Minutes 2025

Executive Committee Meeting I
Southern Sociological Society
Charlotte, NC Meeting

Wednesday April 9, 2025
2PM-6PM

Present: Dawn Robinson, Dave Brunsma, Rhiannon Leebrick (virtual), David Embrick, James Maples, Kendra Jason, Earl Wright II, Gayle Kaufman, Patricia Drentea, Marisela Martinez Cola, JT Thomas, Elizabeth Culatta, Cameron Lippard

Not Present: Ali Sewell, Anthony Peguero

Meeting begins: 2:04PM

Welcome and Report by President Dawn Robinson. Thanks to the Executive Committee for their thoughtful responses by email and the quick responses throughout the year.

Recap of votes throughout the year. First, we voted to approve the prior year's meetings.

We also voted on a statement titled "A Message to Our Members" to be sent to SSS members.

We voted to approve Nomination Committee's nominations put forward by Vice President Peguero.

We voted to co-sign a statement written by ASA President Adia Wingfield on behalf of Academia, Free Inquiry, and Research.

The membership voted to replace the Ad-Hoc Harassment Task Force, with the Standing Committee on Anti-Harassment. This committee membership will be elected like our other committees. We agreed that those that are elected will begin their terms of service after next year's meetings, so on the last day of the 2026 meetings, which means that we still have one more year that we are going to need to have an appointed committee. Dawn shares that she has some ideas about members for that committee. For this year's election slate, we need to have people who will run for staggered terms, who have some experience in this area or experience with advocacy and had to have two people each for one year, two year and three-year terms. For this first slate, we have six candidates with deep expertise and experience with the Society's anti-harassment initiatives. That's the number of slots we need to fill the first year, so we can make it a competitive process later.

We also voted to nullify an earlier vote that we had on an Ad-Hoc Social Media committee with graduate students and instead create an Ad-Hoc Social Media Committee populated with an assistant, an associate, and a full professor and potentially some students. We had some volunteers, including Ali Sewell, who volunteered to be the liaison, but Ali is rolling off the EC this year. Cameron and Kendra, next year we will need some help creating this committee.

Rhiannon Leebrick developed a template to streamline committee reports and the reporting system in hopes that we would get more reports.

Finally, after learning about the sad passing of colleague and EC member Juan Bustamante, we voted to have Patricia Drentea continue for the rest of his term.

We also discussed whether to remove ourselves from X/Twitter or not. We decided that we didn't have the expertise in the room to make that call and what we probably really need is a membership survey about use and value of the various social media platforms before unilaterally deciding. This could be the first task of the new Ad-Hoc Social Media Committee.

Action Items:
- **Create Ad-Hoc Social Meeting Committee**
- **Send thank you note to Virginia Tech**
- **Update membership of newly formed Anti-Harassment Committee**

Executive Officer Report (Dave Brunsma) The budget that was proposed by Finance Committee and approved by Executive Committee was a cautious and reasonable one, building in a +24.9% growth across all membership and registration categories from our first meeting back in person after the pandemic in Birmingham. Given all the uncertainties that remained in 2024, I am happy with the outcome. Concerning our *revenues* for FY2024, there was nothing particularly noteworthy. We came in around 103% of what we projected for registration fees (both preregistration and onsite registration) and about 92% of what we expected for membership dues. This means that the approach we used to propose those numbers for the budget was spot on. There were no areas of the revenue side of FY2024 where we brought in significantly *more* than expected. There were a few revenue categories that brought in less than expected. We didn't bring in as much as we expected with the exhibitors advertising, tabling, combined exhibits and so on, hoping that Cameron, the new EO, will figure the new normal for exhibiting publishers .

Post pandemic, it's become clear that costs are still up completely across the board. It doesn't matter what it is, they're all up. Costs were up for everything at the hotel. Next year, we will have some additional costs with the upcoming transition to the EO at Appalachian State, increased costs like a trailer to move things, there may be some expenses for that transition that are unforeseen, but we will try to keep them down.

Our Vanguard Total Stock Market Index and the Himes fund have both increased each year, as of the end of December of 2024. We will be drawing upon this latter account yearly to support the Gomillion-Himes Award when one is awarded. Membership and registration are getting close to pre-pandemic numbers, which is great. Also, shares that the Site Selection Committee has discussed adding new locations down the road.

Dave reports it is his last report as Executive Officer and he thanks the Executive Committee, Assistant Executive Officer, Elizabeth Roberts (and past AEOs Lyla Byers and Slade Lellock) and shares that the incoming AEO is Upali Bhattacharya, a graduate student at Virginia Tech. He also thanks President Dawn Robinson, incoming EO, Cameron Lippard, Vice President Anthony Peguero, the support system he has had at Virginia Tech, to our new editor of *Social Currents*, Hiromi Taniguchi, the amazing editorial team at *the Southern Sociologist* who work with editor Nadya Vera, the SSS members for their constant energies, ideas and scholarship, and many, many others. He also shares that it has been one of the greatest honors of his career thus far, to serve as the Executive Officer of the Southern Sociological Society.

