

Minutes - Business Meeting
Communication History Interest Group (CHIG)
International Communication Association

Chicago, May 23, 2009

Chaired by: Dave Park
Minutes: Stijn Reijnders
Present: around 20 members

Conversation begins at approximately 3:10 pm.

1. Unanimous approval of the minutes from last year's business meeting, at the 2008 ICA meeting in Montreal. (Those minutes can be viewed at communicationhistory.org/newsandevents/news.html)
2. Chair's report
 - a. Report by chair David Park on the ICA Annual Board of Directors Meeting
 - b. How fares the interest group?
 - i. Last year: 170 members
 - ii. Nov. 2008: 198 members
 - iii. Jan. 2009: 150 members
 - iv. May 2009: 202 members
 - c. Activities
 - i. programming was tight, as it often is in new IG's
 - ii. 9 sessions with *very high* rejection rate (59%) (highest of all interest groups / divisions)
 - iii. Pre-con was successful, amongst others in bringing in new members
3. Two award presentations
 - a. Top student paper: "The Part Played by Bells in the Emergence of American National Consciousness," Deborah Lubken, University of Pennsylvania
 - b. Top faculty paper: "'Stories of Great Indians' by Elmo Scott Watson: Syndication, Standardization, and the Noble Savage in Feature Writing," Miranda Jean Brady, University of Minnesota
4. Park introduces the discussion topic of *growth*: How do we grow? And where do we want to go to?
 - a. Park states that finding new members is necessary if we want to become an ICA division. However, the advantages of becoming a division are relative small. Therefore, Park opts for a policy of

gently trying to increase the amount but also the diversity of our members. All agree.

- b. Park explains that new members are best to be found a) via personal contacts and b) among existing ICA-members.
 - c. Park states that as for now around 80% of all members are from North America. This is relatively high compared to other IG's and/or divisions.
 - d. Member Sharrona Pearl suggests reaching out to trained historians working in history departments.
 - e. Member Ben Peters advocates not only diversifying the member group, but also diversifying the topic of our research, eg. by introducing international themed sessions. Peters asks which is more important: a diverse and international membership, or a diverse and international intellectual agenda?
 - f. A member suggests re-naming our Interest Group to Communication and Media History. Park explains that the choice has been made for the current title because it entails all three levels we're interested in: 1) media & communication history, 2) the history of communication studies and 3) the history of the idea of communication.
 - g. The discussion returns to Pearl's suggestion to reach out to trained historians working in history departments. Six strategies are discussed and applauded: 1) position historians in panels & commissions, 2) find historically interested scholars in other divisions, 3) reach out to group lists of existing communication historians, 4) organize more joint receptions, 5) invite local historians to the Singapore conference, 6) contact other organizations such as IAMCR and ECREA.
 - h. As it turns out, one of our members is also part of the communication history group of ECREA, which will be founded this year; she expects this group to be more than positive about cooperation with the CHIG.
 - i. Member David Morrison points out that enlarging the group does not automatically result in a higher quality.
5. Announcements from president-elect of ICA Francois Cooren
- a. Francois Cooren announces next year's conference in Singapore. The deadline for paper and panel proposals is scheduled on November 6, 2009; theme panel proposals are due before September 1, 2009
 - b. Registration costs are downsized, and there will be free lunches as well as one dinner organized by ICA.
 - c. There will be post conference tours to Bangkok and Cambodia

- d. Cooren acknowledges that Singapore is not well known for its democratic values, neither for its gay-friendly policy. That said, Cooren believes that in practice it's not all that bad.
 - e. Pearl asks whether there will be child care in the conference hotel. Cooren is unable to answer this question at this point in time.
6. Future leadership of the interest group
- a. Park announces that Jeff Pooley will become Chair as of the planning meeting at Singapore in 2010. Therefore, the position of vice-chair will be vacant. All members are invited to nominate themselves or other members to become vice-chair. In addition, Park will contact members personally to inquire about their interest in running.
7. Internationalization strategy
- a. Park states that the CHIG has a relative low number of non-American members. This might result in low participation rates in Singapore 2010.
 - b. Member Megan Mullen points out that the high number of American members might be due to the fact that as for now, CHIG has not been active at *non-American* conferences.
 - c. Secretary Stijn Reijnders adds to this point by stating that Singapore 2010 does not only pose a threat, but also opens opportunities to reach out to non-American (and for that part, non-European) scholars.
 - d. Park agrees, but repeats the claim that *existing* ICA-members are the ones we should focus on first. He concludes by pinpointing the importance of personally inviting colleagues to join our group. He hopes all members will actively participate in this quest for a more international profile.

The meeting is adjourned at 4.15 p.m.