

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
American Sociological Association Council
Tuesday, August 19, 2003**

Members Participating: Elijah Anderson, William Bielby (President), Michael Burawoy, Craig Calhoun, Esther Chow, Robert Crutchfield, Jennifer Glass, David Grusky, Arne Kalleberg, Deborah King, Rhonda Levine, Victor Nee, Bernice Pescosolido, Barbara Risman, Lynn Smith-Lovin, Ivan Szelenyi, Pamela Walters.

Members Unable to Participate: Linda Burton, Barbara Reskin.

Incoming Council Members Present: Troy Duster, Caroline Persell, Diane Vaughan, Franklin Wilson.

Staff Participating: Janet Astner, Kevin Brown, Lee Herring, Sally Hillsman (Executive Officer), Carla Howery, Michael Murphy, Mercedes Rubio, Roberta Spalter-Roth.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:38 pm in the Henry Room of the Hilton Atlanta hotel. President William Bielby welcomed Council members to the final meeting of the 2002-2003 Council. Newly elected members of Council were introduced and welcomed as observers at this meeting.

A. Setting the Agenda

Bielby announced the addition to the agenda of a discussion about California Proposition 54, the resolution about classification by race, also known as CRENO. There were no objections to the addition of this item. With no other additions, the agenda of the meeting was set.

B. Minutes of Previous Council Meetings

Minutes of the February 2003 Council meeting had previously been circulated, approved, and published in Footnotes. Minutes of the March 31, 2003 telephone conference call had previously been circulated. President Bielby invited corrections or amendments to the minutes of the March 31 conference call meeting.

Two minor wording changes were proposed to the draft minutes: on page 3, 3 lines from the bottom, Calhoun suggested adding the word "it" to make the statement "it is a personal obligation..." Also, Calhoun suggested that the sentence which started "Other concerns expressed ..." would be more accurate if it read "did not display specifically sociological knowledge ..." There was no objection to these two amendments.

Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the March 31, 2003 conference call meeting with the two amendments proposed.

2. Report of the President

A. Reflections on the Year and the Annual Meeting

President Bielby reported that his term in office had been packed with issues important to sociology, including the amicus brief, a member resolution on the war in Iraq, and the CRENO proposition in California. He noted his pleasure at working with the ASA staff, and thanked everyone for their assistance during his term of office.

B. ASA Member Resolution on Iraq War and Possible COPE Complaint

In response to the member-initiated resolution that appeared on the 2003 ballot on the subject of the war in Iraq, James Tucker of New Hampshire and a number of his colleagues contacted the ASA office to lodge a complaint. The complainants felt that the resolution adopted by the membership on the 2003 ballot violates the ASA's Code of Ethics which directs that sociologists must "provide service only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, or appropriate professional experience" and "rely on scientifically and professionally derived knowledge; act with honesty and integrity; and avoid untrue, deceptive, or undocumented statements in undertaking work-related functions or activities."

The complainants also charged that this resolution violated current ASA policy that the organization should take official positions on public policy only when there is a "solid foundation of sociological knowledge as well as widespread agreement on its policy implications." Tucker et al felt that most sociologists are not specialists in terrorism, war and international relations, and are therefore not professionally qualified to take a position on the issues addressed in the resolution. They charged that this was unethical and an abuse of professional authority.

As liaison to the Committee on Professional Ethics (COPE), Executive Officer Hillsman reported that COPE had met to examine this complaint and found that it did not meet the standards set out for filing a complaint under the official COPE policies and procedures. COPE is focused on individuals and their actions; COPE felt that this complaint is more an issue of ASA governance than of ethics. Hillsman reported that Council has previously decided to generally avoid making statements on behalf of the organization, but left itself the option to address any matter if necessary.

Members of Council agreed that the best response would be two-fold: a letter from the Executive Officer outlining the facts of this situation as recited during the discussion, and publication of the minutes of the March 2003 Council meeting which focused solely on the member-initiated resolution.

Council voted unanimously to direct that the Minutes of the special March 31, 2003 Council meeting be published in *Footnotes*. Council also asked that a letter summarizing Council discussion be sent to Tucker et al, the substance of which will be published in a future issue of *Footnotes* in the form of the March 31 Council minutes.

C. Expenditure of Funds on Political Activities

Just a few days before the start of this Council meeting, another member wrote to the Executive Office about funds from dues being used for political activities. Art Bedeian of Louisiana State University requested that ASA members be allowed to cut off the portion of their dues used for political activities.

