

**American Sociological Association
Council
August 23, 2016
Seattle, Washington**

Members: Ruth Milkman (President), Michèle Lamont (President-elect), Paula England (Past-president), Barbara Risman (Vice President), Kathleen Gerson (Vice President-elect), Cecilia Menjivar (Past Vice President), Mary Romero (Secretary), David Takeuchi (Secretary-elect), Daniel Chambliss, Tina Fetner, Cynthia Feliciano, Tanya Golash-Boza, Adia M. Harvey Wingfield, Peter Kivisto, Karyn Lacy, Leslie McCall, Mignon Moore, Wendy Ng, Patricia E. White; **Absent:** Margaret Hunter

Incoming Members Present: Nina Bandelj, Mabel Berezin, Christopher Uggen

Staff Present: Sally Hillsman (Executive Officer), Janet L. Astner, Deborah K. Brandt, Les Briggs, John Curtis, Karen Gray Edwards, Justin Lini, Michael Murphy, Jordan Robison, Jean Shin, Bradley Smith, Margaret Weigers Vitullo

Guests Present: Stephanie Bohon, Nancy Kidd

President Ruth Milkman called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m. on August 23, 2016.

1. Introductions and Orienting Documents

Introductions of all meeting attendees were made.

A. Approval of Agenda

A proposal from Council Members-at-Large was added to the agenda. Past President England indicated that the report of the Joint Committee on the Future of *Contexts* would include an action item.

MOTION: Approve the agenda as revised. Carried (unanimous).

B. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Approve the minutes for the March 12-13, 2016 Council meeting. Carried (unanimous).

A date correction was made on the third page of the draft July minutes.

MOTION: Approve the minutes for the July 25 and July 28 Council meetings, as revised. Carried (unanimous)

2. Report of the President

President Milkman highlighted two activities that occurred during her term, creation of the Task Force on Contingent Faculty and the annual meeting plenary session on Black Lives Matter.

3. Report of the Secretary

A. 2016 Election

Secretary Romero referred EOB members to the election report in the meeting materials. Most notably, the voter rate for the 2016 national and section elections was the highest in the history of the association. Nine sections did not meet criteria for competitive elections this year.

B. Year-End (2015) and Current (2016) Financials

Romero reported that revenue for 2015 was below budget by \$191,000, with the shortage primarily coming from membership dues and member journals. Publication sales and meeting revenue were also low. Expenses were below budget, but not enough to overcome the revenue shortfall. 2015 ended with a net deficit of \$58,127.

The 2016 budget was approved with a \$49,916 deficit. The mid-year projection is that revenue will be lower than budgeted by \$27,000 and expenses will be \$46,000 above budget. Effort will be made to contain expenses for the rest of the year since the projected deficit could put us at risk for violating the debt service coverage ratio that is part of our financing agreement with the bank.

C. Journal Subscription Rates for 2017

Romero reminded the Council that because ASA's publishing partners require approval of annual subscription rates prior to the summer EOB and Council meetings, Council uses a process whereby the Secretary approves rates which are then affirmed by EOB and Council.

MOTION: Affirm the Secretary's approval of subscription rates for 2017. Carried (17 for, 1 abstention).
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D. Update on *Socius*

It was reported that *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World* opened its manuscript submission site in August 2015. By the end of June 2016, *Socius* received 99 submissions, 56 of which came in the first six months of 2016. The first article was published in January. To date, 17 submissions have been accepted for publication and 33 have been rejected, resulting in an acceptance rate of 34 percent. Authors of accepted articles are at a full range of career stages.

E. ASA Investments and Reserves

Director of Finance Les Briggs provided a brief overview of ASA investments, indicating that the year began with steep market declines which ultimately corrected, leaving the portfolio with

a 3.9% gain at the end of June. In July, when EOB reviewed projected cash flow needs for the fall, a decision was made to authorize the transfer of \$400,000 from the long term investments to the checking account. The markets experienced continued growth during the summer, bringing gains close to an annualized 12% by mid-August. Briggs also reported that, as of June 30, 2016, the unrestricted long-term investments of the association totaled \$5,735,209 or 85.5% of the 2016 operating budget.

F. 2015 ASA Annual Report

Copies of the report were distributed to Council members.

