

**2014-2015 ASA Council  
Minutes of the First Meeting**

**Wednesday, August 20, 2014**  
Hilton San Francisco, Franciscan A-B Room  
San Francisco, CA

**Officers Present:** Paula England (President), Annette Lareau (Past President), Cecilia Menjivar (Vice President), Ruth Milkman (President-Elect), Brian Powell (Past Vice President), Barbara Risman (Vice President-Elect), Mary Romero (Secretary)

**Members-at-Large Present:** Stephanie Bohon, Tina Fetner, Tanya Golash-Boza, Margaret Hunter, Kelly Joyce, Peter Kivisto, Karyn Lacy, Leslie McCall, Dina Okamoto, Jane Sell, Patricia E. White

**Members-at-Large Absent:** Adia M. Harvey Wingfield

**Staff Present:** Janet L. Astner, John Curtis, Karen Gray Edwards, Sally T. Hillsman, Kareem D. Jenkins, Justin Lini, Michael Murphy, Jordan Robison, Jean Shin, Brad Smith, Margaret Weigers Vitullo

**1. Introductions and Orienting Documents**

President Paula England opened the first meeting of the 2014-15 Council at 8:49am with a welcome to the incoming officers and members.

*A. Approval of the Agenda*

No changes were proposed.

MOTION: To approve the agenda. Carried (no opposed).
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*B. Conflict of Interest (COI) Statement*

Due to the revised policy adopted in yesterday's Council meeting, all Council members were requested to sign the COI statement and give it to Governance Director Michael Murphy.

In preparation for agenda item 3, the President asked Council members to look at the list of Council Members' Committee and Liaison appointments and check with her or the Executive Officer during break if there were any questions or objections.

Before proceeding to the Secretary's Report, the President settled the matter of dates for the next meeting of Council. See agenda item 10C.

## **2. Report of the Secretary**

### *A. Summary Review of the 2014 Budget*

Secretary Mary Romero recapped the budget status reported at the previous Council meeting and outlined in the report prepared by ASA Finance Director Les Briggs. ASA ended 2013 on a positive note. Revenues were \$55,000 above-budget due to a successful Annual Meeting in New York City. In general, most expenses were slightly below or on budget. Overall, the 2013 operating budget ended at a positive \$138,854, which was \$92,000 better than what was originally budgeted.

End of year projections for 2014 are not as positive. Income from membership dues is projected to be around \$40,000 below budget, and renewing members continue to stop purchasing additional journals at a faster rate than we had expected when we introduced including one journal as part of dues. Concerns about the drop in membership will be discussed further in the Membership Report. Expenses are projected to be around \$33,000 higher due to depreciation of capital projects that were finished this year. Personnel costs will be higher than anticipated because of four staff turnovers and the accompanying needs for temp help and employee recruitment. Rental income dropped because the fifth floor tenant did not renew their lease and the space was on the market for several months. After lowering the asking rent, lease negotiations are concluding for a new tenant who will be moving in after the Annual Meeting. The current projection for the bottom line is a negative \$45,000, but the Executive Office is continuing to look for ways to contain costs in the hope of attaining a break-even status at year's end.

It was noted that the registration count for the 2014 Annual Meeting is around 5,950. This means that on-site registration met budget projections and meeting revenues are on target.

### *B. ASA Headquarters Refinancing Update*

The Secretary noted that the original financing of ASA's headquarters occurred in November 2007, and the Letter of Credit associated with those arrangements expires in November 2014. In March 2014, Council authorized the Executive Office to move forward with the refinancing option offered by PNC. Refinancing can occur with a "new issuance" or "conversion" process; ASA's real estate attorneys have recommended the conversion process. Since the required resolution from Council must include specific details on the transaction, the Executive Office will be in touch with Council members in the autumn to conclude the refinancing paperwork.

### *C. Journal Subscription Report*

The *American Sociological Review (ASR)* and the *Journal of Health and Social Behavior (JHSB)* have the most consortia subscriptions (2,356 each), while *Contexts* has the fewest (2,267). ASR, JHSB, and *Sociology of Education* have experienced the largest decreases in traditional institutional subscription, ranging from 2.2 percent to 4.5 percent. It is possible that these decreases are the result of the journals' inclusion in consortia packages.

Decreases in member subscriptions are related primarily to the inclusion of a journal in dues but also to the small drop in membership. The percentages of member subscribers choosing to no longer receive print copies of the other journals ranged from 14.5 percent to 26.2 percent.