Members of Council reviewed Bedeian's request. Most members questioned what in particular Bedeian considered to be political activities. While a very limited amount of money was spent related to the member resolution on the war in Iraq, that issue was initiated by members of the Association and followed procedures established in the ASA Bylaws. Any costs incurred related to the resolution are properly governance costs and not political activity costs.

There was agreement that no ASA money is spent on political activity. Any public activities that ASA engages in are a direct extension of our sociological knowledge and/or have a sociological purpose. The ASA does not provide funding to particular candidates or parties. Council agreed that a letter should be sent to this member summarizing this discussion and reiterating that all activities are in accordance with member-established Bylaws.

The Council considered the question of expenditures for “political activity” and unanimously agreed that the ASA does not expend funds on partisan political activity. The ASA Council is bound by the Bylaws to consider all motions brought forward in proper procedures by members, some of which bear on public affairs, and to hold votes on referenda when appropriate. The ASA issues public statements that bear directly on the field of sociology and/or express sociological expertise.

3. Report of the Secretary

Secretary Kalleberg reported to Council on a number of issues.

A. Review of Membership

As of the Annual Meeting, the ASA had passed the 13,000-membership mark. Last year and this year reverse a previous 5-year decline that had been of great concern. Kalleberg noted the hard work of Karen Edwards in meeting the goal of reaching 13,000 members in 2003. He noted that a key issue for membership is renewals. ASA recruits a large number of people to membership, but many times those people drift away. Renewals for 2003 are finally moving in the right direction but there is much work yet to be done.

In addition to focus on renewals, staff will continue to seek new members. However, places where there is potential for more outreach to the field are much harder to reach –

for example, sociologists in non-academic settings, faculty in smaller institutions, or faculty in institutions with small or no sociology departments.

B. Review of Section Memberships

Sections are also doing well in 2003, already surpassing the 2002 membership total, which was an all-time record. Unfortunately, a number of sections continue to operate below the minimum 300-member level. The Committee on Sections discussed this ongoing issue during their recent meeting but did not recommend any specific action at this time.

It was suggested that the Committee on Sections direct sections that are chronically losing members be given time to reverse the losses or go out of business. Robert Crutchfield, member of the Committee on Sections, reported that the chair of the Committee will write to the chairs of Sections with low membership informing them that they must provide evidence of vitality within one year. He reminded Council that section vitality is measured not just in quantitative terms but also in qualitative terms, noting that some small sections have very active programs. He added that chairs from small sections had dominated a recent meeting between the Committee on Sections and Section Chairs.

Members of Council debated strictly following quantitative guidelines versus allowing small intellectual groups to continue. It was noted that it was difficult for Council to have a policy about continuation of sections that it had no intention of following. The current policy as stated in the Sections Manual was reviewed, but ultimately no changes were recommended at this time. Council did agree to remind the chair of the Committee on Sections that COS is required to submit to Council a request for waiver of quantitative indicators in light of qualitative indicators.

Council voted to instruct the President and/or Executive Officer to send a letter to the Chair of the Committee on Sections reminding them of their duty to ask for waiver for any section that falls below the minimum membership requirement of 300 members. (1 opposed)

C. Review of Journal Subscriptions

ASA experienced a 2.9% decline in institutional subscriptions through July 2003 compared to one year earlier. It is unlikely that there will be any significant increase in subscription totals for the balance of the year. As has been reported at earlier Council meetings, retention of institutional subscriptions is a continuing challenge for ASA, as well as other scholarly societies. Generally, libraries are reducing the number of copies of journals that they purchase rather than dropping entire subscriptions to specific journals. The availability of back issues electronically through databases such as JSTOR is making multiple copies of journals less necessary.

In late 2002, a major subscription agency filed for bankruptcy protection. Hundreds of thousands of 2003 subscriptions, for which libraries had paid, were never forwarded to the publishers of those journals. Those orders were finally released in early 2003 but

without any funds to cover those subscriptions. As did most scholarly publishers, ASA decided to “grace” issues of subscriptions paid by libraries to the bankrupt agency. There were 570 journal subscriptions paid to the bankrupt agency for which ASA never received payment. Lost subscription revenue will total about \$75,000; cost of gracing issues for these 570 subscriptions cost an additional \$20,000 in printing, mailing and handling expenses.

