

**2009-10 ASA Council Final Meeting
Final Minutes**

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

2:30 – 6:10 p.m.

Hilton Atlanta

Room 401-402

Officers Present: Catherine White Berheide (Secretary-Elect), Patricia Hill Collins (Past President), Randall Collins (President-Elect), Evelyn Nakano Glenn (President), John Logan (Vice President), David Snow (Vice President-Elect), Donald Tomaskovic-Devey (Secretary)

Officers Absent: Margaret Andersen (Past Vice President)

Members-at-Large Present: Marjorie DeVault, Sarah Fenstermaker, Rosanna Hertz, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, Jennifer Lee, Omar McRoberts, Clara Rodriguez, Marc Schneiberg, Sandra Smith, Robin Stryker, Sarah Soule

Members-at-Large Absent: Debra Minkoff

Incoming Council Members Present: Cecilia Menjivar, Joya Misra, Edward Telles, Robin Wagner-Pacifici, Erik Olin Wright

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

1. Introductions and Orienting Documents

ASA President Evelyn Nakano Glenn convened the last meeting of the 2009-2010 ASA Council at 2:41pm on Tuesday, August 17, 2010.

A. Introduction of New Members (2010-2013)

President Glenn welcomed the newly elected officers and incoming Council Members-at-Large who were able to attend the final meeting of the 2009-2010 ASA Council.

B. Approval of the Agenda

MOTION: To approve the agenda. Carried.

C. Approval of the August 12, 2009 Minutes

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the meeting on August 12, 2009 minutes. Carried.
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D. Approval of the February 12-13, 2010 Minutes

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the meeting on February 12-13, 2010.
Carried.

E. Approval of the May 26, 2010 Minutes (Arizona identity papers and ethnic studies resolutions)

MOTION: To approve the minutes for May 26, 2010. Carried.

2. Report of the President

A. Reflections on the Year and the 2010 Annual Meeting

The President noted that there was good response by attendees to this year's program sessions, and attendance had met the expectations for a southern site. Glenn was extremely pleased and grateful for the success of the 2010 Annual Meeting.

B. President's Letters to Marquette University & Governor of Arizona

A short summary was given of the withdrawal by Marquette University of its job offer to Professor Jodi O'Brien. The letters from ASA protesting the situation went out very quickly, and although they did not affect the decision-making, they did have an impact on the campus. The sociology department felt supported, and the correspondence was also used in O'Brien's subsequent negotiations with the university. The Executive Officer inquired whether O'Brien thought an additional letter might be useful, and the response was affirmative. A letter draft was presented for Council's review, with the intent being to support positive changes at the university and indicate that the association will be monitoring activities over the coming years.

Discussion brought out the point that it would be best to think in terms of the specific university rather than the entire religious order of Jesuits in private Catholic universities. Concern was expressed that the content of the letter should be helpful to the department and supportive of academic freedom in general. It was recommended that the ASA's response to the letter from Marquette be focused on reiterating two principles – non-discrimination and academic freedom. The President and Executive Officer were tasked with revising the text for review via email by Council following the meeting.

C. Final Update on ASA et al. v. Secretary of State Clinton (Adam Habib)

Executive Officer Sally Hillsman reported that the US Department of State gave Adam Habib a ten-year visa earlier this year, and Habib was finally able to attend the ASA Annual Meeting. Attendance at the session where he presented was rather low, but there was significant press attention. It was noted that the current administration in Washington is less interested in ideological constrictions, but that can change in the future. The Executive Office

will remain vigilant to ensure that the State Department knows there are citizens and scholars who will push for accountability.

3. Report of the Secretary

ASA Secretary Donald Tomaskovic-Devey gave a brief fiscal overview for new members of Council. The new Executive Office space was purchased three years ago, which radically changed the organization's financial situation in the short-term. Last year arrangements were made to work with a new publishing partner and that relationship is in the middle of its first year. The general economic downturn led to drops in revenues, and the collapse of the job market had implications for Job Bank revenues. The organization was suddenly facing a deficit of around \$700,000 at a time when the budget committee was expecting a deficit closer to \$300,000.

Efforts by Executive Office staff to reduce expenses brought the 2009 deficit down to around \$100,000. This was an extraordinary turnaround that did not involve creating much new revenue. The Secretary indicated he was very pleased with the current budget status and the fact that the organization did not react in panic. The association has gone through some tough economic times and weathered them well.

A. 2010 Election Report

The Secretary expressed appreciation that Michael Murphy, Director of Governance and Information Systems, makes sure the annual election happens each year, and that it happens well. Over 48% of ASA's voting membership participates in the national election, which is much better than other social science associations. Results of the 2010 election were reported in the July/August issue of *ASA Footnotes*.

B. Report on ASA Investments and Reserves

Noting that ASA's investments are there to permit innovations in financially good years and assist the organization out in bad years, the Secretary referred Council members to memoranda prepared by Les Briggs, Director of Finance. The ASA Investment Subcommittee meets via conference call twice a year, and the basic investment strategy is maximum diversity, not active trading. The subcommittee recently affirmed the fairly conservative approach to investments which keeps 35% of the portfolio in fixed assets and 65% in stocks.