#### *D. Subscription Prices for 2015*

The subscription prices approved by Secretary in early summer were available for Council's review. Prices were part of the contract renewal with SAGE for 2015-2019. It was noted that member subscription rates remain the same, except for City & Community (published by Wiley) which is transitioning to a formula used for other Wiley journals.

#### *E. Membership Report*

Membership Director Karen Gray Edwards reported that around 100 new members joined during the 2014 Annual Meeting, which was a bit fewer than hoped. The membership count for 2014 currently stands at 12,300. Edwards expressed cautious optimism that the two-year special promotion being done post-meeting might bring membership back to the 13,000 mark. It was noted that the change in the dues structure does not appear to have impacted membership. Categories where ASA is losing members are not those where there was much, if any, change in dues.

The Secretary reported that membership dropped by 1.89% over the last year. Yet three out of four of the highest income categories increased by 5.17%, and there were increases in the Associate and Emeritus/retired member categories. The membership decreases are occurring in the lowest income categories, including student categories; the area of most concern is lapsed members. In terms of "how" members are renewing, the on-line renewal rate remains high – about 79% of members in 2014.

##### *(1) Lapsed Member Survey*

A survey was recently conducted of 445 "lapsed members", defined as individuals who held ASA membership consecutively from 2010 to 2012 and had not renewed their membership for 2013 or 2014 at the time of the survey. The response rate to the survey was 27.1%. Findings identified that one of the key reasons for joining ASA is access to journals. There was no singular reason that was overwhelmingly cited as being extremely relevant or critical in explaining why membership was not renewed but members who were not going to the upcoming Annual Meeting tended not to renew for that year.

The Secretary summarized some of the current efforts to improve benefits of membership. These included the upcoming proposal to Council to provide online access to all ASA journals as a benefit of membership. New benefits added in 2014 included arrangements for discounted/joint membership with the American Education Research Association, the Pacific Sociological Association, and the District of Columbia Sociological Society; options to purchase gift memberships on-line and pre-pay future year membership; and establishment of the new ASA Opportunities in Retirement Network (ASAORN), which is significant given the increasing number of retired members. Future plans include the possibility of offering TRAILS free to all ASA members.

Council members expressed some concern about the level of dues for middle-income categories and indicated that salaries for many members are not keeping up with inflation. It was clarified that ASA has not increased dues since the new structure was implemented. There have been no COLA increases for three years because inflation is so low.

Discussion elicited comments from some that the slight membership decreases were worrisome. A chart showing the number of members in higher categories was cited as illustrating who can afford membership now. If ASA is not careful, it could become more an organization of high income

sociologists than sociologists in general. There was support to add discussion of this to the Council agenda, which President England agreed to do.

*F. New Member Benefit: Increased Journal Access*

The Secretary presented a recommendation from the Committee on the Executive Office and Budget (EOB) to provide online access to all ASA journals as a benefit of membership, beginning in 2015. EOB reached agreement on this because the number of members who now purchase additional journals in order to receive online access to all journals has reached a point where the potential loss of income would be offset by new members that would join. Edwards indicated that members who purchase a second journal are almost all opting for a print journal; it seems likely that those who really want printed journals will continue to purchase those subscriptions.

**MOTION:** That Council approve online access to all ASA journals as an automatic benefit of ASA membership. Carried (no opposed).

*G. New Department Affiliate Benefit: Graduate Student Membership*

The Secretary presented EOB's recommendation to provide first-year graduate students (entering Fall 2014) with one-year free ASA membership through the Department Affiliates (DA) Program. This creates an incentive for graduate level sociology departments to join the DA Program, encourages graduate students' early involvement in ASA, and provides ASA access to contact information for membership outreach and follow-up.

Noting that the Student category of membership is significantly subsidized, the President pointed out that revenue enhancement would come when graduate students move out into the profession. This benefit represents an important step in having students recognize that membership in their professional association is an appropriate career-enhancing choice. The Secretary added that EOB expected that the increase in DA revenues would offset the estimated \$7,000 cost of offering this new benefit.

Council members responded enthusiastically to the proposal and asked for clarification regarding the degree of control that departments would have with identifying which students would receive this benefit. Edwards specified that each Department Affiliate will be able to log in and create records for the individuals that the department classifies as first-year students. These can be MA or PhD students; ASA will be accepting the department's designation of its students.