Committee discusses stock market ebbs and flows and how this could impact SSS accounts.

Assistant Executive Officer Report (Elizabeth Roberts) This year there were some significant updates to the *Social Currents* page, since we have moved to online access only for our members. We also shifted all of our e-mail addresses to a free nonprofit Gmail account this past year to save money. This summer plan to work more on the website, including potentially introducing an FAQ's page specific to the conference since we get a lot of the same questions over and over again. We launched the SharePoint site last year and have continued this past year to figure out how to get people to use it figure out what's working and what's not. A lot of the work of the AEO is fielding email questions. The AEO also helps support the planning of the annual meeting, including recruiting students to help manage registration, as well as the poster session, this year we had over 90 people sign up to do that, usually it's about 50. And the AEO runs the mobile app, so everything that you see there was built by the AEO in the last six months.

Publications Committee Report (Gretchen Peterson)
Hiromi Taniguchi took over as editor of *Social Currents*, and has wanted a co-editor to work with, the Committee is working on selecting a co-editor based on a list of nominations. Issues getting the committee together, so proposing a virtual option. **Suggestion by Publications Committee to have more clarity over their tasks and what the EC expects from this committee.**

Program Committee Report (Lisa Walker) Following the 2024 Annual Meeting, President Dawn Robinson met with the Program Committee Chair to discuss the theme, program priorities, and new sessions (such as a flash talks and an expanded poster session). We also discussed the presidential plenaries. In addition, the chair met multiple times during the spring with Brad Smith of Meeting Savvy. Over the summer, the chair met with the program committee (which had been constituted prior to the 2024 meeting) to discuss their role in the program building process and encouraged each of them to submit 1-2 complete sessions to ensure a robust program. We also reviewed the Call for Papers that President Robinson had drafted before distributing this in the early part of the fall semester. During mid-fall, the chair complied and, with the assistance of the Assistant EO, Elizabeth Roberts, the sessions seeking papers weekly updates (6 in total) and answered many questions from members about the presentation opportunities and submission process. Additionally, the chair attended the site visit at the Sheraton Charlotte in September with the EO, Assistant EO, President, and Local Arrangements chairs. Following the submission deadline, the chair organized the submitted sessions and papers and assigned them to timeslots/rooms. This was completed by mid-December and the preliminary program was submitted to the Executive Office for review. The preliminary program was distributed to membership the second week of January. Following the period for change requests (January 30 deadline), the chair revised many sessions and finalized the program. The final pdf program was completed the first week of March including all front matter, program-at-a-glance, full program, index, and maps/advertisements. Some changes this year were at Dawn's suggestion to beef up posters, so the committee made a concerted effort at getting poster submissions, we ended up with seventy submissions and decided to have a competition for posters, we had little slips of paper and a glass bowl for people to cast their votes in. The winner gets recognition. In addition, this year we added flash talks, short five to seven minutes presentations. There were also food trucks made available because of the lack of restaurant options near the hotel. **Chair notes to EC that some additional guidance about the necessary steps in compiling the final program would be helpful to future Program Chairs. Chair also asks EC to consider rethinking the notion of "final" program, maybe have a published PDF for our records after the conference but recognize that the program may be changing up until the actual conference.**

Honors Committee (Elizabeth Culatta for Chair Matthew Ward) The committee reviewed nominations for the following awards in January/early February: Distinguished Contributions to Teaching, Junior Scholar, Odum Undergraduate Paper, Odum Graduate Paper. By mid-February the committee had selected an outstanding winner for each award (listed below). Winners were then approved by the Executive Committee and society leadership in mid-February and notified soon thereafter. The Executive Committee has confirmed that all plaques and certificates have been arranged for presentation at the Spring 2025 meeting in Charlotte, NC.

Distinguished Contributions to Teaching Award:
Daniel Farr, Kennesaw State University

SSS Junior Scholar Award:
Trenton Mize, Purdue University

Howard Odum Award for Best Graduate Student Paper:
Reilly Kincaid "Time is Money? Differences in First-Order and Third-Order Beliefs about How Gender Should Shape Parents' Work-Family Priorities," Purdue University (Jeremy Reynolds, advisor)

Howard Odum Award for Best Undergraduate Paper:
Isabella Bahamon "'Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Choice: American Attitudes about Abortion Rights in the United States," Southwestern University (Maria Lowe, advisor)

EC revisits conversation from last year about the structure of the Honors Committee and the work assigned to this committee and what it would take to give out more awards, expanding the work of this committee too much, perhaps delegating them to other committees such as tasking different committees to come up with nomination packets. Earl has raised several times that if we have these awards, we should be giving them out. Perhaps consider streamlining the process, for example, instead of nomination letters, can put names of support in their letters. We could also have other committees potentially read over nominations or solicit nominations for certain awards and vet packages and then send to Honors Committee. We also need to re-think all the materials folks need to submit for the Distinguished Lecturer Award and if this is necessary.

