

**2010-2011 ASA Council Second Meeting
Final Minutes**

Saturday-Sunday, February 12-13, 2011
Hotel Palomar, Washington, DC

Officers Present: Catherine White Berheide (Secretary), Randall Collins (President), Evelyn Nakano Glenn (Past President, arrived 9:15am), John Logan (Past Vice President), David Snow (Vice President), Edward Telles (Vice President-Elect), Erik Olin Wright (President-Elect)

Members-at-Large Present: Sarah Fenstermaker, Rosanna Hertz, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, Jennifer Lee, Omar McRoberts, Cecilia Menjivar, Debra Minkoff, Joya Misra, Mario Luis Small, Sandra Smith, Sarah Soule, Robin Wagner-Pacifici (arrived 9:45am)

Staff Present: Janet Astner, Sally T. Hillsman, Michael Murphy, Jean Shin, Roberta Spalter-Roth, Margaret Weigers Vitullo

1. Introductions and Orienting Documents

ASA President Randall Collins convened the second meeting of the 2010-2011 ASA Council at 8:38am on Saturday, February 12, 2011. Due to the packed agenda, he urged members to be focused and concise in their discussions.

A. Approval of the Agenda

No changes were made to the proposed agenda.

MOTION: To approve the agenda. Carried.

B. Approval of the August 17 and 18, 2010 Minutes

A correction to the attendance list for the August 17th meeting was noted.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the meetings on August 17-18, 2010, as corrected. Carried.

C. Approval of October 20, 2010 Minutes (Amicus Brief: Perry v Schwarzenegger)

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the meeting on October 20, 2010. Carried.

D. Approval of December 13, 2010 minutes (Move from Chicago)

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the meeting on December 13, 2010. Carried.

E. Approval of December 28, 2010 minutes (Move to Las Vegas)

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the meeting on December 28, 2010.
Carried.

F. Approval of January 27, 2011 minutes (Amicus Brief: Wal-Mart)

This action supported writing the brief and deferring the issue of whether ASA's name goes on it pending review of the draft by Council. A copy of the first draft of the brief was distributed to Council, with overnight review recommended in order to discuss it on Sunday morning.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the meeting on January 27, 2011.
Carried.

G. Approval of February 1, 2011 minutes (Statement on Scholar Attacks)

A list of other organizations that have co-signed this statement to date was distributed. The final list of co-signers will be shared via email.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the meeting on February 1, 2011.
Carried.

2. Report of the Secretary

A. Current (2010) Financials & Proposed 2011 Operations Budget

ASA Secretary Catherine White Berheide summarized the current financial situation by noting that the budget was moving out from recent deficit years. While two were planned because of the purchase of office space in 2007-08, the unexpected economic downturn added pressure to the fiscal management efforts of the past three years. As ASA revenue streams dropped, staff efforts to reduce expenses ramped up. A small surplus is projected for the end of 2010, which will be used to replenish cash reserves.

The action item for Council was to review the proposed 2011 operating budget. The proposal continues the belt-tightening and anticipates a small positive bottom line at year's end. The only question posed by Council members was about the effect of the publishing partnership with SAGE, now entering its second year. Some primary benefits of the partnership are a reduction in ASA direct publication expenses and a guarantee of revenue, which provide more stability in the revenue stream and smoother cash flow management. It is unlikely that there will be any dividends above the revenue guarantee for the first year of the partnership (2010), but the first quarter of 2011 looks more positive.

Council proceeded to discuss the next agenda item (extra pages for a journal) which impacts the 2011 budget, then returned to take action on the budget proposal.

MOTION: To approve the proposed 2011 Operations Budget. Carried
unanimously.

B. Proposed Extra 2011 Pages for Social Psychology Quarterly (SPQ)

The Secretary provided background information on the recommendation from the Committee on Publications to allocate extra pages to *Social Psychology Quarterly* in 2011. Editorial transition backlogs are expected to fill one issue of the incoming editor's first volume year, but in this case, the outgoing editor left behind an excessive amount of accepted material. The Publications Committee recommended approval of 80 additional pages at a cost of \$90 per page, and the Committee on the Executive Office and Budget (EOB) included \$7,200 for this purpose in 2011 budget proposal.

In response to questions about the origin of the surplus papers and what standard operating procedures are in place for transitions, the Secretary repeated that the guidelines for editorial transitions advise leaving enough content to fill one issue. However, the guidelines also state that manuscripts in the "Revise and Resubmit" (R&R) phase should be finished. The outgoing editor prioritized finishing R&Rs instead of honoring the one issue limit.

It was also noted that the Publications Committee does review the status of journals manuscript flows every August. At that time, the outgoing editor informed the committee that there were no problems regarding the backlog. That editor was also not using the existing reporting systems that keep the Executive Office informed about manuscript flow, so the content overflow emerged as a surprise at year's end. To prevent such reoccurrences in the future, the Publications Committee is reviewing the guidelines and discussing appropriate R&R processes for editorial transitions. It is also expected that all future editors will utilize the online submission system provided by SAGE.

Despite the irregularity of the situation, both EOB and Publications recommended that Council approve the allocation. There are no quality concerns about the manuscripts.

MOTION: That Council approve a one-time-only additional 80 pages for *Social Psychology Quarterly* in 2011 at a cost of \$90 per page (\$7,200 total) to alleviate the excess backlog from the previous editor. Carried.

C. Proposed 2011 Spivack Budget

A significant donation from the Sydney S. Spivack estate in the 1990s was placed in a restricted fund which Council has used for a variety of initiatives related to public sociology and public affairs/information. The 2010 Spivack budget of \$264,302 was higher than usual because Council directed that the fund be used to cover the *Contexts*' deficit of \$35,000.

Now that *Contexts* is under the SAGE umbrella and running without a deficit, the proposed Spivack budget for 2011 returned to a more normal level of \$188,000. The usual range of activities is planned, including Congressional briefings, a Congressional Fellowship, CARI grants, and support for ASA's Public & Public Information program and the ASA Award for Excellence in Reporting Social Issues.