Most ASA journals are showing an increase in the total number of member subscriptions, although this increase is largely due to the overall increase in total members from July 2002 to July 2003. *Contexts* continues to show a dramatic increase in total member subscriptions, with 596 more subscriptions in July 2003 than in July 2002. *Contemporary Sociology* is showing a loss of subscribers, which is of particular concern. With 10.6% more members in 2003 to date compared to the same time last year, *Contemporary Sociology* has experienced a 1.2% decrease in member subscriptions.

For some time there has been concern that *Contexts* could have an impact on subscriptions to other ASA journals. The analysis indicates that a significant percentage of new 2003 *Contexts* subscribers did drop at least one ASA journal when adding *Contexts*. *Contexts* subscribers have dropped 375 other ASA journal subscriptions so far for 2003, the majority either to the *American Sociological Review* or *Contemporary Sociology*.

D. Online Publication Initiatives

Starting with 2004, each print subscription to an ASA journal will include online access to 2004 issues of that journal at no additional charge. ASA signed a contract with Ingenta on April 2, 2003, to provide online publishing services for this member benefit. Prior issues of ASA journals will still be available through JSTOR but with a decrease in the “moving wall” from five years to two years. The goal is to have online access to all ASA journal content – past and current – through the JSTOR/Ingenta combination complete within two years. By the 2006 volume year, 2004 and later issues will be available through Ingenta, and 2003 and earlier issues will be available through JSTOR.

After reviewing options, it was determined that the best option for manuscript tracking was to develop an online version of Tracker, the system already in use by ASA offices. The online version of Tracker is known as JournalBuilder. The current goal is to have JournalBuilder in testing this fall with rollout to the three journals undergoing transitions in 2003.

4. Report of the Executive Officer

President Bielby called upon Executive Officer Sally Hillsman to provide an update on the Executive Office.

A. Overview of Staff and Year

Hillsman reviewed current staffing for members of Council as well as title and responsibility changes that have occurred in the last six months. In addition, she introduced Mercedes Rubio, the new Director of the Minority Affairs Program (MAP) as of August 1. The ASA is deeply grateful to Jean Shin for his valuable assistance as Interim Director MAP over the last year.

B. Report on the Annual Meeting

A total of 4,085 people registered for the 2003 Annual Meeting, down about 700 from the 2002 meeting in Chicago. The count of 4,085 registrations is a significant increase over the last meeting in Atlanta in 1988 when about 2,700 people attended.

C. 2003 Election Update

With the 2003 election, ASA introduced an enhanced election system offering members the option to cast their votes by paper ballot as they have done in recent years, or to vote electronically via the Internet. The first trial of online voting was successful.

There were 9,536 eligible voters for the 2003 election, the highest eligible voter count since 1999. Of those 9,536 voters, 2,940 members cast votes in the election (30.83%), which is also the highest participation rate we have experienced since 1999. In addition, the increase in the number of voters from previous elections is higher for the 2003 election than any election since 1993.

In 1999-2000, member associations of the American Council of Learned Societies benchmarked response rates of annual elections. A number of societies were concerned about the low turnout (with response rates in the teens) and questioned the meaningfulness of conducting elections. ASA's election agent indicated that response rates above 30 percent are very unusual for membership organizations.

A majority of ASA members opted for online voting. Of the 2,940 votes cast in this election, 1,600 votes (54.42%) were cast via the Internet, with paper ballots making up 45.58% of the voters (1,340 voters).

In addition to the candidates, the 2003 ballot also included seven proposed amendments to the ASA Bylaws. Members overwhelmingly approved all seven of the proposed amendments, which immediately become part of the Association Bylaws.

D. Department Affiliates

The Department Affiliates program continues to be an important element in ASA's collaboration with departments. This program is seen as a key vehicle for strengthening ties among departments and with ASA to advance the role of departments and of the discipline more generally. The Department Affiliate program has attracted a stable number of participants for the last several years. Hillsman added that she and Deputy Director Carla Howery are considering ways to publicize the program and increase participation.

E. Member Contributions and Donations

As part of the annual membership renewal process, members are offered the opportunity to contribute to several ASA programs. Through the end of July 2003, members had made the following contributions: American Sociological Fund (185 people have given \$5,036), Congressional Fellowship Fund (38 people have given \$674), Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline (106 people have given \$2,451), Minority Fellowship Program (470 people have given \$13,143), Soft Currency Fund (84 people have given \$1,217), and Teaching Enhancement Fund (80 people have given \$1,343). Total contributions are \$23,864 from 717 separate contributors, about 5% of the total membership.

