1. Introductions and Orienting Documents


A. Introduction of New 2015-2016 Council Members

Newly elected Council members Daniel Chambliss, Cynthia Feliciano, Kathleen Gerson (Vice President-Elect), Michele Lamont (President-Elect), Mignon Moore, Wendy Ng, and David Takeuchi (Secretary-Elect) were welcomed.

B. Approval of the Agenda

The President moved the report of the Task Force on Engaging Sociology (item 6) earlier in the agenda to accommodate the availability of outgoing Past President Annette Lareau.

MOTION: To approve the agenda as revised. Carried (no opposed).

C. Approval of February 7, 2015 Minutes

No changes were proposed.
MOTION: To approve the minutes for the Council meeting on February 7, 2015. Carried (no opposed).

2. Report of the President

A. Reflections on the Year and the 2015 Annual Meeting

England indicated that positive feedback was coming in about this year’s Annual Meeting and expressed her appreciation to the wonderful ASA staff, who “always knows what is going on.” She commented that it was good that meeting themes change every year while ongoing topics are regularly maintained.

3. Report of the Secretary

A. 2015 Election

Secretary Mary Romero reported that ASA members voted to amend the bylaws to increase number of voting members on the Committee on Publications from six to nine. The committee will gradually increase by one member per year for three years until the full nine member committee is in place.

In addition, elections were conducted for ASA’s fifty-two sections; of these, eleven sections voted to amend their bylaws, one increased its dues and one gauged membership support for a change in its award policies.

The turnout rate for this year’s election was 48.3 percent, the third highest in 13 years. The cost of the election was $26,047, which is the lowest in past 17 years.

B. Year-End (2014) and Current (2015) Financials

The Secretary reviewed the 2014 year-end figures, noting that both revenues and expenses came in under budget. In the Member Dues and Member Journals categories, revenues were lower by $130,100 and $21,500, respectively. Publication Sales revenues were lower, primarily from Job Bank listings, the ASA Style Guide, and Online Document Delivery. While expenses for the Annual Meeting were $86,000 higher than budgeted, other areas came in under budget, which helped bring total expenses in line with the budget.

Projections for 2015 indicate there is likely to be a year-end deficit of approximately $116,000 if dues revenues continue to decline. The President commented that the membership drop will become worrisome if it continues, but a long-term overview of membership shows that it has risen and fallen at varying intervals since the 1970s.
The Secretary reported that registration for the 2015 Annual Meeting is at 5,682, which ranks 4th highest. The highest participation in the conference continues to occur when ASA meets in major cities such as San Francisco, New York City, and Chicago.

(1). Extra pages for 2015 *Sociological Methodology*

In May, *Sociological Methodology (SM)* editor Tim Liao submitted a request for 40 additional pages for the 2015 volume of *SM*. This volume is the final of Liao’s editorship and, as an annual publication, adding to the incoming editor’s transitional backlog was not viewed as a reasonable alternative.

As the volume was far into the production process, the request was considered by Jennifer Barber on behalf of the Committee on Publications, and formally approved by Secretary Mary Romero on behalf of the Executive Office and Budget Committee and ASA Council under her ASA Bylaws authority to act when they are not in session. EOB affirmed this decision at its July meeting and recommended that Council also do so.

**MOTION:** To approve the action of the Secretary in approving additional pages for *SM*. Carried (no opposed)

C. Journal Subscription Rates for 2016

ASA’s publishing partners (SAGE and Wiley-Blackwell), as a matter of contract, require approval of annual rates for journal subscriptions prior to EOB’s meeting in order to include ASA journals in their marketing materials to libraries for early renewal. SAGE publishes all ASA journals except the section journal *City and Community* (which is published by Wiley). Subscription rates for 2016 for ASA journals (except for *Contexts*) will increase 5 percent as previously negotiated as part of the financial terms forming the basis for the ASA/SAGE contract renewal for 2015-2019.

*Contexts* and the two section journals published by SAGE (*Society and Mental Health* and *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*) will fall under SAGE’s standard six percent increase for institutional subscriptions 2016.