**MOTION:** That Council approve free membership for one year to first-year graduate students at current ASA Department Affiliates. Carried (no opposed, 1 abstention).

### **3. Committee, Advisory Panel, and Task Force Appointments**

Council went into executive session at 9:46am to discuss the report of the Committee on Committees and nominations from officers on appointments to committees, advisory panels, and task forces.

*A. Nominations from the President, Secretary, Executive Officer*

The Secretary presented a list of nominees for appointment to the Committee on the Executive Office and Budget (EOB).

MOTION: To accept list of nominees for EOB. Carried (no opposed, 2 abstentions).

The Executive Officer proposed slates of nominees for advisory panels.

MOTION: To accept slates of nominees for advisory panels. Carried (no opposed, no abstentions).

*B. Nominations from the Committee on Committees (COC)*

The review of the Committee on Committees (COC) report generated a request that COC be reminded that Council members are ineligible to serve in positions for which they have appointment authority. Council members' names should be dropped automatically from all such lists.

Council also expressed concern about the duplication of names across various lists. Governance staff indicated that past duplications have been dealt with in the normal course of issuing invitations; when a member accepts an appointment, her/his name is dropped from other lists. It was noted that COC did not elect a chair this year; governance staff were utilized to facilitate the committee's progress.

MOTION: To eliminate duplicate names on current COC lists. Rejected (2 yes, 11 no, 2 abstentions).

Council continued with review of the COC report and special requests from committees.

MTN: To extend the term of one member on the GLBT committee, as requested. Carried (no opposed, 2 abstention)

At the conclusion of the review, consideration was given to asking COC to elect a chair annually, with the understanding that the chair is charged with monitoring the diversity of nominees. The issue of having no COC chair this year was ruled not pertinent to the motion to accept the COC report.

MOTION: To approve the COC slates of nominees as amended. Carried (1 opposed, 0 abstention)

The Executive Session ended at 10:59am with the departure of Vice President-Elect Barbara Risman, and Council finally took a short break at 11:00 – 11:14am.

**4. Annual Meetings**

*A. President's Update on the 2015 Program*

President England pointed out the postcard in the Final Program packet that advertised the theme for the 2015 Annual Meeting: Sexualities in the Social World. The theme is broadly construed and the Program Committee hopes it will be interesting to many members. In response to a query about a

rumor that there will be a standup comic on the program, England indicated that a session being organized by Eric Klinenberg may involve Aziz Ansari; nothing has been confirmed at this point however.

#### *B. President-Elect's Report on the 2016 Program Committee*

President-Elect Ruth Milkman outlined the proposed membership for the 2016 Program Committee: Kathleen M. Blee, University of Pittsburgh; Aixa N. Cintron-Velez, Russell Sage Foundation; Peter Dreier, Occidental College; Gay W. Seidman, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Kristen Schilt, University of Chicago; and Francesca Polletta, University of California-Irvine. The carry-over members from the 2015 Program Committee will be Celeste M. Watkins-Hayes, Northwestern University; and Vincent J. Roscigno, the Ohio State University. Ex Officio members are: Ruth Milkman (President-elect), The Graduate Center, City University of New York; Barbara J. Risan (Vice President-Elect), University of Illinois at Chicago; Mary Romero (Secretary), Arizona State University; and Sally T. Hillsman (Executive Officer), ASA.

MOTION: To approve the proposed members for the 2016 Program Committee.  
Carried (0 opposed, 0 abstention).

The working title for the theme of the 2016 Annual Meeting is "Rethinking Social Movements: Can Changing the Conversation Change the World?" Milkman expressed the hope that theme will engage all areas of sociology in one way or another.

#### *C. Registration and Other Fees for 2015*

An EOB recommendation to raise registration fees for 2015 was presented to Council. Reasons cited for raising fees included high labor costs in Chicago, which is a strong union site, and the increasing costs of electronic services. Wi-Fi is provided free to member because the Association is covering that expense. There is expectation that the fee increase will suffice for both 2015 and 2016 meeting sites.

Some opposition to raising fees was immediately expressed, citing the Change.org petition in progress to ask ASA to think carefully about the costs of meetings for participants. The petition should be viewed as a plea from members to keep costs down so more people can participate in the meeting.