4. Report of the Audit Committee

A. Approval of the 2015 Auditor's Report

The Secretary reported that the auditors found the financial statements to fairly present the financial position, change in net assets, and cash flows of the Association in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. At its July meeting, the Audit Committee accepted the audit report and recommended that Council accept it as well.

MOTION: Accept the 2015 audited financial statement. Carried (unanimous).

B. Internal Control Policies

Romero informed the Council that the auditors identified three undocumented credit card charges and recommended that a new procedure be developed for handling cases for which there are no receipts. Management will now review any undocumented charge and include a memo from the employee that explains the purpose of the purchase and documents approval of the charge by management.

C. Auditor for 2016

Noting that there would be a 3% increase in audit fees for 2016, the Secretary presented EOB's recommendation to approve the auditor for 2016.

MOTION: Approve Gelman, Rosenberg & Freedman as ASA's auditor for 2016. Carried (unanimous).

5. Reports of Council Subcommittees and Working Groups

A. Working Group on Annual Meeting Timing and Cost Report

Former Council Member Stephanie Bohon joined the Council to present the report of the working group. She reminded Council that the group was appointed in 2015 in response to complaints from members. The group had several meetings and did a survey of the membership about these issues. They determined that the petitioners' assertion that August meetings are

particularly expensive was erroneous. Further, higher cost meeting sites like New York and San Francisco draw especially high attendance. There was also recognition that the size of our meeting is such that there are several cities without adequate space for us. The Working Group also acknowledged that any changes in date preference or site would not be realized for some time since meetings are already contracted several years into the future.

One thing the Working Group learned through its survey is that the third week of August is a difficult time for many members, both because their schools are starting and because their children's schools are starting.

MOTION: Whenever possible, ASA annual meetings should be held in the second week of August. When that is not possible, priority should be given to the first week of August, followed by the fourth week of August. ASA should avoid meeting the third week of August. Carried (unanimous).

Survey results also showed that appearing on the program is a very important consideration for both regular and occasional meeting attendees. The Working Group recommended allocating a larger portion of the program space to sections instead of the Program Committee as a way of maximizing the ways that members can appear in the program. They also recommended prioritizing program policies that maximize the number of people who appear on the program. Based on data Past President England presented about the number of submitters who do not get accepted (approximately 10%), the Council concluded that invited sessions were not getting in the way of broad participation.

Presidents also noted that the program committees often discuss how to maximize participation in the invited portion of the program. For example, President-elect Lamont noted that the 2017 Program Committee limited participation on invited session to one appearance per participant. There was discussion about whether to limit participation in Plenary, Presidential, Thematic, and Special Sessions to one panelist or discussant appearance. Council was reluctant given that there is a tradition of giving the Program Committee autonomy in this regard and presidents are generally interested in maximizing the number of voices on the program. There was also recognition that theme-related expertise is often needed, which demands heavier participation of some people.

MOTION: A larger portion of the program should be allocated to ASA sections, rather than the Program Committee. Defeated (2 for, 12 against, 4 abstentions).

MOTION: Instructions provided to the President-Elect about how to organize the Program Committee and the program should include encouragement to consider ways of making participation in the invited portion of the program as inclusive as possible by, for instance, considering whether to limit participants to one appearance. Carried (13 for, 3 against, 2 abstentions).

MOTION: Workshops and/or webinars should be held annually on how to write a paper that would have a high likelihood of being accepted onto the ASA program. Carried (17 for, 1 against).

MOTION: Members should be given the option of providing information on their areas of expertise and volunteering to serve as presiders or discussants for open submission sessions. Carried (16 for, 2 against).

The next recommendation from the Working Group focused on Annual Meeting sites. For years, ASA has avoided some locations because of policies related to issues like discrimination, unionization, and climate conditions. Bohon reported that the survey results suggest that discrimination issues are indeed important to the majority of the survey respondents who prefer not to meet in places with legalized discrimination policies, such as Arizona and North Carolina. Very few survey respondents, however, consider the climate or heat conditions when deciding whether or not to attend a meeting. The group suggested, then, that ASA should consider meeting in the South which might be less expensive. Potential sites identified are San Antonio, Miami, New Orleans, Houston, and Dallas. Several concerns about the South were raised in the discussion, including the risk of hurricanes and downtown vibrancy.

MOTION: ASA should consider the feasibility of meeting in the US South and Southwest. Carried (17 for, 1 against).

