

# MARCH 4-5, 2017 COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

## Draft

American Sociological Association  
Committee on the Executive Office and Budget  
March 4-5, 2017  
Washington, D.C.

**Participants:** Michèle Lamont (President), Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (President-Elect), Ruth Milkman (Past President), Kathleen Gerson (Vice President), Christopher Uggen (Vice President-Elect), Barbara Jane Risan (Past Vice President), David Takeuchi (Secretary), Nina Bandelj, Mabel Berezin, Daniel Chambliss, Cynthia Feliciano, Tanya Maria Golash-Boza, Margaret Hunter, Peter Kivisto, Monica McDermott, Mignon R. Moore, Wendy Ng, Andrew J. Perrin, Adia M. Harvey Wingfield, Nancy Kidd (Executive Officer), Les Briggs, Karen Gray Edwards, Michael Murphy, Michelle Randall, Carmen Russell, Jean Shin, Margaret Weigers Vitullo

**Guests:** David Levinson, Co-Chair of the Task Force on Community College Faculty in Sociology (afternoon of March 4); Thomas Lee Van Valey, Chair of the Code of Professional Ethics Revision Committee (morning of March 5)

President Lamont called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m. on March 4.

## 1. Announcements, Updates, and Reports

Council made introductions. Lamont indicated that written reports were provided on membership, department affiliates, sections, subscriptions, initiative to establish an AP test in sociology, Task Force on Contingent Faculty, and member representation at the ASEEEES meeting. There was also a written report from the Executive Officer summarizing recent activity with respect to finance, human resources, and a sample of recent programmatic initiatives. Council members were given an opportunity to ask questions about these reports.

President Lamont provided an oral report about activities that are planned for the 2017 Annual Meeting, and President-Elect Bonilla-Silva talked about his plans for the 2018 meeting on Feeling Race. Council congratulated President Lamont on winning the Erasmus Prize. Kidd provided an oral update on the NSF-funded archives project.

## 2. Consent Agenda

President Lamont presented the consent agenda which included approval of the August 23-24, 2016 Council meeting minutes, extending the *Socius* article processing charge waiver option, *Socius* data visualization fees, a Rose Fund policy revision, a policy for calculating returns on

permanently restricted funds, conflict of interest disclosures, a revised conflict of interest policy, a contracting authority policy, and an employee manual revision policy. Also included was approval of an Executive Office winter break, an updated capitalization threshold, employment service fees, a bylaws amendment for the ballot regarding selection of members for status committees, section bylaws amendments for the ballot, composition of the Task Force on Membership, the Report of the ASA Task Force on Liberal Learning and the Sociology Major, and recognition of Patricia White.

Because this is the first time Council has used a consent agenda, there was some discussion about its purpose and how it works. Kidd was asked to briefly describe each of the issues on the consent agenda and why it was put on the consent agenda. There were some questions of clarification about some of the issues. There was a request to pull career center fees out of the consent agenda for a fuller discussion. There was a proposal to amend some of the language in the proposed employee manual revision policy. *A motion was made by Milkman to approve the consent agenda as presented with the exception of omitting the employment service fees and amending the employee manual revision policy as discussed. Seconded by Wingfield. Motion carried unanimously.*

### **3. Investment Review**

Council was provided with the last quarterly report from our investment adviser, and Director of Finance Briggs presented an overview of the results. He reported that we have been pleased with the investment manager's work and the investments continue to perform well.

### **4. 2017 Budget**

The Committee on the Executive Office and Budget brought a budget proposal for 2017 to the Council for consideration. President Lamont asked Executive Director Kidd to provide detailed context on the proposed budget. Kidd explained that, while ASA has solid assets with a reasonable amount of money in investments, the Association is faced with strict spending limits given two bank covenants that are terms of the mortgage financing. In several recent years ASA has been close to violating one of the covenants, a debt service coverage ratio, and there was a violation in 2008, resulting in just a small fine after we requested, and were granted, a one-time waiver. At the time of the Council meeting, the 2016 books were not yet closed and there was concern that the Association could have a violation in 2016. It was going to be close. While not much could be done to keep that from happening by the late date in the fiscal year when the new Executive Officer joined the staff and recognized the issue, everything possible was done and some steps were taken to mitigate potential consequences should a violation occur.

