



# SPPS NEWSLETTER

The Official Newsletter of the Section on Sociological Practice and  
Public Sociology, American Sociological Association

Winter 2010

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## Editor's commentary

### Sociology Gets Out and About

Leora Lawton

TechSociety Research & University of California, Berkeley

It's with great pleasure that I can welcome the new members to SPPS, and to our biannual newsletter. In this issue we are adding more transparency to our Section operations, with a summary of recent Council activity. This additional step has followed the new practice of posting Council minutes to the listserv. We are now including highlights of individual Council members: this issue features incoming Secretary-Treasurer Becky Hsu.

Our section connects colleagues and also furthers the goal of getting sociology outside the halls of the academy. We do so with voice and activity: those that come easily to mind are organizing sessions at annual meetings, or attending them, getting together for lunch with less familiar faces, and hearing about the experiences of others in our fields. SPPS members have other creative means: Council member Laura Nichols is having her undergraduate class learn about the world of applied sociology and at the same time, they will be redesigning, updating and expanding our Section's Resource pages, something I'd been meaning to get to but finally acknowledged that it wasn't going to happen without some serious help, and Laura stepped in.

Getting students involved in public sociology and sociological practice has other faces. In my fall "Deviance & Social Control" undergraduate class I gave students a final paper option of volunteering at a non-profit, and using that experience as data and a case study of forms of deviance in society. Four students of 52 took me up on the offer, and each wrote a spirited paper on the experience, and found the lessons of our lectures and reading every day in their work.

There are other options for students as well, and I'd like to encourage graduate students to consider getting active in Council office now. It's a great way to get to know other professionals in a relaxed, unintimidating manner, and to get a perspective on how to develop your career. It looks good on your vita or resume. And these connections really do lead to jobs (and for those of you well past your grad school days, the jobs thing might still be relevant). So join us in Atlanta!

## Highlights Inside!!

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## *A Note from the Chair*

**Jeffrey A. Will**

*Director, Center for Community Initiatives  
University of North Florida*

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### **Sociological Practice in Action: The Role of Applied, Clinical and Public Sociology**

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As we enter into the second decade of the 21st Century, I believe the need for, and the role of, Applied, Clinical and Public Sociologists is paramount. And I believe this is true for Practicing Sociologists in the Academy, Corporate, Government, and Private practice. And I also believe that the Section on Sociological Practice and Public Sociology is poised, along with several partner Associations, to lead the way in responding to the myriad issues where this need is paramount.

Over the past year The Section on Sociological Practice and Public Sociology has seen some quite positive developments:

- The “Merger” of the ASA Section on Sociological Practice and the Public Sociology group has moved forward quite successfully, and basically seamlessly. And the most recent Council Elections have produced the diversity of members from Private Practice, Government, Academic, and Public arenas we had hoped for.
- We have seen an increase in membership of The Section by more than 50 percent! We now have over 330 members as of October 2009 – up from 207 in October 2008!
- A number of members have now stepped up and donated funds to provide Student Membership Scholarships to approximately 40 students. As always, we are always looking for additional donations to support additional students. (See the related piece on Scholarships elsewhere in this newsletter)
- We received approximately \$1000 in donations from members to help support the SPPS Reception at the ASA Meetings in San Francisco. The reception was a tremendous success, and we look forward to an even better experience in Atlanta in 2010.

In addition to direct Section benefits, the past year has also provided opportunities to collaborate with other associations in expanding the impact of practitioners of Sociological Practice and Public Sociology. Many of The Section members are also affiliated with the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology (AACS), the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) and a number

of other Applied, Clinical, and Evaluation Research oriented groups. It is my hope that over the next several years, The Section can enhance relationships with these Associations in order to provide our members outlets for collaboration, presentation, and sharing of our important work.

Of course not everything over the past year and coming months has been ideal. Indeed, although The Section has grown significantly in membership numbers, we are still below the threshold to increase significantly the number of sessions available to the members (thus, in my mind, the need to expand collaboration with the other associations listed above). In addition, for reasons basically out of the hands of the Council and other leadership, financing for The Section is precarious, and we are working with the ASA office to try and rectify costs from the reception in San Francisco. Finally, even with the increased membership and support, the times are such that the number of members with the time, energy, and resources to participate in governance remains low. The entire Council is working hard to recruit high caliber members for the Board elections, to continue to recruit new members, and to raise the necessary resources to make The Section work.