The selection of meeting sites takes a number of factors into account. Many small cities do not have facilities large enough to accommodate a meeting the size of ASA's. Air access is also important; for example it costs more to fly to Detroit than Chicago. San Francisco and New York City are expensive sites, but they always draw high attendance. By contrast, registration for meeting held in Atlanta dropped below 5,000.

Discussion ranged from where cuts would be made if a fee increase was not approved to the feasibility of changing to a graduated fee structure based on income, similar to that used for membership dues. Areas for cost-cutting measures might include catering for receptions and provision of AV and Wi-Fi services. Objections were made to the idea of moving to a sliding scale for registration fees, in part because the higher income categories are already supporting the Association more than the lower categories. A different route might be to think about providing resources for members who need funding assistance to attend the meeting.

Despite the disagreement about instituting a registration fee structure based on income, an amendment was proposed to add new registration categories for Full/Associate Members with external research funding to attend meeting, and Full/Associate Members without research support. Concern was expressed about Council moving in this direction without advice from EOB or time to examine the impact of various structures on the budget. Various opinions mentioned concern about including the Associate category, focusing on Research 1 sources, ignoring non-academic situations, and more. An alternative was suggested to add an option for members to contribute to a fund that supports meeting attendance.

The amendment was withdrawn, and Council returned to consideration of the full motion as received from EOB.

**MOTION:** That Council approve the increase in general registration fees for 2015 for full member/non-member categories by \$10, for student and related categories (retired/emeritus, unemployed, secondary school teacher) by \$5, and for guests by \$10; and fees increases for 2015 of \$5 each for Courses, Employment Service Candidates (members & non-members) and Employers. Carried (2 opposed, 1 abstention).

Council took a lunch break at 12:00 – 12:50pm, at which time Council Member Patricia White departed.

#### *D. Data on Annual Meeting Program Open Submissions*

The President indicated that there was a longer version of the submission report with more data, if anyone was interested. The report had been requested in order to look at whether there was any creep-up in the portion of program reserved for invited sessions. Also of interest was the probability that a submitted paper gets accepted onto a formal paper session (Regular Session or section-sponsored paper session).

The number of submissions varies widely by topic, and it is clear that roundtables accommodate a lot of papers. The heartening conclusion is that 90% of submissions get onto program somehow, and there is no adverse trend on getting onto paper sessions. The number of invited sessions as a proportion of all sessions (excluding roundtables and workshops) is in the 20-25% range, and the President indicated no worry about that percentage.

One remaining issue turns on the fact that organizers of Regular Sessions can ask for additional session slots, based on the number of good submissions they receive. The ratio of submissions to topics varies drastically, creating problems on multiple levels. Organizer workloads are much higher for some topics, and the probability of submission acceptance can be significantly lower. England announced the intention to create a subcommittee, constituted of the three Vice Presidents plus the President and Secretary, to review the template for Regular Session topics. Council members were invited to send their concerns and suggestions to the President.

It was pointed out that some sections game the system by coordinating closely with Regular Session organizers. This did not appear to be news to most Council members, and no concerns were expressed. A suggestion was made to look at increasing the number of sessions by running Plenary Session concurrently with other sessions. Discussion of this suggestion was deferred to new business.

### *E. Preliminary Discussion of Web Petition and Social Media Conversation on Annual Meeting Dates and Venues*

Before opening the floor for comments, the President emphasized the “preliminary” nature of the discussion. The web petition on Annual Meeting dates and venues has not yet been submitted to the Association. At this stage, it would be helpful to identify for staff what kind of information would be useful for Council’s future discussion.

The two primary components—meeting dates, and costs to attend the meeting—are not actually separate issues. Rates for hotel rooms and facilities are directly connected to the demand for availability on certain days and times of the year. The petition does acknowledge that the Annual Meeting is booked far in advance; it is likely, however, that the petitioners are unaware how far into the future sites are booked. In all cases, these future bookings have been done to take advantage of special rates and contract provisions.

There was discussion about the extent to which contractual information could and/or should be shared. The site selection reports for Council usually contain comparison information about hotel rates and other major points of negotiation. Site selection criteria have been shared with the membership before via articles in *Footnotes*; it is no doubt time to update and disseminate that information again. There were also reports to Council in the past providing data pertinent to decision-making about shifting the meeting over weekend, moving away from meeting over/near Labor Day, reducing the meeting length from five days to four days, and more.