Action Items

- **Tasked with getting more nominations and streamlining the process. Making sure we routinely give out all the awards we offer and making the nominations process less onerous.**

Site Selection Committee Report (Gayle Kaufman) The Executive Committee brainstormed a list of possible locations for the 2028 SSS conference at the Saturday morning (April 6) meeting in New Orleans. The necessary meeting specifications were discussed. Based on cutoffs for food and beverage, the list was further narrowed to:

• Loews Atlanta Hotel
• Little Rock Marriott
• Marriott Louisville Downtown
• Raleigh Marriott Crabtree Valley

Our contacts at HelmsBriscoe worked on possible contracts with Marriott Louisville Downtown in Louisville, Kentucky and Loews Atlanta Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia. There was a good deal of negotiation, mainly spurred by issues and questions raised by Dave Brunsma. Ultimately, the contract with Loews Atlanta Hotel was seen as the best arrangement for our organization and the 2028 conference, and this was finalized in October 2024.

EC discusses how to get committees to be more engaged in the future, discusses how CSCC is a great example of an engaged committee.

Committee on Small and Community Colleges Report (Laura Atkins for Chair Evie Perry) This committee has continued meeting regularly throughout the year and has been working on a project that started in 2023. In 2022-2023, the committee designed a study to learn more about participation in organizational activities among SSS members affiliated with small or community colleges. We collected data in 2023. In 2023-2024, a subcommittee completed data analysis and began work on a manuscript for submission to *Social Currents.* This year's committee revised the Executive Summary (Appendix A) and shared it with SSS President Dawn Robinson. Dr. Robinson responded enthusiastically and shared the Executive Summary with the Executive Committee and Program Chair, Dr. Lisa Walker. This committee largely identified that there are some barriers connected to participants from small and community colleges participating in SSS and attending the annual meeting, especially, heavy teaching and service loads at their own institutions and issues with travel funding too. They also noted that faculty from small and community colleges are often incentivized for bringing students from their home institutions. Some strategies the committee developed from this study is that scheduling presentations for small and community colleges to be clustered on the same day and later in the week could be helpful because then some of those folks who have high teaching loads could attend without missing so much class, maybe they wouldn't have to take, two or three days away from their classes. Also, this might help folks from these small colleges coordinate travel to bring down costs. We also have the suggestion that there could be more outreach to small and community colleges and if it is ever possible with the budget to provide travel scholarship, which came up often in our focus group.

Group discussion ensues. President Robinson says that going forward she wonders if it would be helpful to think about a strategically putting teaching faculty who have high teaching loads on each committee to help inform them. She says none of this exists if we don't have people teaching sociology. The research can't happen. We have to have that component and so an intentional decision to make sure this happens on committees. Committees should be a good mix of folks representing different institutions, but this does not always happen, so more intentionality going forward. It would be helpful for people to be able to identify as working from one of these schools when they volunteer to be more involved in SSS.

Committee on Gender and Sexuality (Maddie Williams for Chair Brittany Slatton)
This committee discussed what they can do to protect SSS members more during this time and focused the discussion on providing more information and resources on the website regarding where members can find information about how things affect sociologists, specifically about gender and sexuality, but also a variety of other topics. They want to provide spaces for members to be able to ask questions and have spaces for discussion during this time, while maintaining members' privacy.

This committee also wants to keep focusing on panels and even workshops about teaching and researching during the current political climate as well as having more sessions specifically related to gender and politics, gender and popular culture, digital sociology in regards to gender and more sessions specifically on LGBTQ youth and adding more sessions looking at new directions and intersectional research.

President Robinson shares that this sounds similar to one of the conversations that another the Committee on Professions is having, which might mean that it there could be some synergy.

Committee on Status of Students (Anthony Stone and Kierra Toney)
This year committee chairs had a difficult time connecting with the committee. There were plans to do another professional development webinar, were going to have the creators of the #SocialAF talk to graduate students, but schedules could not align this year. Discussed a mentorship program for graduate students. Also, discuss how to get committee members together during the annual meetings as a time to connect and socialize together, for this committee, during the student mixer might be a good time.

EC discusses how the EC used to meet Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, but no longer meet on Thursdays and this could always be brought back if needed.

EC discusses creating a list of best practices for committees to send to each committee in addition to committee charges in by-laws. Dave says committees are the life of SSS.

Action item, communicate charges and expectations to committees and liaisons more clearly. Make the transition meeting more publicized, send invites early. Providing more spaces for committee members to meet together informally at SSS.

JEDI (Joanna Hunter)

JEDI has three main activities this year. Participation at the Welcome Reception with a table. Creation and involvement in the JEDI Mini-Conference throughout the annual meeting in Charlotte, including four unique sessions:

- Workshop: JEDI Mini-conference: Unveiling Pathways: Fostering SocialCapital and Belonging for Black Women in STEM – Strategies for
- Success and Empowerment AMCR/JEDI Mini-conference: Fallacies of Racism
- Paper Session: JEDI Mini-conference: Framing Diversity in Higher Education
- Panel: JEDI Mini-conference: Doing the Work of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in an Age of Anti-Wokeness

Finally, JEDI continues to work on recruitment and is holding a JEDI book raffle.

