

SOCIOLOGISTS FOR TRANS JUSTICE (S4TJ)

February 2017 Progress Report

To the Sociologists for Trans Justice initiative,

Laurel Westbrook and I write to you to provide a progress report for our work to promote trans justice through and within sociology. With 44 volunteers spread across six committees, we have been accomplishing a lot since the initiative's inception last summer!

Below, we have compiled a list of what each of the six subcommittees is working on; please note that there are specific requests for feedback that committee chairs have posed. General feedback can be directed to Laurel (westbrol@gvsu.edu) and me (egrollma@richmond.edu) by email. Also, at the end, we have provided tips for successful committee work.

We recommend that each committee take note of what other committees are working on 1) to identify places of concern or opportunities for feedback, 2) to identify possible collaborations, and 3) to avoid overlapping or redundant projects. For example, multiple surveys of trans scholars have been proposed, including one by the ASA's LGBTQ Status Committee; if these surveys are intended for the same population, one well-advertised large survey may be better than several smaller surveys.

Committee: Advancing Trans Studies in Sociology

1. #TransJusticeSyllabus: This committee has been working on creating a #TransJusticeSyllabus – a list of suggested readings on trans and non-binary communities. They have launched a website: <http://www.TransJusticeSyllabus.com> (transjusticesyllabus.net, transjusticesyllabus.org, and transjusticesyllabus.info will also take you there). And, there is an associated Twitter account: [@TransSyllabus](https://twitter.com/TransSyllabus). The committee has put out calls to several ASA sections for suggested readings for the syllabus.
 - a. **REQUEST #1:** The committee requests your feedback on the #TransJusticeSyllabus website before the site goes live. Please email Anne Marie Champagne at anne.champagne@yale.edu
 - b. **REQUEST #2:** The committee invites other S4TJ committees to submit any information and resources from their work to be included on the #TransJusticeSyllabus website: <http://www.transjusticesyllabus.com/sociologists-for-trans-justice/#committees>. Please email Anne Marie Champagne at anne.champagne@yale.edu.
2. Compendium of Resources: This committee has been developing an archive of datasets, print matter, visual arts, conferences, organizations, and other academic resources related to trans justice.
 - a. **REQUEST #3:** The committee invites materials to be included in the compendium. Please email them to committee chairs Ghassan Moussawi (moussawi@illinois.edu) and Chris Barcelos (cbarcelo@oberlin.edu).

3. ASA Panels: This committee successfully proposed a Trans Studies regular session at ASA annual meetings, beginning with the 2018 annual meeting in Philadelphia, PA.
4. Journal reviewer database: This committee has been developing a database of trans studies experts in sociology to provide to sociology journals; this will help journals draw from a wide, diverse pool of reviewers to provide reviews on trans studies related manuscripts. They will solicit contributors later this semester.

Committee: Addressing and Eliminating Transphobia and Cissexism in Sociology

1. Best Practices Guide: This committee has been developing a “best practices” guide for inclusion of trans and non-binary people in classrooms, departments, universities, and academic conferences. They have consulted existing literature, and plan to disseminate their findings in the coming months.
 - a. **REQUEST #4:** The committee requests suggestions for the most effective way to disseminate the best practices guide upon its completion. Please email committee chair Lindsey Wilkinson at lindsw@pdx.edu.
2. Conference Safe Spaces: This committee has sent requests to regional sociology organizations to create safe spaces for trans and non-binary people at future conferences. The Southern Sociological Society (SSS) has agreed to host a TGNC Hospitality Suite at its 2017 meeting.
 - a. **REQUEST #5:** The requests other committee members’ input on conceptualizing a safe space for trans and non-binary people, including what such a space entails and what it should be called. Please email your suggestions to committee chair Lindsey Wilkinson at lindsw@pdx.edu.
3. Pronouns on Conference Badges: This committee has sent requests to ASA and regional sociology organizations to include conference attendees gender pronouns on conference nametags. The committee has asked that soliciting members’ pronouns be standard during online registration, rather than a special option that (trans and non-binary) members must request.
4. Survey of Trans Experiences in Sociology: This committee has considered administering a survey of trans and non-binary sociologists of their experiences in the discipline. Whereas the ASA Status on the Committee of LGBTQ People in Sociology plans to conduct a similar survey, the committee must decide whether to collaborate with the Status Committee or hold off to conduct a separate survey.
 - a. **REQUEST #6:** The committee requests other committee members’ opinions about the benefits and/or costs of partnering with other ASA entities, including the Status Committee and the LGBTQ Caucus. Should the committee remain independent in its efforts or should it consider joining forces with existing entities? Please email your thoughts to committee chair Lindsey Wilkinson at lindsw@pdx.edu.