It was suggested that a joint subcommittee of Council and EOB members be put together to examine data from the Executive Office in order to make suggestions about questions for a survey of members. The subcommittee could get additional input from other sources, if desired. Comparisons with what other association are doing would be useful, provided the differences in scope and personality are recognized.

The President invited Council members to volunteer for a temporary subcommittee to think about the scope of work for, and the membership categories of, a working group to be appointed at the next meeting. In the meantime, some acknowledgment will be made of the pending petition. It was noted that ASA staff have already tweeted that ASA is aware of the petition.

## **5. Publications**

### *A. Committee on Publications Long Range Planning*

The Secretary relayed a recommendation from EOB that the Committee on Publications be required to have an annual discussion of whether or not the current stable of journals properly represents the discipline. The Committee on Publications has added this to the agenda for its December meeting, so a question was raised about the need for Council to pass a mandate. There was some discussion of the fluctuation of the committee’s workload and the possibility that this topic would be dropped when the committee is overwhelmed with other tasks.

Having sections start new journals creates a lot of work for the ASA Publications Department, with no fiscal reward for the Association. One of the Publications Committee’s primary obligations should be

identify gaps in the journal portfolio and evaluate whether an ASA journal is warranted. Sooner or later a section proposal will require that.

MOTION: Council mandates that the Committee on Publications have an annual discussion about whether or not the current stable of journals properly reflects/represents the discipline, and that the Secretary report the content of the annual discussion back to Council. Carried (0 – opposed, 0 – abstained).

#### *B. Report of the Committee on Publications*

##### *(1). ASA Open Access Journal (Executive Session)*

Council convened in executive session to discuss the Committee on Publications' recommendations for the editorship of the new open access journal. The name of the new journal will be determined in connection with the new editors.

With the departure of Council Member Karyn Lacey at 2:00pm, the voting quorum of Council dropped to 14 members.

##### *(2). ASA Current Member Survey re Rejected Manuscripts and Peer Reviews*

A subcommittee of the Committee on Publications will be doing a survey of members to obtain information about rejected manuscripts and peer reviews. It is expected that the Committee on Publications will eventually propose a policy change.

##### *(3). Social Media Subcommittee Report*

The Secretary indicated that the subcommittee's proposal was accepted with the proviso that the Executive Office will determine an appropriate staffing configuration.

##### *(4). Journal of World Systems Research (JWSR)*

The Section on Political Economy of the World System (PEWS) submitted a request to the Committee on Publications to move JWSR onto the University of Pittsburgh's electronic publishing platform and to permit the journal to use Creative Commons licensing which allows authors to retain copyrights. The committee declined to move the journal's site but approved the request to use Creative Commons licensing. This constitutes an exception to ASA's current copyright policies for journals. However, the new ASA open access journal will also be using Creative Commons licensing.

There was consensus in Council to permit policy exception for the online section journal, in part because the new open access journal will be going the same route.

MOTION: To approve the usage of Creative Commons licensing by the online *Journal of World Systems Research*. Carried (0 opposed, 0 abstention).

The last item reported by the Secretary was a permanent page increase for *Social Psychology Quarterly*. The journal has had a temporary increase for three years. The Committee on Publications felt that the journal was filling its page with high quality material and approved the request. Since the page allocation is already part of the new SAGE contract, no further action deemed necessary.

## 6. Committee on Sections

### A. Report on Sections

Governance Coordinator Justin Lini noted that last year's report was inadvertently included in the agenda book and apologized for error. The section news for 2014 is that six smaller sections (Ethnomethodology; Rationality and Society; Evolution, Biology, and Society; Animals and Society; Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco; and History of Sociology) continue to lose members. The Committee on Sections (COS) is concerned about developing due process for deactivating/dissolving sections. All six of these small sections were founded in same general time period; all used a similar organizational structure.

In the realm of large sections, the COS is attempting to deal with an issue from the Section on Medical Sociology. The estate of Howard B. Kaplan is offering funding to the Medical Sociology section to support a section award, but the section already offers the maximum number of awards permitted (5). The suggestion that a Kaplan award be alternated with an existing award was offered, but the Kaplan estate was not amenable to that proposal. Being reluctant to turn down contributions, COS is now asking if there is an option to explore permitting sections to offer grants or research scholarships. If so, the Kaplan award would be an annual grant to students.

There was consensus in Council to hold the line on the number of awards (5) that a section may offer. However, the Executive Office was encouraged to creatively figure out a solution that encompassed "technical virginity" in this matter.