Thus, in response to the Positive Outcomes of the past year, as well as the obstacles we have faced, I would like to challenge members of The Section to the following:

- First, I challenge each member of The Section to persuade at least ONE Sociology friend to join the section. An increase in membership of 70 persons would be enough to give us additional sessions for members to present at the Annual Meetings.
- Second, I challenge non-Student members to provide support for The Section for ONE student member. For a mere \$7, you can support a student member.
- Third, I urge all members of The Section that can donate directly to the section to support the Annual Meeting reception and other activities. If most of the non-student membership were to donate \$5, we could have the resources to improve the Annual Meeting experience.

- Fourth and finally, I urge all members to come to the Annual Business Meeting at the conference in Atlanta in August. All of us on The Council are interested in learning more about what you want The Section to be and what direction we should take.

In all, I am very optimistic that The ASA Section on Sociological Practice and Public Sociology can, and will, continue to grow. And through this growth,

I believe that Sociological Practice and Public Sociology will take the appropriate place at the lead of the Discipline of Sociology worldwide. And I look forward to working with you all to get there!

Happy New Year!

jw

## Feature Article

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### An Introduction to NIH Small Business Innovation Research Grants\*

By Augusto Diana

NIH National Institute on Drug Abuse

#### Making a Case for NIH SBIR Grants

One NIH funding mechanism rarely considered by sociologists is the Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) Program. SBIR – and the parallel Small Business Technology Transfer Research (STTR) award category– are restricted to small for-profit businesses. (STTR actually requires a partnership with a second institution, often a university, with the small business as the lead institution on the grant. Otherwise, the two mechanisms function in exactly the same way so this essay discusses only SBIR.) A description of SBIR/STTR can be found in in the *NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts (2009)*. Below we summarize its purpose, content, and its potential attraction to sociologists who have at least one foot in the for-profit world.

In general terms, the goal of the SBIR/STTR Program is to promote utilization of technological innovation by small businesses as a way to “spread the news” about what works. Further, these grants are designed to support commercial development of research-based applications, with an eye on supporting small businesses in particular. Ultimately, the goal is to provide a solid return on investment from Federally-funded research for economic and social benefits to the Nation. For example, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has enhanced dissemination opportunities for strategies that have been proven effective for preventing, treating and studying substance use and substance use related problems.

The structure of the SBIR Program is very different from other NIH grant mechanisms seeking to fund primary or clinical research, in that it has three

tiered phases of the grant award, each conditional on receiving the previous, and each designed to take the research-based application closer to successful commercial release. As described in the *NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts, Omnibus Solicitation (2009)*:

The SBIR program is structured in three phases, the first two of which are supported using SBIR funds. The objective of Phase I is to establish the technical/scientific merit and feasibility of the proposed R/R&D efforts. The objective of Phase II is to continue the research or R&D efforts initiated in Phase I. An objective of the SBIR program is to increase private sector commercialization of innovations derived from Federal R/R&D. The objective of Phase III, where appropriate, is for the SBC to pursue with non-SBIR funds (either Federal or non-Federal) the commercialization objectives resulting from the results of the R/R&D funded in Phases I and II. In some Federal agencies, Phase III may involve follow-on, non-SBIR funded R&D, or production contracts for products or processes intended for use by the U.S. Government.

#### SBIR’s Appeal to Sociologists

SBIR makes sense for sociologists in two ways. First, the project areas that generally comprise the focus of SBIR grant awards cross over very nicely with many areas of sociological research. Second, applied sociologists interested in addressing social problems related to public health are well-suited to enhance the use of strategies in real-world settings. The general funding announcement for the SBIR Program provides a number of example areas for the crossover between sociological principles and SBIR goals (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Omnibus Solicitation, PHS 2009-2 SBIR/STTR Program Descriptions and Research Topics for NIH, CDC, and FDA, [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/sbirsttr1/2008-2\\_SBIR-STTR-topics.doc](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/sbirsttr1/2008-2_SBIR-STTR-topics.doc), but see also: NOT-OD-09-132, <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-09-132.html> ).

- organizations, organizational development and organizational management
- mass communication and information dissemination
- family, school, workplace, total institutions and other community settings as service delivery environments
- environmental impacts on individual behavior
- staff training and staff impact on individual behavior
- methodology and tool development
- community adoption of service strategies
- enhancing access to and engagement in effective programs.

