

Official Reports and Proceedings

Minutes of the Third Meeting of the 2001-2002 Council

August 19, 2002, Chicago, IL

Council Members Present: Richard D. Alba, Elijah Anderson, William T. Bielby, Diane Brown, Michael Burawoy, Linda Burton, Craig Calhoun, Robert D. Crutchfield, Nancy Denton, Paul DiMaggio, Arne L. Kalleberg, Douglas S. Massey, Ross Matsueda, Victor Nee, Barbara Reskin (President), Barbara Risman, Lynn Smith-Lovin, Ivan Szelenyi, Pamela Walters.

Incoming Council Members Present: Esther Ngan-Ling Chow, Jennifer Glass, Deborah K. King, Rhonda F. Levine. These members were observers at this council meeting.

Staff Present: Torrey Androski, Janet Astner, Karen Edwards, Lee Herring, Sally Hillsman, Michael Murphy, Jean H. Shin, Roberta Spalter-Roth.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:40 pm in the Lake Erie Room of the Chicago Hilton Hotel on the final day of the 2002 Annual Meeting. President Barbara Reskin welcomed Council members to the final meeting of the 2001-2002 cycle. Newly elected members of Council were introduced and welcomed as observers at this meeting.

2. Minutes of Previous Council Meeting

Minutes of the January 2002 meeting of the ASA Council were distributed at the start of the meeting. At the end of the meeting, President Reskin called for discussion and approval. Two corrections were noted and accepted by the group.

Council voted to approve the Minutes of the January 2002 Council meeting with two corrections: (1) on page 13 in the 3rd full paragraph, delete the word "not", and (2) on page 3, correct the section membership count to read "19,223" instead of "18,223".

3. President's Report

Barbara Reskin provided a report on her year as president and also presented a proposal for Council consideration.

A. Review of Year as President

Reskin reported that while the last year had been challenging personally, professionally the year as ASA President had been extraordinarily fulfilling. The Annual Meeting just concluding was, in her view, an overwhelming success, attributable to the hard working program committee and to Janet Astner and the staff of the Executive Office.

Hardly any complaints were received by officers this year during the meeting. While there was concern going into the meeting about the evolving management/labor dispute at the

hotel, the hotel staff was very accommodating and helpful and no problems have been reported.

B. Proposal for a Bridges Task Force

Reskin circulated a three-page proposal from a committee in the early 1990s to increase communications between sociologists and groups that are typically excluded from dominant economic and political institutions, and to aid sociologist in working with and on behalf of such groups. Noting that many people are attracted to sociology as a way of pursuing social justice, she recommended that Council create a new task force to pursue the ideas presented in the original proposal. Such activities help people learn the skills to do good sociology work and to bring those skills to an arena where they can make a difference. Members of Council agreed with the premise of the proposal and recommended that a mission statement be drafted; Reskin agreed to draft such a statement.

Council voted to appoint a task force to review the report of the blue ribbon commission from the early 1990's and provide recommendations to Council about how to expand upon what has been done since the report of the original commission.

C. Appointment of SSRC Representative

Reskin reported that, in consultation with the Executive Office, she had appointed Troy Duster to serve as the ASA representative to the SSRC. Duster replaces Neal Smelser who had served as ASA's representative to SSRC.

4. Report of the Secretary

A. Annual Meeting

Secretary Kalleberg reported that 4,780 people had registered for the current Annual Meeting, which was 675 more than in Anaheim and 119 more than the last time ASA was in Chicago in 1999. The record attendance was 4,986 in San Francisco in 1998.

B. Membership

ASA membership stands at 12,294. Kalleberg reported that when the EOB met earlier in the summer there was concern that membership was declining. Since then, however, an aggressive outreach effort on the part of the Executive Office has reversed that trend. The number of new members are up. Membership renewals show both mixed results: renewals of lapsed members are up, as are renewals of members in higher income categories, but renewals by low income members, associate members and student members are down. Some of the decline in renewals at lower income levels can be explained by incomes increasing and members moving into higher income categories. Members of Council commended Executive Office staff for their efforts.

Section memberships are down slightly from one year ago at this time. Currently, the average member holds 2.37 section memberships. Some are concerned that there are too many sections; there is no consensus on this issue,

but there is consensus that sections serve an important role. Many sections are thriving and growing nicely, but others are experiencing significant losses. Several sections have fallen below 200 members. Current policy provides that sections below 300 members may be removed, but this policy has never been enforced.

