

**2008-09 ASA Council
Draft Minutes of Final Meeting**

Tuesday, August 11, 2009

2:30 p.m. – 6:10 p.m.

Hilton San Francisco

Continental Parlor 2

Officers Present: Margaret Andersen (Vice President), Patricia Hill Collins (President), Evelyn Nakano Glenn (President-Elect), Arne Kalleberg (Past President), John Logan (Vice President-Elect), Douglas McAdam (Past Vice President), Donald Tomaskovic-Devey (Secretary).

Members-at-Large Present: Marjorie DeVault, Rosanna Hertz, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, Omar McRoberts, Debra Minkoff, Mary Pattillo, Clara Rodriguez, Mary Romero, Rubén Rumbaut, Marc Schneiberg.

Members-at-Large Absent: Dalton Conley, Robin Stryker.

Incoming 2009-2010 Council Members Present/Absent: Kate Berheide, Randall Collins, Sarah Fenstermaker, Jennifer Lee, Sandra Smith, David Snow. Absent: Sarah Soule

Staff Present: Janet Astner, Les Briggs, Karen Edwards, Lee Herring, Sally T. Hillsman, Michael Murphy, Jean Shin, Roberta Spalter-Roth, Margaret Weigers Vitullo.

1. Call to Order

President Collins called the final meeting of the 2008-2009 Council to order at 2:33 pm on Tuesday, August 11, 2009, in Continental Parlor 2 at the Hilton San Francisco Hotel. A quorum of members was present for the conduct of business throughout the course of the meeting.

A. Introduction of New Members (2009-2010)

Collins identified the newly-elected members of the 2009-10 ASA Council (Kate Berheide, Randall Collins, Sarah Fenstermaker, Jennifer Lee, Sandra Smith, David Snow, and Sarah Soule) and welcomed everyone present to the final meeting of the 2008-09 Council.

B. Approval of the Agenda

Additions and amendments to the agenda were invited.

MOTION: Accept the agenda as presented. Carried.

C. Approval of the February 7-8, 2009 Minutes

No revisions to the minutes were proposed.

MOTION: Approve the minutes of the February 7-8, 2009, Council meeting.
Carried.

D. Approval of the February 17, 2009 Minutes (Federal Research & Statistical Agencies)

Draft minutes of the Council vote on February 17, 2009, were presented for approval.

MOTION: Approve the minutes of the February 17, 2009, Council meeting.
Carried.

E. Approval of the May 14, 2009 Minutes (Renaming TEF)

Draft minutes of Council's online discussion and vote on May 14, 2009, were presented for approval. Correction of minor errors on page 23 of Appendix 2 (misspellings of three Council members' names) was requested.

MOTION: Approve the minutes of the May 14, 2009, Council meeting as amended. Carried.

2. Report of the President

A. Reflections on the Year and the 2009 Annual Meeting

President Collins reported she was very pleased with the 2009 Annual Meeting, which was the culmination of a two-year planning process. Two sets of unfolding events—the campaign and then election of Barack Obama, and the dramatic changes in the economy—had implications for some decision-making about program planning. While a significant time was spent on the program, it appears the time was well-spent. Registration closed at 5,491, which compares favorably to the record of 5,557 set in 2004. Collins applauded ASA Meeting Services staff and their efforts to accommodate the needs of ASA members, for example, extending the preregistration deadline.

B. Proposal for a Council of Social Science Advisors

Secretary Tomaskovic-Devey brought a proposal for a national council of social science advisors to the attention of Council, noting that the underlying issue is the representation of social science in US policy making. Other countries have a broader array of social scientists involved in advising top government officials than does the U.S., where Federal government job titles do not even include “sociologist.” The memorandum shared with ASA Council members was sent to Melody Barnes, President Obama’s Domestic Policy Adviser and the Director of the Domestic Policy Council, which coordinates the domestic policy-making process in the White House, and to John Holdren, Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy.

The Secretary asked Council members for expressions of interest or disinterest in this idea. ASA is part of the Consortium of Social Science Associations, and the idea can be brought up there to see whether other organizations are interested. A COSSA initiative might then be brought to Council for a vote of support.

Reactions from Council members were generally supportive of the effort and included suggestions to monitor the political environment and keep testing whether this is the right way to proceed. If there is responsiveness from the administration, then COSSA can put more time and energy into networking and promotion. ASA's Director of Communications, Lee Herring, pointed out that the post of behavioral/social science associate at OSTP has not been filled, so one avenue could be to push OSTP to fill that vacancy. Council members were invited to submit their ideas for good nominees for that position.