ASA Secretary Mary Romero reported that she had approved the 2016 rates on behalf of EOB and Council (a process previously confirmed as appropriate and acceptable by EOB and Council). EOB affirmed this action at its July meeting.

**MOTION:** To approve the action of the Secretary in approving subscription rates for 2016. Carried (no opposed).

D. ASA Investments and Reserves

ASA’s long term investments had a positive overall performance for the five months ending May 31, 2015. Net gains through May 31, 2015, put the account at an approximate 3.6 percent total gain for the five month period (8.8% annualized).
E. 2014 Annual Report

Copies of the 2014 Annual Report were distributed to all Council members. It was noted that fewer copies were printed this time. All annual reports continue to be available online.

4. Report of the Audit Committee

A. Approval of the 2014 ASA Financials (Auditor’s Report)

The Secretary reported that the auditors found the financial statements to fairly present the financial position, change in net assets, and cash flows of the Association in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. At its meeting on July 14, 2015, the Audit Committee (EOB) recommended that Council accept the 2014 audited financials.

**MOTION:** Council accepts the 2014 audited financials. Carried (no opposed).

B. Internal Control Policies

Some recommendations for internal control policies occasionally accompany the annual audit. The comment provided with the 2014 audit noted that ASA’s Accounting Department reconciles the monthly bank statements to the general ledger and recommended that the reconciliations be reviewed by the Executive Officer to ensure that the reconciliation was performed properly and to investigate any unusual reconciling items. Evidence of such review should be indicated by the Executive Officer’s signature on the reconciliation.

Romero informed Council that the Audit Committee recommended acceptance of this improvement to accounting processes and operations.

**MOTION:** To accept the recommendation made by the Audit Committee. Carried (no opposed).

C. Auditor for 2015

The Secretary relayed EOB’s recommendation to appoint the firm of Gelman, Rosenberg & Freedman as the auditor for 2015. The fee estimate for the audit is $22,500, plus out of pocket costs (approx. $500).

In response to a question about how long ASA has used this company, Finance Director Les Briggs indicated that 2015 would be the fourth year and noted that best practices in the accounting world are to rotate the auditing partner or get a new firm every five years. Briggs affirmed that no conflicts of interest exist between the accounting firm and ASA staff.

**MOTION:** To approve Gelman, Rosenberg & Freedman as the auditor for 2015 Carried (none opposed).
5. Reports of Council Subcommittees and Working Groups

A. Working Group on Annual Meeting Timing and Cost Interim Report

Council Member Stephanie Bohon reminded Council that this Working Group was appointed after the previous Council meeting in response to an online petition created by a number of ASA members. The Group met in May to discuss the issues raised by the petition and drew three conclusions: (1) members are not always aware of how ASA selects sites; (2) meeting earlier in August does not necessarily solve the problem of school start dates for those with children, because some schools start as early as August 1; and (3) the most expensive meeting sites are also the most popular, as evidenced by registration (thus, while some members are excluded, others are included).

To attempt to resolve these complications, the Group agreed on several steps. The first was to write an article for *Footnotes* explaining the current site selection process; that article appeared in the July/August issue and some positive feedback has been received from ASA members.

The second step was to create a list of factors that influence decisions to attend the meetings and poll members to see how these factors affect their attendance decisions. Work on developing a survey is currently underway; the hope is to roll out the survey in October.

Based on the results of upcoming poll, the Working Group expects to make a recommendation to Council about whether or not (and how) to revise Council policy to broaden the range of meeting sites and dates.

Noting that the Working Group has just barely begun, the President suggested that it was not yet time to have a substantive discussion about what to do, though comments and questions were welcome. One suggestion was to have survey research experts look at the survey in addition to working with staff; Bohon noted that membership of the working group included some research experts. Another suggestion was for the survey to include questions about whether members received subsidies from their institutions to attend the meeting.

(1). Research data on Annual Meeting registration by dues category

England indicated that a question came up at the last Council meeting about trends in registration and membership by dues categories, so ASA Research Director John Curtis did an analysis of the available data.

Curtis noted that the main point was to get at whether attendance at the Annual Meeting has shifted toward higher income members of the association. The long-term trend has been one of generally increasing Annual Meeting attendance, despite swings in membership levels, as more meeting attendees have become actively engaged in meeting participation. This undoubtedly reflects the growing importance of Annual Meeting presentations as “résumé enhancers” in a challenging professional employment market, as well as increasingly scarce travel support from colleges, universities, and other organizations, often contingent on the attendee being listed on the program.
In terms of total membership, 2003 was a relatively low year during an upswing, 2007 is the peak year, and 2014 was a down year as part of a multi-year decline. The proportions for the three years are consistent: a majority of attendees are regular or associate members, and about one third are students. Based on this data, it appears that there is no reason to be unduly concerned about meeting attendance.

It was suggested that the Working Group could consider what further analysis of Annual Meeting attendance data would be useful in its deliberations.


Past President Annette Lareau provided some background on creation of this task force when she was president-elect. A primary goal was to look at how to increase the contribution of sociologists to issues in the news. The task force developed several subcommittees to look at various areas of social media, including an advisory group to look at the meeting app. A new app debuted at this year’s Annual Meeting and received a lot of positive feedback. The advisory group is conducting a short survey about the new app, and Lareau encouraged Council members to respond to the survey.

The four main subcommittees of the task force are focused on the ASA website, standards and evaluations of social media efforts/activities, a toolkit of resources about using social media, and promotion of sociological research.

The website subcommittee is based in DC and chaired by Mohamed Bashir (Pew Research Center). The new site is under creation and should be unveiled sometime in the spring. One major impetus has been to ensure that the ASA website is mobile-friendly, which should be helpful to younger scholars and possibly increase membership.

The standards and evaluation subcommittee is chaired by Council Member Leslie McCall. The charge to that group is to think about how social media efforts/activities can count toward merit, promotion, and tenure. A report should be coming to Council at its winter meeting. Rather than telling departments what to do this regard, the subcommittee is developing rationales for why a department might want to consider giving credit for some social media activity, and how it might be done. McCall indicated that the intent is to provide an educational tool to talk about what is going on and what the considerations are, which is important because there is a potential generation gap around this.

The toolkit subcommittee, chaired by Council Member Tina Fetner, is developing profiles of different paths experiences with using social media professionally. Fetner commented that there are many paths to using social media in a variety of different ways. “This is how I did it” is the general theme behind the documents being prepared. Given how quickly technology changes, the subcommittee does not want to develop “how-to’s” that will soon be outdated. A report is expected to be available for the winter meeting, and the hope is that these resources can be posted on the ASA website.
Matt Wray, the co-chair of the task force, chairs the subcommittee on promotion of sociological research. Among other things, the subcommittee is looking at starting a line for sociological papers in the Social Science Research Network (SSRN). Another area of endeavor is looking at how the association might be more proactive in promoting sociological research, beyond what is being done for articles in ASA journals.

Lareau invited Council members to share their comments or thoughts about the work of the task force and its subcommittee. One concern was raised that if the task force encourages people to use social media professionally, it should provide information about the risks of doing so. In the past few months, for example, some young African American sociologists have come under considerable attack when using social media.

Fetner noted that the toolkit subcommittee had talked about this issue and been in touch with people who have experienced such issues. As a result, the subcommittee is looking at including some narrative about the kinds of things that can happen, though it is aware of the need to be careful about offering advice that could be construed in legal situation. McCall commented that the standard and evaluation subcommittee had also talked a lot about this in terms of what kind of advice should be given to junior faculty. In general, social media attacks have exposed a lack of institutional support for faculty in vulnerable positions.

Lareau closed the task force report by noting concerns about the future of Contexts. This ASA magazine is beautiful and very useful in teaching, but it is not making headway on increasing the visibility of sociology in the public eye. Contexts is currently funded under a traditional academic publishing model that limits the editors’ ability to spread the content more widely.

Since Contexts is under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Publications, not a part of the task force’s mandate, Secretary Romero segued to a part of the Committee on Publications’ report that was originally scheduled for the following day about Contexts. She noted that the original business plan developed in 2000-01 (when Contexts was created) anticipated sufficient income generated by library subscriptions for the magazine to both become self-sustaining in ten years and to have a subscriber base beyond academics. This level of library subscriptions was never realized. As a result, the journal publishing model does fit the broader readership goals of the Association for Contexts. Romero presented a recommendation from the Committee on Publications, endorsed by the Committee on the Executive Office and Budget, to establish a joint committee to explore alternate publishing models for Contexts in the future.

Council members inquired about what alternative models for the magazine might be, and what exactly needed to be done in different ways. Romero indicated that wider dissemination of the magazine’s content beyond students and sociologists is desired. The editors have raised various ideas for discussion, including eliminating the print version of the magazine and putting all content freely on the web. But, Romero indicated, if editorial costs remain the same and there is no revenue from subscriptions, the question remains of where the money will come from to support the editorial function and web publication. That is the core dilemma for any non-subscription based model.
Romero said that the original impetus for Council underwriting *Contexts* start-up ($800,000) was not just to publish a magazine for sociologists and classroom use. It was to present sociology to the broader public in an accessible way. There was agreement then, and perhaps even more now, that it is extremely important to increase the visibility of sociology to the general public. But the original business model assumed library subscriptions would be sufficient once the ASA start-up subvention was used. They were not at the beginning or since.

In response to a question about the current publishing contract for *Contexts*, Publications and Membership Director Karen Gray Edwards informed Council that the contract with SAGE was to expire at the end of 2015, but the Executive Office worked out a continuing extension so that the Committee on Publication can look at other publishing models. The *Contexts* contract is separate from the major contract with SAGE for ASA journals because of the timing of *Contexts’* previous contract with the University of California Press.

One challenge Edwards noted that must be overcome is that ASA and the editors have not found any other obvious new publishing models that might suit *Contexts*. Most successful magazine publishing models rely on subscription income or advertising revenue, or a combination of both. An important element affecting the situation is the significant change in technology since the magazine was started. There is more going on with the *Contexts* website now than what appears in each printed issue.

Consensus was reached that using a working group to dig more deeply into this matter would combine the experience and expertise from several different committees.

**MOTION:** To establish a joint committee consisting of two members of Council, the Committee on Publications, the Task Force on Engaging Sociology, the ASA Secretary, the editors of *Contexts*, and appropriate Executive Office staff to explore alternate models for producing *Contexts* that would be revenue neutral. Carried (no opposed).

Council then took a short break at 3:45pm – 4:00pm, at which point Past President Lareau departed.

**7. Report of the Committee on Awards**

The President commented that the awards ceremony went beautifully this year. No music came on; no one went over time limit. Staff had two layers of backup ready, but they were not needed. Kudos was given to ASA Governance staff for their work on coordinating the ceremony.

Council Member Jane Sell, chair of the Committee on Awards (COA) presented the committee’s report. During the Annual Meeting, COA meets first with chairs of the award selection committees, then afterwards on its own. Several award chairs felt that the selection committees are not getting enough nominations, so COA brainstormed on ways to improve the flow, including having outgoing chairs contact sociology department heads to encourage
nominations. In some cases, there is misperception about the nomination process. For example, the teaching award application is believed to require more than is actually required.

Selection committee chairs felt they often did not receive enough information from previous chairs. A short questionnaire could be developed about measures committees have taken to create a diverse pool of nominations, along with estimates of the success of those measures. This could provide a basis of making recommendations for the next committee.

COA developed a list of best practices in February and added to the list in August. One item is the specification that there is no requirement that every award be given every year. In other words, there is no penalty for not giving an award.

One somewhat complicated issue was brought to Council’s attention. The Dissertation Award Selection Committee recommended to the COA that a winning dissertation be made publicly available in the year that it receives the award. It was noted that it would be good for students to see what kind of dissertation wins an award.

There are different viewpoints from publishers regarding what “publicly available” means, and universities/colleges have differing policies about embargoing dissertations at the request of the candidate. A dissertation that might be turned into a book is a project that could be worked on for several years, and publishers are usually not interested in material that is already available in a library or archive. At issue is what is in the best interests of the scholars, and what requirements presses may have.

Some Council members expressed uncertainty about publishers requiring dissertations to be embargoed, while other Council members affirmed that there are a number of presses that require dissertations be embargoed in order to be eligible for publication. There was agreement that the COA should investigate the issues surrounding the request from the Dissertation Award committee and prepare a recommendation for Council’s consideration at its next meeting.

MOTION: To ask the Committee on Awards to do some fact finding about issues surrounding making an award-receiving dissertation publicly available, and prepare recommendation for Council to review at its March meeting.
Carried (no opposed).

8. Report of the Executive Officer

A. Task Force on Sociology and Global Climate Change

Academic and Professional Affairs Director Margaret Weigers Vitullo, who served as the staff liaison to the task force, provided a brief summary of the background and work of the task force. In February 2010, Council established the Task Force on Sociology and Global Climate Change and charged it with producing a report that would apply a sociological analysis to the issue of climate change and make a series of public policy recommendations based on that
analysis. Task Force Chair Riley Dunlap (Oklahoma State University) and Task Force Associate Chair Robert Brulle (Drexel University), along with the nine other members of the Task Force Steering Committee and 37 contributing authors, produced a thirteen chapter edited volume published by Oxford University Press (OUP). *Climate Change and Society: Sociological Perspectives* was released during the ASA 2015 Annual Meeting in Chicago.

The volume received advance praise from Naomi Klein and Bill McKibben, and OUP sold all copies that were brought to its exhibit book for the Annual Meeting. The book was scheduled to release on Amazon in September. The soft cover edition will be available in the ASA bookstore, where members will receive a 20 percent discount.

In light of the quality of this volume and the remarkable accomplishments of the Task Force and its Chair and Associate Chair, APAP Director Vitullo presented a recommendation that Council accept the volume as the final report of the Task Force on Sociology and Global Climate Change and affirm a statement of appreciation for the excellent work of the task force. It was noted that Past President Erik Olin Wright and Past Vice President Doug McAdam had also written strong statements of support for the volume.

**MOTION:** The Council of the American Sociological Association expresses its deepest appreciation to the Chair of the Task Force on Sociology and Global Climate Change, Riley E. Dunlap, and Associate Chair, Robert J. Brulle, as well as each of the Task Force members and contributors for their dedication, determination, and thoughtfulness in demonstrating so effectively how sociological perspectives and scholarship inform and advance our understandings of the causes, consequences, and potential responses to global climate change. *Climate Change and Society: Sociological Perspectives* (Oxford, 2015) is a remarkable scholarly achievement and the first of its kind for an ASA Task Force. This volume and your efforts make manifest the core mission of the American Sociological Association to advance sociology as a scientific discipline and profession serving the public good. Carried (no opposed, one abstention).

B. Request from the Section on Racial & Ethnic Minorities

Sociologists at Duke University, who were seeking funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for a five-year grant to develop a mentoring program for tenure-track sociology faculty, requested ASA support for their proposal. The Duke team proposed to draw on ASA, especially ASA’s very active Section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities (SREM), because of the long history of ASA’s Minority Fellowship Program (MFP), the association’s status as a founding member of the multi-disciplinary Collaborative for Enhancing Diversity in Science (CEDS), and ASA’s current NSF-funded research grant comparing PhD career trajectories for sociology and economics.

Minority and Student Affairs Program Director Jean Shin indicated that SREM was viewed as a good source for mentors for the proposed program. Since sections are not independent
entities, Council’s authorization was sought for SREM’s participation in the proposed program. Following some discussion about parameters of collaboration, Council reached agreement about the request.

**MOTION:** If the grant proposal to the National Science Foundation from the Samuel DuBois Cook Center on Social Equity at Duke University for a “Mentoring Program for Greater Inclusion in Sociology” is funded, the ASA Council gives its approval for the Section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities to collaborate in the work of selecting mentors. Carried (no opposed, 1 abstention).

C. Updates:


Copies of the Vantage Point column in July/August issue of *Footnotes* were provided for reference. ASA grant application for the digitizing the paper records was approved by NSF, and work is underway. Hillsman expressed gratitude to NSF for funding and to members who contributed funds to help with scanning.

(2). NSF Budget and Responses to Congressional Attacks

Public Affairs and Public Information (PAPI) Director Brad Smith noted that May and June of this year were difficult months for the social and behavioral sciences in the U.S. House of Representatives. First the House approved the *America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2015* (H.R. 1806) and then it approved the Fiscal year 2016 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) spending bill. Both seek to drastically undermine funding for the social and behavioral sciences within National Science Foundation (NSF).

It was noted that the willingness of some Republicans to vote no on the COMPETES bill was largely due to the pressure put on them by their constituents. In response to an email by ASA President Paula England, ASA members sent more than 2,000 letters to the House of Representatives in opposition to this bill. In addition to ASA’s efforts, other science societies urged their members to write letters in opposition. Hillsman commented that it was exciting to have such an outstanding response from the membership at the grassroots level.

With the approach of the Congressional recess in August, it became all but certain that a continuing resolution (CR) would be enacted to push work on the fiscal year (FY) 2016 appropriations bills back into the fall.

(3). ASA Opportunities in Retirement Network (ORN)

Edwards reported that 2015 was the first year for ORN to have a full program at the Annual Meeting. This included a workshop on before/after retirement, a paper session on retirement issues, and a combined lecture/business meeting/reception. Session attendance was in the range of 20-40 people. The lecture was recorded; a link will be posted soon as the ASA website.
(4). First Generation College Sociologists in the ASA Membership

Before Research Director Curtis provided highlights of the report, the Executive Officer pointed out that this issue was raised by Monica Prasad when during her term as a Council Member-at-Large. The Council-authorized sample survey of ASA members was done in February and March, 2015. The survey included Regular, Student, and Associate members and achieved a 61 percent response rate.

Curtis reported that three definitions of “first generation college student” were created, based on parental education: Neither parent completed a college degree of any kind (36.8 percent), parents did not attend a four-year college or university (27.2 percent), and parents had no educational attainment beyond high school (21.4 percent). The first definition was used in further analysis, which grouped together regular and associate ASA members, since their age and educational profiles are similar. Highlighted results were:

- Among regular and associate ASA members, 41 percent were first-generation college students. Among graduate student members, 30 percent were first-generation.
- First-generation college students are more racially and ethnically diverse than non-first generation members, and that holds across member categories. Women are less well represented among first-generation college students.
- Among regular and associate members, first-generation college students are somewhat older.
- Although a majority of regular and associate members are employed as full-time faculty members, the proportion among first-generation college students is lower. Focusing on the respondents employed in academia, there is a slightly larger proportion of community college faculty members among the first-generation college members.

The survey included questions regarding the influence of other family members and non-relatives as college role models. Curtis indicated that those items would be analyzed in the near future and reminded Council that it was important to bear in mind that the survey was limited to ASA members, who are not representative of all sociologists.

D. Press Results from the Annual Meeting

PAPI Director Smith reported that highlights of media coverage were moved into a Google collection this year. That url was linked to the meeting app and the 2015 Annual Meeting page on the website. Nearly 600 news articles were posted. The most recent activities were a 5-minute segment on CBS This Morning and several radio interviews. Smith noted that a study about mass shooters was helping change the conversation in the media. Foreign language coverage included Japan, Russia, Finland, Ghana, and more.

Adjournment

President England brought the meeting to a close by expressing appreciation for the outgoing officers and Council members: Annette Lareau, Brian Powell, Dina Okamoto, Jane Sell, Kelly Joyce, and Stephanie Bohon.
Noting that Executive Officer Hillsman would be retiring in May, Secretary Romero invited Council members to toast Hillsman’s contributions to the Association and the discipline during her tenure.

President England then adjourned the last meeting of the 2014-2015 ASA Council at 5:30pm on Tuesday, August 25, 2015.