



# The Bulletin: North Carolina Sociological Association

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IN THIS ISSUE

## NCSA Annual Conference 2018 - Social Justice: A Renewed Commitment to Equity and Inclusion

by Dr. Stacey Blount, President-Elect & Conference Chair

NCSA's annual conference will be held on February 23, 2018 at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel in Fayetteville, North Carolina. It will be graciously hosted by the Department of Sociology at Fayetteville State University. Information on the theme and call for papers is below; however, full conference information is also available at <http://www.ncsociology.org/new/index.html>.

### This Year's Conference Theme

The theme for the 2018 conference is timely, given the series of events and perspectives that permeated our society during and after the 2016 campaign cycle and subsequent election. A social justice framework promotes the organization of social processes, social practices, and social organizations in a manner that affirms human dignity for all individuals.

Renewal implies a revival of freshness. Commitment suggests an obligation, responsibility, or charge to do something. Equity and inclusion are active processes and can be considered as foundations of social justice.

The field of Sociology and we, as sociologists, are strategically positioned to examine and discuss how a social justice orientation can infuse a renewed sense of peace in society. The North Carolina Sociological Association (NCSA) would be thrilled to have you join us as we explore sociological connections among these ideas.

### Conference Participation Options

This year, NCSA will offer several conference participation options. These include:

**Individual Papers/Presentations – Research**  
If you desire to present a research project, then submit it as an individual research paper/presentation.

**Individual Papers/Presentations – Teaching**  
If you desire to present on a teaching-related topic, then submit it as an individual teaching paper/presentation.

Continue to page 2 →



### Annual Conference Announcement

Pages 1-2

### Call for Himes Award Student Paper Competition

Page 3

### Call for Sociation Today Editor

Page 3-4

### The State of NC Family Court - Research by Dr. Cindy Dollar, UNCG.

Page 4

### 2017-18 Executive Council Members

Page 5

**Special Format (e.g., workshops, panel discussions, etc.)**

We accept workshops, panel discussions, or special format sessions on sociological topics. These proposals should be submitted as a complete or closed session, meaning all participants will focus on a single topic and must have agreed to participate before the organizer submits the proposal.

**Complete (Closed) Sessions – Research**

We accept complete sessions on related research topics. These sessions should have approximately 3 to 4 participants who present papers on similar topics. All participants must have agreed to participate before the organizer submits the abstract for the session.

**Complete (Closed) Sessions – Teaching**

We accept complete sessions on teaching-related topics. These sessions should have approximately 3 to 4 participants who present papers on similar topics. All participants must have agreed to participate before the organizer submits the abstract for the session.

**Opening Panel Discussion: Commonalities and Patterns of Social Justice in Society**

The opening panel discussion is designed to engage in conversation focused on the conference theme. We desire four panelists whose area(s) of expertise lie(s) in different types of social inequities (e.g., immigration, race, class, gender, education, criminal justice system, intersectionality).

**Student Poster Submissions**

Undergraduate and graduate students are welcome to submit posters for presentation.

To submit to any of these conference options, please refer to the specific instructions provided at

<http://www.ncsociology.org/new/index.html>.

**Deadline for submissions and inclusion in this year's conference is December 15, 2017.**

**Hotel Accommodations**

The Doubletree by Hilton in Fayetteville, North Carolina is the host location for the conference. A block of rooms has been reserved for conference attendees.

**Room Type Options:** Standard Double Queen or Standard King

-All room are non-smoking.



**Group Rate:** \$93.00 before taxes (does not include breakfast)

Please note the following steps for booking reservations:

- Reservations can be made by either calling the hotel directly at 910-323-8282 or at 1-800-222-8733 (Central Reservations).
- If you call the Central Reservations Center, state the city/state of property location.
- Inform responding agent of the date you seek for your reservation and the group code of "NSA" or group name: NC Sociological Association.
- Indicate the room type preferred (based on availability).
- If it applies to you, give agent your Hilton Honors number or your name, address, and phone number.
- Provide a debit/credit card to guarantee reservation.
- Please keep in mind that the block dates are important. The room block will close on February 8, 2018.
- If you have questions, please contact Stacye Blount at [sblount@uncfsu.edu](mailto:sblount@uncfsu.edu).

For additional details about the Doubletree Hotel in Fayetteville, please click on link below.