Two more items concerning section awards were reported. First, it has come to light that several sections are giving awards to recipients who are not affiliated with the association, and COS thinks there should be an ASA membership requirement for all section awards. Second, some confusion is arising between Section awards and the major ASA awards due to the fact that some section awards do not cite the name of the section. COS is recommending that all Section awards be required to include the section's name in the award title.

A motion was made to require that all section award recipients have a current membership in ASA at the time the award is given, unless the award is intended for a category of persons that are non-members/non-sociologists. It was noted that the original proposal to COS was that recipients should hold section membership, but COS broadened the requirement to ASA membership. A clarification was supplied that the majority of non-members receiving section awards were students.

There were varying reactions to the proposed requirement, and an amendment was proposed to handle the problem by required that nominees be members of ASA. This raised concerns about undue restriction on nominee pools, particularly for smaller sections.

MOTION: Nomination for a section award may not be considered unless the nominee is an ASA member. Rejected (0 yes, 10 no, 4 abstentions).

Without further discussion, Council acted on the original recommendation.

MOTION: To require that all section award recipients have a current membership in ASA at the time the award is given, except where the award is specifically intended for a category of persons that are non-members/non-sociologists. Carried (3 opposed, 0 abstentions).

On the matter of including a section's name on its award, there were comments that resumes frequently list section awards as ASA awards. Requiring that the section award certificate include the section's name should facilitate correct citation. The fact that this would create some very long titles did not dissuade Council.

MOTION: To require all section awards to contain the name of the section in the title on award certificates to distinguish them from the major ASA awards. Carried (8 yes, 5 no, 1 abstention).

It was clarified that section bylaws did not have to be changed to reflect this policy; a section is simply required to include its name on the award certificates and in all materials publicizing the award and its recipient. Further discussion generated a suggestion for COS to develop best practices guidelines for Section awards.

The last item from COS was that the Section on Communication and Information Technology (CITASA) is moving toward changing its name to include Media Sociology. A request is likely to be on the agenda for the next Council meeting.

## **7. Updates from Status Committees**

### *A. Committee on the Status of Persons with Disabilities in Sociology*

No discussion.

### *B. Committee on the Status of Women in Sociology*

No discussion.

Before Council moved on to the next agenda item, Council Member Tina Fetner offered an oral report on the meeting of the Committee on the Status of LGBT Persons in Sociology (LGBT). The committee had prepared a proposal to expand the gender categories for ASA membership records. The committee views the current categories as too focused on biological bases; the focus should be on social identity. In her role as Council Liaison to the LGBT committee, Fetner noted that it is important for ASA to understand its members on their own terms. Changing the categories is symbolically important to indicate a warm welcome to all members wherever they are. It is also important for this association to be the one that other organizations look to regarding what categories to adopt.

Research Director John Curtis indicated that there was discussion in the committee meeting about the technical aspect of making database changes. That is why the changes will be proposed for implementation in 2016. Committee members are firm about the specific wording of categories, but amenable regarding how to work it out technically.

Consideration of the committee's proposal was added to the items under New Business.

## **8. Updates on Task Forces**

### *A. Task Force on Community College Faculty*

This task force was appointed in 2013 for a two-year term. It has been actively working on the charge given to it by Council. A one-year extension (to August 2016) was requested so that the task force could finish its investigations and disseminate its report.

MOTION: To extend the term of the Task Force on Community College Faculty to August 2016. Carried (0-opposed, 0-abstain).

### *B. Task Force on the Post-doctorate in Sociology*

There was no discussion.

Council took a short break at 3:10pm – 3:23pm.

## **9. Report of the Executive Officer**

### *A. Executive Office Staffing*

The Executive Officer reported that four staff transitions had occurred since March. A reorganization in operations/administration resulted in a promotion to Executive Assistant for Valerie Pines. Brandon McCain was hired in June to fill the resulting vacancy in Membership and Customer Service. A new Director of Research, John W. Curtis, and a new Webmaster, Redante Asuncion-Reed, came on board in late July. Hillsman indicated significant satisfaction with all the recruiting efforts.

### *B. Posting Council Agendas Online*

It has not been a policy of Council to post online the agenda for Council meetings in advance of those meetings. This is partially because the agendas often change until just before the meeting is held. The Committee on Publications began posting its agendas online a few years ago, and Publications Director Karen Gray Edwards indicated that few difficulties have been encountered.