F. Honorary Reception Revenue

An Honorary Reception is held following the President's address at the Annual Meeting. All attendees are invited to attend to congratulate the President and the recipients of the major ASA awards. Each year the Executive Office undertakes an effort to obtain contributions from regional departments and departments connected to the President and award winners. This outreach brings in financial resources but also permits departments and organizations a symbolic opportunity to honor sociologists and signal strong working relationship with the ASA. For the 2003 Honorary Reception, a total of \$4,350 has been received so far, which is less than last year's contributions. There are fewer universities in the Atlanta area than the Chicago area, and some of those have fairly tight financial constraints.

5. Report of the Committee on Publications

Secretary Arne Kalleberg earlier on the agenda provided a substantial report on subscriptions to ASA journals. He noted that three journals are currently searching for new editors: *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, *Sociological Theory*, and *Contexts*.

6. Report of the Awards Committee

Craig Calhoun, chair of the Awards Committee, presented a report of the recent committee meeting. The committee discussed the Awards Ceremony and possible alternatives. In addition, the committee met with chairs of the various award selection committees for input.

A. Notification of Award Recipients

The committee agreed that winners of ASA awards should be notified as soon as their selection has been made, rather than the current system of notifying all recipients in the spring. In addition, the committee recommended that the awards selection committee chair should notify the ASA and then contact the recipient with the news. However, public announcement of the award winners will not be made until all are announced at once in the spring in *Footnotes*. There was no objection from members of Council.

**Council voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the
Committee on Awards to modify current awards procedures to allow**

award selection committee chairs to contact winners directly regarding their selection, and further to allow contact as soon as the selection is made rather than delay personal notification. Public notification will be reserved for simultaneous announcement of all winners in *Footnotes*.

B. Awards Program

Calhoun reported that as frequently happens, the Awards Ceremony ran a little long this year. The Committee on Awards discussed various alternatives to keep the program within its allotted time, including having the Master of Ceremonies make the presentations. This proposal, however, was not well received by selection committee chairs.

Ultimately the committee decided that the awards program should remain coupled with the Presidential Address, but that the combined session should be declared to be longer (e.g., ending at 6:30 rather than 6:10). In addition, the event should commence exactly on time. Also, the committee recommended that there be no speeches from the winners. The committee also decided that they prepare a template to help presenters construct their remarks within parameters.

Recipients will be given the opportunity to say something along the lines of “Thank you – I am greatly honored”. Some members of Council disagreed on this point, noting that the problem this year was with the presenters, not the recipients. It was suggested that presenters be given several reminders about the length of their introductory remarks.

The committee also suggested making the awards program more detailed and more formal. Victor Nee, incoming chair of the awards committee, will work with the Executive Office staff in preparation for next year’s program on these issues.

C. Award for Distinguished Coverage of Social Issues in the Media

The Committee on Awards reviewed a proposal from Michael Burawoy and the 2004 Program Committee for the establishment of a new award for media. Calhoun asked that if Council decided to create this new award, that the issue be referred back to the Committee on Awards for development of award criteria.

Rather than create a new award, the Committee on Awards recommended that the current Award for the Public Understanding of Sociology criteria be revised to allow awards to non-members so that work in media would be eligible. Members of the committee felt the proposed award was a good idea but that there was a better way to incorporate it into the existing award system.

Barbara Reisman disagreed with the Committee on Awards recommendation, stating that the Public Understanding award has a completely different intent than the proposed media award. She stated that this award was intended to encourage journalists to take sociological research seriously and to use it in their reporting. She noted that she co-

chaired a similar award for another organization and that there the award had been quite successful.

Noting that the cost of adding an award was minimal, Council decided against the Committee on Awards recommendation and for the original proposal with the following modifications: adding “sociological research” to the description of the award, and broadening the title of the award to “Distinguished Coverage of Social Issues in the Media.”

Council voted to defeat a proposal to broaden the name and criteria of the current Public Understanding of Sociology Award (none in favor, 8 opposed, 3 abstained).

Council voted unanimously to create a new award to be called the “Distinguished Coverage of Social Issues in the Media”.

7. Update on ASA Task Forces

Several task forces have wrapped up their assignments and presented final reports for Council consideration.

