

**2010-2011 ASA Council Final Meeting
Minutes**

Tuesday, August 23, 2011
Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, NV

Officers Present: Catherine White Berheide (Secretary), Randall Collins (President), Evelyn Nakano Glenn (Past President), John Logan (Past Vice President), Edward Telles (Vice President-Elect), Erik Olin Wright (President-Elect)

Members-at-Large Present: Sarah Fenstermaker, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, Jennifer Lee, Cecilia Menjivar, Joya Misra, Mario Luis Small, Robin Wagner-Pacifici

Absent: David Snow (Vice President), Rosanna Hertz, Omar McRoberts, Debra Minkoff, Sandra Smith, Sarah Soule

Staff Present: Janet Astner, Les Briggs, Karen Edwards, Sally T. Hillsman, Justin Lini, Michael Murphy, Jordan Robison, Jean Shin, Brad Smith, Roberta Spalter-Roth, Margaret Weigers Vitullo

Incoming Officers and Members-at-Large Present: Amanda Lewis, Monica Prasad

1. Introductions and Orienting Documents

ASA President Randall Collins convened the final meeting of the 2010-2011 ASA Council at 2:38 pm on Tuesday, August 23, 2011.

A. Introduction of New Members (2011-2012 Council)

President Collins identified the newly elected officers (Cecelia Ridgeway, Jennifer Glass) and Council Members-at-Large (David Brunsmas, Amanda Lewis, Monica Prasad, Laurel Smith-Doerr) and welcomed those who were able to attend this last meeting of the 2010-2011 Council.

B. Approval of the Agenda

A request was made to move MFP Advisor panel report earlier in the agenda.

MOTION: To approve the agenda as amended. Carried.

C. Approval of the February 12-13, 2011 Minutes

No revisions in the draft minutes were proposed.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the meetings on February 12-13, 2011. Carried.

D. Approval of the February 21-22, 2011 Minutes

Corrections were noted for typographical errors in the names of two Council members.

MOTION: To approve the minutes for the actions on the Wal-Mart Amicus Brief on February 21-22, 2011, as amended. Carried.

E. Approval of the April 26, 2011 Minutes

No revisions in the draft minutes were proposed.

MOTION: To approve the minutes for the Statement on the Dues Referendum on April 26, 2011. Carried.

2. Report of the President

A. Reflections on the Year and the 2011 Annual Meeting

Collins reported that, overall, a surprising number of things happened during his presidency. One of his discoveries was that people are more impolite in email than through other forms of communication. A major event was moving the meeting site from Chicago to Las Vegas, and Collins asked Council members for their feedback on the relocation and what they had heard from others.

Comments relayed were both positive and negative. Members who had read the information about the site constraints and decision timeframe were generally sympathetic. There remained some confusion about what factors Council considers in selecting sites and in deciding the relocate. One opinion argued that the Association was wrong to be more concerned about labor rights than issues affecting women and gays (e.g., sexploitation in Vegas shows, etc.). However, no one wanted the meeting moved to non-union hotels in Chicago.

Typical site-specific complaints were about the size of entire complex and the lack of a smoke-free environment in the casino area. Those with guest rooms in the far corners of the property had a long way to walk to get to the meeting space, as did those who did not stay in the headquarters hotel. When attendees got to the right area, however, they appreciated having all the meeting activities in one place. The biggest frustration was not being able to venture outside much due to the extreme summer heat, a factor no one controls.

Positive reactions were voiced by many Californians and students, who were able to attend the meeting due to the site change. Others said they were excited that going to a professional conference in Vegas gave them an opportunity to explore a place they had not been or vacation in the area. Collins noted that final registration was 5,225 attendees, which was excellent.

A question was raised about the threshold level for anticipating labor problems at meeting sites. It was pointed out that the situation in Chicago did not end up in a major labor strike, and a contract was signed and in place before summer. At the time ASA pulled out of

Chicago, an article in the *Chicago Sun-Times* indicated the local union was surprised at the action as they had not called for a boycott. The Executive Officer stated that the Association has a general policy of not meeting in hotels/facilities where labor contracts are still in dispute. The Chicago hotel workers contract had expired at the end of August 2009, and ASA waited as long as practically possible before moving. There had been a limited labor in August 2010, and it was not in ASA's best interests to stay in Chicago when no contract had been settled on and there no reliable evidence that one would be signed in the near future. The new contract was not ratified with Hilton properties until March 2011, and Starwood signed in late April 2011. At that point UNITE HERE reported that the settlement effectively resolved all remaining hotel contract disputes in Chicago, except those with Hyatt Hotels and the Congress Hotel, site of the longest hotel strike in history.