MOTION: To approve the 2011 Spivack budget as recommended by EOB. Carried.

D. Member Contributions and Donations

(1) General Contributions in 2010

Member general contributions are down, which is not surprising in the current economic climate. The Secretary noted that contributions to MFP also fell in 2010, which is not unexpected given the members' focus on supporting the MFP Leadership Campaign.

(2) MFP Leadership Campaign

Executive Officer Sally T. Hillsman reported that the MFP Leadership campaign was now completed. The goal was to raise \$500,000, and total contributions now stand at \$471,000, thanks to the tireless efforts of immediate past Vice President Margaret Andersen. A resolution of thanks for Andersen's work was presented for Council's consideration.

MOTION: The Council of the American Sociological Association, meeting in Washington, DC, on February 12, 2011, by acclamation expresses the deepest appreciation to Dr. Margaret L. Andersen for her outstanding efforts in organizing and leading the ASA Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) Leadership Campaign from 2009 to 2011. Carried by acclamation and with applause.

(3) Council Subcommittee on Member Giving

Council Member Sara Fenstermaker presented a brief report on the recent deliberations of the subcommittee. ASA has a mechanism for accepting donations but it has little visibility beyond the membership renewal phase, and there is no real marketing to members. Discussion explored ways to get more members to contribute as well as collect data about giving. The current participation rate is not high; less than ten percent of members make contributions. The subcommittee hopes to do a comparison of ASA member giving rates and evaluate the assumption that there is a large untapped group of potential donors within the membership.

A three-pronged approach was laid out for Council's consideration. The subcommittee proposed to:

1. Initiate a two-year effort beginning in the fall to support another fund. The ASF was viewed as the best choice for the upcoming campaign because it points directly to the Association and members are already familiar with the fund. ASF is also a more versatile fund than others on the current list.
2. Focus on what some members currently do, such as rounding up the dues.
3. Start a publicity campaign that includes placing a conspicuous link for contributions/pledges on the website. The intent will be to reinvigorate the notion of stewardship for the future, and the campaign can show how ASF has been used in the past.

Response from Council members was enthusiastic. Additional ideas were proposed, including offering monthly installment plans for paying pledges, allowing "round-up" contributions to be earmarked for specific funds/projects, and identifying specific ASF projects. It was noted that many people are not interested in giving to unrestricted funds; they prefer to contribute toward a specific goal. The MFP Leadership campaign was successful in part because everyone knew exactly what their donations would support; it was a very targeted fundraising effort.

The importance of letting everyone know what is accomplished with donations was emphasized. ASA needs to highlight the good works done for sociology by these funds. One way could be to connect stories with fund support, noting that support was made possible by member donations. FAD recipients would be one source of interesting stories about what was accomplished that otherwise could not have been done.

3. ASA Investments and Reserves

A. General Financial Picture of ASA Investments

The Secretary reminded Council that the Investment Committee meets via conference call to advise EOB. ASA's investment strategy is based on extensive diversification, and the value of the ASA portfolio is nearly back to where it was before the economic downturn. A little rebalancing of fixed income and equity assets will be done at the next quarterly review, but the portfolio is generally doing well.

A question was raised about the performance of investments in relation to the amount of reserves. The Director of Finance indicated that 64% of long-term investments is unrestricted, amounting to approximately \$3.4 million at the end of November 2010. The budget for 2010 was \$5.67 million. Thus about 66% of the budget was backed by the long-term investments. With the recent growth in the portfolio, it appears that investments and thus reserves are healthy.

B. Reserves

ASA defines "reserves" as the unrestricted long-term investments of the Association. EOB has agreed that the amount of reserves at minimum should be half (50%) of current operating expenses, and that a reserve of 60% or more would be better. It was noted that there were concerns in prior years when reserves were as low as 40% of the operating budget, due primarily to two factors—the withdrawal from the building fund in order to purchase office space, and the overall drop in the market. Since November of 2008, however, the reserve and its percentage of the operating budget has climbed back upwards as a result of market recovery and reductions in the operating budget.

4. Audit Committee

The 2010 audit is underway, and the Secretary indicated she had spoken with the auditors by phone. EOB had already authorized the Executive Office to issue an RFP for future audits, which coincides with the transition of Secretaries. There are no issues with the current firm; it is simply good financial practice to go out for bids every so often.

Council took a short break at 9:48am – 10:10am.

5. Publications

A. Subscriptions Report

Institutional subscriptions were down 6% in 2010, but ASA journals are now part of more consortium arrangements as a result of the publishing partnership with SAGE. The general feeling is that, as a result, ASA publications are more readily available to readers and researchers than before the transition. Membership subscriptions are lower due to members reducing the number of journals that they purchase.

B. Selection of Editors for the Rose Series, Contexts

Before proceeding to review the recommendations from the Committee on Publications for the editorships of *Contexts* and the Rose Series, Council addressed the confidentiality issues that should accompany these types of discussions, including the constraints on sharing any information outside the Council meeting.

Following discussion of each editorship, Council acted on the recommendations and the Secretary was authorized to proceed with negotiations and to relay information back to the Committee on Publications.

C. ASA Statement Thanking UC Press

On behalf of the Publications Committee, the Secretary presented the following statement for Council's consideration.

"The Council and Committee on Publications of the American Sociological Association express their deep appreciation to the University of California Press for its invaluable partnership during the development and inauguration of the Association's award-winning magazine, *Contexts: Understanding People in Their Social Worlds*, during its first decade (2001-2010). The sound foundation this partnership created will serve the magazine and the Association for many years to come."

MOTION: To approve the statement of appreciation to the University of California Press passed by the ASA Committee on Publications. Carried.
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Before breaking for lunch, Council received a short presentation about the new digital teaching library, TRAILS (Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology). There was discussion about citing teaching resources, and it was pointed out that scholarly citations should acknowledge all sources drawn on and that this is not dissimilar to citing sources in articles. Those involved with the scholarship of teaching are working toward establishing a norm of citing everything, including teaching materials.

