Minutes from the December 12, 2012
Meeting of the ASA Committee on Publications

Elected members present were Catherine White Berheide (ASA Secretary), Karen Cerulo (Chair), James Jasper, Erin Kelly, Peggy Levitt, Cecilia Ridgeway (ASA President), Mary Romero (ASA Secretary-Elect), Vincent Roscigno, and Steven Vallas.

Editors present for the open session were David Bills, Judith Gerson, Karen Hegtvedt, Tim Futing Liao, Holly McCammon, Alan Sica, Arlene Stein, and Debra Umberson.

Present from the Executive Office were Sally T. Hillsman (Executive Officer), Karen Gray Edwards (Director of Publications and Membership), and Janine Chiappa McKenna (Journals and Publications Manager).

The meeting convened at 8:40 a.m. and introductions were made.

The agenda was approved unanimously.

Report from the Chair

Cerulo provided an overview of the archived manuscript boxes that were formerly held at ASA’s archive at Penn State, now at a secure storage facility in Maryland. The prior discussion is available in the August 2012 minutes.

The Committee discussed the August vote to destroy the archived files (five yes, one abstention) and agreed that three years is not enough of a timeframe to retain manuscript files.

The Committee created a subcommittee to decide what to do regarding archiving going forward and the subcommittee will present its proposal (mechanism for obtaining permission to share reviews and rejected manuscripts with researchers, how long to save manuscript files) at the Committee’s August 2013 meeting. The subcommittee will include Kelly, Cerulo, journal editors, and a representative from the History of Sociology Section. The subcommittee will make recommendations to the full Committee, which may include an article in Footnotes on retaining manuscript files asking for member input.

Report from the Executive Officer

Hillsman stated she did not have a report, but will further discuss the archive issue at the end of the meeting.
There was a brief discussion on the journal subscription numbers for 2012 and renewing members for 2013, focusing on the new membership categories.

Report from the Secretary

Berheide had passed forward the Committee’s recommendations to Council in August and spoke about Council’s actions and discussions about those recommendations.

Regarding increasing editorial honoraria amounts, Edwards talked to publishers (SAGE, Wiley) about what they offer, and it was decided to keep the current weighted structure where *American Sociological Review*, *Contemporary Sociology*, and *Contexts* get the most and the other publications receive lesser amounts.

The Committee discussed providing honoraria in the form of an expense account to avoid tax implications (e.g., could use for travel to the Annual Meeting).

Berheide noted that her job is to keep ASA budget balanced and while in spirit she is in favor of providing resources to editors, it is unlikely to happen when the budget is in deficit. Hillsman has no issue bringing the honoraria amounts up to inflation levels, but it needs to be compatible with ASA’s overall budget. This is a high priority if funds allow.

Umberson stated that from an editor’s perspective, it is awkward to talk about compensation. Being an editor is a service to the discipline and it is volunteer work; therefore, the amount should be significant enough to make a meaningful symbolic gesture. When the Committee is trying to recruit editor applicants it would be helpful to say you get this much, almost like an award.

Vallas wondered if there should be an ongoing review every five years to see if the amounts need to be revised and if more of the income journals generate should go back to the editors. Ridgeway stated there is no real means of editor compensation based on journal income as that revenue supports much of the association’s activities.

Roscigno wondered about making the honorarium a line item on each journal’s budget rather than an honorarium that could be used, for example, for travel expenses to the Annual Meeting. Edwards reminded the Committee that no one (including ASA officers and other committee members) are compensated for Annual Meeting travel and any process that compensated editors in an official way would most likely be rejected. As an honorarium, however, editors can choose to use those funds in any way they wish—including to cover meeting expenses.

The Committee discussed revising the budget guidelines for new editors so that new editors have additional information on what will be needed (e.g., office supplies, clerical staffing). Hillsman stated this should be held separate from the issues of the honorarium. If there are editorial office expenses that we are not covering that editors feel are important, there should be a separate discussion between the Committee, EOB, and the Executive Office.
New Journal Proposal from the Section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities

As called for in the ASA Guidelines on the Publications Portfolio, a subcommittee had been established to provide a preliminary review of the proposal. Cerulo read the subcommittee’s list of concerns regarding the proposal: Would the journal’s pedagogy section conflict with Teaching Sociology? There is discussion in the proposal of the void in the area of race and ethnicity but no real detail on that. There is also some inaccurate and missing information related to the operating budget, and no discussion about the potential decrease in section membership as a result of the increase in the dues amount to cover a journal subscription.

The subcommittee wanted to see a revised proposal—they proposed offering the opportunity to get the revised proposal back by December 21 so that the Committee could hold an e-mail vote and Council could vote on it at the January 2013 meeting. If the section could not manage that schedule, the action would be postponed until August 2013.