The Association is not in jeopardy of violating the second covenant for liquidity at present, but if ASA continues with the past practice of drawing money out of long term investments (LTIs) for routine operations, there will likely be a violation in the future. Should ASA end up with a budget deficit in 2016, which is almost certain, it will be the sixth time in the last ten years. Budget deficits have been managed in large part by borrowing from LTIs. There has not been a corresponding

decrease in the value of the LTIs because there have been high market gains. But if the value of the investments goes down, which is inevitable, the Association will be in trouble if it is relying on investments for routine operations—both because ASA will be unable to sustain operations and because there will be a covenant violation.

In addition, ASA has been funding routine operations through restricted funds, rather than annual operating revenue, with no provision for how to cover those expenses once funds are depleted. For example, the Association has been covering \$110,000 of staff salaries and several programs from the Spivack Fund, and Spivack is now nearly depleted. That means, in addition to eliminating what has become a fairly routine budget deficit (ranging from \$58,000 in 2015 to \$103,000 in 2009 to an anomalous \$726,000 in 2008 and possibly close to \$150,000 for 2016), the Association also has to absorb about \$250,000 in previous Spivack spending into the operating budget just to maintain current activity without any new or expanding revenue streams. Further, there is no leeway for unanticipated problems. For example, ASA's tenant defaulted on his lease so there will be a substantial decrease in 2017 revenue.

It is likely that these issues did not come to light earlier in part due to the previous budget presentation format, so several changes were made for 2017. First, the new format provides a more holistic, integrated, and complete picture of the money that is coming in and out of the association in a given year. In the past, the “operating budget” showed only expenditures that were paid with operating revenue, but not all of those expenditures. Some items for which revenue went back out in a directly correlated expense were left out of the operating budget. There were also separate reports regarding expenditures from certain funds (e.g., Spivack) or for certain projects that would be supported by funds (e.g., MFP), but not all fund expenses were reported. The revenue and expense from grants presented in the operating budget was for administrative fees, but the project spending was not reflected. In short, the operating budget was just one piece of the full picture of money in and out of the organization with some, but not all, of the additional pieces presented separately. The 2017 budget proposal includes not only all operating revenue and expenditure, but also revenue and expenditure from grants, section funds, restricted funds, and board designated funds.

Second, the budget proposal is organized around categories of activity including administration, governance, and programs, with programs divided into membership, annual meeting, publications, academic and professional affairs, and public engagement. Within those categories, a more streamlined set of line items for revenue and expense is used, along with a corresponding simpler allocation approach. This involves aggregation and de-aggregation of the categories used in the past. Previously, allocated expenses, such as telephone, were separated into many separate line items (e.g., phone for annual meeting, phone for public affairs). This required substantial work on the part of the reader to figure out just how much money the organization was spending on each of these items (e.g., total spent on telephone) and created a budget with so many line items that it was hard to follow. In the new format, the full cost of each allocable line item is presented first and then a single line of total allocable expense is added to each of the categories to which those line items get allocated. This allocation approach not only simplifies the presentation of the budget, but also allows the EOB and Council to better understand what the Association's resources support in terms of program versus administrative expense overall and among specific programs.

The 2017 budget proposal is both balanced and reasonably conservative. Given the difficult budgetary situation, the only way to accomplish that was to make every effort to cut expenses without compromising service to members. Many ways to cut costs through more efficient operations were found. For example, the Association has failed to undertake competitive bidding on a regular basis for some products and services, and competitive bidding is now underway. Some significant cost savings from this process are included in the proposal. ASA has also historically contracted out some services that can be reasonably done, at least in part, by Executive Office staff, and that has been adjusted accordingly. Not all of these things are going to lead to immediate savings, however. In some cases, contract buy-outs have to be made to ultimately reap cost savings. In other cases, there is no payout option or the payout will not be worthwhile, so the Association will have to wait until contract expiration dates. It also takes some time to explore different options. Despite quite large savings from these efficiencies, the gap that needed to be closed was too big to be addressed by more efficient operations alone.