It was the sense of Council to go ahead with posting agendas for Council meetings, as long as flexibility to change the agenda was preserved.

### *C. COPE Update*

The Executive Officer reported that the Committee on Professional Ethics (COPE) is commencing with a revision/update of the ASA Code of Ethics. This will not be a small undertaking. Input will be sought from other committees, particularly the Committee on Publications, as well as from sections, all ASA members, other sociological societies, and related professional associations. The revision will eventually come to Council for review and vote, after which a membership referendum must occur. All ASA members are bound by the Code, so it must be voted on by the entire membership.

### *D. Public Affairs and Public Information*

Hillsman referred Council members to the report provided in the agenda book and invited everyone to sign up to be in the database of sociology experts available for media referrals.

*E. High School Sociology Program Planning Update*

Minority & Student Affairs Director Jean Shin indicated that work has commenced on revamping the high school sociology initiatives. A full report will be provided at the winter Council meeting.

*F. MFP Update*

No discussion.

*G. Postdoctoral Fellowship Program Update*

No discussion.

*H. External Grants*

Hillsman provided an update that NSF has funded the project on examining academic career trajectories.

*I. Technology Update*

No discussion.

**10. New Business**

*A. Business Meeting Resolutions*

A resolution proposed by ASA Member Harry Perlstadt to set up a task force on public policy and information was passed at the ASA Business Meeting on August 19. Even though attendance at the business meeting was lower than the minimum set in the bylaws for putting items on Council's agenda, Council opted to discuss the resolution.

*Resolution: That ASA Council establish a Task Force on Public Policy and Information as a pilot for a possible standing committee. The Task Force will work with the ASA Public Affairs/Public Information Program to enable ASA members to: (1) communicate clearly and effectively with the media to increase the visibility of sociology and its usefulness to the general public; (2) promote and disseminate sociological research, practice, and public policy position papers, issues briefs, and opinion pieces; and (3) participate in public policy activities on the individual and association levels. The Task Force will consist of nine members, two each from large, medium, and small sections, and three selected from among past recipients of the ASA Award for the Public Understanding of Sociology, the ASA Award for Excellence in the Reporting of Social Issues, and the ASA Congressional Fellowship.*

Some concerns were identified with the proposed task force charge. A task force cannot make a policy statement for the Association; only Council can issue policy statements. In terms of institutional structure, ASA has a Public Affairs & Public Information Program and consideration needs to be given regarding how to link that work in the Executive Office with any new endeavors. Involvement of the Spivack Program must be done through the existing advisory panel. In sum, it would be best to figure out *what* the association wants to do, then determine how that relates to other elements.

Different perceptions about the proposal leaned toward consensus that the goal was more about getting members' research noticed publicly than making policy statements for the Association. If that is accurate, then there is some overlap between the aims of the proposed task force and the interests of the current Task Force on Engaging Sociology (TFES). Reports of discussions with Perlstadt after the business meeting indicated some amenability about working with the TFES on the issues outlined in the resolution.

MOTION: To ask the Executive Office to reach out to Harry Perlstadt to clarify the primary purpose(s) behind the resolution and determine the feasibility of folding that into the work of the current Task Force on Engaging Sociology. Carried (no opposed, no abstention).

#### *B. Proposed Task Force on 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition of Liberal Learning and the Sociology Major*

The *Liberal Learning and the Sociology Major* booklet is the Association's primary guide for departments of sociology regarding best practices for sociology curriculum and programs. It is available as a free PDF on the ASA website and also in print copy through the ASA Bookstore. The booklet was last revised in 2005.

The current edition of *Liberal Learning* provides no guidance on how online courses best fit within the larger curriculum, how to best prepare instructors, or criteria for evaluating quality in online courses and programs. Also, the need to develop core content for the undergraduate sociology curriculum must be addressed. Blanket articulation agreements in many states mandate that sociology courses taught at the community college level must be accepted for transfer into their state's four-year state colleges and universities. This means that individual sociology programs and faculty in many four-year state institutions no longer have the prerogative to determine appropriate content and learning goals for 100- and 200-level sociology courses. Those determinations are being made by their sociology colleagues in their state two-year institutions, many of whom do not have PhDs or extensive training in the discipline.

