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President's Report

The SSWR Board of Directors, with its four newly-elected members Von Nebbitt, Emily McCave, Lambert Maguire, and Alberta Ellett, met on March 21 and 22, 2008 in Chicago. It was my first meeting as president. In keeping with the aim of increasing communication between the SSWR Board of Directors and its members, we are printing this somewhat abbreviated newsletter to ensure that you are apprised of recent board activities and to elicit your feedback.

In the following pages, we discuss progress on two major issues, namely SSWR's involvement with unification of social work professional organizations and the e-journal that we are helping to launch. Following that is a recapitulation of the awards that SSWR confers to members during its annual meeting and a request for nominations. Last, but certainly not least, you will find a report of SSWR activities for doctoral students by Emily McCave, our student representative, followed by Sue Pearlmutter's report of the most recent arm of our strategic planning.



Unification & Unity

BYLAWS VOTE RESULTS

The SSWR Bylaws vote concluded May 1, 2008. Both revisions to the bylaws were approved by the membership. Therefore, the standing Committee on Publications will be established and the staggered 3-year terms of the board members-at-large will be implemented.

See Page 5...

A meeting to discuss possible unification of the social work profession was held on June 18 and 19, 2007 at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin. Organized by CSWE, the meeting was attended by representatives from ten social work professional organizations (CSWE, NASW, SSWR, the Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work, National Association of Deans and Directors, the Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors, the Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research, the Association of Social Work Boards, the Action Network for Social Work Education and Research, and the St. Louis Group). A Wingspread Resolution on Social Work Unification (see next page) was endorsed by all present, with the exception of two of the three SSWR representatives, who abstained.



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 Unification & Unity *Continued*

Wingspread Resolution on Social Work Unification

Leaders of 10 professional social work organizations convened at Wingspread to address the future of the profession. Participants signed a resolution: We resolve to create a unified profession with one social work organization by 2012. This historic agreement sets the stage for an organizational structure inclusive of all sectors of social work. It reflects the diversity of our profession and addresses the concerns of the United States and the global society. The social work profession requires a strong unified voice to enhance its ability to serve, to educate, to develop research and to influence social service, social policy and social change. The challenges of the 21st century, identified by the Social Work Congress of 2005, compel a vibrant, proactive, nimble, flexible organizational structure that reflects collective vision and ensures impact. A transition team will address implementation issues and will be guided by the Leadership Roundtable with ongoing input from constituents over the next five years.



The three SSWR representatives reported on the Wingspread meeting to the SSWR Board of Directors. The board decided to solicit the opinions of its members through a blog on the SSWR Bulletin Board entitled "Unification of the Social Work Profession" that was launched on December 20, 2007 and a Town Hall meeting to be held at its 2008 annual conference.

Although the blog has yet to generate a flurry of activity (there have been seven responses to date), the Town Hall meeting, which was organized by board member Allen Rubin and held on January 19, 2008, was very well attended. After short presentations by a panel of SSWR board and regular members, a number of members aired their views from the floor. Although I hesitate to try to capture the comments, I think it is safe to say that they were

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2008-2009

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Unification & Unity Continued

two pronged. Many members were concerned that SSWR's strengths and gains would be lost if all social work organizations merged to form one organization. They cited the successful annual conference as an example. In the same vein, others cited a concern that the profession's research agenda would be diluted if SSWR were dissolved into one large professional organization. The second prong of comments emphasized a need for greater communication among, and shared mission for, the social work professional organizations. There was a concern that SSWR was elitist and divorced from social work practice. Members spoke of the need for social work practitioners and researchers to work together to strengthen the profession.

At its most recent meeting, the SSWR Board of Directors revisited the issue of unification. Ricky Fortune, past president of the organization and its representative to the transition team for unification, report-

ed that the efforts to merge into one organization have slowed somewhat, because of growing realization of what dissolving some organizations would entail. Based on comments made by members at the Town Meeting, the board discussed ways of increasing its connections with other organizations, whether or not we proceed with unification. Board members agreed that dissolving SSWR would require a vote of the membership.

We urge SSWR members to use the blog, which can be found on the SSWR Web site, <http://www.sswr.org/blog.php>, to present their views on unification as well as ideas on how to achieve unity among social work education, research, and practice. This clearly is a goal for SSWR members. Please take the opportunity to communicate with SSWR board members so that SSWR can be a leader in efforts to achieve unity and will continue to be a membership organization.



Publications

The President's Task Force on Publications presented its report recently. Please take the time to review the report, which can be found on the SSWR Web site, <http://www.sswr.org/>. We appreciate the efforts of the almost 60 members who took part in the task force, especially Jeff Jensen, who chaired the group.

As announced at the 2008 annual conference, SSWR will be spearheading the launch of an electronic journal to be called the Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research. Members recently received an announcement requesting their vote on a possible bylaws change that would allow the establishment of a new standing committee, the Committee on Publications, which would advise and guide the new journal. This committee would serve several purposes, including selecting an editor for the journal, who would receive a modest stipend, and an editori-



al board, and setting policy for the new journal. As described in the proposed bylaws change, the Committee on Publications would be comprised of five members, a board member chair appointed by the President and no more than one other board member. The SSWR President serves as ex-officio on all standing committees.