The sociological perspective runs comfortably through these areas, most of which overlap with the NIH priority of translating research findings into practice. For example, a grant to support the area of Staff and Systems Applications would be innovative research that develops and validates generic staff selection systems which could be adopted and tailored for use by drug abuse treatment clinics to minimize or address staff turnover issues that affect quality of service to patients and clients. Translating research into practice is equivalent to “doing sociology,” or the practical application of sociological theory and research.

The SBIR program seems ideal for applied sociologists who are not housed primarily in academic settings. Many of the areas listed above are simply not well-led by academic researchers. By way of example, one common direction for SBIR has been tests of program dissemination. Much research has shown that evidence-based programs are the best ways to change perceptions and behaviors that put people at risk of substance use problems (Hawkins, et al., 2008; Spoth et al., 2007; Glasgow et al., 2006). Basic academic research does not typically allow for expanded tests of programs and strategies on wider populations and settings. Further, university faculty are typically not well-positioned to create marketing and implementation plans for wide-scale dissemination of effective programs and strategies. Those in business settings, like SBIR awardees, can take an existing effective program or strategy and test

its application to a wider market and determine the best methods to disseminate the program or strategy to the audience in need of it.

The second meaningful rationale for the contention that SBIR is a good avenue for sociologists, and for others as well, in pursuing research funding, is the opportunity for success. A likely deterrent to the application process, which involves a significant amount of time and expense, is the low success rate for many traditional NIH grants. Comparatively, the *NIH Office of Extramural Research Databook, Small Business Innovative Research Grants, 2008* shows a success rate for SBIR applicants well above 20% over a 10-year period. The average success rate for SBIR Phase I applications is 31%; when moving to Phase II, the success rate reaches 44%. (Remember that applicants are only eligible for a Phase II award after successful completion of a Phase I grant).

#### What Is Involved in Pursuing SBIR Awards?

For those sociologists with a more entrepreneurial spirit, eligibility for SBIR funding is easier than it may seem. The only organizational requirement for SBIR eligibility is for-profit small business status (see the SBIR Omnibus Solicitation referenced here for full details on NIH’s SBIR business eligibility requirements). Thus, for sociologists who prefer the applied world outside of the academy, even while they often keep their hands in the teaching world as adjunct faculty, small business incorporation and pursuit of SBIR grant awards may be a viable option.

#### Seeking an SBIR Award

The first step in considering an SBIR is to learn about NIH funding, so first visit their <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/sbir.htm> and read the parent funding announcement, PA-09-080: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-09-080.html>. The next step is look at the list of institutes and centers (IC) at the top of this announcement and identify which is most likely to be interested in your product (and we use ‘product’ in a wide sense). Then visit that website and identify which research program area is most of interest to them for funding, find out who the program officer is for that program area. Then, contact the program officer. Many prefer email, with a brief statement with the basic idea (objective of grant money), motivation, public health problem to be addressed, how the innovation will address it and then, how will you bring it to a viable market. When speaking with the program officer, it’s important to see that s/he is enthusiastic about your idea. NIH grant application forms are a bit complicated for the uninitiated and it’s worthwhile to

get mentored through this process, or to have a partner who has the experience.

If you are interested in SBIR, feel free to contact Augie Diana, who is a program officer for SBIR at NIDA, at 301-443-1942, or [dianaa@nida.nih.gov](mailto:dianaa@nida.nih.gov)

### **Other Resources**

National Institutes of Health, *NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts*, "Glossary and Acronym List," <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/glossary.htm#G6>, February, 2009.

National Institutes of Health, *NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts*, "PHS 2009-02 Omnibus Solicitation of the NIH, CDC, FDA and ACF for Small Business Innovation Research Grant Applications (Parent SBIR [R43/R44])," Program Announcement (PA) Number: PA-09-080, <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-09-080.html>, January 2009.

National Institutes of Health, *NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts*, "Weekly NIH Funding Opportunities and Notices," <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/description.htm>, February, 2009.