<http://doubletree3.hilton.com/en/hotels/north-carolina/doubletree-by-hilton-hotel-fayetteville-FAYDSTD/index.html>

**Conference Registration and Payment**

To complete the registration form, click on link below. Please note that lunch is not provided for onsite registrants. After you complete the registration form and click SUBMIT, you will be directed to the payment link: [https://g.oo.g.l/dT\\_4fzT](https://g.oo.g.l/dT_4fzT)

**Important Dates to Remember**

**December 15, 2017** submission deadline

**January 26, 2018** advance conference registration closes

**February 1, 2018** target date for 2018 preliminary program to be posted online

**February 8, 2018** hotel special room rate block closes

**Conference Contacts**

If you need to more information or have some great ideas for the conference, please contact one of the following individuals:

General Program Inquiries- Stacye Blount, [sblount@uncfsu.edu](mailto:sblount@uncfsu.edu)

Opening Panel Discussion - Emily Estrada, [eestrada@highpoint.edu](mailto:eestrada@highpoint.edu)

Himes Student Paper Awards - Abby Reiter, [areiter12@gmail.com](mailto:areiter12@gmail.com)

Hotel/Conference Arrangements - Stacye Blount, [sblount@uncfsu.edu](mailto:sblount@uncfsu.edu)

Payment Inquiries - Beth Davison, [davisonb@appstate.edu](mailto:davisonb@appstate.edu)

# Himes Outstanding Student Paper Awards – Call for Submissions

The North Carolina Sociological Association (NCSA) seeks papers that represent excellence in sociological analysis from both undergraduate and graduate students.

NCSA membership and conference fees are deferred for all awardees who attend the NCSA conference. Students who apply for the award should be prepared to attend the annual conference on Friday, February 23, 2018, in Fayetteville, North Carolina and present their work as part of the special Himes Award Paper Session.

## About the Himes Award

The award is named in honor of Dr. Joseph Himes. In 1969, he and other sociologists in the state founded the North Carolina Sociological Association (NCSA). In 1969, Dr. Himes became the first African American faculty member to be tenured as a professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). Prior to his tenure at UNCG, Dr. Himes spent 23 years at North Carolina Central University. From 1965-66, he served as president of the Southern Sociological Society. Additionally, from 1969-71, he served as the first president of the NCSA.

### Eligibility requirements are as follows:

- Any student enrolled in a community college, four-year college/university in North Carolina may submit a paper for consideration.
- Students who graduated in spring 2017 or summer 2017 are eligible to submit a paper for the 2018 awards.
- Co-authored papers written by graduate students are eligible for the graduate paper award. The monetary award will be evenly distributed among authors of the winning paper.
- Co-authored papers written by undergraduate students are eligible for the undergraduate paper award. The monetary award will be evenly distributed among authors of the winning paper.
- Co-authored papers written by students and faculty members are ineligible for the award.

- Co-authored papers written by undergraduate and graduate students are ineligible for the award.
- The same individual is eligible to win the undergraduate award once and the graduate award once.

### Award information:

This competition comes with the following monetary awards:

- \$150 for winning undergraduate paper (2-year institutions)
- \$150 for winning undergraduate paper (4-year institutions)
- \$250 for winning graduate paper

Additionally, each winner receives a certificate of recognition from the NCSA. Award winners are recognized at the NCSA Annual Conference and, at the discretion of winners, papers are published on the official NCSA website. Faculty mentors are recognized at the annual conference and their school/college deans and department chairpersons are notified of this recognition.

### Evaluation criteria are as follows:

- Accurate, focused, and thorough review of the pertinent sociological literature
- Use of method related to topic
- Appropriate use of evidence in drawing conclusions
- Ability to use theoretical analysis and interpretation
- Insight and creativity
- Writing skill, clarity, coherence, and proper use of citations and documentation.

### Submission guidelines are as follows:

- Submit PDF and MSWord blind copies of your paper to the following address: [ncsa2018fayetteville@gmail.com](mailto:ncsa2018fayetteville@gmail.com).

Your paper will be forwarded to the Himes Award Committee.

- In the subject line, identify the award category.

Example: Himes Award 2-year undergraduate

Example: Himes Award 4-year undergraduate.

Example: Himes Award Graduate

Submit a separate cover letter that includes the following information to Stacye Blount at [sblount@uncfsu.edu](mailto:sblount@uncfsu.edu):

- Your full name and contact information (email address and telephone number)
  - Your college/university
  - Full name and contact information for your faculty advisor/mentor
  - Award category
- Example: Himes Award 2-year undergraduate

Example: Himes Award 4-year undergraduate

Example: Himes Award Graduate

- Subject line text: Himes Award Cover Sheet

### Submission Deadline:

**The submission deadline is Friday, December 15, 2017.**

If you have questions, please contact Abby Reiter at [areiter12@gmail.com](mailto:areiter12@gmail.com).



## Call for Sociation Today Editor!

Sociation Today, the official Journal of the North Carolina Sociological Association (NCSA), is seeking applications for the position of editor. Sociation Today is published bi-annually. It is a member of the EBSCO Publishing Group, abstracted in Sociological Abstracts, and is also listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals which provides for on-line searching.

### Preferred Qualifications:

- Ph.D. in Sociology
- Active membership in NCSA
- Willingness to serve a 5-year term
- Established record of peer reviewed publication/scholarship
- Record of responsible service to scholarly publishing as an editor and/or reviewer
- Evidence of understanding the mission of the journal and its operation as indicated by experience with the journal across any of a wide variety of activities (e.g., publication, reviewing, editorial board experience)
- Ability to assess the present state of the journal, its strengths and challenges, and a vision for the journal's future
- Evidence of effective organizational and communication skills
- Web skills for publishing and maintaining a web-based journal

- Demonstrated institutional support (e.g., computer services, reduced teaching load, administrative endorsement, etc.)