The biggest line items were reviewed for cost-cutting consideration. One of the three largest expenses is editorial for our journals. That model is complex and involves many people and contractual agreements. It was not feasible to consider any changes at present. In the future we will undertake a comprehensive review of editorial financial models and costs across other learned societies to see whether there are any reasonable adjustments that can be made. Another large line item explored for cuts is facilities. Most of the facilities expense is fixed, so the only way to reduce the cost would be to sell the facility. This possibility was carefully assessed and it was determined that the Association would lose too much money in the transition even if a suitable alternate space could be found. Not only would ASA need to be able to sell the condominium for a price in the ballpark of that for which it was bought, but transaction costs, moving costs, and the like would also have to be covered. Even if all of that was possible, the payment currently due on the Association's swap obligation, which is approximately \$1,500,000, would have to be covered. The final large item in the budget is compensation and benefits, and the rest of the shortfall had to be absorbed in large part by reducing headcount.

Kidd also directed the Council's attention to two documents in the meeting materials, a narrative description of the budget and a line-by-line spreadsheet with comparisons to the 2016 budget.

One of the line items in the budget proposal included funds to support new research on campus carry. This line item was included at the recommendation of a subcommittee on campus carry which was led by Past Vice President Risman. Risman described the context for this recommendation.

Council asked several questions, and discussion ensued. The group decided to vote on the budget later in the meeting after other related issues are discussed.

Council took a break at 10:40 a.m. and reconvened at 10:55 a.m.

## **5. Inclusive ASA**

Council discussed several activities ASA undertook in recent months in response to concerns expressed at the 2016 Annual Meeting Town Hall. Among these activities were a series of twitter chats, #inclusiveASA, during which members were asked to share ideas for how to have a more inclusive ASA and how ASA can foster more inclusion in departmental life and in academic more generally. Council discussed the content of the chats. Council also discussed historical data about the Association's elected leadership and how its composition compares with that of membership, as well as the extent to which those who are nominated for leadership positions accept those nominations and are elected and how this varies by race/ethnicity and gender. Council also discussed the webinar ASA organized for members with a post-election Q&A on dealing with emerging dynamics in the classroom which focused on ways that faculty, especially under-represented faculty, can address emerging dynamics. There was discussion about ideas for future activity as well.

## **6. Fundraising Possibilities**

EOB brought two fundraising campaign possibilities to Council for consideration: one to support the Minority Fellowship Program and one to develop a low income member travel fund for the Annual Meeting. The second recommendation also came to Council as a recommendation of the Task Force on Community College Faculty in Sociology. Discussion ensued.

*A motion was made by Ng to launch a new campaign to strengthen the MFP fund. Seconded by Kivisto. Motion carried unanimously. A motion was made by Moore to launch a low income member travel fund. Seconded by Milkman. Motion carried unanimously.*

## **7. Preferred pronouns on Annual Meeting Badges**

Kidd reported that we have received several requests over time to include gender pronouns on annual meeting badges, and Council is asked to consider providing the option for meeting attendees to identify preferred pronouns.

*A motion was made by McDermott to provide the option for meeting attendees to identify preferred pronouns. Seconded by Wingfield. Motion carried unanimously.*

## **8. Bylaws Amendment for the Ballot Regarding Membership Category for High School Teachers**

Council was asked to consider recommending a new membership category for high school teachers of sociology. Director of Academic and Professional Affairs Margaret Vitullo and Director of Minority and Student Affairs Jean Shin provided some background on ASA's work with high school teachers and the motivation for this proposal. She indicated that high school teachers are important to ASA as we seek to strengthen the pipeline to the sociology major. An ASA high school teacher membership would also benefit the teachers, many of whom have little

training in sociology and scant access to resources for teaching sociology. Membership categories are included in ASA's governing documents, so Council is asked to put this question on the next election ballot in the form of a bylaws revision proposal. Discussion ensued.