EC thanks JEDI Chair.

Meeting adjourns 6:06.
-Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Recording Secretary Rhiannon Leebrick.

Minutes 2025

Executive Committee Meeting II
Southern Sociological Society
Charlotte, NC Meeting

Friday, April 11
8:30 am – 10:30 am

Present: Dawn T. Robinson, David Brunsma, Kendra Jason, James Maples, Gayle Kaufman, Earl Wright II, David Embrick, James "JT" Thomas, Marisela Martinez Cola, Brandon Jackson, Patricia Drentea, Elizabeth Culatta, Cameron Lippard

Not present: Ali Sewell, Rhiannon Leebrick & Anthony Peguero

President Dawn Robinson called the meeting to order at 8:36am.

First order of business is the finance committee report.

8:30-9:00 Finance Committee Report (David Brunsma)

Dave Brunsma shared report with everyone in advance and announced **1012** people registered. 113% of what was budgeted for and 1052 memberships which is 98% of what we budgeted for. 80% of membership download app. Few hardcopy programs printed. Pre-pandemic numbers.

Highest post-pandemic we had was NOLA with 941 registrations with 974 memberships. In 2019, we had 1089 registrations. We are close to our pre-pandemic numbers.

Given market volatility we may not pull out 6%. Dave reviewed budget. Jacksonville is off-site so we typically look at patterns of growth to another off-site location. Birmingham was first meeting post-pandemic. Myrtle Beach was a new location and our second meeting after pandemic which showed slight growth (756 reg, 816 members). Budgeted for conservative growth and we exceeded our expectations for registration.

Dave Brunsma noted that institutions sometimes donate to the organization when their faculty member is president, but noted that there isn't pressure for Kendra Jason to secure this donation. Dave built in royalties and can zero it out, but said we got $5400. Misc line is $17,706 (6% investment poll). Building in growth means we may want to change the investment (anticipating 17% growth). But the bylaws allow for EO to pull out from investments. We've lost 20% since January 1st.

Kendra Jason asked when a donation would ideally needed by and Dave Brunsma explained fiscal year and said as long as it was in by the meeting it was fine. Earl Wright pointed out ASA minority fellowship hasn't been paid since the pandemic. Dave pointed out we took out COSSA as well. JT Thomas asked if we could write the budget so that if we bring in X amount over that it could be donated to a particular category to allow for the presentation of a balanced budget. Dave noted in 13 years we've never had extra money except Stephanie Bohon's meeting and it went into the investment account. Dawn Robinson wants the ASA fellowship to be an expected expense and wanted more info on COSSA. Dave Embrick mentioned lowering the percentage from 6% to 3% until we knew what was happening. Earl Wright noted ASA is expanding what the fellowship means and who may be eligible. ASA legal looked at the structure of the program. Dawn Robinson likes the idea of cutting draw from 6% to 3% and adding back MFP. Kendra Jason mentioned that Committee on Sociology in Community and Small Colleges (CSCSC) wants to consider a travel fund similar to CREM. Cameron Lippard wants to know if we are okay with pulling more money out if the stock market goes down. Marisela Martinez Cola mentioned that some people may not want to travel to Florida because of politics. Kendra Jason was more concerned when Florida was an outlier and now it is going to be any issue regardless of where we are going. The messaging matters that we are supporting our colleagues in the state.

Dave Brunsma mentioned that SSS can fundraise. We are the cheapest organization. He discussed using the QR to fundraise for certain funds, so that if members want to donate for travel funding for community colleges they could. Dawn brought us back to JT Thomas's motion. Dawn made a friendly amendment to fund COSSA.

MOTION: JT made a movement to again fund ASA MFP ($1000). Dawn made friendly amendment to add COSSA ($800). Brandon Jackson seconded.

Vote: 11 Yes. Unanimous (Cameron Lippard, Kylie Parrotta, and Elizabeth Culatta didn't vote).

Dave Brunsma noted there will be two new people at the business meeting on Saturday who will be unable to vote because they won't be privy to the conversation. Dave Brunsma discussed sending the budget out via email so that the current EC could vote via email.

Kendra Jason asked if the $2500 for STARTS was built in and Dave said yes.

9:20-10:00 Unfinished Business

- Ad-Hoc Committee on Social Media (TSS)

Dawn Robinson noted that we voted to create this committee, but we only have one member. Dawn said it was maybe time to retire TSS because readership is down. She was resistant because it was our archival record of who was on committees and got awards. She discussed moving things to the website so that they are housed for archival purposes for our membership. Nadya Vera (editor) is on board with this plan.