In response to questions about how the Association accumulated its reserves, the Secretary and Executive Officer cited the sale of the old office space, major bequests by Arnold Rose and Sydney Spivack, and prior decisions in good years to invest net gains rather than spend those funds.

C. Year-End (2009) and Current (2010) Financials

The 2009 contingency budget produced a \$103,000 deficit, despite heroic efforts by the Executive Office in cutting expenses. Revenues were down, particularly for the Job Bank which suffered an income drop of \$150,000. The Secretary indicated that the outcome for 2010 should be a balanced budget as the third year in a declining economic situation.

Some of the transition from being a self-publisher to working with a publishing partner is shown in the detailed budget where there are lines that suddenly have no expenditures. One good part of the transition is that the income guarantee from Sage is based on revenue history prior to 2009. When the economy improves and revenues rise, the revenue-sharing agreement will kick in.

In response to an inquiry about the details of the agreement with Sage to publish *Contexts*, the Secretary indicated that magazine content is not affected; only the financial arrangements are different. He mentioned that Sage's rule of thumb is that it takes 10 years to make money on a new publication. It is somewhat amazing that *Contexts* has actually come within \$20,000 of breaking even during its first ten year period.

The role that the editors have played in contributing to the success of the magazine was lauded. As inaugural editor, Claude Fischer set a high standard and successive editorships also aimed high. Member subscriptions have leveled out at 2,500, making the magazine the third highest publication selected by ASA members. *Contexts* is turning the corner from revenue loss to revenue-neutral, and it could be revenue positive in the coming year. The Secretary praised Publications & Membership Director Karen Gray Edwards for doing a marvelous job in negotiating the publishing contract.

As the budget review wound down, the Vice President put in a request for more detail on personnel expenses to accompany the budget as a routine, general practice. It is important the Council to know how staff time is allocated across the various departments, programs, and initiatives, especially if it becomes necessary to make difficult decisions about the budget. The Executive Officer confirmed that such information would be provided.

D. Update on New Dues Structure Proposal

EOB continues to work on models for a new dues structure, and feedback was requested from Council on some guiding principles and goals. Council's input will be used to prepare a final proposal to be put on the table as an action item for the winter meeting. The Secretary reminded Council that the ASA Constitution permits only COLA increases to dues. Any changes in the actual dues structure have to be voted on by the membership. If a decision is made at the February meeting to put a new dues structure on the ballot, the membership would vote on the proposal as part of the national election in late spring, and the new structure would be put into effect for 2012. Council could, of course, decide to defer the issue for another year (or more).

Council discussed the principles used by EOB in preparing the current draft of a dues structure proposal. A basic guideline was that there should be as few changes as possible with a focus on achieving greater progressivity.

Discussion of the models presented began with a concern that a dues increase for members at the bottom of the income ladder not be more per capita than at other levels. Another question was raised about actual revenue needs. One member raised the issue that now that budget deficits seemed to be decreasing was there a need for additional revenue. Others noted that revenue was declining and that deficits were being avoided by rather significant cuts in expenses that impact Association programs. Such cuts cannot go on indefinitely and not impact member services.

Council discussed the current and proposed ASA dues levels in comparison to other social science organizations, although such comparisons are difficult to make. ASA dues are often lower but associations have different structures, provide different and often fewer services, and make different decisions on subsidizing journal subscription costs for their members.

If ASA goes ahead with changing the dues structure to ensure progressivity, it will be important to provide information on the rationale and history of member services so our internal constituencies are fully informed. There seemed to be agreement with the general logic on the proposal although some Council members remained uncertain about whether to proceed given the higher education economy.

The Secretary indicated that Council's comments would be taken into account during the next round of revisions by EOB, and Council could expect to receive a final proposal at its meeting in February.

After receiving thanks from the Secretary for their thoughtful feedback on the dues proposal, Council members took a short break at 4:54 – 5:10pm.

4. Report of the Audit Committee

A. Approval of the 2009 Audit

The ASA Audit Committee reported that the auditors found the 2009 financial statements to be in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles and that the Association is in compliance, in all material respects, with the requirements applicable to its federal grant program.

MOTION: To approve the 2009 audit. Carried.

5. Reports of Council Subcommittees

A. Member Giving Subcommittee

(1) MFP Campaign

Minority Affairs Program Director Jean Shin reported that the MFP Leadership Campaign had raised \$440,000 thus far. The leadership campaign will continue into the end of the calendar year in order to reach the goal of raising \$500,000. Then a general campaign is likely to be opened to wider participation by all members.

(2) Letter to SWS

The letter written by President Glenn thanking Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS) for its significant pledge of \$100,000 for ASA's Minority Fellowship Program was shared with Council.

(3) All Member Contributions

There was a significant decline in the number and dollar amount of contributions from members for 2010. Since contributions to every fund are down, it is unlikely that the MFP leadership campaign affected member giving in general. The drop is more likely a result of the continuing economic downturn.