Many decisions would have to be made on the journals format and functioning, such as length of articles and whether to post works in progress. We welcome members' feedback and opinions on the E-Journal blog on the SSWR Bulletin Board.



Awards



The bylaws state that “the Society provides formal recognition of significant contributions to social work-relevant research.” To achieve that aim, SSWR presents a number of awards aimed at members at various career stages, as follows:

THE DEBORAH K. PADGETT EARLY CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD- is to recognize individuals who in their early careers have done innovative work and are making a notable influence in their field and in the profession and goes to a member who is three to six years post PhD.

DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS- of which two are awarded per year, recognize students who are writing their doctoral dissertations. Nomination requires a letter of agreement, a brief synopsis, and the approved dissertation proposal.

THE DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT AWARD- recognizes the cumulative career of an established social work researcher in terms of the quality of scholarship and its overall impact.

THE OUTSTANDING SOCIAL WORK DOCTORAL DISSERTATION AWARD - recognizes completed dissertations exemplifying high standards in social work research and scholarship.

We strongly urge SSWR members to nominate individuals for the above awards to ensure that we recognize researchers from all backgrounds, parts of the country, settings, etc.



Report from SSWR's Student Representative



As the newly elected doctoral student representative from The University of Kansas, I would like to say a warm "Hello!" to all doctoral students in SSWR. I am fortunate to be in this position and am excited to inform you about all SSWR activities geared specifically towards meeting the needs of doctoral students. I hope you will spread the word to your fellow graduate students who have yet to join SSWR so they too may enjoy the many benefits of membership.

blog on the SSWR website solely for doctoral students. Here you will be able to post questions and connect with other doctoral students around the country. I will be monitoring the blog, so you can also post questions to me as your representative. Please be on the lookout this summer for an email I will be sending to all doctoral student SSWR members soliciting your feedback on topics you would like to see presented at next year's Doctoral Student Panel at the annual conference. I will also take nominations for presenters. I look forward hearing from you and I appreciate the opportunity to serve your interests.

Please feel free to contact me at emccave@ku.edu with any questions or comments about SSWR related matters. Also, I would like to remind all doctoral students about the student resource page on the SSWR website. Please check it out, as Bridget Weller-your past representative-worked hard to make it a site worth going to! I am excited to announce that there will be a new





Report on Strategic Planning



At its spring board meeting, SSWR board members engaged in a strategic planning process. We reviewed progress on the past strategic plan, explored issues currently facing the organization, and set some priorities for the next three years. The board re-confirmed the significance of the annual conference for the future of SSWR. Through a conference work group, we will examine the future of the conference in light of its accomplishments and existing focus. In addition, we want to expand our focus on doctoral students, beyond the conference panel and reception, to include other mechanisms and opportunities for skill building.

The Board recognized its commitment to the online journal that was made late in 2007. It reiterated its attention to membership retention and growth and to maintaining close relationships with other social work entities. Other ongoing efforts will be in the area of increasing administrative capacity.

We determined that setting two new priority areas for the coming years would make sense and fit with the capacity of the organization. We determined that we would work to retain and increase support for minority scholars/researchers and for culturally competent research. The second priority area will include pursuing high quality, well funded, social-work relevant research. There were several components of these priority areas. Board members agreed to develop two work groups to begin addressing the priority areas and to request participation from non-board members as well. We will continue to keep the membership apprised of the progress of the implementation of the strategic plan.




SSWR BYLAW REVISIONS

The SSWR Board of Directors recommended revisions to Article IV and Article V of the SSWR Bylaws
<http://www.sswr.org/bylaws.php>

The revisions were submitted to a vote of the SSWR members. The vote concluded May 1, 2008 and both revisions were approved by the membership.

ARTICLE IV

Section 1. The Board of Directors shall consist of (a) the officers of the Society and (b) seven members-at-large. One member-at-large serves as student member and is elected for two years. Six are elected for staggered three-year terms, with two members elected each year. All members shall have voting privileges.

ARTICLE V

Section 6. The Committee on Publications will consist of at least five members of the Society. It will be chaired by a member of the Board of Directors and will include no more than one other member of the Board.





Society for Social Work and Research
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With over 1200 members, the society....

- *encourages the design, implementation and dissemination of high quality research that addresses critical social practice and social policy issues;*
- *fosters a support network among researchers conducting research on social work practice and social policy in the United States and around the world;*
- *provides learning opportunities to improve the conduct of social work-relevant research and its application;*
- *endorses practices and policies grounded in the best available evidence;*
- *promotes increased research funding and training programs for social workers;*
- *provides formal recognition of significant contributions to social work-relevant research; and*
- *seeks active partnerships with other social work and research-related organizations to accomplish all of the above*

Address changes and membership inquiries should be directed to:

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