There are currently two Sections-in-Formation working to gain full Section status: Animals and Society, and Ethnomethodology and Conversational Analysis. Sections-in-Formation are given two years in which to recruit at least 300 members. For Animals and Society that two-year period ends on September 30, 2002; Ethnomethodology has another year to go to reach 300 members. At the time of the Council meeting, Animals and Society had 224 members and Ethnomethodology had 135 members.

C. Review of Journal Subscription Data

On the issue of journal subscriptions, Kalleberg reported that ASA is experiencing a decline in the number of institutional subscriptions. However, ASA is doing better than other learned societies on maintaining institutional subscriptions. He noted that the decline is in the number of institution copies ordered, not in the number of individual universities that subscribe. Marketing for institutional subscriptions is handled through brokers rather than by ASA directly; staff is currently looking at ways to increase institutional subscriptions. Institutional subscriptions are a major revenue source, so this decline is a concern.

Kalleberg reported for the Committee on Publications that the quality of *Contexts* is excellent. Approximately 10% of the current membership subscribes; the journal ranks 5th among ASA journals. One area that has not materialized as well as originally anticipated is institutional subscriptions. There are currently 18 institutional subscriptions while the goal was to have 100 in the first year. This is because libraries tend to wait until a new journal has established a following and because institutional subscriptions for 2002 were ordered before *Contexts* was published. Institutional subscriptions for 2003 should be a better test of its library market. Council originally approved a maximum investment of \$620,000 from the Rose Fund for the development of *Contexts*, with a goal of the journal being self-sufficient by 2006.

While member subscriptions to *Contexts* have exceeded projections, one-third of member subscribers have dropped subscriptions to other ASA journals. Kalleberg reported that members are mostly dropping subscriptions to the *American Sociological Review* and *Contemporary Sociology*. These declines are countered to some degree by new subscriptions from the 30% of members who previously had no journal with their membership.

Members of Council expressed concern over the subscription situation, noting the long-term decline in subscriptions to core journals that publish research. Alba noted that in 1994, *ASR*

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had 8,800 subscribers, but only 6,000 in 2002; and *CS* had 5,300 subscribers in 1994 but only 3,700 today, a 25% decline. He noted that in future years there will be no pool of non-subscribing members to boost declining subscriptions. He added that ASA should be in the business of publishing original, scholarly research.

Several members noted that when *Contexts* was originally proposed they were assured that member subscription costs were linked to the cost of producing the journal. Since *ASR* is published six times a year, it may have economies of scale that ASA's quarterly journals do not. It was suggested that the Executive Office review journal subscription prices and costs.

Calhoun suggested that ASA see if COSSA compiles data for other social science organizations on the cost of journal subscriptions. Hillsman cautioned that this was easier said than done due to the differences among the social science organizations, but agreed that she and publications staff would work on the issue.

Others on Council suggested that the decline in subscriptions for *ASR* and *CS* was not a factor of pricing but rather a lack of interest or an overload of information, and that new journals like *Contexts* met the needs of some members. It was suggested that perhaps the editors of *ASR* and *CS* might publish more controversial articles in an effort to re-capture member interest and focus.

Kalleberg thanked Council for the discussion of ASA publications and indicated that the Publications Committee will take up these issues in detail at their next meeting. Calhoun added that any data collected on these issues also needed to come to Council, not just to the Publications Committee. Noting consensus among Council members, Reskin agreed that any data collected would be provided to Council as well as the Committee on Publications.

Council voted (1) to ask the Publications Committee to examine the current pricing of journals to determine whether they are currently priced based on costs, and (2) to request the Publications Committee to consider the impact of *Contexts* on other ASA journals insofar as it deems appropriate (gathering, for example, information on the number of member subscribers who also subscribe to other ASA journals), and to make recommendations to Council on how to protect the viability of existing ASA journals, if necessary.

5. Executive Officer's Report

A. Overview

Executive Officer Hillsman reported that diving deeply into a new position is a great way to learn a lot quickly. With only three months on the job prior to the Annual Meeting, there has been a steep learning curve, but one that has been managed effectively with the assistance of elected officers, ASA staff, and others. Previous Executive Officer Levine has been helpful and will continue to be involved in some

programs. Staff of the Executive Office has been supportive and helpful in making the transition work. Overall, the transition has gone quite well, but transitions can take as long as six months to a year to fully complete.