*A motion was made by Golash-Boza to put a bylaws revision proposal on the ballot to add a high school teacher membership category. Seconded by Bandelj. Motion carried unanimously.*

## **9. Report of the Task Force on Community College Faculty in Sociology**

The Council briefly discussed each of the recommendations in the task force report. Most discussion was deferred until later in the meeting when the task force co-chair would join the Council. This brief discussion was meant to ensure that Council was familiar with the issues and prepare to ask questions of the co-chair.

Council took a break for lunch at 12:11 p.m. and reconvened at 1:03 p.m.

## **10. Proposal for New Status Committee: First-Generation and Working-Class Persons in Sociology**

Some members submitted a proposal to form a status committee for first-generation and working-class persons in sociology, and Council considered the proposal. Discussion ensued. Council recognized that there are some initial definitional issues that such a group would need to address and discussed the idea of starting with a task force.

*A motion was made by Wingfield to constitute a task force on the status of working class persons in sociology, with the charge to be crafted by the proposers. Seconded by Bandelj. Motion carried unanimously.* It was agreed that Milkman and McDermott would review and approve the charge once it was written.

## **11. ASA and the Trump Era**

Kidd described several of the Association's recent advocacy activities and the group engaged in a discussion about future strategy. The March for Science is seeking formal partners. Council recognizes that the March is nonpartisan and focused on our core mission. *A motion was made by Bandelj to partner with the March for Science. Seconded by Risman. Motion carried unanimously.*

Lamont introduced the idea of a Sociology Action Network, a program to provide direct support to nonprofit organizations with advocacy missions related to issues that can be informed by sociologists. Discussion about the idea and how it might be operationalized ensued. There was enthusiasm for pursuing the development of a formal proposal. *A motion was made by Milkman to appoint a subcommittee of Council (Golash-Boza, Risman, and Uggen) to work with staff and members who have been involved in this effort to develop the proposal and bring it back to Council via email in the coming weeks. Seconded by Gerson. Motion carried unanimously.*

In light of the Trump administration's recent revocation of a set of federal guidelines specifying that transgender students be permitted to use the school restrooms and other sex-segregated school facilities consistent with their gender identities, we asked a sociologist with expertise in this area to draft an advocacy letter asking Trump to reconsider based on social science evidence. Council discussed the letter. *A motion was made by Risman to approve the letter on transgender bathroom use as presented. Seconded by Kivisto. Motion carried unanimously.*

## **12. Public Positions**

In 2001, Council approved a policy concerning ASA policy statements and member resolutions that was developed by a committee led by Richard Alba. Despite the passage of sixteen years, this policy has remained relevant and useful. The policy, which can be found on page 203, focuses on resolutions submitted to the Association for consideration by members.

Council was asked to build upon the work of a 2001 committee that determined appropriate categories for ASA public statements. That work focused on resolutions submitted to the Association for consideration by members and involved an extended approval process. Given that we increasingly face time-sensitive issues, Council discussed a process for expeditiously approving association positions on public issues. The proposed expansion of the current policy focuses on the two types of issues on which ASA has agreed we could consider taking public positions: public policy issues and academic/ professional issues.

*A motion was made by Milkman to approve the policy for taking public positions on time-sensitive issues as presented with the exception of removing the word "only" from the first sentence. Seconded by Bonilla-Silva. Motion carried unanimously.*

## **13. Advocacy for Departments**

ASA is frequently asked to help departments that are in peril on their campuses. Council was asked to consider different approaches we can take. There was agreement that we should advocate for the discipline rather than the department. We can make a clear case for the importance of sociology as an integral part of a liberal arts education. In that context, we can offer to send a letter to the institution's administration. We can also share advocacy resources with the threatened department and work with department leadership to develop plans for deploying the resources. Departments can also be directed to the ASA Department Resources Group.

## **4. Budget (continued)**

Council returned to discussion of the budget.

*A motion was made by Milkman to approve the budget as presented with the exception of reducing the campus carry initiative to \$24,000. Seconded by Chambliss. Motion carried*

*unanimously.* There was also agreement that the president's discretionary fund for the 2018 Annual Meeting will be \$40,000.

Council took a break at 3:05 p.m. and reconvened at 3:22 p.m.