It was proposed that Council set up a task force of 6-8 members, with representation from four-year colleges and universities as well as community colleges. Approximately half of the task force membership could be drawn from members of the ASA Department Resources Group, who have extensive experience working with departments of all types from across the country on issues related to curriculum and assessment. The other half of the task force membership would be drawn from ASA members who respond to a general request for volunteers that will be published in *Footnotes* and sent out through the Section on Teaching and Learning listserv.

MTN: To approve establishment of a Task Force charged with creating a revised and expanded 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of ASA's *Liberal Learning and the Sociology Major*. Carried (no opposed, no abstention).

#### *C. Date for Winter 2015 Council Meeting*

The President took a straw poll of Council members' availability on the dates proposed for the winter meeting. Everyone was available on the first set of dates, Saturday-Sunday, February 7-8, 2015. Council members were asked to arrive on Friday, February 6; the expectation is that Council will meet all day on Saturday and a half day on Sunday. The Executive Officer clarified that members of

the Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline (FAD) Advisory Panel should arrive by mid-day on Friday, February 6, in order to attend the FAD meeting that afternoon.

*D. Other New Business*

The President turned to the new discussion items generated during the meeting.

*(1). Plenary Scheduling*

Consideration of the suggestion to schedule Plenary Sessions concurrently with regular program sessions was deferred to the winter meeting.

*(2). Withdrawal of hiring offer at University of Illinois-Champaign*

There was a request that the Association weigh in on a matter receiving a lot of social media attention: the withdrawal of a hiring offer by the University of Illinois-Champaign for a tenure position in its department of Native American Studies. The letter of offer had indicated that the offer would be going to the board for approval, which is usually a pro forma step. The professor who received the offer left his previous position and moved to Champaign during the summer to get ready for the start of the school term in August, at which point it became clear that the offer letter had not been sent to the board and that it was not going to be sent. The assumptions circulating in social media during the ASA Annual Meeting were that the professor's statements on blogs about Israel and Palestine caused the offer not to go forward.

It was clarified that the ASA President could write a letter, not on behalf of Council or the Association, to speak on matters of process (not on outcomes). It seemed advisable to check some facts before wading into the issue, such as whether the individual involved is a sociologist. There was consensus that ASA officers (i.e., President, Past President, President-Elect, and Secretary) confer and make a decision about sending a letter in support of due process and academic freedom.

*(3). LGBT sex/gender categories*

An amendment was proposed to add "Prefer not to respond" as an option for the sex/gender categories in the ASA database.

MOTION: To add a "Prefer not to respond" option to the sex/gender categories.  
Carried (no opposed, no abstention).

As noted in the earlier discussion, the ASA database currently does not have the ability for members to check more than one sex/gender category. The LGBT proposal targets the 2016 membership year for implementing changes to this category in order to provide time for the necessary technical developments. A question was raised regarding why the option to check more than one category was necessary. Fetner explained that individuals should be able to check Male and Transgender, or Female and Transgender, because both biological and social aspects matter.

The similarity of the discussion to what was talked about 20 years ago regarding non-white options for the category of race received notice. It continues to be true that various categories are meaningful to different people.

MOTION: To approve the proposed changes for the sex/gender categories in the ASA database, to be implemented by the 2016 membership year. Carried (no opposed, no abstentions)

*(4). Changes for COC procedures*

The concern about the lack of a chair for the Committee on Committees (COC) meeting was again raised, along with the desire for COC to pay more attention to wider diversity, including differing types of institutions, when developing lists of potential appointees. It was pointed out that the membership composition of COC, as spelled out in the ASA Bylaws, carries no mention of a chair. The Bylaws also do not specify a chair for the Committee on Publications, but that committee has a long history of electing its own. COC has usually identified a member to chair its meeting, but this year it made the decision not to do so.

Given that the bigger issue was how to institutionally support more diverse lists of appointees, a decision was made to put this matter on the agenda for next meeting.

As the Council meeting closed, Meeting Services Director Kareem Jenkins invited Council members to an informal reception being hosted by the Hilton San Francisco hotel at 6:30pm in the Urban Tavern. Past President Lareau took the opportunity to express thanks to ASA staff and special thanks to Jenkins, who handled all arrangements for the 2014 Annual Meeting

**Adjournment**

With thanks to all the Council members and ASA staff in attendance, President England adjourned the first meeting of the 2014-2015 ASA Council at 4:33 p.m. on Wednesday, August 20, 2014.