

# Membership Secretary Report, 2021 for Society for Socialist Studies GAMM

**Prepared By:** Megan Aiken, Membership Secretary

**Email:** [membershipsocialiststudies@gmail.com](mailto:membershipsocialiststudies@gmail.com)

## Background

- The Membership Secretary position was officially created at the 2020 GAMM, I was elected to serve a 2-year term.
- The Constitution defines the position in section 7(d):

The Membership Secretary shall convene and chair a committee, open to all members in good standing and appointed by the Executive, tasked with maintaining and updating the membership list; retaining, expanding and diversifying membership; and working to stabilise and increase membership and donation revenues. The Membership Secretary and sub-committee will ensure compliance with all relevant privacy legislation and protection of members' data. The Membership Secretary will report to the Executive on the activities of the sub-committee and provide an annual report to the General Assembly Membership meeting.

## Role-in-Practice

- In practice, the role of Membership Secretary has included:
  1. Attending monthly meetings of the SSS Executive.
  2. Convening and chairing monthly meetings of the Membership Committee, which this year consisted of Radhika Desai, William Carroll, David Huxtable, and Sabra Rezaei, to discuss membership expansion efforts and plan events.
  3. Acting on its decisions.

## What We Accomplished

1. Created Local Chapters and Affiliates forms and revamped of membership section of the website, which is an ongoing process.
2. Coordinated and logistics management of online events.

3. Assisted with social media posting.

### **Membership Growth and Retention**

4. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, membership typically grew through our annual conference. In person conferences were prevented last year by Covid and this year by our solidarity with the BCSA, though we have gone ahead with a minimum programme. In light of these difficulties, the executive decided to keep up SSS activities by programming throughout the year to focus attention to the Society.
5. We also decided to compile contact information from university departments, student groups and associations, and civil society organizations with a view to hold a future membership drive.

### **Membership and Broader Connections (as of May 3, 2021)**

#### *Membership*

- 88 active members
  - 8 at “sponsor” level
  - 14 at “supporter” level
  - 29 at “standard” level
  - 37 at “student/low wage/fixed income/unwaged” level
- Membership affiliation generally reflects universities across Canada.

#### *Facebook*

- 2,407 followers
  - Increase of 274 since May 1, 2020 (2,133)
    - Increase of 121 between May 1, 2019 and May 1, 2020 (2,007 to 2,128)
  - 2,256 to 2,293 during March (event #2, livestreamed on Facebook)
  - 2,170 to 2,190 during November (event #1, no livestream)

#### *YouTube*

- 43 subscribers
  - +19 subscribers from May 1, 2020
  - 34.9 Watch time (in hours)

- Most watched videos:
  - SPE Book Prize, Glen Coulthard parts 1 & 2 (2017, combined views: 1576)
  - Roundtable on the History of the Society of Socialist Studies (2017, views: 79)
  - After the US Election (2020, November event, views: 73)

## Chapters & Affiliates

- We officially launched the Chapters & Affiliates program in fall 2020 and have so far welcomed three affiliate groups: the Venezuela Peace Committee, Canadian Dimension, and Peace Alliance Winnipeg.
- More needs to be done to 1) get word out about the benefits of organizing as a Chapter or becoming an Affiliate group, and 2) build connections with those groups.

## Events and Programming

- Over the past year the SSS held two events:
  - **“After the US Election: Challenges and Possibilities for the Left” (Friday, 13 November, 2020)**
    - Poster, event details, and panelist information [here](#).
    - 279 Registrants via Eventbrite (event participant peak ~200)
    - Video was not livestreamed, but was posted on YouTube (73 views, 11.6 hours of watch time)
  - **“The Struggle Against Free Trade in Canada” (Friday, March 19, 2021)**
    - Poster, event details, and panelist information [here](#).
    - 135 Registrants via Eventbrite (event participant peak ~80)
    - Video was livestreamed (5 Peak Live Viewers, 30 views > 1 min.), and was posted on YouTube (13 views, 3.0 hours of watch time)
- Both events were free for anyone; participants did not need an active membership but were encouraged to donate or become a member.
- Our November event had some logistical problems with some participants being unfamiliar with Eventbrite and unsure of how to obtain their Zoom link via “ticket,” but we anticipated those for our March event and only had one person who experienced difficulties participating.

## Looking to the Year Ahead

I plan on having two priorities for the upcoming year:

1. Expanding the Chapters and Affiliates via new and retained members.
2. Encouragement of Members to propose/organize events to be facilitated/sponsored by SSS.

### *Membership & Chapters and Affiliates*

- While approaching individuals about SSS may be one way to increase membership, I think it would be worth framing it in a way that encourages solidarity-building through creating Chapters, and approaching civil society organizations, similarly, to become affiliated.
- Through making calls for expressions of interest in building a Chapter, would-be members may find SSS to be a good place to make a 'home' for a group of people to come together either through a shared location (by city, university, etc.) or common interest (policy or research area, reading group, etc.).
- Likewise, through making calls for expressions of interest in becoming an Affiliated group, organizations (broadly speaking) may find a home with SSS to build solidarity across-groups, and make use of our growing leftist network.

**Action:** The Membership Committee will, by end of 2021, send out calls for expression of interest through MMS (the Society mailing list), as well as emails to individual university departments, student groups, unions, non-profits, and loosely organized groups. *We welcome any and all assistance on leads for who/where this call should go to. Please submit your ideas/contact information to [membershipsocialiststudies@gmail.com](mailto:membershipsocialiststudies@gmail.com).*

### *Facilitating and Sponsoring Events*

- Both events held by SSS this year were a relative success in bringing together members and non-members.
- Rather than organizing and planning events in the future, I would like to couple this with facilitating events proposed/organized by members. Members can work with me and the Membership Committee to provide a platform, as well as logistics,

ticketing, and facilitation of the event that would be planned and moderated by members.

**Action:** The Membership Committee will, three times before our next AGM (August, December, March) send our calls for expression of interest to active members who may be interested in requesting facilitation of an online event by SSS. Events will need to be approved by the SSS Executive for sponsorship.

It has been a pleasure serving the Society as Membership Secretary for the past year, and I have high hopes of building the membership and building solidarity in the year ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MA', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Megan Aiken,  
Membership Secretary