This position is considered service and does not come with any stipend or funds graduate assistance. The editor will hold a seat on the NCSA executive council. Applicants for the position of editor should submit: (1) a letter of interest which addresses qualifications for the position along with a vision statement; (2) current vitae; and (3) three letters of recommendation which speak to your qualifications for the position (one from an administrator at the rank of Dean or higher that also demonstrates institutional support for the position) to Terrell A. Hayes at [thayes@highpoint.edu](mailto:thayes@highpoint.edu), with the subject line heading: Sociation Today Editor.

**The deadline for application is November 30 2017. Applications will be reviewed by the NCSA Executive Council.**

## Researching NC Family Court Programs

By Dr. Cindy Dollar, UNC-Greensboro

Research has noted some of the damaging effects of traditional court models. In light of these findings, scholars and practitioners have advocated for alternative court processes, including the establishment of problem-solving courts. Family court is a type of problem-solving court, which handles legal disputes among family members. While each family court is tasked with developing its own mission statement, family court models generally reflect notions of therapeutic jurisprudence. Therapeutic jurisprudence encourages law reform by promoting an interdisciplinary approach to legal practice. Stating that law can have therapeutic or anti-therapeutic effects, advocates of therapeutic justice recommend laws, policies and practices that maximize the potential for healing and minimize the potential for harm. Although it is difficult to fully define therapeutic jurisprudence, it is generally agreed that therapeutically just encounters share 3 common components: (1) respectful interaction between legal actors and litigants (2) self-efficacy among litigating parties and (3) transparent judicial decision-making. Although the idea of therapeutic jurisprudence was developed in

the 1980s, scarce research examines if it is actually practiced in family court settings.

My prior research on other forms of problem-solving courts (mental health and drug courts) suggest that court ideals and actual practices may be disjointed. In other words, actual court practices may not reflect idealized principles and stated missions. As such, this research examines law in action. The court that is the subject of this research was established approximately 10 years ago and is located in a mid-sized county in North Carolina. North Carolina district courts handle approximately 100,000 cases a year, with about 45 percent of those involving family-related matters. The court that I examine holds subject jurisdiction over all family and juvenile cases, including cases that involve custody and visitation, separation and divorce, and equitable distribution.



I rely on a closed case study method, which focuses on systematic data collection of a single case. The data was collected over the course of 12 months. During this time, I observed 108 hearings, including 8 trials, presided over by 5 judges. Because of my consistent court attendance, my presence became relatively normative, thus minimizing any observational influence and ensuring that I was observing typical court procedures and behavioral patterns. Rather than relying on a structured observation guide, I took notes on verbal and gesturing expressions and reactions during court proceedings. My attention was most focused on the interactions between judges, plaintiffs, defendants, their respective attorneys; however, I also noted the presence and interactions of other persons located in the courtroom. To maximize my ability to watch and listen to interactions, my on-site field notes were brief, but I expanded these notes and added analytical reflections

immediately following my exit from the court.

I found that therapeutically just interactions were common in the court. Court personnel regularly treated the parties with dignity and respect. For example, judges directly communicated with the litigants even when the parties are represented. In addition, judges commonly used the litigants' first and last name rather than the impersonal "plaintiff" and "defendant." In fact, judges relied heavily on "natural" language and gesturing throughout court proceedings rather than formalities and legal jargon. Observational data further indicate that judges not only allowed, but encouraged, parties to express and explain their standpoint. One judge, who presided over the majority of the cases, always asked litigants if they wanted to speak even if they were legally represented. This same judge restated the evidence presented and considered before ruling even if the restatement took several minutes. As a part of the judge's reiteration, the case content and the litigants' emotional responses to the content were read into the court record. Such a practice indicates careful listening and validation of the litigant's perspective.

Despite this support for therapeutic jurisprudence, some encounters were anti-therapeutic. These damaging interactions were apparent when litigants were asked to reveal upsetting, personal information about the "opposing" litigant or the litigants' relationships. Because family court takes place in a public court forum, persons unrelated to the case were often present during this testimony, which often involved recounting specific instances of family violence, including neglect, assault, rape or other forms of maltreatment. Other instances of damaging interactions involved lengthy lines of questioning that seemed to intimidate or threaten litigants, and in at least one of these cases, the line of questioning was irrelevant to the case facts in dispute. These anti-therapeutic encounters remind us that practicing therapeutic jurisprudence is challenging in a broader legal context that is largely built on principles that divide rather than reconcile and seek to find fault rather than heal. Compelling critiques of the "justice" system are numerous, and a growing body of literature indicates that problem-solving courts do not eradicate well-documented problems and inequities. The present study indicates that these issues remain in family court even though many encounters align with the principles of therapeutic jurisprudence.

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