The transition of senior staff leadership is always somewhat difficult for any organization, but ASA has faced additional challenges with the departure of several other key people, including the Deputy Executive Director, the Controller, the Membership Director, and the MAP Director. In addition, several staff are new to the organization, including Kevin Brown, Director of Information Services, Michael Murphy, Governance and Sections Coordinator, Lee Herring, Director of Public Policy, Kareem Jenkins, Meeting Services Coordinator, and Torrey Androski, Executive Assistant. Hillsman assured Council that the organization has an energized Executive Office staff with many new ideas that is working hard to make the ASA an even stronger organization.

There are a number of important future directions that the Association will address in the months ahead, including an examination of electronic publishing and an improved web presence for the ASA. Hillsman added that in the months ahead she would be moving to make external contacts with essential outside groups such as COSSA, regional associations, federal agencies, and other learned societies.

B. Annual Meeting

Secretary Kalleberg earlier provided an overview of the annual meeting. Staff has daily been handling situations that inevitably arise with sensitivity and finesse. For the average member, the fact that a labor dispute is happening has almost been invisible in terms of service provided.

C. 2002 Election Update

Election participation has declined a bit over recent years, but the current 30% participation rate is excellent for a professional association. A detailed proposal will be presented at tomorrow's council meeting to add new electronic features to the ASA election.

D. Department Affiliates

The Department Affiliates program is a core activity of the organization. The staff is pleased to see growth in this area, especially at a time when departments are not flush with money.

E. Member Contributions and Donations

At the time individuals renew their membership in the association they are given the opportunity to make contributions to the organization and specific programs. The number of members who make such contributions is not large but they provide important assets for the organization. The Minority Fellows Program and the American Sociological Foundation continue to receive the largest number of member contributions.

F. Honorary Reception Revenue

A total of 27 departments gave \$6,675 for the honorary reception this year; this is down slightly from last year.

G. Participation in the ISA Meeting

ASA was officially well represented at the recent International Sociological Association meeting in Brisbane, Australia with attendance by ASA Secretary Arne Kalleberg, ASA Representative to ISA Doug Kincaid, and Executive Officer Sally Hillsman. In addition, the ASA was able to secure a \$33,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to support US members' travel to the meeting. Through a competitive, peer review process, a total of 35 members received some financial assistance to support their trip to the ISA meeting.

6. Committee on Publications

A. Additional Pages for *JHSB*

The editor of the *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* submitted a request to publish an additional 90 pages for a special issue on race and mental health. The estimated cost for an additional 90 pages is approximately \$9,830; outside funding of \$10,000 is anticipated from the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research (OBSSR) and its National Institute of Mental Health.

Council voted to approve the request from the editor of the *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* for additional pages for a special issue on race and mental health.

B. Copyright Issues

Council considered the issue of copyright laws and their implication for electronic publishing. The Publication Committee reported that current policy is that all electronic and print rights to articles are retained by ASA. Technically, authors are not able to post text of their articles to individual websites or send PDF files to others without violating current copyright policy. The ability to electronically share the text of an article has raised this issue to new levels since anyone can share the texts with many others. Members agreed that this is a troubling issue that places the organization between the desire to share knowledge widely and potential copyright restrictions. In addition, members agreed that Council must keep an eye on preserving revenue streams that support these journals. Following an extensive discussion,

Council voted unanimously to appoint a subcommittee of Council members that also has a member from the EOB, the Publications Committee, and the Executive Office to examine and report on possible actions regarding tensions between open access and copyright protections in light of Association revenue streams. The analysis is to include consideration of electronic dissemination issues related to JSTOR and other arrangements that ASA may enter into. The examination should also assess the prevalence of the posting of material on which ASA holds copyrights to individual websites, and the question of whether any particular policy on this is-

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sue would be enforceable. The report will go first to the Publications Committee and then to Council.

7. Update on ASA Task Forces

A. Task Force on Articulation of Sociology in Two- and Four-Year Colleges

Kate Berheide joined Council to discuss the work of the Task Force on the Articulation of Sociology in Two- and Four-Year Colleges. She noted that the issue was one about which she previously knew very little, but with the changing demographics of the American population, people are moving around more and spending longer pursuing their educations than previous generations. The issue of students transferring to 4-year schools is a complicated issue because it is entwined with state and county-level politics.

Berheide called the attention of Council to page 4 of the written report which summarized three patterns found during the Task Force review. Following that summary, page 5 of the report included a series of bulleted recommendations. Roberta Spalter-Roth, staff to the Task Force, added that the recommendations listed were ones the Task Force felt were important to this issue.

Reskin commented that Council approval of the report today would mean dissemination of the report. Others were less clear on whether accepting the report included accepting all of the task force recommendations. Some urged caution, suggesting Council accept the report and acknowledge the work and contributions made by the Task Force, but not accept all the recommendations without further review, including linking the report with that of the Task Force on the Major.

