnover on Council, a new Council subcommittee on task forces needed to be appointed.

Council discussed the charge of these task forces. Council members focused first on the Task Force on the Advanced Placement Course in Sociology for High Schools. Council reviewed the purposes of this task force—to develop the framework and syllabus for such a course, to hold a workshop and otherwise support a field-test for high school teachers, and to report to Council on the course and related issues involved in creating an advanced placement test. Council discussed the potential impact on sociology were an advanced placement course and possibly an advanced placement test to be developed. Council members focused on the implications for preparing and training high school teachers and the impact of this development on enhancing sociology in the secondary school curriculum more generally.

Council then focused on the Task Force on an ASA Statement on Race and the value of developing a statement that reflects and draws upon sociological knowledge and expertise. Past President Portes suggested that perhaps the task force's work should include a broader investigation and produce a report, not just a statement. Council members appreciated the potential of a fuller report on the scholarship on race. Council discussed possible overlap with the ASA project on race and concluded that this task force had a purpose that differed from the ASA project and its focus on examining the social science literature on race. Council agreed that the current task force should be more focused on crafting a sociological statement on race which documented the scientific underpinning for that statement and addressed scientific racism but was not otherwise a freestanding report on empirical knowledge on that topic. Council agreed that the task force should be established to create the statement, open to the possibility of a second "charge" if that seemed warranted. Council members thought that this approach could better achieve the goal of the timely creation of a statement on race.

Feagin appointed a Council subcommittee comprised of Berheide, Denton, Marks, and Levine to review nominations for task force members and to recommend a slate of persons to serve on each. Feagin noted that, based on consultation with President-elect Massey, DiMaggio had agreed to serve as Council liaison to the Task Force on the Advanced Placement Course and Brown had agreed to serve as

liaison to the Task Force on the ASA Statement on Race.

9. Next Steps for Status Committees

In summer 2000, Levine sent a letter to members of the status committees on behalf of President Feagin and President-elect Massey asking them to review their current charge; to recommend revisions, if any; and to indicate whether they would be interested in serving in 2001. The goal is to refine the charge and then have an open call for members to volunteer to serve on these status committees in order to complete a slate for the 2001 status committees, other than the Committee on the Status of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered People in Sociology which had been moving forward on their charge.

Executive Office staff liaisons to the status committees then reported on the progress of these committees. Ed Murguia reported on the meeting of the Committee on the Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in Sociology and their request for data relevant to their charge. Murguia suggested that it might be useful for the group to meet with the Executive Office (Levine and Roberta Spalter-Roth) and possibly the President. Council members and Executive Officer Levine emphasized that available information should be provided so that the committees can do their work, while protecting the confidentiality of information provided to ASA. Levine indicated that ASA has examined demographic data on the ASA membership and disseminated some information through *Footnotes* and other research briefs. President-elect Massey indicated an interest in helping in any way he could. Secretary Bonner indicated that the Executive Office should review the requests from the status committees, evaluate the elements, and then inform the committees as to what is available.

Spalter-Roth reported on the progress of the Committee on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Status of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Persons in Sociology. Carla Howery summarized the activities of the Committee on the Status of Persons with Disabilities in Sociology, noting that the Committee continues to help the Executive Office with "site audits" of Annual Meeting facilities to make sure they are as fully accessible as possible.

There was consensus about the value of chairs of the status committee meeting as there might be some common interest areas, concerns, and knowledge that can be shared. Nan Lin suggested that representatives from these committees might be invited to the FAD-funded conference on research on the profession scheduled for 2001. There was some discussion as to whether it might also be useful to have an additional Council liaison to facilitate communication with these committees beyond the Council and staff liaisons appointed to each committee.

Feagin summarized steps to be taken: The Executive Office staff and President-elect Massey will review available data at ASA. There would be a meeting or communication with the chairs of the status committees to facilitate their work on their respective "charges." Levine sug-

gested that she and Massey will discuss how best to proceed and will set forth a plan that can commence this fall.

10. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the January 28-30, 2000 Council meeting were approved as amended.

11. Report on Open Forums

Council turned to a discussion of the two open forums held as part of the Annual Meeting program by the Task Force on Journal Diversity and the Task Force on the Reexamination of the Committee on Committees and the Committee on Nominations, respectively. Carole Marks reported on the open forum on Journal Diversity. The Task Force met before the open forum. The forum was held at a time when there were other high profile sessions, so the attendance was sizable but not as large as it might otherwise have been. The discussion ranged from raising specific suggestions (e.g., additional pages in journals) to general concerns about possibly underrepresented work. While persons attended expressed different views, the general feeling was that there is hope that something can be done and that the process is just unfolding. Portes stated that the forum was productive and that interesting issues were raised, such as professional socialization and preparation for submitting journal articles, differential rejection rates among different disciplines, specialization of journals, and the definition of "diversity." Matsueda questioned whether attendees were a good sample of the membership. Levine indicated that there will be a follow-up call in *Footnotes* for members to submit additional comments and input.

Kate Berheide reported on the open forum on the Reexamination of the Committee on Committees (COC) and the Committee on Nominations (CON). She noted that the forum was held on the first afternoon of the Annual Meeting with other competing sessions and was not well attended. Berheide noted that attendees shared the view that there should be a COC structure, thought not big in size. One possible structure would be a committee with four at-large members and then another four members selected based on employment type (e.g., research university, 4-year college, practice, etc.). Alba cautioned that the light attendance may not be indicative of the extent to which members may be dissatisfied with the current structure. The Task Force decided to deal with developing a recommendation on COC this year and to defer consideration of the Committee on Nominations until next year. The Task Force thought that the issues surrounding COC and CON are quite different.

11. Update on Proposed Section-in-formation on Animals in Society

This agenda item was deferred for consideration by the 2000-01 Council meeting on August 16-17, 2000.

12. Concluding Business

President Feagin thanked outgoing officers and Council members for their fine service.

Council adjourned at 6:15 p.m.