ASA is contracted to meet in Chicago in 2015, and the current UNITE HERE Local 1 contract expires in August 2013, leaving room contract negotiations to be settled but not removing all concerns about the future status of these contracts. ASA staff will be monitoring Chicago carefully and at some point will be consulting with officers and Council. Program planning for the 2015 Annual Meeting will not commence until the fall/winter of 2013. Collins closed discussion of meeting sites by expressing a hope that the Association does not lock itself into not returning Chicago for a long time. The city is a favorite site for many members.

Other crises Collins mentioned as occurring during his presidency included academic departments' reactions to the new NRC rankings, the ASA dues restructuring, the ASA amicus brief in the Wal-Mart case, and selection of the 2011 Excellence in Reporting of Social Issues Award recipient. Also of concern was the media harassment of Past President Frances Fox Piven that was generated by Glenn Beck.

Collins commented that the NRC rankings created anguish, and the Association came out with a terrific report in response. The report has been helpful to members and Departments.

Announcement of the proposed dues restructuring for 2013 encountered a negative response from some members, Collins reported, with a cascading effect of from blogging. Significant explanatory information was provided by the ASA Secretary in *Footnotes* and the dues referendum was passed by a significant margin in the recent election Collins noted that it remains to be seen what the responses will be from those most affected when the changes are implemented for 2013..

Collins noted that one interesting factor during the preparation of the ASA's amicus brief in the Wal-Mart case was that there were sociologists on both sides. While some questioned whether it was proper for the Association to come in on one side when it has members involved on both sides of the case, the Association took no position on the merits of the case. The brief addressed only whether the methods and sociological concepts used by the plaintiffs were valid according to the standards of the discipline. If the United States Supreme Court took a position against the inclusion of such methods in legal briefs, it would be a blow to the standing of the discipline. While some associations, such as the American Political Science Association (APSA) and the American Economics Association (AEA), have bylaws that are very explicit about not taking public stance, the ASA Bylaws have no such specification. Council's policy on making statements, based on the work of the Alba Committee in the early 2000s, is provided to every incoming Council member and is also available on the ASA website.

ASA officers also responded to the personal attacks on former ASA President Frances Fox Piven by Glenn Beck in his political opinion show on Fox News by issuing a public statement of support (see http://www.asanet.org/press/asa_presidents_respond_to_attacks_on_piven.cfm).

Collins also reflected on the reaction of some members to the announcement that the Association giving an award to David Brooks. It resulted in some rather nasty emails, which offended some of the leaders and some members of the award selection committee. Objections about the selection were, in the views of some members, that the recipient sometimes uses sociology well but that he also sometimes distorts it. The award committee acted in good faith on the nominations it received, and it is the committee's responsibility to make this decision on behalf of the Association. Council saw no reason for the Committee on Awards or Council to be involved. The award chair did a good job of announcing the award at the ceremony; concerns about negative reactions from some in the audience proved unfounded. One viewpoint noted that the fact there was some flak about the selection showed that members are noticing the awards, which is good.

Collins ended his review by commenting that it had been an instructive year.

Council then took a short break at 4:05 – 4:25pm. When the group reconvened, Collins expressed thanks and led a last hurrah for the outgoing members of Council--Past President Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Past Vice President John Logan, Rosanna Hertz, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, Omar McRoberts, and Debra Minkoff.

3. Report of the Secretary

Secretary Berheide indicated her intention to give a truncated oral report and referred Council members to the background materials in the agenda book. To follow-up on the earlier discussion about Council's policy on making policy statements, three copies of the Alba Committee report were circulated around the table. Attendance at the Annual Meeting this year was dead center in the average of 5,000-5,500 registrants, proving that Las Vegas was a good draw. As the elected officer with the highest fiduciary responsibility for the organization, Berheide confided her initial feelings of concern about the relocation, but the early report of the record-number of paper submissions helped eased those concerns.

A. 2011 Election Report

While there was high participation by voting members this year, it did not set a record, despite the debates about the dues restructuring proposal. Of those who voted on the referendum, 27% voted no; 14% abstained from voting on this election item. The 58% approval reflected significant support.

B. Greater Fiscal Transparency (2010 ASA Annual Report)

Berheide noted that the latest audit (2009) had not yet been posted on the ASA website when some members raised the issue of whether the Association was sufficiently transparent about financial matters especially in light of members' need to vote on the dues referendum. That oversight was immediately rectified. The Secretary's responses to questions about the overall ASA budget as well as background on the proposed dues restructuring were

published in *Footnotes*, and the ASA's first annual report was produced covering all aspects of the Association's programs and finances.