(4) Status of Member Giving Subcommittee

Council set up this subcommittee to think about encouraging members to give to specific programmatic ASA activities. MFP was prioritized, and the Leadership Campaign was begun in collaboration with the MFP Transition Committee. Subcommittee members are now rotating off Council, but it is still important for the Association to look at other categories and other ways of giving, and institutional mechanisms to do that need to be considered.

Past Vice President Margaret Andersen presented the subcommittee recommendation that Council confirm Sarah Fenstermaker as the new chair and appoint new volunteers to fill out the roster. There was consensus in Council to move ahead as recommended, and Council members Sandra Smith and Jennifer Lee volunteered to serve on the subcommittee.

B. MFP Transition Subcommittee

An extensive memo providing a summary review of the Minority Fellowship Program was prepared as requested by Council at its previous meeting. This document contained updates on six initiatives related to MFP: MFP Program and Training Overview, MFP Stipends and Fundraising, Final Report of the MFP Transition Committee and Expansion of the MFP Advisory Panel, Upcoming NIDA Application Resubmission, MFP 35th Anniversary Followup, and NSF EAGER Project and SREMS Committee Project.

After expressing its appreciation for the excellent report, Council focused on the recommendations from the MFP Transition Subcommittee. Past President Patricia Hill Collins recommended that Council endorse the report and consider reasonable action strategies. Vice President Logan suggested that the advisory panel be given a charge to prepare recommendations for turning the ideas into specific proposals with appropriate budgets for Council's review.

<p>MOTION: To expand the MFP Advisory Panel by three people so that it can begin the process of implementing the recommendations in the report. The advisory group is directed to report back to EOB and Council for input and advice on budget categories, financial resources, and program directions. Carried.</p>

6. Committee on Awards

The Council Liaison to the Committee on Awards presented a summary of issues discussed by the committee during its recent meeting. No policy changes were proposed however, so no action by Council was required.

7. Report of the Executive Officer

A. Executive Office Staffing

A current list of Executive Office staff by department/program was provided for reference.

B. Contexts Update

In August 2009, Council approved the continuation of *Contexts* for an additional three years (through 2013) and instructed the Executive Office to immediately begin a competitive search for a new publishing partner. ASA staff are now in the final stages of reviewing the formal agreement for Sage to publish *Contexts* for five years beginning in 2011. One significant aspect of the agreement is that it ensures the magazine will produce at least modest positive revenue for the association. ASA will retain all member subscription revenue and will receive from Sage a set share of all other revenue. Council members had no questions or concerns.

C. Costs of Mid-Year Council Meetings (in person v. conference call)

The winter storms in February made it necessary for Council to meet via conference call sessions rather than face-to-face meetings. As requested by Council, the Executive Office provided a report comparing costs for the winter meetings of Council. Expenses for the February 2009 meeting were a little over \$26,000, while the cost for the February 2010 meeting was just under \$4,000.

There was no question that it was less expensive to conduct business via the conference call sessions, but the strong consensus among Council members was that collegial discussion and the quality of interaction and policy discussions is far better face-to-face. Comments also noted that building cohorts of leadership and professional relationships does not happen via conference calls.

D. Costs and Cost-Savings on Footnotes Opt-in

The intention to change ASA's newsletter to an online publication was fast forwarded when contingency budget needs arose. A few complaints have been received from members, but having the ability to opt in for a print copy has been a satisfactory solution.

E. Status of Task Force on Sociology and Global Climate Change

At its February meeting, Council approved creation of a task force on sociology and global climate change and appointed Riley Dunlap (Oklahoma State University) as the task force chair. Normal governance processes solicited nominations and volunteers during the spring and summer. Given the high caliber and large number of nominees and the comprehensive charge of the task force, the Task Force chair decided to structure the task force to have a core Steering Committee to lead the work of the Task Force under the Chair and report to Council. Its substantive work would be supplemented and facilitated by an additional group of Contributors, who would be tasked with writing, reviewing, and otherwise helping with the content of the Task Force's written products. The core steering committee has already met and begun its work.

F. Update on New Diversity Policy

The updated diversity policy was publicized in *Footnotes* and included in the online Job Bank. Unisex bathrooms were designated at the Annual Meeting site this year for the first time, and feedback from users was positive. The only concern heard from attendees was that Women's restrooms at both hotels were designated for unisex use, and women registrants outnumber men at Annual Meetings. It was noted that one reason Women's restrooms were selected was because those facilities offered more privacy than Men's restrooms.

Another revision to the diversity policy is on the agenda for consideration at the first meeting of the 2010-2011 Council.

G. Report on NSF/ASA Travel Support to the ISA Congress in Sweden

The Executive Officer reported that the travel grant allocations went smoothly. It was noted that ASA receives very little support from the NSF grant for handling logistics however. Looking ahead, the prognosis is good that travel funding will be available for the next ISA Congress, which will be held in Yokohama in four years.

Adjournment

After small tokens of appreciation were presented to outgoing Council members, President Glenn adjourned the last meeting of the 2009-2010 ASA Council at 6:15pm on Tuesday, August 17, 2010.