James Maples noted he was trying not to cry. Kendra Jason said the transition could happen as the social media committee is emerging and so it could just be change in our communication patterns. Dawn Robinson discussed making it a more modern approach to our marketing and communication, while preserving the nostalgia. James Maples reflected on editorship and making static PDF that can compete with social media news is challenging. James was concerned with the archives, but noted if it was going into the webspace and the team could archive it. He noted we don't have stuff from the presidents going into the archives. He worries things will be lost in transitions and time. He wants to see oral interviews happen and have another issue of the Southern Sociological Society. James Maples wants the TSS name to remain for Bob's legacy. James and Slade wanted to do more oral history work and haven't had the time. Dawn Robinson noted the website could be a repository for that information.

Dawn proposes to update the ad-hoc committee, to include Nadya Vera, to develop a strategy to update TSS, and include Upali Battacharya. Earl Wright wanted to know if a different team of people would produce a different result. James Maples mentioned it used to come out 4 times a year and maybe we could strip it down so the workload is reduced. TSS could become am archival document instead of a newsletter. Marisela Martinez Cola suggested reducing it to two releases a year. James stressed the progression of the president's term coming out across the 4 releases. He mentioned one president refused to write 4 announcements.

MOTION: Dawn Robinson proposes to update the ad-hoc committee, to develop a strategy to update TSS, and include Nadya & Upali Battacharya to restructure the committee. JT Thomas seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (unanimous) (Kylie Parrotta, Cameron Lippard, and Elizabeth Culatta didn't vote)

- **<u>Guidelines for Publications Committee on *Social Currents* Editorial Board</u>**

Patricia Drentea mentioned a third of the articles from *Social Currents* should be about the southeast or from members in southern institutions. Dawn Robinson wondered why all editorial members of the journal weren't required to be members of SSS. Cameron Lippard mentioned that having to pay dues to serve as an editor is a conflict of interest. Earl Wright mentioned *Social Problems* required you to be a member. Dawn Robinson said ASA required them to be a member to be on the board. Elizabeth Culatta wondered if it would deter people from being on the board. Cameron Lippard asked if they would be required retroactively. Dave Embrick said that other organizations don't require it. Dave mentioned that *Social Forces* called themselves the journal of SSS, but Southerns members weren't being published in the journal. Dave Brunsma mentioned the handbook of operations still says *Social Forces* and the publications committee is not accurate or in the bylaws. Publications is supposed to collect a report from the editors every year.

Brandon Jackson and Elizabeth Culatta left to present at 9:45.

Dave Brunsma mentioned the handbook needs to be updated. Dawn Robinson said it would be easy to police board members, but what about articles? Having to be a member to submit versus publish could be a problem. Dave Brunsma wondered if it was aspirational instead of a requirement, and Dawn Robinson wondered if we could charge non-SSS members to submit. JT Thomas mentioned you'd be punishing the same people twice if they couldn't afford it. Cameron Lippard said we should get an editor's report about the submissions and who is submitting. SAGE report could be shared too. Kylie Parrotta mentioned Pubs used to submit this information in their annual report.

Earl Wright mentioned that you had to pay a fee at *Social Problems*, but then people wrote angry letters after they were desk rejected after paying a fee. James Maples mentioned recreation journals having a fee is common, but that some have a fee on a scale. Dawn Robinson mentioned SAGE had a work around for ASA journals to give waivers on submission fees.

MOTION: Cameron Lippard made a motion for Publication Committee to provide a more detailed report including SAGE info. JT Thomas seconded. Vote: 9 yes (unanimous)

Dawn wants a detailed report that includes information about the editorial board and about submissions from SSS members. They need to clarify the mission statement. Kylie Parrotta will work with Elizabeth Culatta & Rhiannon Leebrick to update the handbook.

<u>9:55- 10:30 New Business</u>

Dawn Robinson raised the discussion of status of the recording secretary and Elizabeth Culatta replacing Rhiannon Leebrick. Dawn Robinson is moving to appoint Elizabeth Culatta as the new recoding secretary as of Saturday. Kylie Parrotta is sitting in for Rhiannon Leebrick during the EC business meetings on Friday and Saturday.

MOTION: Dawn Robinson moved to appoint Elizabeth Culatta as the new Recording Secretary as of Saturday. JT Thomas seconded.

9 Yes (unanimous).

Kendra Jason brought the Committee on Sociology in Community and Small Colleges (CSCSC) report. Dawn Robinson discussed their report and suggestions. They requested a travel fund similar to CREM. This would be a new budget item. Kendra Jason mentioned CREM has $2,500 so they should too. Gayle Kaufman said this is a good way to support members, especially ones who drive to meetings.

Dawn mentioned we used to keep track of how many undergrads attended and presented so that they could have programming geared to them. At one point, we wanted them to be more integrated so we cut the undergrad only sessions. Earl Wright wanted to know if there was a policy on how many years a person could receive the travel funds. Dawn Robinson said we could add language to the handbook about adding priority and eligibility. Cameron Lippard noted CREM doesn't have that limitation. Earl Wright said the person shouldn't receive the funds more than three consecutive years in a row across both committees.

MOTION: JT Thomas made a motion to fund the committee with $2500. Dave Embrick seconded.