President Collins closed discussion by summarizing that there was fairly strong interest in Council in favor of this idea and encouraging Executive Office staff to work on a proposal to put some resources into this effort in partnership with other social science organizations.

3. Report of the Secretary

A. 2009 Election Report

The Secretary reported that an overwhelming majority of ASA members cast their ballots online this year. The move to online voting has decreased the cost of holding the national election and incorporated the section elections. The Director of Governance and Information Systems, Michael Murphy, was thanked for the successful transition to online elections in 2005 and subsequent improvements to the process.

B. Report on ASA Investments and Reserves

The first two months of 2009 continued the downward spiral experienced in the market and the economy in 2008. While ASA's investment approach is fairly conservative, the dynamic economic situation has had an impact. Long term reserves were down \$1 million from June 2008 to June 2009, but \$1.1 million was regained by July 2009. Currently the DFA portfolio is \$178,000 below peak. The Secretary reminded Council members that the goal with investments is to have reserves of at least 50% of the operating budget, and recent market gains have accomplished that.

On the matter of socially responsible investing, DFA is starting a social responsibility portfolio but there is no track record yet. While one alternative would be to look for another financial advisor, the Secretary reported that the Investment Committee and the Committee on the Executive Office and Budget (EOB) were not willing to do that in the middle of an economic meltdown.

C. Year-End (2008) and Current (2009) Financials

Review of the 2008 fiscal year showed the year ending with a deficit of \$726,000, caused by a combination of lower revenues resulting from the faltering economy and higher expenses related to the purchase of office space and the lawsuit settlement with the ASA's former landlord. The majority of the deficit was due to the drop in revenues; overall, 2008 expenses were over budget by \$15,000.

The 2009 budget reviewed by Council in February projected a \$283,000 deficit, and Council had requested that the Executive Office do an analysis to provide options for a potential 5% reduction of expenses. Cuts amounting to 3.8% were subsequently reviewed with EOB and Council and implemented in the spring. Since then, revenues softened further, with the Job

Bank currently down \$100,000 and membership down 1%. The mid-year projection forecasts a \$234,000 deficit at year's end. On the good news side, Annual Meeting revenues are on target, and the publishing partnership with Sage is now in place, which brings with it a substantial signing bonus.

The Secretary reported that EOB is moving toward a three-year budgeting review, which will allow the committee to grapple with revenue and expense issues arising over the longer run. When stimulus package protections for state educational systems lapse, the impacts of likely budget cuts at those institutions will continue to affect disciplinary associations. The Association should expect to continue to experience soft revenues for several years.

The Secretary noted that the timing of moving into a publishing partnership agreement was excellent. ASA is now in the position to know what its minimum journal-related revenues will be annually for the next five years. After journal revenues, membership dues are the next major source of income for the Association, so Council attention turned to discussion of the small decline in membership. The Director of Publications & Membership, Karen Gray Edwards, reported that renewal rates in the high income categories have been good, but less so for the low to mid-salary ranges. The overall membership drop of 1% at the mid-summer point is still not as feared thanks to extra efforts by Membership and Customer Service staff.

Discussion then focused on the third highest source of revenue—the Annual Meeting. Registration and fiscal austerity moves for the 2009 convention are doing well, but projections for 2010 will be lower since registration always drops when the meeting is held in a southern site. A concern about Meeting Services staffing was raised in relation to the slow response time reportedly experienced by some section roundtable organizers trying to meet program deadlines. Bringing in unpaid interns was suggested as a possible solution. Some Council members expressed an interest in receiving information about functional areas in conjunction with budget materials.

The Secretary summarized the view of the EOB that there is no budget catastrophe in progress for ASA and currently no need to consider cuts in core functions.

4. Report of the Audit Committee

A. Approval of the 2008 Audit

On behalf of the ASA Audit Committee, the Secretary indicated that an independent, professional audit firm is hired to audit the Association's financial books annually and to examine Executive Office internal controls. The 2008 Independent Audit Report included a "Financial Report" and the separate "OMB Circular A-133 Supplementary Financial Report", along with the June 8, 2009 letter from the auditors.