Levitt felt there is a need for this journal but wondered whether it will be able to compete globally with the existing prominent British journals. Jasper agreed that the proposed journal is too U.S. focused and wondered about possible revenue.

Edwards pointed out that the journal will not be self-published—the financial risk would be absorbed by the publisher (e.g., SAGE). The journal will likely run a deficit of $200,000-$300,000 before it begins to break even, but the deficit will not be incurred by ASA or the Section.

Hillsman explained to the Committee that the Executive Office negotiates the contract with the publisher on behalf of the Section, but the Section will have to help sell the journal to the publisher. While publishers are not amenable to many new journals in general, this particular journal is a good fit for ASA (and preliminary discussions with SAGE have been met with enthusiasm).

Hillsman noted that the subcommittee’s concern about a possible decline in Section membership may be overly pessimistic; both the Section on Community and Urban Sociology and the Section on Mental Health experienced increases in membership after launching a journal, which is good to note in discussions with publishers.

Romero pointed out that the Section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities is one of the largest sections in the ASA and a new ASA journal in this area would provide an opportunity for new knowledge to emerge.

Journal of Health and Social Behavior and Sociology of Education Editor Candidate Discussion

The subcommittee reported on what they had done to encourage applications and provided a preliminary ranked list for the Committee’s consideration.
Proposal to Change *Sociological Methodology* Mission Statement

Liao gave background on his proposal to change the journal’s mission statement to:

*Sociological Methodology* (*SM*) is the only American Sociological Association periodical publication devoted entirely to research methods. It is a compendium of new and sometimes controversial advances in social science methodology. Contributions come from diverse areas and have something new and useful—and sometimes surprising—to say about a wide range of methodological topics. *SM* seeks qualitative and quantitative contributions that address the full range of methodological problems confronted by empirical research in the social sciences, including conceptualization, data analysis, data collection, measurement, modeling, and research design. The journal provides a natural forum for engaging the philosophical issues that underpin sociological research. Papers published in *SM* are original methodological contributions including new methodological developments, reviews or illustrations of recent developments that provide new methodological insights, and critical evaluative discussions of research practices and traditions. *SM* encourages the inclusion of applications to real-world sociological data. *SM* is published annually as an edited, hardbound book.

Liao considers *SM* to be the journal in methodology and that it covers multiple disciplines; this change will better reflect the journal’s mission.

The Committee discussed the proposed mission statement and suggested either replacing the word “natural” with “central” or deleting the word altogether. It was stated that Council will need to approve the new mission statement.

Changes to *Teaching Sociology* Author Guidelines

Lowney proposed changing the *Teaching Sociology* author guidelines to limit submissions to research-based articles and to not accept papers over 25 pages (including references, figures, tables, and supplemental materials) for review.

Some members of the Committee suggested Lowney give a firm page or word limit, but other Committee members felt that a strict limit may exclude some submissions. The Committee then discussed Institutional Research Boards and noted that some smaller schools may not have an IRB and some of the research presented may be examples from within the classroom.

Improving Writing Subcommittee
Jasper stated that the subcommittee has nothing new to report, but that there will be a workshop at the 2013 Annual Meeting (which will happen the day before the meeting starts).

Berheide suggested the subcommittee work with Margaret Vitullo, director of ASA’s Academic and Professional Affairs, to ask her to include this type of workshop every year if the Committee feels it is important. There are always a certain number of workshops every year, and if this goes well it could get a certain time slot to run every year.

Hillsman felt that the Committee needs to decide what it wants long term. They can decide what they want to do for 2014 since the opportunity is still open and if they want this to be a recurring activity.

Sica pointed out that if there is an Annual Meeting session on how to write book reviews for Contemporary Sociology, the session could go to Contexts editors instead for a writing workshop. There was a discussion on how members may not understand how far in advance meeting sessions are planned.

The subcommittee needs to re-engage and determine the needs and frequency of these workshops, and Jasper volunteered to chair the subcommittee, with O’Brien and Sica as members. Hillsman noted that there may be similar courses given at the graduate school level, which could be potential resources.

**Copyediting and Editorial Expenses**

With the association’s transition to SAGE there seems to be less substantive copyediting in the journals and that the introduction of SAGE Track has changed the role of the managing editor and in some cases the managing editor is doing more copyediting than in the past. For those editors who use SAGE’s copyeditors and find it inadequate, the association can try to provide some copyediting funds.

ASA will attempt to negotiate for better copyediting as part of the SAGE contract renewal, but Edwards is not optimistic that SAGE (or any publisher) has the kind of substantive copyediting services that can be provided by independent contractors (such as ASA used pre-SAGE).