Bohon reported that another finding of the survey was that frequent attendees want to have more research sessions, while infrequent attendees want more teaching-focused sessions. The Working Group recommended that more teaching-focused sessions be offered at the annual meeting, and that the timing of teaching-related sessions be reconsidered. Faculty at community and small colleges are often prohibited from cancelling classes to attend professional meetings, so it may be useful to concentrate teaching sessions on the weekend and, if necessary, adjust the place of the Section on Teaching and Learning in the section scheduling rotation. It was suggested that if sections understood that teaching sessions/workshops were a draw for attendees, they would be more interested in allocating some of their limited program space for that type of session.

MOTION: Council Liaisons to the Committee on Sections should communicate Council's discussion about the importance of including teaching-related sessions/workshops on section programs. Carried (17 for, 1 abstention).

The issue of the timing of teaching-related sessions was deferred for a later discussion, in part because COS is considering questions about the section rotation schedule. Also, timing may be less of an issue now that future meeting dates are unlikely to fall during the third week of August.

B. Joint Committee on the Future of *Contexts*

Past President Paula England provided a report from the Committee. First, the committee recommends that the new Executive Officer treat dissemination of sociological knowledge to

non-sociological audiences as a long-term goal. Second, the committee brought a recommendation to the Committee on Publications for consideration, which was approved. Specifically, the call for applications for the next *Contexts* editors will convey that applicants should address how they would produce and direct readers to the web-only content that supplements the magazine, encourage policymakers to access content, and generate non-academic readership.

Finally, the committee pursued avenues for opening access to the magazine's content even further. Currently, each issue is open access for the first thirty days. After that, one article in each issue remains open. The committee worked with SAGE to discuss various options for amending that arrangement. SAGE agreed to open up the back files if ASA signs a new 5-year contract. This would mean that, in addition to the current first year level of access, the entire content of each issue will be open access one year after publication.

MOTION: Authorize the ASA staff to proceed with negotiating a new 5-year contract with SAGE to publish *Contexts*. Carried (unanimous).

Council took a break at 4:50 p.m. and reconvened at 5:02 p.m.

C. Ad Hoc Committee on Council Members-at-Large Nominating Procedures

Given some concern that Council Members-at-Large (CMAL) are not generating sufficiently diverse nominations for the Committee on Nominations (CON), Council earlier requested historical data on nominees and nominations. Those data were presented. This led to a lengthy discussion about the Town Hall meeting that had taken place a few days earlier. Council members who attended shared details about the event, including the topics addressed and the depth of the emotion conveyed. The President acknowledged the complexity and importance of these issues and requested that the Council address them more fully at the winter meeting given the lack of necessary time available at this meeting.

Council member Fetner asked the Council to consider adding a question about LGBTQ self-identification to the membership join/renewal form as a way of allowing CMAL to track an additional element of diversity in its nomination process. It was noted that the Committee on the Status of LGBTQ Persons in Sociology was working on a related proposal that would likely come before Council in winter 2017 and it is undesirable from a research perspective to frequently change questions. It was clarified that the proposal was not intended to provide data for research purposes.

MOTION: Add the following question to the membership join/renewal form: "Would you like to self-identify as LGBTQ?" Carried (8 for, 5 against, 3 abstentions).

D. Ad Hoc Committee on a Task Force on Membership

The Ad Hoc Committee on a Task Force on Membership, appointed at the previous Council meeting, presented a proposal to establish a Task Force on Membership and Membership Costs

to research declining membership and the role of the cost of membership, develop proposals for solutions to the membership decline, and report back to the ASA Council. Secretary Romero presented an alternative proposal from the EOB that focused less on membership cost and more on membership outreach. There was some discussion about how much cost should factor into the charge. There was general agreement that benchmarking data from other associations about cost will be essential. Due to time constraints, the President deferred further discussion to the August 24 Council meeting.

6. Report of the Task Force on Engaging Sociology

The President indicated that no action was needed on the task force's report and encouraged Council members to read the update provided in the meeting materials.

Adjournment

President Milkman acknowledged the contributions of outgoing Council members-at-large Tina Fetner, Karen Lacy, Leslie McCall, and Patricia White. Special acclamation was given to Paula England for her presidential service. A formal resolution of appreciation for Mary Romero's service as Secretary was presented.

MOTION: Approve a resolution expressing appreciation for Mary Romero's excellent service as Secretary. Carried (by acclamation).
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President Milkman adjourned the meeting at 6:35 p.m.