The Audit Committee was pleased to report that the auditors found the financial statements for 2008 to be in conformity with generally held accounting principles and that the Association is in compliance, in all material respects, with the requirements applicable to its federal grants programs. Accordingly, the Audit Committee submitted its unanimous recommendation that Council approve the 2008 audit.

MOTION: Council approves the 2008 audit. Carried.

Following approval of the audit, Council members took a short break from 4:20 – 4:35pm.

5. Reports of Council Subcommittees

A. Report on MFP Fundraising Campaign

Vice President Andersen provided brief background information about Council's decision last winter to give fundraising priority to the Minority Fellowship Program (MFP). The first phase has been devoted to a quiet leadership campaign, with Council members suggesting names of people who might have the personal capacity to make a \$5,000 pledge (\$1,000 per year for 5 years). The Executive Officer and Vice President collaborated on developing a tracking system and began contacting potential donors in the spring. The total amount pledged as of August 9, 2009, was over \$250,000. There are still more people to be contacted, as well as others who should be added to the list, so it seems entirely feasible to be closer to the goal of \$500,000 by the end of the year.

An article about the campaign will appear in the September/October issue of *Footnotes*. In 2010 there will be a general call for contributions. Andersen said that ASA has not had a history of educating members about the importance of giving to Association programs, and there are plans to send a letter to members at some point about various ways to support the profession, from annual donations to bequests in wills. The opportunity for members to make contributions when renewing will continue to be offered, and a "Contributions" page will be developed for the ASA website. Efforts will also be made to obtain some foundation or corporate matching funds for the MFP.

Council expressed appreciation for the fundraising efforts and accepted the subcommittee's report and recommendations. The question of whether a permanent member-giving committee should be constituted was deferred to the February meeting.

MOTION: Council extends its gratitude to the ASA members who contributed so generously to the MFP Leadership 100 Campaign in 2009 by pledging significant support to the MFP for the next five years. Their exemplary generosity will help ensure that ASA can continue to support the graduate education of students who enhance the diversity of our discipline, and it will inspire others to join this Association-wide effort. On behalf of the Council of the American Sociological Association, its members, and especially the students who will benefit from these gifts, we extend our recognition and thanks for your leadership. Carried unanimously.

(1) Overall Member Contributions

As part of the annual renewal process, members are offered the opportunity to contribute to several programs and restricted funds. The number of individual contributors is down somewhat at this point in 2009, and the total amount contributed has also decreased. The Minority Fellowship Program continues to receive the most support, with the American Sociological Fund coming in second.

B. Ad Hoc Committee on MFP Transition

MFP Director Shin reported that ASA received encouragement from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to submit a T-32 grant application to support training minority scholars. This would be a much smaller training grant than what ASA has been receiving from the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH). If NIDA approves the application, the grant funding would begin on August 1, 2010. However, it is rare for a training application to be funded in its initial application review.

Activities celebrating the MFP 35th anniversary commenced at the 2008 Annual Meeting and concluded at this year's meeting. One program session that touched many chords featured a panel of former Fellows talking about what MFP meant to them. There is now a conversation underway with Springer Press, facilitated by former MFP Fellow David Takeuchi, about doing a book on the MFP experience. Another newsworthy event is the National Science Foundation's (NSF) awarding a two-year \$120,000 grant to ASA to study the MFP by comparing trajectories of Fellows with other people in the discipline, looking at mentoring, networking, etc., over time. A web-based survey of current graduate students is underway, asking them to provide information on the impact of the program. The next phase will be qualitative and involves conducting interviews.

Council was advised that the MFP transition plan is a moving target at this stage. When NIMH monies are no longer available to support MFP, the program is likely to be more modular, with innovations and new directions being added as opportunities arise. There will be an on-going dialogue with Council on proposed substantive program modifications. What develops in the next several years will be important. The potential exists to rely on members to give time and energy to the program efforts, and it will be important to look at what are best practices for minority students, students in general and faculty.

C. Joint Committee on the Future of Contexts

Noting that the committee's report would be considered the next day at the first meeting of the 2009-2010 ASA Council, President Collins invited outgoing Council members to offer input and suggestions on the future of *Contexts*. Past Vice President McAdam summarized that the joint committee had reached consensus on a long set of issues, and along the way had also carried out conversations with outside experts. The joint committee was constituted with members of the Committee on Publications and the Committee on the Executive Office and Budget as well as Council because ASA was nearing the end of the original 10-year business plan that launched the magazine. The magazine has been heavily subsidized in the early years and has been moving toward position of self-sufficiency, but it isn't there yet.