Council members were very interested in the TRAILS online teaching library and offered some ideas for future enhancements. These included: (1) Add or highlight information on website about acceptability of short submissions (e.g., single exercise or set of exam questions); (2) Consider having a short trial period for new viewers to examine library content; (3) Develop profiles of resources and feature them on the website; (4) Include information about CV citations of teaching scholarship on the site; (5) Make sure the peer-reviewed nature of resources is clear on the main homepage; and (6) Show information on the number of times a resource has been downloaded.

Council then recessed for lunch at 12:22pm and reconvened at 1:15pm.

6. Annual Meetings

A. Update on the 2011 Annual Meeting and Related Presidential Activities

President Collins reported that one of the exciting and traumatic challenges in the past two months was reacting to the lack of a hotel workers' union contract in Chicago and moving the meeting to Las Vegas. Chicago is not only a great city and a successful meeting site that ASA members like, but the local spotlight committee was preparing some very interesting sessions. Some of the Chicago Spotlight planning has been reframed as a "Chicago in Exile in Vegas" program element. For example, a session on Grant Park 1968, reassembling some of the Chicago Seven, will commute to the new site, and a session on organized crime is easy to move to Las Vegas. Also in process are additions of some Las Vegas-oriented sessions coordinated by Dmitri Shalin at UNLV.

Meeting Services Director Kareem Jenkins affirmed that sociologists at UNLV were ready and eager to plan sessions and write articles for *Footnotes*. Las Vegas is an interesting destination for sociologists for a variety of reasons, including the colorful juxtaposition of glitz and reality. The ASA headquarters hotel is in the center of the strip and has over 26 restaurants on the property. As a result, the new local committee decided it was better to use their short planning period to develop program sessions rather than compile a restaurant guide. The local tour component may fall by the wayside too.

A question arose about whether the ASA room block at Caesars Palace might be difficult to fill, given the bargain room rates available elsewhere. Jenkins indicated the low budget motels/hotels are at the other end of the strip, and they are a case of buyer beware. ASA rates are now ranging from \$99-139, the lowest they have been in many years, and all Annual Meeting activities are under one roof. There is no need for attendees to go outside or between properties, unless they choose to do so for reasons other than cost.

One positive indicator of member interest in the new-to-ASA meeting site is that paper submissions are at an all-time high. Over 3,700 submissions have been received; the average range is 3,000 – 3,300.

Collins closed his report on the 2011 Annual Meeting by outlining plans for plenary sessions. There will be an opening plenary session on schools of thought, organized by Andy Abbott. Subsequent plenary sessions will be on the politics of sexuality today, and on theorizing in social movements.

B. Update on the 2012 Program Committee

President-Elect Erik Olin Wright talked about the 2012 meeting theme, "Real Utopias: Emancipatory Projects, Institutional Designs, Possible Futures," and indicated that the three plenary sessions will focus on democracy, policy, and sustainability. Two kinds of Thematic Sessions are being planned – the usual panel format, and a new proposal-based format. The latter type of session will have written essays posted online in January 2012, hopefully with capabilities for members to comment online. At the session itself, the writer will make a short presentation, followed by one commentator, then the floor will be open for dialogue. At this time, the Program Committee has planned 17 proposal sessions, and 30-40 panel sessions.

Wright indicated an interest in having a party on Saturday night during the meeting instead of the usual reception. One idea on deck is to get a good square dance caller, as Wright has been known to fiddle for such events.

Since Council's approval of the 2012 Program Committee composition last August, one committee member has resigned (Carmen Sirianni). Wright proposed a colleague at UW-Madison, Jess Gilbert, to take over Sirianni's assignments.

MOTION: To approve the proposed appointment of Jess Gilbert to the 2012 Program Committee. Carried.

C. ASA Site Selection Process and Criteria

Sites for the 2017 and 2024 Annual Meeting were selected last August. At that time, Meeting Services Director Jenkins noted that most Council members were not familiar with how sites are investigated, so an explanatory memo was prepared as background information and included in the agenda packet for this Council meeting.

The material provided information on the selection criteria and policies set by previous ASA Councils, date preferences, geographic rotation, city and climate "feel", meeting and exhibit space requirements, overlap with meetings of sister associations/societies, and the status of state and local ordinances that afford legal protection from discrimination on the basis of age, gender, marital status, national origin, physical ability, race, religion, or sexual orientation.

The normal selection time frame is usually 4-5 years in advance. Exceptions have been made when unusual deals have become available however, as occurred last summer with Montréal.

D. Viable Destinations for ASA Annual Meetings

Jenkins provided brief reviews of a number of possible convention sites, broken out by region and rotation patterns. While not an exhaustive list of cities, information was given on some of the pros and cons of each site. The next open year for booking an Annual Meeting is 2018, and more detailed site investigation of cities in the central US will occur over the next two years.

7. Status Committee Updates

A. Committee on the Status of Women in Sociology (CSWS)

CSWS is currently focusing on the issue of women faculty spending more years in rank than male faculty. Research Director Roberta Spalter-Roth, the Staff Liaison to CSWS, reported on the committee's progress toward conducting a survey on number of years in rank, oversampling for underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, which was recommended to Council last summer.

At its August 2010 committee meeting, the CSWS began a discussion of how to carry out such a study. The out-going chair of the committee provided a memo with recommendations as to whether and, if so, how to carry out the study, concluding that it was worthwhile doing

only if it included full professors because data are needed from faculty who have gone through all the academic ranks. CSWS members sought out data sources and other studies or data sets including those on the ADVANCE website. It was determined that the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Survey of Doctoral Recipients would be too difficult to use for the purposes of this study. However, during the review process, it was learned that sociologist Dana Britten has received an NSF grant to study the years in rank question, and CSWS is currently communicating with Britton about the usefulness of her data and whether the committee might use it.

