

Membership committee report 2019-2020

We have had a membership/outreach committee for several years, which has functioned as a subcommittee of the executive. This past year, I was chair/convenor. Other members were Megan Aiken, Radhika Desai, Jamie Magnusson, Debbie Dergousoff, Cheryl Hewitt, Sandra Rein and Jamie Lawson.

The committee has not had formal status, but its basic mandate is to try to retain current members and recruit new ones, so that we can expand our activities and impact. To that end, we tried to implement a three-stage initiative: 1/ reach out to existing and lapsed members, encouraging them to renew/rejoin, 2/ reach out, through kindred groups and individuals, to potential new members, 3/ begin a process of establishing chapters that could expand both membership and activities in local and extra-local (e.g. online) contexts. We implemented the first stage last fall and in January, through personally-addressed emails. We began implementing the outreach to potential new members in February, but the pandemic led us to suspend that effort – since a big part of the appeal emphasized our very promising Conference, which had to be cancelled. The third piece, establishing chapter and affiliates, is an issue we want to discuss later at this meeting.

We face real challenges in retaining and growing our membership, particularly with cancellation of Congress this year and doubts about next year's Congress taking place. Many SSS members renew their affiliations at Congress. We also feel that the Society can and should be engaged more with activist communities and movements. The Executive is proposing a constitutional amendment to create a Membership Secretary who will be charged with leading these efforts. I am really happy that Megan Aiken has agreed to let her name stand for this position, if the amendment passes.

Bill Carroll

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