The 2010 ASA Annual Report includes reports from officers, answers questions about what the association does, and provides some historical data on membership, meeting registration, and more. Print copies were available at the 2010 meeting site in the ASA bookstore and at ASA registration and information desks. An electronic version will be posted on the website in September.

Indicating the intent to produce this type of report annually, the Secretary asked for feedback from Council members about what should be included in the report, how best to present the information, and any other suggestions. Responses about the report were positive, and Council expressed appreciation that information about Association plans and activities was made available to members both in *Footnotes* and in the annual report. The design and color scheme of the annual report received favorable review. Discussion of how to distribute the report further yielded a verdict to mail copies to sociology departments. Given the cost estimate of \$50,000 to print and mail copies to the entire membership, Council settled for supporting the online version.

A suggestion was made to consider providing more information about ASA staff and departments on the website. Blurbs about departments, staff members, and the possible inclusion of photos, could help members feel the staff are approachable, as well as knowledgeable and diverse.

C. Report on ASA Investments and Reserves

At end of May, ASA investments had recouped earlier losses; thereafter, the market experienced some downward volatility. As of May 31, 2011, the ASA reserve amount was \$4,194,132, or 70.3% of the 2011 operating budget, at the higher end of the range the Committee on the Executive Office and Budget (EOB) considers appropriate.

D. Year-End (2010) and Current (2011) Financials

The mid-year budget status reflects that revenues are still down, so staff will continue to tighten expense budgets. In response to a question about the distribution of staff time in various program areas, it was noted that these data are normally provided at the mid-winter meeting at the close of the fiscal year. There was general support for the Executive Office to continue providing that information annually.

4. Report of the Audit Committee

A. Approval of the 2010 Audit

Because the audit reports found the financial statements to be in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles and that the Association was in compliance, in all material respects, with the requirements applicable to its federal grant programs, the Audit Committee recommended that Council approve the 2010 audit.

MOTION: Council approves the 2010 audit. Carried.

The Secretary reported that EOB reviewed proposals from auditing firms in July and selected a new firm, Gelman, Freeman & Rosenberg, to do the 2011 audit. This action was taken because it is good practice to switch auditing firms or managing partners every five years or so, both to ensure objective oversight and to contain costs.

5. Reports of Council Subcommittees

A. Member Giving Subcommittee

Consideration of this report was deferred to the next Council meeting.

6. Report of the Committee on Awards

This report was deferred to the next Council meeting.

7. Report of the Executive Officer

A. Executive Office Staffing

There were no staffing changes or concerns to report.

B. Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) Advisory Committee Report

MFP allocates approximately \$100,000 per year in direct financial support to five Fellows. The \$20,000 that supports each Fellow provide \$18,000 for a 12-month stipend, plus \$2,000 (on average) for university-related costs such as health insurance and un-remittable academic fees, and travel support for two ASA Annual Meeting (one at the beginning and one at the end of the 12-month fellowship) as well as a regional/aligned sociology meeting. About two-thirds of the current MFP budget comes from organizational partnerships and annual ASA member contributions, and one-third is drawn from the MFP Leadership Campaign funds.

The recommendations from the advisory panel were to:

- 1) Continue the full stipend support model for 5 annual Fellows;
- 2) Expand the current number of pre-doctoral non-stipendiary Fellows, who would receive \$2,000 annually to support professional networking and career development;
- 3) Extend support to the post-PhD early career stage, with the addition of a formal mentoring component.

For this early-career initiative, MFP Advisory Panel members would help form a formal mentoring component with volunteers from the Advisory Panel as well as persons affiliated with benefactor organizations such as SWS, AKD, ABS, MSS, and SWSA but who are *not* from their current institution of employment

The MFP Leadership Campaign brought in \$474,000. Assuming that everyone continues to contribute at approximately the same level per year, and that pledges meet the current payment schedule, ASA could increase MFP support to approximately \$67,000 per year beginning in 2015. A seven-year budget outline was presented for Council's review and approval. This budget would spend down the entire Leadership Campaign fund, with a margin of approximately \$8,000.