Council voted (1) to accept the report of the Task Force on Articulation of Sociology in 2- and 4-Year Colleges and to distribute the report as outlined by the task force, (2) to thank the Task Force and Carla Howery and to commend them all for their efforts, and (3) to set up a sub-committee on Council members (two people) to look at the recommendations from the Task Force on Articulation of Sociology along with Executive Office staff, and to return to Council at the winter 2003 meeting with recommendations on any follow-up that is necessary.

B. Task Force on a Statement on Race

Reskin reported that the report of the Task Force on a Statement on Race had been accepted earlier by Council by mail ballot to allow for dissemination at a press conference during the Annual Meeting.

Council voted to thank the members of the Task Force on a Statement on Race and ASA Staff Liaison Roberta Spalter-Roth for their hard work in producing the statement on race.

C. Task Force on an Advanced Placement Course in Sociology

The Task Force on an Advanced Placement Course in Sociology reported that Sociology is disadvantaged by lack of understanding among high school students about what sociology is. As a result, high school students enter college with less understanding of sociology as a career option than they have about some other areas of study.

Members of the Task Force are working to design a state of the art advanced placement course. The Task Force has drafted a curriculum outline and narrative and has spent as much time as possible in open forums and workshops with teachers.

The original schedule for the Task Force required adjustment. As originally conceived, the Task Force was to have a two year life, but members of the Task Force asked for a one year extension, through August 2003, to adequately finish their assigned task. The Task Force plans to apply to NSF for a grant to bring in a curriculum specialist to develop the curriculum. Based on initial inquiries, NSF seems sympathetic to this type of request. In addition, the Task Force will work on recruiting sites for a demonstration project of the course in September 2003, and other sites to offer the new course in 2004-2005.

Members of Council agreed that this was important to Sociology since students gravitate to majors where they have some experience from high school.

Council voted (1) to extend the tenure of the Task Force on an Advanced Placement Course in Sociology by one year with a final report anticipated at the August 2003 meeting, (2) to work with the task force to seek outside funding, perhaps from NSF, to support temporary engagement of a curriculum specialist for this project, and (3) to approve the recommendation of the task force to offer a high school affiliate relationship with ASA for \$45, to include *Contexts* and *Teaching Sociology*, and use of member prices on other publications and services.

D. Task Force on the Implications of Assessing Faculty Productivity and Teaching Effectiveness

The Task Force on the Implications of Assessing Faculty Productivity and Teaching Effectiveness provided a written update to Council and asked for an extension of their original tenure.

Council voted to extend the tenure of the Task Force on the Implications of Assessing Faculty Productivity and Teaching Effectiveness by one year with the anticipation of receiving a draft report at the January 2003 meeting. The task force is asked to clearly define what material in their report they would like to see published as a journal article. ASA staff should look closely at the recommendations before Council gets the report.

E. Task Force on Undergraduate Sociology Major

Council received a progress report on the ongoing work of the Task Force on the Undergraduate Sociology Major. The task force is writing a report that is revisiting issues raised in the 1991 report on Liberal Learning and the Sociology Major that they expect to publish following Council approval. Members of the Task Force held an open forum earlier during this meeting to collect member input. Much of the work is done but the final report is not yet finished.

8. MOST Conference and Report

Copies of the MOST final report, *Promoting Diversity and Excellence in Higher Education through Department Change*, were distributed to members but the lack of time prevented a discussion of this item.

9. Centennial Planning

The planned discussion of the ASA's centennial year (2005) was postponed until the Council meeting the next day.

10. Finances

A. Final 2001 Financial Reports and Audit

Secretary Kalleberg presented the results of the audit of 2001 financial records. ASA ended 2001 with a \$33,000 deficit, taking into account losses on ASA's long-term investments, which was less than the approved deficit of \$59,000. The audit report indicates that the organization is functioning well financially.

B. Analysis of Investment Performance

Secretary Kalleberg reported that the ASA lost money on long-term investments in 2002, along with almost every other investor in the financial markets. The EOB met with the association's investment advisor on July 30th. The association currently has a growth strategy for investments as opposed to a value strategy. This strategy is sound, but has not been as effective over the last few years with the markets in decline.

Council voted to accept the report from the ASA investment advisor, noting that cautious income projections should continue to be included in future reports.

11. Adjournment

Reskin thanked the outgoing members of Council for their service. Members of Council gave Reskin a round of applause for her leadership over the last year. With no additional business for consideration, the meeting was adjourned at 6:18 pm.