Vote: 9 yes (unanimous)

Dawn Robinson brought up the eligibility rules and better record keeping.

Patricia Drentea was thanked and left at 10:10.

Kendra Jason mentioned that the undergrads have easier access to funding and that their faculty need support. Gayle Kaufman mentioned they have 32 students on their $50 membership.

MOTION: Dawn Robinson made motion priority is given to people who were not prior recipients, but that no one can receive more than three years of consecutive funding. JT Thomas seconded it.

Vote: 8 Yes (unanimous)

President Dawn Robinson adjourned the meeting at 10:15am.

Business Meeting
Southern Sociological Society
Charlotte, NC Meeting

Saturday, April 10
7:30-8:30 am

Present: Dawn T. Robinson, Micah Roos, David Brunsma, Kendra Jason, James Maples, Gayle Kaufman, Earl Wright II, Ali Sewell (absent), David Embrick, Marisela Martinez Cola, Patricia Drentea, Elizabeth Culatta, Kylie Parrotta, Michael Hughes, Lynn Smith Lovin, Lisa Walker, Robert Freeland (late), and Larry Hughes (late)

Not present: Anthony Peguero, Rhiannon Leebrick, Brandon Jackson (absent), James "JT" Thomas (absent)

President's Report –
President Dawn Robinson called the meeting to order at 7:34am.

President Robinson welcomed us and thanked EC, especially Dave Brunsma for his work in keeping SSS moving and serving the members. EC had high caliber conversations throughout the year in addressing organizational issues. We lost an EC member (Juan) and Patricia Drentea filled in for the remainder of his term. Dawn Robinson thanked Patricia Drentea for her service. EC supported nominations committee candidates and the new slate of the new anti-harassment committee (ad-hoc). They will start on the last day of the meetings in 2026. Committee reports were streamlined and restructured. We discussed SSS presence on X (Twitter). Some wanted removed from platform and others wanted to continue. We remained on, but quit engaging. We discussed modernization of *The Southern Sociologist*. We created a new ad-hoc committee on digital communications (webmaster, *TSS* editor, and different levels of faculty) to rethink media strategy, archival materials, and dissemination of materials to membership.

We voted to reinstate contributions to ASA MFP and COSSA that were paused during Covid-19 to align with the mission of SSS. We created a new travel grant for members from small college and community colleges (5 at $500). Rhiannon Leebrick stepped down as Recording Secretary and we voted yesterday to confirm Elizabeth Culatta will serve as Recording Secretary. Kylie Parrotta filled in as Recording Secretary for Rhiannon. We approved the budget yesterday too.

Dave Brunsma provided an overview of the SSS budget. We use Quickbooks to prepare taxes and budget for the Finance Committee. Revenues failed to meet our $138,276 operating expenses (8k short). 2024 budget was approved. We were at 103% of reg predictions. Estimates work pretty well. Exhibitors are changing practices and we are attracting new companies (Cengage). EC tweaked budget that was approved by Finance Committee for 2026 because of market volatility. For 2024 expenses, everything is up, including hotels to make up for losses during pandemic. In 2024, the hardest thing was figuring out what was happening. Registrations and membership are going upwards even as members face institutional and financial issues. We are back with healthy numbers (over 1000). There is good energy in the organization and we are attracting new members. We have 3 accounts: investment (in flux), money market (AV equipment), and basic checking account (in Knoxville). Investment lost 20% since December. In 2024 in Gayle's meeting in NOLA we had 978 members and this morning we have 1061. In 2024, we had 941 registrants and today we have 1023. Thursday was very busy at registration, but we did better with pre-registration this year.

2025 – Charlotte; 2026 – Jacksonville; 2027 – New Orleans; 2028 – Atlanta

Dave Brunsma wanted to give thanks on ending 13 years as EO for SSS. He thanked EC for continued faith and confidence in him in supporting members and discipline. He was grateful for working with the team (Elizabeth, Jacob, Upali). Dave thanked Lisa Walker from his first SSS meeting in Nashville. He thanked Dawn Robinson and he said her talk inspired him and he looked forward to learning about her scholarship more. He noted Anthony Peguero was missed. He thanked Virginia Tech a lot for supporting him in being EO and for the large amount of support he received from course releases, grad support, and office space. Virginia Tech has supported past-presidents and secretary-treasurers. He noted his chairs and deans supported him in being EO. He reflected on being EO when cutting ties with Social Forces and starting Social Currents. He thanked the editors and noted looking for a co-editor. He noted SSS is run by amazing people who are selected by the membership of the organization. Off the cuff, Dave said he wanted to properly reflect on his time and wanted to draft something for TSS or another outlet. He thanked all of the past program chairs and EC members he got to work with during his 13 years. The membership collectively drives the organization.

Dave Brunsma was raised Mennonite and his grandfather was a minister. Three words mattered: community, fellowship, and stewardship. They were always thrown around and as he grew he reflected on these terms. His understanding of stewardship came to him over his time in SSS, and the "Mennonite boy" now comprehends them differently as a family member of SSS. He mentioned knowing Cameron Lippard since 2003 and he feels strongly that his sensibility will be good fit for being EO of SSS. Dave looks forward to just being a member of SSS and is confident in Cameron's abilities to take over.