8. Task Force Updates

A. Task Force on the Postdoctorate in Sociology

The Executive Officer informed Council that responses to the call for volunteers to serve on the task force were minimal (only one person volunteered). Council members were invited look at the statement of purpose and submit suggestions of possible members. Alternatively, the President suggested that perhaps Council should rethink the need for the task force at this time, given the low interest.

It was noted that ASA is now administering an NSF-funded program with six schools that have postdocs, and ASA's Research Department will be collecting data on that program. The function of a postdoc is very different now than in past decades. The economic crisis has affected the job market adversely, and it is now more important to have postdoctoral opportunities. Council members concurred that collecting data and seeing where it points would be a good step to take before moving ahead on appointments to the task force.

MOTION: To table appointments to the Task Force on the Postdoctorate in Sociology for a year or two, until more research data is available. Carried (1-abstention).

B. Task Force on Sociology and Global Climate Change

The Task Force on Sociology and Global Climate Change has engaged in a number of activities over the past six months, including two conference calls to plan activities and task force products. Based on these calls and other communications among members, an overall strategy has been agreed upon that includes issuing a series of policy papers (or "Green Papers") followed by a final report in the form of an edited volume with topical chapters authored by task force members. While the task force continues to wrestle with some of the details, it is clear that three key topics to be addressed include: social justice and global climate change; "driving forces"—or societal factors that contribute to climate change; and civil society and global climate change. Green papers on these three topics are in process.

Past Vice President Logan has served as liaison to this task force since its inception, and he advised Council of the need to appoint a replacement since he is rotating off Council this summer. Council member Sarah Soule offered to fill the upcoming vacancy.

9. Executive Office

A. Overview of the Staff and Year

The Executive Officer provided the chart showing the staffing structure of the Executive Office and noted that one internal shift occurred in order to facilitate having more technical expertise on staff. Another difference from several years ago is that ASA now has more research grants and thus there are more FTEs whose salaries are covered by the grants in the Research Department.

Copies were provided of the press release about the ASA moving from Chicago and a letter directed to Council from a group of members who were disappointed with the framing of the decision to move. More focus was desired on ASA's support for workers. Council acknowledged receipt of the letter.

B. Information Technology Report

Council members were referred to the prepared report in the agenda packets. The most notable completed projects included the debut of TRAILS, as reported to Council earlier, and the video archive of Annual Meeting plenary sessions. ASA staff availability to answer questions about these resources and other ongoing projects was noted.

C. Other

The Executive Officer brought two items of information to Council's attention. First was the opportunity to provide nominees for the Medal of Science. Given the imminent deadline, Council members needed to submit their suggestions by the end of the Council meeting. Second was the question of whether there was any interest in working with Professionals Abroad, a division of Academic Travel Abroad, to send a professional research team to Cuba. Further investigation and consultation was advised.

At this point the President brought discussion of Item 12b, the NRC Doctoral Program Rankings, forward on the agenda.

12B. Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the NRC Doctoral Program Rankings

The highly anticipated National Research Council (NRC) rankings, titled *A Data-Based Assessment of Research Doctorate Programs in the United States* (Ostriker et al. 2010), had incited controversy after the report finally appeared. Critics of the 2010 NRC report argued that it did not evaluate sociology programs effectively, and that strong sociology programs were unfairly ranked. Furthermore, some department chairs feared that the report data collection and analysis strategies misrepresented the quality of their programs in ways that university administrators may not appreciate. In November 2010, the ASA President appointed an *ad hoc* committee and charged it to prepare a set of recommendations to the ASA Council on how to respond to the NRC report. Council Member Mario Small, who chaired the committee, presented the committee's report and recommendations.

The committee report began by stating that the 2010 NRC rankings and their potential problems must be understood in light of other existing rankings, whose limitations the NRC attempted to address. Of these, the three most important are the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings; the Gourman Report rankings, now published by Princeton Review; and the 1995 NRC rankings, which preceded those published in 2010. Shortcomings of these three rankings were briefly summarized for Council. It was then noted that the 2010 NRC rankings

were expected by many to avoid the problems of reputational approaches (such as those in *U.S. News* and the 1995 NRC) while adding the transparency missing from some existing rankings (such as the Gourman Report).

The NRC committee's solution was to produce rankings based on objective departmental performance data, to provide five different principal rankings of program quality, and to give readers the measures used in each ranking, so that users can assess how departments rank according to, not only each of the five rankings, but also each of the several components of each ranking. Of the five, two core rankings provided overall assessments and three focused on specific dimensions of program quality.

The *ad hoc* committee reported to Council that there are two sets of problems with this approach, those dealing with operationalization and those dealing with implementation. Six operationalization problems were cited: The rankings (1) exclude books from the measure of faculty publications; (2) exclude cited books from the measure of citations to faculty; (3) disregard the quality of the outlet in which articles were published; (4) disregard the number of authors in each publication; (5) disregard the non-quantitative portion of the GRE scores in their measure of the competitiveness of incoming students; and (6) rely on at least one measure that can change dramatically from year to year. The implementation problems identified were that the process by which publication data were gathered is not well documented, and the approach to dealing with uncertainty is not well justified.

In addition, two larger issues were outlined for Council. First, sociology departments cannot be rank-ordered effectively with respect to their excellence in sociological scholarship because the heterogeneity of sociology is multi-dimensional. Second, any ranking produced by a respected scientific association will be read as a best-to-worst ordering of sociology departments by prospective students, deans, and faculty, regardless of any disclaimers offered by the producers of the ranking.

Because of these problems and issues, the committee recommended that ASA issue a resolution criticizing the 2010 NRC rankings for containing both operationalization and implementation problems; discouraging faculty, students, and university administrators from using any of the five 2010 NRC rankings to evaluate sociology programs; encouraging them to be suspicious of the spreadsheet data produced by the report; and indicating that reputational surveys have their own sets of biases.