Proposed MFP Budget, 2012-2013 through 2018-19:

Cohort/Year	Stipendiary MFP Fellows (5 per year)	Non-Stipendiary MFP Fellows (2-3 per year)	Early Career MFP (4-6 per year)	Annual Total MFP Program Costs	Sources of MFP Funds	
					Partners & ASA Members	MFP Leadership Fund
	@\$20,000	@\$2,000	@\$2,000			
39 / 2012-13	\$100,000	\$2,000 (1)	\$ 8,000 (4)	\$110,000	\$67,000	\$43,000
40 / 2013-14	\$100,000	\$4,000 (2)	\$ 8,000 (4)	\$112,000	\$67,000	\$45,000
41 / 2014-15	\$100,000	\$6,000 (3)	\$10,000 (5)	\$116,000	\$67,000	\$49,000
	@\$23,000					
42 / 2015-16	\$115,000	\$6,000 (3)	\$12,000 (6)	\$133,000	\$67,000	\$66,000
43 / 2016-17	\$115,000	\$6,000 (3)	\$12,000 (6)	\$133,000	\$67,000	\$66,000
44 / 2017-18	\$115,000	\$6,000 (3)	\$12,000 (6)	\$133,000	\$67,000	\$66,000
45 / 2018-19	\$115,000	\$6,000 (3)	\$12,000 (6)	\$133,000	\$67,000	\$66,000
TOTAL	\$760,000	\$36,000	\$74,000	\$870,000	\$469,000	\$401,000

Questions were raised regarding whether other associations/organizations would be able to continue contributing to MFP for the foreseeable future. MAP Director Jean Shin reported that SWS and AKD have committed without constraints on the time period. It is possible, however, that things could change if an organization encounters financial difficulties.

Past Vice President Logan recommended that the proposed budget outline be considered informative and that Council approve the budget year by year. In addition to being fiscally prudent, annual budget review would permit further discussion regarding the wisdom of spending the entire Leadership fund.

In general there was support for the programmatic directions recommended by the advisory panel, coupled with concern about the stability of both the individual contribution levels and the organizational commitments for the long haul. There is clearly a need to continue searching for additional long-term support for MFP.

MOTION: Council supports the programmatic directions of having competitively selected Stipendiary and Non-Stipendiary Minority Fellows and developing an early Career Program for MFP Fellows who complete the PhD. Carried.

MOTION: Council accepts the proposed seven-year budget outline, directs that each year's budget be reviewed and approved annually by Council, and encourages the MFP Advisory Panel and the Executive Office to seek additional long-term support from appropriate not-for-profit, for-profit, and federal organizations. Carried unanimously.

C. Update: Contexts and Society & Mental Health

The Executive Officer distributed samples of the new section journal *Society & Mental Health* and reported that the new *Contexts* reader was selling well.

D. Update: Task Force on Sociology and Global Climate Change

The work of the task force is proceeding well, particularly in terms of narrowing down the vast amount of potential material into a manageable set of twelve topics. The proposed report will be an edited volume that will consist of chapters on each of the topics, as well as a synthetic introductory chapter. The task force aims to produce a high-quality volume that will achieve the goal of meeting the original charge from Council of providing sociological analyses of the vital problem of global climate change.

8. Held-over Action Item

A. Business Meeting (August 18, 2010) Resolution on Human Rights of Children

A resolution regarding the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was presented to Council on August 18, 2010, from a vote of the Business Meeting. It was brought to the Business Meeting by Gertrud Lenzer on behalf of the ASA Section on Children and Youth. Council discussed the resolution, but felt it did not have time to complete the discussion because there were varying points of view. The matter was included on the agenda for the February 2011 Council meeting, but there was again insufficient time to address it during that meeting.

In preparation for a discussion of this resolution at the August 2011 Council meeting, input was solicited from Brian Gran, an ASA member and professor at Case Western University who has extensively on the topic of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. A detailed memo was prepared for Council's review that addressed the issues that arose during Council's discussion in August of 2010, including the definition of "child" and the sexual activity of minors.

Concern was again expressed about the definition of "child," and that treating teenagers under 18 as children has had negative unintended consequences. Several reasons were provided regarding why the US has not signed this UN convention, including that groups of people believe this pre-empts the rights of families to control their children, and that the convention does conform to current US laws. The relationship between sociology and social policy was raised. If a supporting statement is based on politics and not sociological knowledge, it does damage to the perception of sociology in public discourse.

It was suggested that a task force or Council subcommittee could be created to look at the sociological literature on this issue and present a critique from the sociological perspective, but support for this tactic was not strong.

<p>MOTION: To create Council subcommittee to work on the broader questions of the sociology involved in this issue, one component of which would be to produce a revised motion if appropriate. Defeated (4 yes, 6 no).</p>
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MOTION: To table the motion. Tied (5 yes, 5 no).

MOTION: To accept the resolution as currently written. Defeated (3 yes, 6 no, 1 abstain).

Adjournment

The last meeting of the 2010-2011 ASA Council adjourned at 6:30pm on Tuesday, August 23, 2011.