Comments about *Contexts* ranged from approval and/or disapproval of content to questions about paper quality and concern over outreach. The original intention of reaching a larger audience (beyond sociologists) has not been accomplished. However, if journalists are referencing it frequently and teachers are using it regularly (as has been happening), ASA might be satisfied that sociological content is getting to a broader audience than sociologists. The actual number of subscriptions may be a less important issue than having active dissemination avenues so long as revenues can sustain publication.

The joint committee members agreed that the original goal of the publication was the dissemination of sociology, not the production of sociology so a revenue-neutral model would be acceptable for the future. The current publishing contract is almost ten years old. The

University of California Press was the only publisher interested in publishing *Contexts* on a full cost recovery basis (i.e., with ASA bearing the costs). When ASA goes into the RFP process for a publishing partner for *Contexts* this time around, publishers will see it as having value. The question remains, however, whether any publisher can be found who has experience with a magazine or is willing to attempt publishing a magazine as a new venture while bearing the costs. This is a difficult financial time in the publishing world for this RFP process.

D. Subcommittee on Federal Government Collection and Dissemination of Scientific Data

Established at a previous Council meeting, this subcommittee was charged with a preliminary exploration of what ASA might do on behalf of its membership to monitor and improve federal government collection and dissemination of scientific data. The subcommittee undertook an informal survey of a small, purposive sample of members, asking for information on what federal data they used, whether there were data problems or issues of concern, and what members thought ASA might do to improve federal data integrity and adequacy. Thirty-five of the 90 sampled members provided substantive responses, which was judged to be a good response rate for mid-summer.

A number of respondents suggested that the most useful thing for ASA to do is to ensure that sociologists have a seat at the various tables at which government personnel make decisions pertaining to government data collection and dissemination. Also suggested was that ASA conduct a broader, systematic sample survey on members' use of government collected and disseminated data, and on their priorities for new or improved data collection. Establishing a task force to delve further into the suggestions might be considered.

6. Report of Committee on Awards

The Council Liaison to the Committee on Awards (COA) reported positive responses from attendees about the award ceremony this year. Several issues brought to COA's attention by the award selection committee chairs included the small number of nominations for certain awards, getting sufficient information/materials about nominees and/or their work, the need for more infrastructure/support for committee members, and appropriate handling of non-member award recipients during the Annual Meeting. COA does not intend to undertake writing criteria or procedural manuals for each award; rather, it is encouraging the award selection committee chairs to compile pertinent guidelines of procedures/practices for each committee's work. It is hoped that eventually the ASA website or an extranet will provide secured workspaces for committees to access materials and conduct their business.

7. Report of the Executive Officer

A. Executive Office Staffing

An updated list of Executive Office staff by functional area was available for reference. There were no questions nor discussion.

B. Update on ASA et al. v. Clinton (formerly v. Chertoff & Rice)

The Executive Officer reported that it was again not possible for Professor Adam Habib to participate in the ASA Annual Meeting because the litigation in which ASA is involved, represented by the ACLU, has not yet been resolved. Council members were referred to the background history contained in the informational memo in their agenda packets. There is no evidence at this point that the new administration in the White House has had any effect on the providing visas to scholars who have criticized the United States Government but the ACLU remains hopeful.

Council member Rumbaut commended ASA and the Executive Office staff for the work done in support of this case and noted that the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) had invited 117 scholars to its conference, all of whom were denied visas by the State Department. This prompted LASA to institute a policy not to meet in the US until the government changes its policies.

C. Update on ASA Amicus Brief in Varnum et al. v. Brien

In March 2008, ASA Council approved signing an amicus brief that focused on social science expert witnesses in the case of Varnum et al. v. Brien before the Iowa Supreme Court. In April of this year, Council was notified that the case was successful on substantive grounds (i.e., denial of gay marriage was declared unconstitutional in the State of Iowa).

ASA's participation in an amicus brief filed in this case was not directly about the substance of the case, although much of the data brought before the trial court was social science data. The Association supported the trial judge's rulings about who the court would consider expert witnesses on the social science evidence that was key to the substantive ruling of the trial judge that there were no grounds to deny gay marriage under Iowa law. Upon reading the appellate court ruling, it appears that the court bypassed the issues of defining who were legitimate social science experts and went straight to the substantive and constitutional matters in upholding the ruling of the trial judge.