It appears that some universities are viewing ASA as a source of support for graduate student stipends, and that the cost of using graduate students for editorial office staff now, in many cases, far exceeds the reasonable cost ASA would expect to incur for part-time clerical staff. The journal editors need to work with the Executive Office to consider alternative models of staffing—unless there are instances when graduate students are specifically needed or are offered at a reasonable cost.

**Editorial Board Nominations**

The Committee discussed whether the minority and gender representation is decreasing on certain editorial boards. Cerulo asked editors if they face challenges in finding editorial board members. Some
editors indicated they have struggled to increase diversity on their boards but are frequently “turned down” by minority scholars that have too many commitments to accept the invitation to serve.

Archives/Editorial Office Files

Hillsman provided an overview of the memo prepared for ASA Council in July 2012 regarding the 580 boxes of archived manuscript files that had been stored at Penn State as part of the ASA Archive but are now stored at a storage facility in Maryland. The boxes contain articles that were submitted for publication (whether accepted or rejected), as well as correspondence regarding peer review (and some personal correspondence with authors). For the previous discussion of the archive contents, read the August 2012 minutes.

An article that was submitted for review but not accepted remains the intellectual property of the author; ASA owns the copyright for accepted articles only. Without the permission of the author of the rejected article, the association has no legal rights to the paper. Additionally, making the peer review correspondence available is not strictly a legal issue; it is more importantly an ethical issue as ASA has a policy regarding the strict confidentiality of the peer review process.

Even suggesting retention of such material (and potentially allowing researchers access to it) could cause some concern with future authors and reviewers.

Cerulo stated that The Committee will not be revisiting the vote on the boxes, but Sica will be allowed some time to provide his thoughts on the issue and then the Committee will move on to the four things Council has asked the Committee to consider.

Sica gave a brief background on the archives at Penn State and stated that any archive (even if it is incomplete) is better than not having an archive. He also noted that copyright laws could change.

Cerulo discussed point #4 from the Committee’s plan for archives presented to Council: to “consider that the current policy guarantees both authors and reviewers confidentiality. That can’t be changed retroactively but the Committee could propose to change that in the future as a means of allowing for research on editorial files.” The Committee decided “This will require a brief discussion and an up/down vote -- specifically: ‘should all future ASA journal authors/reviewers/editors be required to sign waivers making their materials/decisions available for research?’”

The Committee wondered if ASA could save everything and have authors and reviewers sign a release, which would allow someone to opt out if not interested, and then not release the materials for 50 years. A check box or other mechanism could be added to SAGE Track for the authors and reviewers to allow for release of manuscripts or reviews. Some of the editors noted that they already have a difficult time getting reviewers, and this may cause them to not get adequate reviews and the reviews may not be as candid as they would be otherwise. Although the reviews would be anonymous there are always ways to determine who the reviewer is.
There was a discussion on the possibilities of saving “parts” of the boxes as a means of extracting some data to create a sample for research purposes. However, even doing that would require some process to get permission from authors and reviewers (particularly on rejected manuscripts—to which ASA has no “ownership”).

New Business

Hegtvedt discussed the decision to retract an article that appeared in Social Psychology Quarterly in 2011. One of the authors provided falsified data, which had been used in multiple articles across various scholarly publications. In the end, an analysis of the articles published using that dataset had resulted in more than 50 retracted articles, one of which was the SPQ one. (For additional information and the official retraction, see http://spq.sagepub.com/content/74/1/98.abstract).

Executive Session

The Committee voted to:

- Recommend to Council to increase editor honoraria amounts as quickly as possible to meet inflation (or above, for rounding). Carried unanimously.
- Reach out to guide editors in creating a budget. Carried unanimously.
- Conditionally accept the new journal proposal from the Section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities with minor changes (to be more global in their plans and include international editorial board members). Carried unanimously.
- Recommend to Council new editors for the Journal of Health and Social Behavior (Gilbert C. Gee) and Sociology of Education (John Robert Warren). Carried unanimously.
- Recommend to Council to approve Sociological Methodology’s change in vision statement, provided the word “natural” is removed. Carried unanimously.
- Approve Teaching Sociology’s updated author guidelines. Carried unanimously.
- Approve nominations for new editorial board members. Carried unanimously.
- Invite the editors of Contexts and the Rose Series in Sociology to extend editorships for up to three years. Carried unanimously.
- Inform Council that the Committee maintains its position to keep rejected manuscripts and accompanying materials for 10 years only for administrative purposes. Carried unanimously.
- Instruct the archive subcommittee to consider an implementation plan to seek permission from future authors and reviewers to make rejected manuscripts and reviews available for researchers. Carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m. The Committee will meet next on August 11, 2013, in New York.