National Institutes of Health, *Office of Extramural Research Databook*, "Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)

Grants," <http://report.nih.gov/NIHDataBook/>, [http://report.nih.gov/NIH\\_Investment/PDF\\_sectionwise/NIH\\_Extramural\\_DataBook\\_PDF/NEDB%20SBIR.pdf](http://report.nih.gov/NIH_Investment/PDF_sectionwise/NIH_Extramural_DataBook_PDF/NEDB%20SBIR.pdf), May 2008.

National Institutes of Health, *Office of Extramural Research Databook*, "Success Rates,"

<http://report.nih.gov/NIHDataBook/>, [http://report.nih.gov/NIH\\_Investment/PDF\\_sectionwise/NIH\\_Extramural\\_DataBook\\_PDF/NEDB\\_SPECIAL\\_TOPIC-SUCCESS\\_RATES.pdf](http://report.nih.gov/NIH_Investment/PDF_sectionwise/NIH_Extramural_DataBook_PDF/NEDB_SPECIAL_TOPIC-SUCCESS_RATES.pdf), May 2008.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Omnibus Solicitation of the National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Food and Drug Administration, for Small Business Innovations Research (SBIR) and Small Technology Transfer Research (STTR) Grant Applications, PHS 2008-2 SBIR/STTR Program Descriptions and Research Topics for NIH, CDC, and FDA*, January, 2008.

\*This article is condensed from Diana, A. (2009). "Blending Sociology with Federal Funding: The Example of the National Institutes of Health Small Business Innovative Research Program", in *Doing Sociology: Case Studies in Sociological Practice*, chapter 11. Jammie Price, Roger Straus, and Jeff Breese (editors). Lexington Books: Lanham, MD. Reprinted with permission. Leora Lawton assisted in the adaptation of this essay.

## ***Elections***

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Ballots for our section officers and council members will be sent to all members no later than May 15. Please be sure to vote. We have an excellent slate of candidates and the Council thanks all of those who have agreed to run for office.

### *Chair-elect*

Yonette Thomas, Howard University  
Robert Granfield, University of Buffalo

### *Council:*

Jennifer Nargang Chernega, Winona State University  
Deirdre A. Oakley, Georgia State University  
Maryann Mason, Children Children's Memorial  
Hospital Chicago  
Mario Small, University of Chicago

## ***Council Decision Highlights***

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The Section held two council conference calls in October and December 2009. Highlights from the meetings follow: 2010 ASA MEETINGS. Current plans for sessions at the 2010 ASA include two sessions plus a roundtable. The first session will be an invited session related to grant making foundations and the role of applied sociology. We will invite senior foundations officers to present views of how they view sociologists. The second session is going to be to welcome public sociologists, titled "Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods and Public Sociology." People are invited to submit papers. In addition to the sessions, we also have a reception. A committee will be formed to locate a suitable place. Because Atlanta, the site of next year's ASA meeting, is a big civil rights town, we discussed the possibility of focusing on the applied side of civil rights. We should include all the universities in Georgia in our call for papers. We also discussed how to demonstrate the section's connection with organizations and practitioners who have been involved in practice and public sociology.

- MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT. As of September 30, 2009, we have 334 people who paid as members for last year. This was a significant increase from the earlier year. We discussed increasing student recruitment by offering free memberships to students based on member donations (we had enough donations for 40 students at the time). Students have begun responding to the announcement.

## Research About Compact Fluorescent Lightbulbs (CFL) Wins Public Sociology Student Award

*Public Sociology "lights up" Humboldt State University.*

Mary Virnoche

Humboldt State University, Eureka, CA

Lou Jacobson, a 2008 alumni of the Sociology Master's Program at Humboldt State University, took home the 2009 Robert Dentler Award for Outstanding Student Achievement for his research on compact fluorescent light (CFL) adoption. One might not think that lightbulbs would be the topic of sociological inquiry, but one of the promising areas for public sociologists is in energy efficiency – that is, understanding how residential and business consumers can be motivated to reduce their energy consumption and carbon footprint. Jacobson's master's thesis, *Anthropogenic Carbon Dioxide Mitigation: The Social Barriers to the Diffusion of the Compact Fluorescent Light Bulb*, explored the barriers to HSU student use of the CFL. These bulbs offer a cost effective way to mitigate human generated greenhouse gas through reducing net electricity use. The study used an online survey model reaching a randomly selected sample of 916 students.

"As in other studies, HSU students reported that product factors like cost, toxicity, compatibility, flickering, humming, brightness, and color quality were deterrents to CFL use," said Jacobson. "Many of these actually were problems of early CFL technology. Yet even though we've improved the CFL, the beliefs still hold back people from giving the CFL a try."