The committee also recommended making the present report (or selections thereof) public to clarify the rationale behind its resolution. Because the NRC is currently considering the release of further documents and continues to evaluate the future of its ranking program, any additional actions vis-à-vis the NRC depend on conditions which are uncertain at this time.

Additional recommendations were that the ASA should encourage prospective students, faculty, university administrators, or others evaluating a given program to avoid blind reliance on rankings that claim explicitly or implicitly to list departments from best to worst. The heterogeneity of the discipline suggests that users should first determine what characteristics they value in a program and then employ available sources of information to assess the program's performance. Further, the ASA should help facilitate, within available means, the dissemination of such information.

Council discussion began with a commendation to the *ad hoc* committee for a very accessible report. Anecdotal information from Council members confirmed that NRC

information immediately gets picked up in non-thoughtful ways by university administrators. Caution was given that any excessive institution focus on these NRC rankings would be likely to change how sociologists work in much the same way that the USN&WR rankings transformed how law schools were structured. For example, departments might be pressed to assess articles published anywhere over books in evaluating faculty. While it may be easy to assert that the NRC rankings should not be taken too seriously, there is almost a cultural obsession in the US with rankings, "Top Ten" lists, etc.

A question was raised regarding whether concerns about the NRC rankings were a social science-wide issue or limited to the discipline of sociology. The Executive Officer reported that feedback obtained during the fall meeting of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) Executive Officers indicated that most of the humanities and social science organizations were having a hard time with the new rankings. The issue is definitely broader than just sociology, and this adds broader importance for sociology to address its concerns with the NRC rankings. There is room for a well-articulated response sharing the concerns about the methodology used and some of the implications of that methodology.

It was pointed out that whether or not the feedback accomplishes changes with the rankings or at NRC, a solid scientific statement would help sociology departments deal with the current situation and set up a platform for the future. There was some discussion about disseminating a version of the committee's report and what possible outlets might be.

MOTION: To accept the report of Council's *ad hoc* committee with commendation for their work, circulate the full report widely, produce documents based on that report (as needed) to be distributed to divisions and department heads, and respond to NRC at the appropriate level. Carried.

There was consensus that the Executive Office staff were empowered to modify (condense) the report if necessary to implement the above action. Several additional distribution possibilities were noted, including the spring ACLS meeting and the NRC convocation in March on assessment of research documentation.

10. Executive Office Programs

Council members were advised to read the reports provided in the agenda books for details on the current status of the various programs. Only brief highlights were presented orally.

A. Academic and Professional Affairs Program

The debut of TRAILS under the leadership of Margaret Weigers Vitullo was pointed to as evidence of strong activity in APAP department.

B. Minority Affairs Program

Minority Affairs Program Director Jean Shin informed Council that there were seven Fellows in the 2010 MFP cohort, which is a significant drop from 20 Fellows in 2009. This change was directly related to the end of the major training grant from NIMH. The MFP Advisory panel will meet in March to select the new cohort of Fellows.

One outcome of the reduction in the funding base is that the program now gives one-year awards instead of three-year awards. Not doing so would heighten the risk of not being able to appoint new Fellows in a given year.

Past Vice President Logan raised questions about follow-up on the report of the Committee on the MFP Transition. In particular, that report contained seven specific proposals regarding possible program enhancements, structural changes and new initiatives for the re-imagining of MFP. At its August meeting, Council had approved expanding the MFP Advisory Panel by three people so that it could begin the process of implementing the recommendations in the report. The advisory group was directed to report back to EOB and Council for input and advice on budget categories, financial resources, and program directions.

Clarification was given that the advisory panel had not met since the Council's action at the end of the Annual Meeting. The next scheduled meeting is in March, at which time the group would review this round of fellowship applications and discuss the proposals outlined by the transition committee. Preliminary feedback from panel members indicated, however, that the proposal to move toward partial funding support was not acceptable.

Logan offered some information about interesting features of an Eiger (NSF) program in global equality that was recently started at Brown University. The program offers a bigger stipend than usual and covers summer research activities, but students cannot enter the program in their first year. Logan suggested that supplementary funding of various kinds could help support MFP Fellows, and he offered encouragement for the MFP Advisory Panel to review the transition proposals and prepare a budget for next year that provides a balance of activities.

President-Elect Erik Olin Wright noted that the most useful funding at the University of Wisconsin would be a full dissertation support grant. For the first time, that university is now guaranteeing five years of funding for all graduate students, which leaves the dissertation phase unsupported. ASA Research Director Roberta Spalter-Roth indicated that ASA now has an NSF grant to compare MFP Fellows and group networking with NSF dissertation award fellowship recipients, and the data gathered for this would help provide some empirical basis for evaluating directions for MFP.

While agreeing that there is value in having a final bump of funding support at the dissertation stage, some Council members voiced concern about shifting all funding to that phase. General support was expressed for having the advisory panel look at ways to increase the diversity of support available to minority scholars.

MOTION: To ask the MFP Advisory Panel to provide a budget and set of concrete recommendations with the panel's best sense on how to balance various concerns. Carried (17-yes, 1-no).

C. Student Programs

No major changes were reported; the current student programs are operating as intended.

D. High School Sociology Affiliate Program

Efforts are underway to develop stronger High School Affiliates program, including special activities at 2011 Annual Meeting.

E. Post-Doctoral Fellowship Program

The first year of administering the postdoctoral program is going well. An application has been submitted to NSF for some additional research money.

F. Research and Development Grants and Projects

It was noted that some exciting work for the discipline is going on in the Research Department all of which is documented in the prepared report.

G. Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline (FAD)

Another grant application for FAD support was submitted to the NSF Sociology Program on February 8, 2011. Staff has concerns about potential reductions in NSF's budget by Congress, but no one can predict outcomes for NSF at this stage.