President Dawn Robinson passed the gavel to President Kendra Jason. And explained the book and mirror tradition.

President Kendra Jason

Kendra Jason did 5-week study abroad in Ghana as an undergrad. She explained the Sankofa bird being relevant to her studies and connected it to the mirror. Kendra thanked the conference program committee and President Dawn Robinson for creating an inclusive program. Kendra thanked Dave Brunsma for being personally and professionally supportive of her. SSS has a new president, secretary, EO and assistant EO and President Jason looks forward to working with everyone. Kendra announced her theme: Empowered Sociologists: Agency and Action towards Social Change is a call for action to empowered thought leaders who can upload mission of SSS. Lead through social change when we feel disempowered. Reminder of our power and call to use sociology to solve social problems. Kendra noted that the 89^{th} annual meeting calls sociologists to empower each other to deepen critical thinking, engaged research, effective mentoring, enriched pedagogy, viable interventions and action plans across multi-layered social dimensions as we navigate an interconnected and interdependent global world. The 2026 Annual Conference welcomes and values your research, perspective, and pedagogy that empowers you to shape the future of sociology.

Kendra Jason directly addressed going to Florida for the meeting. If you join SSS because of our mission, then you need to be in Florida. She talked about Florida and the political debates and battlegrounds. She discussed the privilege of choice in avoiding red state because you have an orange president.

Kendra Jason welcomed the new EC members.

Kendra Jason and Cameron Lippard have a lot of ideas for strengthening the Society and will not be restricted in their vision. Cameron Lippard noted his passion for the organization and that he is a "Southern boy" at heart. He noted it's not just Florida and that we need to do the work of the organization. It's about listening, watching, and doing. Be prepared to come, learn, and change things for the better. We want it to be a member driven society.

Kendra Jason noted her goal is for the conference to be solution oriented and to create sustainable collaboration. Kendra Jason thanked Kylie Parrotta for serving as recording secretary.

Transition Meeting
Southern Sociological Society
Charlotte, NC

Saturday, April 12
8:30 am – 10:30 am

Present: Brandon Jackson, David Embrick, James Maples, Lisa Walker, Kendra Jason, Marni Brown, Marisela Martinez Cola, Gayle Kaufman, Micah Roos, JT Thomas, Kylie Parrotta, Cameron Lippard (late), Lisa Walker, Dawn Robinson (late), Amanda Koontz (late), Elizabeth Culatta (late)

Absent: Ali Sewell, Rhiannon Leebrick & Anthony Peguero

President Kendra Jason called the meeting to order at 8:34am.

President Kendra Jason discussed the new leadership team and theme for the conference. She discussed her goals for improving communication across the committees and increasing accountability and transparency. We are using professional skillsets to improve the sustainability of the organization. Kendra and Kylie have discussed the institutional memory of the organization and how to improve processes.

Kendra Jason had us go around and introduce ourselves. Lisa Walker just served as program chair and it is her 25th SSS. James Maples was program coordinator, EO, webmaster, TSS and announced his enthusiasm for Kendra's theme. David Embrick is returning EC and has been involved in SSS for at least 20 years and was past program chair. Brandon Jackson has been member since grad student and has been on several committees. Kylie Parrotta is filling in as sec and has been coming to SSS for two decades. JT Thomas is on EC. Micah Roos just rolled onto EC and has been coming since 2006, served on honors, pubs, and nominations. Gayle Kauffman is past-past president and has been coming since early 2000's and has been on several committees. Marisela Martinez Cola is returning EC member and has been coming since 2014. Marni Brown has been coming since 2006 and is past VP and now president-elect.

President Kendra Jason announced the theme: Empowered Sociologists: Agency and Actions towards Social Change. She read the description to the EC and explained her motivation. Kendra is a sociologist of inequality who thinks about power dynamics all the time. So many people feel disempowered. "Be the sociologist in the room." We have power tools and power knowledge. We are equipped with power. We need to be activated. We are already empowered and can activate one another. Our outcomes and results should be solution-based. It shouldn't just be theory and methods. We need to work in community.

Amanda Koontz came late and is a new EC member. She was co-editor of Social Currents and was a program chair. Elizabeth Culatta came in and will be rolling on as the new recording secretary.

Kendra Jason wants us to remember that SSS stands for something. Some have moral and political concerns about going to Florida. You became a sociologist because you wanted to advocate for change and so we should go to Florida and show up for them. It is a battleground, and we should show up. Our local arrangements committee will make it fun, but we are there for the work.

David Embric said he was excited about the theme. He contextualized his question. He said he is director of community engagement at university and the community doesn't know what a sociologist is and that has changed his thinking. He wants us to think about how to get the people on the ground doing the work involved. Kendra Jason is putting together a Florida panel on Thursday or Friday who will position the conversation from the frontline so we can learn from them. Fernando Rivera and Ryan Thompson will do some community-based work. Tiffany Chenault will do communities and action. Florida communities have pulled together over disasters and political upheaval.