#### **14. Probation for Sections**

In August, a proposal from the Committee on Sections (COS) regarding putting sections that are not complying with ASA requirements on probation was handed out at the Council meeting, and Council approved it. That proposal stipulated: "If Council approves the above policy, the Committee on Sections would work with ASA Council to further clarify the probationary process." COS developed a detailed proposal regarding the probationary process which Council, and Council is asked to consider it.

Council spent extended time discussing not only the probationary process but also revisiting the approach for putting sections on probation in the first place. There was discussion about the role of sections in the association.

*A motion was made by Golash-Boza to amend the automatic probationary policy for sections approved in August 2016 such that the 300 member threshold in clauses (2) and (3) will become 200. Seconded by Milkman. Motion carried with 2 opposed and 1 abstention.*

*A motion was made by Perrin to approve the proposed probationary process as presented by COS. Seconded by Berezin. Motion carried unanimously.*

#### **9. Report of the Task Force on Community College Faculty in Sociology (continued)**

David Levinson, Co-Chair of the Task Force and President of Norwalk Community College, joined the Council to present the task force report and respond to questions. He provided some context for the task force's work and described the research the task force undertook to develop its recommendations. He described each of the recommendations and responded to questions about them and additional suggestions.

David Levinson left and Council turned to voting on the recommendations.

*A motion of appreciation for the Task Force on Community College Faculty in Sociology was made by Kivisto. Seconded by Chambliss. Motion carried unanimously.*

Recommendation one was to create a more inclusive ASA Diversity Statement as specified in the task force report. Discussion about the recommendation ensued. *A motion was made by Wingfield to approve recommendation one with grammatical errors corrected. Seconded by Risman. Motion carried unanimously.*

Recommendation two was to send a message to all community college faculty who received the task force's survey which would include the Teaching Sociology articles produced by the task

force and a letter summarizing the recommendations coming out of the task force's report and encouraging ASA membership. Discussion about the recommendation ensued. *A motion was made by Golash-Boza to approve recommendation two as presented. Seconded by Risman. Motion carried unanimously.*

Recommendation four included sending annual communications to community college members from the President encouraging them to submit papers and workshops to the next Annual Meeting and renew membership as well as providing the highlights of the program that are of particular relevance to the community college context. Discussion about the recommendation ensued. *A motion was made by Golash-Boza to approve recommendation four with the amendment that non-members should also be recipients. Seconded by Milkman. Motion carried unanimously.*

Recommendation six was to change the date for workshop submissions so they are made at the same time as paper submissions. Discussion about the recommendation ensued. *A motion was made by McDermott to approve recommendation six. Seconded by Kivisto. Motion carried unanimously.*

Recommendation seven was to create an Association-wide fundraising initiative to establish an Annual Meeting travel fund to assist low-income members of the Association. Council noted that this had already been discussed and approved separately.

Recommendation eight was to encourage increased research on sociology in community colleges and the sociology of community colleges by following some specific articulated steps. Discussion about the recommendation ensued. *A motion was made by Perrin to approve recommendation eight. Seconded by Wingfield. Motion carried unanimously.*

Recommendation nine was to encourage ASA to explore options for and advisability of joint memberships between ASA and regional sociology associations. Discussion about the recommendation ensued. *A motion was made by Risman to approve recommendation eight. Seconded by Moore. Motion carried unanimously.*

Recommendation ten was to create a community college focused page on the ASA website. Discussion about the recommendation ensued. *A motion was made by Golash-Boza to approve recommendation ten. Seconded by Risman. Motion carried unanimously.*

Recommendation 3 was to add a designated elected seat on Council reserved for a faculty member from a two-year institution. There was extensive discussion about this issue and an understanding that it would have far-reaching organizational implications regarding representation that have to be carefully considered. *A motion was made by Kivisto to table recommendation three but to indicate to the task force that Council is in agreement with the spirit of the recommendation. Seconded by Bandelj. Motion carried with one opposed and two abstentions.*