H. Public Affairs and Public Information Program

The work of getting information on sociological scholarship to the national and local news media is meeting with continued success. The Executive Officer commented that Council's encouragement of ASA adding a specialized media person to the staff was a wise direction from Council. Even though attendance was lower at the 2010 Annual Meeting in Atlanta and Atlanta is not media intensive city, there was a huge amount of press coverage, partly as a result of ASA using electronic avenues such as social media. Media representatives no longer have to attend the meeting to get information on research and presentations. Details of these successes are in the reports provided in the agenda book.

11. Membership

A. 2010 Membership Report

The Secretary reported that the final membership count for 2010 was 13,698, a 6.8 percent drop from the 2009 end-of-year total of 14,899. Membership usually drops when the Annual Meeting is held in a less popular site, most notably southern cities such as Atlanta. While 2011 renewals started slowly, there was burst of renewals in January following the announcements about relocating the 2011 Annual Meeting to Las Vegas. The count as of early February is just under 10,000 members, which compares favorably over last year at this time.

B. 2010 Sections Report

The Secretary reported that section memberships dropped from last year's record numbers but at a lower rate than the overall decrease in ASA membership (3.8% versus 6.8%). This suggests that members who are retained are more likely to be those that belong to sections.

(1) *Section Bylaws Changes.* Six sections are seeking Council review and approval of section bylaws changes in advance of the ASA 2011 elections. The sections are: #10—

Community and Urban Sociology, #11—Social Psychology, #17—Political Economy of the World System (PEWS), #19—Sociology of Mental Health, #26—Sociology of Culture, and #31—Children and Youth. In addition, a new section-in-formation (#50—*Inequality, Poverty and Mobility*) is requesting approval of its bylaws.

The Secretary presented three recommendations on the proposed changes: (a) approve section bylaws changes for Sections 10, 11, 17, 19, and 26; (b) return section bylaws changes for Section 31 for further clarification; and (c) approve the proposed bylaws for the new section-in-formation.

MOTION: To accept the recommendations of the Secretary. Carried.
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Before closing the afternoon session, President Collins advised Council members to make sure their overnight reading included the prepared materials on dues restructuring and the draft amicus brief.

Council then recessed at 4:50pm on Saturday, February 12, 2011, and reconvened at 8:39am on Sunday, February 13, 2011.

11. Membership, continued

C. ASA Dues Restructuring

Before opening the floor for discussion of the proposed dues restructuring, the Secretary recapped three major points from the ongoing discussions in Council and EOB meetings during the past several years.

First, the structure of the income categories for dues no longer reflects the range of faculty and member salaries as a result of almost two decades of inflation and salary changes in the academy. These categories have not been changed since the early 1990s, and the consequence is an erosion of the dues structure's progressivity. The intent of EOB and Council has been to make adjustments to the structure to improve progressivity and to do so in such a way that the structure will not become outdated quickly.

Second, while EOB/Council have recognized the need to change the categories because of the progressivity issue, several prior Councils and EOBs decided not to formally propose a change in the income categories to the membership until additional revenues were also needed. The ASA is now at that moment so the major goal of changing the income categories to reflect the Association's long-standing progressivity goals now can be proposed to the membership coupled with small to modest increases in dues amounts and larger increases at the very top of an expanded income category structure.

Third, the Secretary said, is the issue of timing. Council needs the membership to approve this change in the income and dues structure through a referendum. The logical time to do this is during the Association's annual election cycle. She indicated that if Council is not convinced that 2011 is the right time to present the issue to the membership, it can be deferred for a year. While ASA's budgets have been balanced for the past two years by

severely containing costs, the revenue side of the budget continues to decline and this is not, and should not be, the Association's normal operating mode.

Council continued its discussion, noting that proposal on the table re-bundles dues and one journal subscription and contains adjustments suggested by the EOB and Council discussions during the summer of 2010. The highest dues category (F) has been expanded, an Unemployed category has been specifically added rather than being encompassed under the low income category. The Emeriti category is now referred to as "Retired" and the criteria for qualifying changed to reflect the need to include retired members who are not in the academy.

Two issues were discussed at length: (1) whether the Unemployed category should a journal at no additional charge (as all the other membership categories would), and (2) what information was available regarding anticipated impacts on total membership numbers. The current proposal does assume that an Unemployed member will get a single journal and all other benefits of regular membership, and the proposed dues level for the unemployed membership category are lower than the Low Income dues for 2011 plus cost of one journal subscription.

Council discussed the effect on membership and concluded that it is difficult to anticipate, over the short or mid-range. The changes don't affect students (who are one-third of the membership). The dues increases at the lower/middle income range are minimal. The benefits to emeriti/retired will be significant and the cost changes minimal. The general sense of the meeting was that there would be a period of adjustment, and that some members will be lost and others gained. Individuals select their own income categories, and will continue to do so; those who now under-report their income will probably continue to do so and this may increase at the upper-end of the incomes spectrum. It is impossible to know how the decision-making of those whose dues will increase, mostly those members with income levels above \$100,000 will shift.

A suggestion was made to proceed with the membership vote on the dues restructuring this spring but to delay implementation of the changes for one year. This would provide members a chance to assess the impact of the changes on themselves, and to prepare a year ahead. There was some discussion about the "gross income" label. Many members probably redefine that as "annual salary", while others grapple with whether it implies household income or only income received from sociology-related sources. There was some sentiment that "Individual Gross Income" might be a clearer standard to use.

Issues of timing and revenue needs were discussed. Noting that the 2010 membership count was lower than 2009 by 1,001 members, concerns were raised whether there was sufficient value in changing the dues structure if it results in losing another 1,000 members. The recession is not yet getting better in terms of people's personal lives. If the organization can get by another year or two with the severe cuts to expenses and if there is any evidence that other sources of income would return to previous levels, the \$150,000 - \$200,000 in new dues revenues could wait and referendum postponed a year. However, EOB does not see any evidence as yet that revenues are increasing much if at all in areas where they are not a result of already executed contracts. Council also indicated that there were areas where some programmatic cuts would need to be restored more quickly than this.