Committee: Professional Development of Trans and Non-binary Scholars and Trans Studies Scholars in Sociology

1. Curriculum Lab: This committee plans to propose a “curriculum lab” session at future ASA meetings to create a space where students and junior scholars can receive feedback on syllabi, presentations, reading lists, action checklists, etc. This is similar to the

“Critique Me” career development sessions held at SWS meetings:

<https://www.socwomen.org/list-of-committees/career-development/>.

2. Professional Development: This committee plans to develop an online platform to distribute professional development materials for trans scholars. The committee is looking into creating more formal professional development support channels to promote peer support and mentorship for trans studies scholars. Particular attention is being paid to amplifying the voices of and sharing resources from trans student activists within and beyond sociology.
3. Social Gathering: This committee plans to host social gathering for trans and non-binary sociologists at future ASA conferences.

Committee: Graduate Students (Working For Trans Justice)

1. Survey of Trans Grad Students: This committee has been developing a survey to administer to trans and non-binary graduate students (all disciplines) to ask about their experiences in their academic training, teaching, job searches, and with discrimination. The committee plans to administer the survey in late spring and present survey results at the S4TJ forum at the 2017 ASA annual meeting.
2. Avoiding Overlap: This committee is investigating the work of other entities to ensure that there is no overlap, and to identify possible collaborations.

Committee: Advancing Public Understanding of Trans and Non-Binary Issues

1. Expert Database: This committee plans to develop a database of trans studies experts for journalists to contact about news stories related to trans and non-binary people.
2. Online Platform for Experts’ Opinions: This committee plans to create an online platform – blog or other social media platform – to feature the perspective of trans studies experts to weigh in on current events and news stories related to trans justice (e.g., transphobic bathroom bills, the epidemic of transphobic and racist violence).

Committee: Advancing Trans and Non-Binary Scholars in Sociology Generally

1. ASA Demographic Information: This committee is awaiting demographic information from the ASA.
2. Collaborations: This committee has reached out to the ASA Committee on the Status of LGBTQ People in Sociology and LGBTQ Caucus to forge possible collaborations.

Tips for Successful Committee Work:

- Begin by being clear on your committee’s function/mission. Please contact Laurel (westbrol@gvsu.edu) and me (egrollma@richmond.edu) by email if you are unclear on this.
- Set realistic expectations for what can be accomplished over the next year. Assess what you already know and what you don’t know, what’s been done and what hasn’t, and where are there opportunities for collaboration?
- Committee members should be in regular communication, preferably by conference call, Skype, or Google Hangout (not email). Calls should be used to update progress from the previous call and to set goals to be achieved by the next call.

- Divide the committee's multiple projects, but troubleshoot problems that arise as a full committee.
- Use shared documents (e.g., Google Docs) – rather than email – to keep track of committee progress, division of labor, and questions or problems to be addressed.
 - An example, using the Google Sheets function in Google Docs: Date, name, specific task, steps taken, next steps, notes, requests for assistance from your fellow committee members.
- Work with those who are strategically involved with ASA or other sociology organizations rather than contacting general organization contacts. And, contact colleagues you already know rather than “cold calls.”