Beliefs about CFL quality and cost were not the only factors that Jacobson considered. According to Augie Diana, Chair of the Section's Awards Committee, "Lou's work is unique in that it integrates more complex sociological concepts like "worldview" in building an adoption model. We were all impressed by Lou's ability to so artfully develop and link sociological theory with a very real and pressing problem like understanding energy choices."

Jacobson's findings also suggest a link between CFL use and worldview. Those students most closely aligned with a perspective defined by human and environmental interdependency were more likely to adopt the CFL. Students with stronger leanings toward human power to control the environment were less likely to adopt.

Spiritual, atheist, and agnostic students were more likely to adopt than Christian and Protestant students. Politically liberal students were also more likely to use

CFLs than those who defined themselves as more conservative. "I also explored other factors like shopping patterns, opinion leadership, risk perception, meaning association and gender," said Jacobson. "These need more study. I'm particularly interested in understanding why male students were more likely to adopt the CFL than female students."

Before graduation in 2008, Jacobson had already accepted a position as an energy specialist with the Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA).

According to Dana Boudreau, RCEA Operations Manager, "As Lou interviewed alongside the usual environmental and engineering candidates, we realized that his sociology background and mindset could be a powerful addition to our organization."

"Risk perception, peer involvement, and worldview have been subjectively and haphazardly considered before Lou's arrival, but now we can explicitly build this capacity into our analysis and decision-making process," continued Boudreau. "With a passion for social well-being and a pragmatic focus on sustainable practices, Lou Jacobson ensures that we keep our priorities straight and follow a well-reasoned path towards success."

Jacobson received his award on Monday, August 10, 2009 at the annual association meeting hosted this year in San Francisco. The award is accompanied by a \$200 award. Jacobson's thesis is available through the Humboldt Digital Scholar at <http://library.humboldt.edu/>.

Lou and his light bulbs



## Member News

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### NEW PUBLICATIONS AND GRANTS

A forthcoming (Pine Forge Press) book *Sociologists in Action*, edited by Kathleen Odell Korgen, Jonathan M. White and Shelley K. White (forthcoming Pine Forge Press) will provide vivid examples of how sociologists inside and outside academia are using sociological tools to make a positive impact on our society. In each chapter, three to five public sociologists describe in short, engaging essays how they have used sociology to understand and influence the world around them. The *Sociologists in Action* (SIA) pieces cover the key topics in sociology courses and bring the subject matter of sociology to life for students, giving them clear examples of the power and usefulness of sociology as they learn the course content. The discussion questions and suggested additional readings and resources at the end of every chapter provide students the opportunity to delve further into the topics covered and help create full and nuanced discussions, grounded in the "real world" work of public sociologists. Many of the contributors to *Sociologists in Action* are members of Sociological Practice and Public Sociology, including: Sam Friedman, César Garavito Leslie Hossfeld, Becky Hsu, Lou Jacobson, Jack Levin, Laura Nichols, Philip Nyden, Kathryn Goldman Schuyler, Scott Myers-Lipton, Harry Perlstadt, Susan Stall, and Kathy Stolley.

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Kathy Shepherd Stolley and John E. Glass announce the publication of their new book: *HIV/AIDS*. Published by Greenwood Press, Westport, CT (2009). In this book, the history, symptoms, prevention, and current issues surrounding HIV and AIDS are discussed, along with a focus on special populations struggling with the disease.

## Notes from the U.S. Field

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At the Southern Rural Sociological Association meeting in February, 2010 George Floro, Adjunct Professor of Sociology at Sul Ross State University at Alpine, Texas will be presenting a paper on a craft approach to sociological practice in participatory research programs. Much use is made of crafted dichotomies and the objective is to bring people together who need each other. For those sociologists who want to see the gradational methodology of science, Dr. Floro offers the following example.

Sociologists working in agriculture may go beyond social life among humans and learn from herding animals like goats. For example, if animals are in a herd where they want to be, they may be less likely to jump the fence. And if they are well placed and they jump the fence for better pasture, they may not wander far away without the others. A concern in a dairy to be studied may be that some aggressive goats in the herd may have effects on the white cell count in the milk similar to other animals that become identified as predators threatening to kill the goats.