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

Roberta Spalter-Roth, staff liaison to the Task Force on the Implications of Assessing Faculty Productivity and Teaching Effectiveness, reported that this component was established in 1999 to determine whether faculty productivity measures (including outcomes assessment measures) used by institutions of higher education and various external agencies “threaten the freedom of faculty teaching and research.” The Task Force was asked further to examine the ways in which productivity-reporting requirements affect faculty, to report on “best practices,” and to make any recommendations for appropriate ASA action to Council. She reported that in the interim the task force had done an enormous amount of work.

The Task Force submitted an extensive written report with a series of conclusions regarding measuring productivity. The task force suggested that the report be published on the Association’s website; that the Association remain vigilant around this effort; that the ASA continue to publish teaching resources; and that ASA staff meet with their counterparts in other organizations to see if they are facing this issue and if so, what is their approach.

Members of Council noted that they were impressed with the work of the task force and its recommendations, and that the recommendations were sensible and “doable.” When asked about the scope of this issue, Spalter-Roth responded that this is not just a sociology department issue but rather one that is university-wide.

Council agreed that implementation of the task force report be focused on the report as a resource for our members to consult. Council asked that the report be added to the ASA website and that electronic means be utilized to notify members and other sociologists of its availability.

Council voted unanimously to utilize electronic means (e.g., publication to the ASA website) to distribute the report of the Task Force on the Implications of Assessing Faculty Productivity and Teaching Effectiveness for informational purposes.

B. Task Force on International Focus of American Sociology

On behalf of the Task Force on International Focus of American Sociology, Executive Officer Hillsman presented the group's final report; a draft of the report had been circulated previously. The task force was created in 1998 as a replacement for the prior standing committee on international issues. The committee started work in 1999 and completed much of its work some time ago.

The task force reported that the evidence presented in their report suggested increased attention to international topics in annual meetings and committees. They noted that there is a relatively low degree of participation in ASA meetings by foreign sociologists, especially non-Europeans.

The task force also examined teaching materials and reported that they found a low degree of inclusion of international materials in the majority of teaching areas considered. They found this to be a source of concern as it reflects a rather parochial and ethnocentric view of the discipline.

Noting that interest in international issues and research topics is highest when there is an active ASA committee with an international focus, the task force recommended reconstituting a committee devoted to international issues. In addition, the task force recommended that ASA should facilitate contact between its membership and international scholars, perhaps by sponsoring one or more leading international scholars to participate in special internationally oriented sessions at the annual meeting. Also, the task force recommended expanding the use of the Soft Currency Fund to include support of travel expenses of international sociologists to the ASA Annual Meeting.

Craig Calhoun reported that he had been a member of the previous committee on international issues; he recounted some of the activities and accomplishments of that committee. Others expressed concern about creating a committee without a specific charge and noted the amount of international activity that will be happening in connection with the 2004 Annual Meeting, the Centennial, and the ISA meeting in 2006.

Council voted unanimously to charge the existing Council sub-committee on international collaborations (Michael Burawoy, Chair,

Esther Chow and Victor Nee) with handling the advocacy for international issues for the next two years; at that point, the sub-committee will report on what it has discerned to be a good way to continue that work following the Centennial Annual Meeting. The sub-committee will continue to facilitate contact with international scholars and explore the use of soft currency fund for support of international activities, though not necessarily travel.

C. Task Force on Journal Diversity

Council briefly revisited the extensive report of the Task Force on Journal Diversity that had been discussed at the 2003 winter Council meeting. Noting that most of the recommendations have been implemented or are on their way to being implemented, Council agreed the report should be published electronically on the ASA website.

Council voted to accept the final report of the Task Force on Journal Diversity and to publish the report on the ASA website. (1 abstention)

8. 2002 Financials and Audit

The independent audit of 2002 ASA financial operations was distributed to all members of Council prior to the meeting. The auditor reported that the review of internal controls found all transactions to be in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Council voted unanimously to accept the Independent Audit Report of ASA 2002 financial operations.

9. ASA Investments and Reserves

Due to the late hour, this item was postponed to the meeting of the 2003-2004 Council on the next day.

10. Proposed Name Change for the Minority Fellowship Program

Due to the late hour, this item was postponed to the meeting of the 2003-2004 Council on the next day.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was originally scheduled to adjourn at 6:15 pm but discussion ran longer on several items. Therefore, several items were postponed to the next day and the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm.