

Midwest Sociological Society Student Issues Committee

Meeting Report

Report respectfully submitted by Meggan Lee, 2017 co-chair, in Jessica Hausauer's absence

Committee Members at the 2017 meeting: Meggan Lee (Student Issues Committee Co-Chair, Student Director), Jacob Absalon (19), Ryan Ceresola (18), Kari Gentzler (20), Jackie Henke (17), Lisa Kruse (19), Derek Lehman (19), Rae McDonald (20), Rebecca Morrow (20), Dawn Norris (18), Zach Rubin (19) Ex-Officio: Phyllis Baker (President-Elect, Ex-Officio) Guest: Marlynn May (President-Elect-Elect)

The Student Issues Committee met in Milwaukee at the MSS annual meeting on Friday, March 31 from 2:45-4:15 pm. The committee discussed a number a number of topics pertaining to the annual meeting as well as the committee going forward.

❖ Update on student events at the annual meeting

The Student Issues Committee as well as the Program Committee organized and sponsored a number of activities at the 2017 annual meeting in order to promote student issues, support student members, and work toward the strategic plan of the organization.

- 1) Student Suite – Again this year, the committee sponsored a Student Hospitality Suite for graduate and undergraduate student members who attend the meeting. There were roughly 60 students who came into the suite. We held open hours before the sessions began each morning, during midday, and again in the evening. In the suite, we were able to informally survey students about what they need or would like from MSS. There are a number of suggestion ranging from mentorship and child care to massages in the student suite. The committee will work on a list of priorities to discuss at the Fall board meeting.
- 2) Welcome Reception – The Committee hosted a table at the welcome reception the first night of the conference. The Student Directors were able to talk with both undergraduate and graduate students about their plans and any nerves they were having about the meeting. It was also a great opportunity for students to meet each other.
- 3) Session – The committee put together two sessions for the conference. One was for graduate students pertaining to the job market. The other was a panel where undergraduate students gave advice to Sociology Instructors. Both sessions were well attended. The committee also co-sponsored a film screening of *First Generation*.
- 4) Student Travel Grants – The SIC oversaw the award of travel grants of \$100 to 82 MSS student members and conference attendees.

❖ Committee Work for the 2018 Meeting

The SIC recommends that we continue to organize, facilitate, and support the events and initiatives from this 2017 meeting (as discussed above). Additional events or issues that we would like to consider/raise to the MSS board to consider for the next meeting include:

- 1) The Student Travel Grant – Over the last two years we have had more money allotted for the travel grant than students that actually applied for the grant. There were over 60 grants that were not given out this year due to lack of applications. The committee will work on a

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- proposal on how to handle these grants going forward.
- 2) The SIC would like to formally create a liaison position that will be a member of both the SIC as well as the minority scholars committee to ensure a diverse voice is heard on both committees. The Student Directors will work with the Chair of Minority Scholar.
 - 3) Support for Queer Students – After conversations with student members, it was noted that queer students are having trouble at their home institutions after the election. The SIC will be creating a letter of support for these students that will communicate that MSS is committed to inclusion, diversity, and supporting these students. We will bring this to the Fall Board meeting to discuss how to best move forward.
 - 4) Sessions – With the help of Phyllis Baker and Marlynn May, the committee has come up with a number of sessions that they would like to offer at the 2018 meeting. These include but are not limited to work/life balance, student parents, “speed dating” graduate school session for undergraduates, publishing workshop, labor unions, restricted data, the professionalization of graduate students. We will continue to discuss and plan these over the year.
 - 5) Communication – The SIC will be working on a better way to communicate with student members. This year with the Board’s permission, we were able to create a closed facebook group for student members. To date, this group only has 16 members. We will look at a number of different avenues for communications and look forward to working with the new Media Editor.
 - 6) Student Suite – The SIC will be working on new possibilities for the student suite. We would like to hold dialogues or “conversations” in the space next year so students can gather to talk about issues or subject areas that pertain to them. The committee will create a list and gather volunteers to host each session. We would also like to host practice sessions for students who are nervous about their presentations.
 - 7) The Student Directors will be working with the Executive Director (Jennifer Talarico) and the At-Large Director (Ted Thornhill) on creating a t-shirt design competition for the 2018 annual meeting. Students will compete to create the newest MSS t-shirt that will be sold at the annual meeting. We will have more to discuss at the Fall Board meeting regarding logistics.

❖ **Nominations for new members:**

The SIC would like to thank committee members Jackie Henke, Crystal Miller, and Neil Quisenberry whose terms are ending this year.

The Committee requests nominations for additional members who are interested in student-related issues and are active in MSS. Please send nominations to Meggan J Lee at mlee201@illinois.edu or Jessica Hausauer at jahausau@syr.edu.

The committee would also like to congratulate Student Director, Erin Hoekstra on her new baby, Raisa Elizabeth.