Nevertheless the ruling of the trial judge and the amicus brief ASA signed remain as important and intellectually solid parts of the record for future cases in which the issue of who should be considered by the courts as "experts" in the area of social science evidence.

D. Update on NSF Survey of Earned Doctorates

As reported in the July/August issue of *ASA Footnotes*, the strength of the data user community made itself felt in an effort to prevent the Science Resource Statistics (SRS) program of the National Science Foundation (NSF) from suppressing data on the race, ethnicity, and gender of new doctorates in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. While the struggle against this data suppression appears to be largely successful, the final outcome is remains unclear. At the request of SRS, the Committee on National Statistics of the National Academies convened an expert panel to review the QEM report and the SRD confidentiality decision rules in order to provide advice on how SRS might proceed. The tenor of that meeting appeared to slant toward concerns about confidentiality rather than concerns about providing information to increase the participation of women and underrepresented minorities in the science workforce.

E. Information Literacy Standards for Anthropology and Sociology Students

During 2005-2007, ASA and the American Anthropological Association collaborated with the Association of College and Research Librarians (ACRL) in ACRL's development of standards for information literacy for undergraduate students in sociology and anthropology. A draft of the standards was endorsed by ASA Council in August 2006; the ANSS Executive Committee endorsed the revised draft at the ALA Midwinter Conference in January 2007; and the ACRL Board approved the final document in January 2008. This final document was now presented to ASA Council for review and endorsement.

MOTION: Council endorses the ACRL Information Literacy Standards for Anthropology and Sociology Students and recommends that departments of sociology work with their library staff to consider their implementation in whatever ways departments find appropriate. Carried.

F. ASA Policy on Job Announcements on Section Listservs

At its winter 2009 meeting, Council had a brief exchange about the long-standing ASA policy that Section Listservs should not include job announcements unless the jobs are listed in the ASA Job Bank. Following concerns that were expressed by some Council members, especially about positions relevant to sociologists that are not in sociology departments, the Executive Office reviewed the current policy and attempted to balance the concerns with the principle that all ASA members should have access to employment opportunities circulated via the ASA networks. The modified policy shown below was circulated to Sections in the spring and will be incorporated into the section manual.

Section listservs may include job announcements if they choose to do so, but only if the positions have been posted in the online ASA Job Bank. This is to ensure that all ASA members are given equal opportunity to review and apply for available positions that are known to the ASA, and to keep Section Listserv postings from negatively affecting the financial viability of the online ASA Job Bank which all ASA members support with their dues. Exceptions may be made occasionally for available positions that do not specifically require a PhD (or other degree) in sociology or closely related discipline or that would not otherwise be expected to be advertised in the ASA Job Bank.

Section listserv managers are responsible for implementing this policy. It is recommended that they require persons submitting job announcements for the listserv to provide the ASA Job Bank ID (easily available at jobbank.asanet.org) or a specific reason why the particular announcement is an exception.

G. ASA on Twitter

The July/August 2009 *Footnotes* issue provides information on using Twitter to promote ASA journal articles and sociology topics to the media and general public. ASA media relations staff continue to research and consider possible uses of various Web 2.0 social media in conjunction with weighing the workload associated with monitoring and posting on various sites and web pages.

8. New Business

The only new business item that was proposed was a resolution of condolence to Sheldon Stryker and Robin Stryker.

MOTION: The Council of the American Sociological Association, meeting in San Francisco on August 11, 2009, wishes to express its deepest sympathy and heartfelt condolences to ASA members Dr. Sheldon Stryker and Dr. Robin Stryker, as well as the other members of the Stryker family on the passing of Alyce Stryker, wife of Shel and mother of Robin. Especially as Dr. Sheldon Stryker receives the W.E.B. DuBois Career of Distinguished Scholarship Award, we recognize the essential contribution of family members like Alyce Stryker who support and nurture the careers of our outstanding scholars. Carried unanimously.

With thanks to departing members Rubem Rumbaut, Mary Romero, Mary Pattillo, Dalton Conley, Doug McAdam, and Arne Kalleberg, President Collins adjourned the final meeting of the 2008-09 ASA Council at 6:20pm on Tuesday, August 11, 2009.