New program chairs: names – Mairead Moloney & Taylor McElwain. Kendra picked them because she has known both for years and they understand her vision. Kendra wants to speak to members who also aren't in in academia. The new local Laura Chambers was chair in 2020 and Kendra asked her to do it again since her meeting was cancelled. Stephanie Bradley will also help who went to Florida State.

There is no unfinished business remaining. EC did vote to create a budget line item for 5 travel scholarships for faculty at committee on small and community colleges. Because of resource limitations, these faculty often cannot attend conferences due to travel restrictions. This scholarship will enable 5 members to receive $500 towards travel expenses. Kendra Jason noted their students often have resources, but the faculty don't.

Kendra Jason noted that the poster session was well received and that the undergraduates really appreciated the opportunity. She wants more around professional development with regards to what our undergraduate students could do with a sociology degree. Amanda Koontz brought up that Sociology is not counting as a GE for all universities and so we should address that and other changes at the conference.

Cameron Lippard noted that we may need to purchase easels to do the poster presentations again in the future. He wants to consider purchasing about 50 for future meetings. Amanda Koontz mentioned sponsorships or a local college bringing them instead of purchasing them. Cameron Lippard noted people liked the shared session and the competition. It created a sense of community and it encouraged student engagement. James Maples mentioned that past years we've not had the same level of ease in getting supplies, but he sees it as an investment in our students so we should purchase them. Marni Brown asked if there was anyone who was going to reach out to all of the Florida schools to see who will attend. Dawn Robinson mentioned reaching out to the department chairs to purchase department memberships so that their undergraduates can attend for a lower fee. Cameron Lippard will report back on some potential costs for poster session supplies. JT Thomas mentioned bringing in United Campus Workers and American Federation of Teachers to the conversation.

Cameron Lippard said Meeting Savvy created a new platform and that the submission system looks clean now. The questions will be clarified so we can gather additional information on our membership. James Maples mentioned getting more graduate students on committees.

Gayle Kaufman brought up *Social Currents* and whether the editorial team were members of SSS. There will be a graduate student gathering information for a report on the journal. The website says that the journal mentions that it is a social science journal but that sometimes means that paper submissions aren't sociological (ex: aviation studies). Gayle wanted to know if the mission should be centered more on sociology. They will provide a report about who is submitting and what the themes/topics have been. Dawn Robinson reached out to Pubs after the meeting yesterday and tasked them with gathering data and evaluating the mission. Cameron Lippard mentioned that the social science part was added to the mission to get interdisciplinary contributions, but the pubs committee should review this and come back to EC with revised mission. Amanda Koontz mentioned when she was co-editor that there weren't an overwhelming number of submissions that were out of scope, but that it could be refined. Gayle Kaufman said they had 97 submissions last year and they'll likely get 125 this year. Gayle will have Pubs Committee submit annual report from *Social Currents* editor, creating a more in-depth look at submissions and publications with regards to if they are SSS members, and the editorial board will review the mission and potentially bring revisions to the EC. Cameron Lippard noted SAGE should also provide an annual report to Publications Committee and to EC. Andrew Thompson pulls info from SAGE on standard submissions, acceptance, country of origin, and membership status.

<u>New Business</u>
Kendra Jason discussed the Whova App and in the future tagging the business meeting on everyone's agenda. There should be a description of the business meeting that makes it clear that everyone is invited, that the budget is discussed, and that the new president will be introduced.

For the 2026 conference, Kendra Jason wants to have pre-conferences. It will be a logistic challenge but we'll figure it out so that we can partner with ASA and SSSP to host teaching workshops. It will be a means to get people here earlier. There will be a professional development opportunity hosted by a writing coach to connect scholars to their purpose and process, but there will be a registration fee.

Micah Roos mentioned the ASA pre-conferences and workshops, especially the new department leadership workshop being helpful. James Maples wondered if we could put some surveys out to gauge member interest in these pre-conferences and attitudes towards fees. Kendra Jason thought we could aim for 25-40 people in these pre-workshops. Dave Embrick mentioned the possibility of hosting a hybrid workshop for people who don't have the travel funding. Amanda Koontz wanted to include questions about childcare during the pre-conferences. James Maples noted that the teaching mini conference could offer a certificate so that people can justify that they received 5 learning hours and have documentation for their tenure packages.

Kendra Jason stressed that the idea of the pre-conference is to get people in community sooner to create sustainable relationships. Cameron noted that the response rate on the survey is low and that our membership may not give us the data that we need if we only get 100 responses. Marni mentioned having a QR code survey on site to collect information next year and James mentioned adding it to the app. Cameron and Kendra will talk on the site visit about how a pre-conference could impact space and costs and Amanda mentioned partnering with the local university (maybe UNF).

President Kendra Jason adjourned the meeting at 9:49am.
-Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by substitute Recording Secretary Kylie Parrotta