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August 16, 2013

Dear SSWR member:

I write to provide a second update regarding the labor dispute involving the union, UNITE HERE, and the Grand Hyatt San Antonio, where SSWR is scheduled to hold its Annual Meeting in January 2014. (Please access the first update at www.sswr.org/membersonly/LaborDispute_Presletter.php)

RECENT AGREEMENT

On July 1, 2013 Hyatt Hotels Corporation and UNITE HERE issued a joint press release (Please view the press release at www.sswr.org/membersonly/JointHyattUHPR7.1.2013.pdf) which “announced a national agreement that resolves longstanding disputes between the two organizations.” The agreement addresses the settlement and ratification of union contracts by Hyatt associates at specific hotels in San Francisco, Honolulu, Los Angeles, and Chicago. Once approved, the contracts will provide retroactive wage increases and maintain quality health care and pension benefits. The contracts would be retroactive from 2009 and be in effect into 2018.

A part of the agreement is to establish a fair process, which includes a mechanism for employees at a number of Hyatt hotels to vote on whether they wish to be represented by UNITE HERE. Upon ratification of the union contracts, UNITE HERE will end its global boycott of Hyatt.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SSWR MEMBERS AND FOR THE 2014 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

As you know, the SSWR Board voted not to terminate the contract with the Grand Hyatt San Antonio based on the appraisal that terminating the contract with Hyatt would result in financial penalties that would put SSWR out of existence. Please note that the SSWR contract with the Grand Hyatt San Antonio was signed in 2009 and is the final contract SSWR has with Hyatt Hotels. At this time the Grand Hyatt San Antonio is not unionized and there are no contract negotiations between Hyatt Hotels and UNITE HERE at this property.

The SSWR Board encourages SSWR members to make informed decisions regarding how they will relate to the 2014 SSWR Annual Conference at the Grand Hyatt San Antonio. Understanding that the situation with UNITE HERE and the Grand Hyatt San Antonio is evolving, the SSWR Board will continue to provide SSWR members with up-to-date information about the situation. The SSWR Board suggests that, as SSWR members make their decisions regarding how to relate to the conference, they use their best judgment in discussing these topics with more vulnerable members of our Society.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact me, Jeanne C. Marsh, SSWR President at jmarsh@uchicago.edu, 773-702-1144. If you cannot reach me immediately, please contact Jennifer Lewis, SSWR Administrative Director at lewis@sswr.org, 703-352-7797.

As always, thank you for your continued support of SSWR.

Sincerely,

Jeanne C. Marsh
President