Council discussed the possibility of disconnecting journal subscriptions from membership dues entirely because some members can get access to the ASA journals via their academic

institutions. However, some Council members were strongly opposed to this on the grounds that this change would advantage members at larger research university and disadvantage of faculty at smaller colleges/institutions and those outside the academy who would still have to pay for the journals.

There was consensus about the need for the proposed restructuring on progressivity grounds because of the outdated income categories, but the question of timing remained. Council discussed that from the perspective of an individual member, the costs of being an ASA member may be greater than just the dues including a journal. If the member also planned to attend the Annual Meeting and paid registration at the time of 2011 membership renewal, the total tab for the *highest income* membership category (F) would be over \$400 (\$234 Category F dues with one journal subscription plus \$190 meeting registration = \$424). Some Council members feared that if a portion of these expenses could not be written off to existing grants, the renewal of higher income members might decline as dues rose.

Council considered that members have experienced only COLA increases since the mid-1990s, and those increases have had virtually no effect on membership retention (year-to-year or over time). Empirically, the biggest factor connected to renewal decisions is the location of the Annual Meeting. Despite higher costs for rooms, food, etc. in cities such as San Francisco, New York City, and Chicago, there is always higher attendance at meetings held there. Increases in registration fees, regardless of the venue, also seem to have little impact on decisions to attend the meeting. Council concurred that there is a complex mix of elements impacting membership renewal decisions; while there are patterns, everyone takes a different set of factors into consideration.

There was interest in learning more about what brings members to the point of feeling like they are getting good value for their membership costs. Consideration could be given to improving communication with members about the work done by the Association on behalf of the discipline. There is some evidence that the renewal reminders that the Membership Office sends, each of which describes a different set of organization activities on behalf of the membership and discipline, elicit at least some renewals. Council members also suggested exploring additional incentives, along with better communication. An incentive might be to offer a discount on registering for the meeting during the early months of membership renewal because that is the point when members are digesting the sum of ASA costs.

Several Council members suggested that we might do a more extensive survey than the current question on the membership/renewal form that asks about why people join ASA and what attracts them to attend an Annual Meeting. Unfortunately, the low response rate of members to past ASA member surveys is discouraging. In lieu of a survey, it was suggested that Council members could conduct focus groups in their departments and bring information back to the next Council meeting, but this idea received little support.

Another timing concern is that members who have not been reading the Council minutes do not know that changing the dues structure has been under discussion for several years. A staged PR campaign over the coming year would allow opportunity for feedback and give members time to adjust to the idea, as well as accentuate what ASA does for the discipline and profession as a whole. From an individual's viewpoint, a dues increase of any amount means less money in one's pocket and more money in ASA's coffers.

One Council member noted that she could not have told someone where their ASA dues go prior to coming onto Council. It was suggested that if Council votes for the new structure, the *Footnotes* articles over the next few months on the referendum could be accompanied by providing that financial information, with a link on the homepage that says “here is what your money does.” It is important to get such information out to the members in a very accessible way. The dues structure proposed by EOB is sensible, but the membership needs to be informed.

Other comments reflected on the personal aggravation felt by many members about the institutions in which they are employed. Benefits such as travel support are not coming back, and our members are having issues with many aspects of their professional lives over which they have no control. If someone needs to cut back on expenses, their options include professional memberships. ASA has seen this impact already, although it has been modest; but it would be naïve for ASA to assume everything will return to previous levels and that salaries will go up.

Several officers opined that the Council and EOB has continued to discuss this issue year after year and every year the decision was postponed and it is now simply time to get this to the membership before new Council members have to go through this all over again. Efforts can be made over the next three months to communicate with members about the proposed dues structure and the reasons they are being asked to approve it in the upcoming referendum.

The recommendations on the table from EOB were to approve the recommended income structure and dues model and seek member approval by a referendum in either 2011 or 2012. Because of the need for the Unemployed membership category, it was viewed as imperative to implement as soon as possible. There was a building consensus among Council members that the EOB’s recommended structure for membership dues was sound, that it should be put before the membership in the 2011 election, and that, assuming the members approved it, the Unemployed category be implemented in 2012 and the full structure in 2013.

MOTION: To approve the EOB recommended dues model. Carried unanimously.

Council took a brief break at 10:07– 10:30am, then continued discussion. The President asked that comments be focused on when to put the dues proposal to the membership for vote and, assuming the referendum is approved, when to implement the new structure.

The importance of informing members regarding what ASA does with their dues was emphasized, as was providing members some opportunity for feedback. There should be a quick outreach before the spring ballot that focuses on the progressivity issue and inclusion of an Unemployed category. This will announce the intention to pay attention to membership needs and priorities.

An argument was presented that 2011 is not a good time in member’s lives to present the dues structure for vote, and that it would be better to use this year to provide information before the referendum appears on the 2012 ballot. Other viewpoints supported voting in

2011 with implementation delayed to the 2013 membership year when the Annual Meeting is scheduled to be in New York City.

MOTION: To seek member approval of the new dues model in May 2011.
Carried (17 – yes; 1 – abstain; 1 – no).

Discussion then focused on when to implement the dues structure, assuming it is approved by the membership. There was considerable support for adding the Unemployed category in 2012, with the remainder of the structure to phase in for 2013. Supporters emphasized the an 18-month delay would give members more than 6 months to prepare for even a small increase in dues although the delay benefits wealthier members more.

MOTION: If the new dues structure is approved by membership referendum, implement the Unemployed dues category in 2012 and the remainder of the dues structure in 2013. Carried (17 – yes; 1 – abstain; 1 – no).

Disseminating information about the dues proposal will begin with the next issue (February) of *Footnotes* and the following three issues (March, April, May/June). Materials will also be posted on the ASA website.

12. New & Hold Over Business

A. August Business Meeting Resolution on the Human Rights of Children

Because of time constraints, consideration of this resolution was deferred to the next meeting of Council.

B. Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the NRC Doctoral Program Rankings

Discussion of this report was held on Saturday, February 12th; see the notes that appear after agenda item 9 in these minutes.