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### Upcoming Annual Meetings

- The Fourth Annual Meeting of The Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology will be held October 14-17, 2010, in St. Louis at the Ritz-Carlton. For more information, please visit <http://www.aacsnet.org>.
- The 2009 Annual Meeting of The Midwest Sociological Society will be held in Wed., Mar 31 – Sat., Apr 3, 2010, Chicago, IL, at Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile. For more information, please visit <http://www.themss.org>.
- AAPOR, the American Association for Public Opinion Research, will be holding its 64th Annual Conference, May 13-16, 2010, at the Chicago Marriott Downtown. For more information, visit [www.aapor.org](http://www.aapor.org).
- The Pacific Sociological Association, PSA, has its 81st Annual PSA Meeting, April 8-11, 2010 at the Marriott Oakland city Center. For more information, visit [www.pacificsoc.org](http://www.pacificsoc.org).
- Population Association of America, will hold its Annual Meeting in April 15-17 at the Hyatt Regency Dallas, Texas. For more information [www.popassoc.org](http://www.popassoc.org).

*We're all electronic! In addition to being emailed in the listserv with a link and as an attachment, this and previous newsletters are archived at [www.techsociety.com/asa/communications.html](http://www.techsociety.com/asa/communications.html).*

## ***Awards – Call for Nominations***

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All of us have met, or are at least aware of, another sociologist who has accomplishments of which perhaps you could only dream. They've brought sociology into the world to make at least their corner of it a better place. Nominate this person for the William Foote Whyte Award and bring honor to the value of their work and achievements. And for Section members who teach, if you have a student – graduate or undergraduate – whose work exemplifies the promise of living up to the mission of the Section by increasing understanding of the relationship between sociological practice and sociological knowledge, then please submit this student's name for the Student Award.

### **Robert Dentler Award for Outstanding Student Achievement.**

The Robert Dentler Award for Outstanding Student Achievement\* is made to up to two graduate students who have made a promising contribution to the field, such as a project or paper in the areas of sociological practice and public sociology. Work done within the three years prior to the conferral of the award will be considered. Products of graduate-level classes, internships, or independent projects are eligible. An award recipient who attends the 2010 ASA Annual Meeting in San Francisco will receive a cash award of \$200 to offset travel expenses. Nominations should consist of a letter detailing the nominees contributions, a copy of the paper or other project, and supporting materials such as a curriculum vitae or resume, and/or other additional letters of support. Please send nominations by May 15, 2010 to Jeff Will, [jwill@unf.edu](mailto:jwill@unf.edu).

\* The Sociological Practice Student Award was renamed in 2008, by unanimous vote of the Section Council, in honor and memory of Robert Dentler, former Section Chair, as well as President of the Society for Applied Sociology, whose work advanced not just our field, but also the American people.

### **William Foote Whyte Award**

William Foote Whyte Distinguished Career Award: The William Foote Whyte Award is for individuals who have made notable contributions to sociological practice, which can include several of the following elements: outstanding clinical or applied work, exceptional service to the section, publications that advance both the theory and methods of sociological practice, or mentoring and training of students for careers in sociological practice. Nominations should consist of a letter detailing the nominee's contributions and supporting materials such as a curriculum vitae or resume, and/or additional letters of support. Please send nominations by March 15, 2010 to the section chair, Jeff Will.

## ***Spotlight on SPSS Council Members***

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Not only did our Secretary-Treasurer Becky Hsu receive the 2008 Robert Dentler Award for Outstanding Student Achievement, but she also became an active member in our section, moving right into the Council where she is spearheading greater communication and transparency to the Section. Becky Hsu is a PhD Candidate in the sociology department at Princeton University. Becky's research interests include theory, economic sociology, culture, Chinese society, religion, and organizations. Her research focuses on the effect of moral understandings on the economy and asks the question "What are the conditions under which people pay debts?". This research was done in the context of microcredit poverty alleviation programs in rural China., and her work has also won best paper awards from the American Sociological Association Sections on Theory, Asia and Asian America, and Religion, as well the best student paper award from the Eastern Sociological Society. She has published in the

*Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* on international religious composition data and faith based organizations. Becky has also contributed as a researcher to "Mapping the Global Muslim Population", published by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life in October 2009. Her work on international religion has been cited in *The Economist*, *The New York Times*, CNN, and BBC.