Recommendation five was to establish a “teaching day” at the Annual Meeting. Specifically, the Teaching Day would provide a full day of teaching-focused sessions organized in coordination with the Section on Teaching and Learning. It would not be limited to community college faculty, but would emphasize the importance of teaching at all levels. The proposal specified that the section day for the Teaching and Learning Section would rotate only between Saturday and Sunday. It also specified that there would be a special session of community college focused roundtables as part of Teaching Day which would require only an abstract for submissions for this session. Finally, the proposal specified that a lower cost “Teaching Day Only” Annual Meeting registration fee should be provided. Extensive discussion ensued about the implications of each component of this proposal. *A motion was made by Milkman to have a teaching day. Seconded by Ng. Motion carried with 3 abstentions. A motion was made by Berezin to rotate the Teaching and Learning Section day only between Saturday and Sunday. Seconded by Hunter. Motion failed with zero for and two abstentions. A motion was made by Wingfield to offer a special session of community college focused roundtables which would require only an abstract for submission. Seconded by Milkman. Motion carried unanimously. A motion as made by Ng to provide a lower registration rate for community college faculty rather than a one day only registration fee. Seconded by Milkman. Motion carried unanimously.*

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m. on March 4.

President Lamont called the meeting to order 8:41 a.m. on March 5.

## **15. Code of Professional Ethics (COPE) Revision**

President Lamont introduced Thomas Van Valey, Chair of the COPE Revision Committee. Van Valey provided some historical context on COPE as well as an overview of the revision committee’s work since 2014. He indicated that the review committee will likely have a specific set of proposed revisions ready for Council consideration in August, but prior to that the committee would like feedback on a broader issue from Council. The question, raised by our legal counsel, was whether ASA should be focused only on teaching ethics or should continue to also be involved in enforcing ethics. Council discussed the pros and cons of enforcement.

Van Valey departed and Council continued their discussion. There was agreement that ASA should continue to enforce the Code.

## **16. Sexual Harassment at the Annual Meeting**

Council had a lengthy discussion about steps ASA might consider taking to both prevent and respond to sexual misconduct at our Annual Meeting.

*A motion was made by Milkman to authorize Lamont to appoint a committee on sexual harassment to identify and develop relevant productive activity. Via email in the next few months, Council will also review a sexual harassment policy for the Annual Meeting created by the new committee. Seconded by Moore. Motion carried unanimously.*

Council took a break at 10:15 a.m. and reconvened at 10:25 a.m.

### **17. Editor Selections**

Council was asked to approve the selection of new editors for *Contexts*, the Rose Series, and *Social Psychology Quarterly*. Council member Uggen presented the recommendations of the Publications Committee on behalf of Secretary Takeuchi. Discussion ensued.

*A motion was made by Milkman to approve the Publications Committee's editor recommendation for Contexts. Seconded by Bandelj. Motion carried unanimously.*

*A motion was made by McDermott to approve the Publications Committee's editor recommendation for the Rose Series. Seconded by Bonilla-Silva. Motion carried unanimously.*

*A motion was made by Chambliss to approve the Publications Committee's editor recommendation for Social Psychology Quarterly. Seconded by Feliciano. Motion carried unanimously.*

### **18. Employment service fees**

Council turned back to the question of fees for the employment service which was initially in the consent agenda. The discussion centered not around fees, but rather on the proposed changes to the service. The reasons for the changes were discussed as well as the pros and cons of both models.

*A motion was made by Gerson to authorize the office staff to develop a revised model to improve the employment service, rolled out in a two-step process in 2017 and 2018, with Council feedback in mind and with the understanding that the model may continue to evolve over time depending on what works well and what does not work well. Approve fees for employers as presented and approve the proposal to eliminate fees for job seekers. Seconded by Golash-Boza. Motion carried unanimously.*

### **19. Social Media Guidelines for Council Members**

Council had a discussion about how one can be a representative of the Association while still maintaining an independent personal identity on social media. The goal of the discussion was not to be prescriptive, but rather to allow the group to think through relevant considerations together. On a related topic, Council requested a future discussion about confidentiality issues.

### **Adjournment**

President Lamont adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

Council is asked to approve these minutes as presented.
---