C. Amicus Brief in *Wal-Mart v. Dukes et al.*

Executive Officer Hillsman provided Council with a review of the status of this matter. In mid-January ASA received an inquiry from former ASA President Barbara Reskin about whether the Association would submit an *amicus curiae* brief to the United States Supreme Court in the case of *Wal-Mart v. Dukes, et al.* Former ASA President William Bielby provided extensive analysis as an expert witness in this case on behalf of the plaintiffs, a class of female workers at Wal-Mart from across the country who contend significant sex discrimination. This case will draw on social science data if and when it comes to trial on the merits after the United States Supreme Court makes a number of important decisions about the case. These include whether the certification of a class of Wal-Mart workers as plaintiffs should be sustained. The Supreme Court is likely to consider whether the case study methodology of data collection and analysis is valid science, and it is also likely to draw on other types of scholarship on organizations and organizational culture that has a strong empirical base in the discipline of sociology.

Initial discussions with President Randall Collins, President-elect Erik Olin Wright, and Secretary Catherine White Berheide (as well as other ASA leaders) in late January resulted in a strong consensus that ASA should embark on drafting an *amicus* brief, and that the modest expenses involved should be covered by the Spivack Fund. The deadline for submitting the brief to the Supreme Court is March 1, 2011.

Council voted via email on January 27, 2011, to support development of the proposed *amicus* brief. The first draft by Laura Beth Nielsen, Barbara Reskin, Robert Nelson, and other sociologists, was provided to the attorneys on February 11, 2011, and to Council for its review during its February 12-13, 2011 meeting. The authors circulated the draft to other scholars who do work central to this area of sociological research for their review, comment, and input.

The *amicus* draft focused on presenting the case that the court should care about blind peer-reviewed research because much of the critique of sociological research in this litigation as well as others is found in law review journals where articles are not peer-reviewed. Because of significant space constraints on all *amicus* briefs submitted to the Supreme Court, the draft used only a few high prestige citations, mostly from peer-reviewed journals such as *ASR*, *AJS*, *Social Problems*, etc. rather than citing the large amount of other scholarly literature. The number of citations was limited because the word count in citations is part of the very modest 9,000 word maximum for the whole brief.

Feedback from Council members contained some concerns that the brief seemed to respond to a particular narrative, to defend case study perspectives as legitimate, and also appeared to defend one particular sociologist's work although it didn't intend to. The content discussing informal/formal organizational structure also raised some questions, and clarifications were though desirable regarding "corporate culture" and "social framework analysis" as used in the draft brief.

Council discussed that there will be multiple *amicus* briefs in progress on both sides of the case so the ASA brief only deals with a small number of the issues before the court. This potential ASA brief is being coordinated by the lawyer who will represent the plaintiffs to ensure all the central topics are covered by the most suitable *amici*. Briefs are usually written by or assembled by those who have particular expertise on issues that the lawyer arguing the case wants the court to consider. If ASA decides not to put its name on this brief, the sociologists who wrote it could still have the brief submitted by a lawyer. However, there is value in having the imprimatur of the Association as the spokesperson for the discipline..

The attention paid to *amicus* briefs is reputed to vary from judge to judge on the Supreme Court. The assumption by the lawyers is that Justice Kennedy is the primary target for social science briefs, because does consider them seriously and will view the sociological and related evidence carefully.

More background was requested on how this issue came to ASA's attention. The Executive Officer reported that the lawyers for the plaintiffs were looking for *amicus* briefs regarding what they view will be the issues considered by the justices at the appellate level. One set of those issues involves sociological matters. The plaintiffs' lawyer was advised that for a good brief on these to have the most impact, it should be supported by the American Sociological Association. Hence the request to the ASA.

It was pointed out that if ASA's name does not go on this brief, it does not mean that the Association sides with Wal-Mart; if it does go on the brief, it also does not mean that the Association agrees that there is scientifically credible evidence of discrimination by Wal-Mart because the Council has not reviewed this. That evidence is not the issue before the Supreme Court. More detailed discussion of the draft brief by Council members focused attention on specific parts of the draft that appeared to be a rebuttal to complaints about Bielby's specific submission in the case rather than statements about the state of sociological knowledge on a topic of substance, methodology or research approach. Because Council members did not review the Bielby research or testimony, Council wanted those sections of the draft revised. Social science uses mixed methods including case studies and does them rigorously, and that should be an emphasis in that part of the brief. The consensus was that the draft brief should strengthen support for the inclusion of social science evidence in court cases in general.

Another area of discussion by Council was the draft's inclusion of perspectives from organizational sociology. There was considerable discussion of changes in language that Council members thought necessary to this part of the draft, and members of Council agreed to provide specific suggestions on which Council had consensus to the drafters.

There was an inquiry about whether ASA would pay for the submission of the final brief if the Association's name was not on it. A recommendation was made that if ASA decides not to support the brief, the commitment should be honored to support costs incurred up to the time Council makes that decision. If ASA signs the final brief, ASA will pay all the costs incurred in production and submission of the brief.

MOTION: If ASA chooses not to submit the <i>amicus</i> brief, it should honor its commitment to support the drafting of the brief up to that point but incur no further costs. Carried.

Council then reviewed the various changes it was requesting based on its discussion of the current draft. Council viewed the purpose of the proposed ASA brief to be addressing questions at the appellate level regarding sociological methods, including case studies, as scientific evidence in legal proceedings and the various other matters including the state of the sociological literature on organizations.

Council also agreed that the final brief would be reviewed by members of Council before it took a final vote on whether the brief should be submitted on behalf of the Association.

There was consensus that Council's review and final vote would be conducted by email and/or conference call, as needed, prior to submitting the brief to the printer during the week of February 21, 2011, to meet the United States Supreme Court's tight deadline.

Executive Session

Council convened in executive session at 11:43am and adjourned at 12:02pm on Sunday, February 13, 2011.