International Communication Association

Public Relations Division

Annual Business Meeting Minutes

Chair: Jennifer Bartlett

Caribe Hilton, San Juan, Puerto Rico

May 22nd, 2015, 4:30pm - 5:45pm

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF OFFICERS 2014-2015

The meeting was called to order by division Chair Jennifer Bartlett, on May 22nd, 2015, at 4:30 pm. Members were welcomed to the meeting and the officers for 2014-2015 were introduced –

Chair: Jennifer Bartlett, Queensland University of Technology, Australia
Vice Chair (acting also as secretary): Chiara Valentini, Aarhus University, DK
Secretary: Lee Edwards; Leeds University, UNITED KINGDOM (unable to attend for personal reasons)
Student Representative: Alice Srugies, Ilmenau University of Technology, GERMANY (unable to attend for personal reasons)

The meeting was opened by Amy Jordan, President Elect, introducing next year’s conference in Fukuoka, Japan. The conference theme is “communicating with power”. Conference hotel rate is substantial low compared to other locations (110$/night approximately) and breakfast is included. Conference hotel is not in the city, but there are bus transportations to facilitate moving. ICA is negotiating the possibility to have lunch included in the registration fee. There are direct flights from Amsterdam, Singapore and Honolulu. Alternatively, one needs to fly to Tokyo first and then either take an internal flight or fast train. Amy Jordan recommends pre- and post- conference panel organizers to look for offsite locations in Tokyo or Kyoto.

Amy Jordan thanks Jennifer Bartlett and Chiara Valentini for their work on the program.

II. OLD BUSINESS

1. Approval of the 2014 minutes

The minutes were circulated via the mailing list prior to the meeting. No comments and amendments were suggested. Minutes from the ICA Public Relations Division Annual Business Meeting (Hilton, Seattle, WA, USA) from May 25th, 2014 – 4:30-5:45 p.m., were approved.

Moved: Juan Carlos Molleda; Seconded: Candace White

2. Announcements from the ICA Board’s meeting (Jennifer Bartlett)
This year conference has attracted about 2600 participants, 2nd largest after London conference; overall acceptance rate was up to 42%.

**Paper acceptance and reviewing guidelines**

There is a need to increase the acceptance rate for paper and panel submissions. ICA is working on making different adjustments to include more paper and is calling divisions to suggest different panel formats that can allow more presenters.

The board has discussed the need to revise the current reviewing guidelines and a task force will be formed to look into this matter. Jennifer noted that the Public Relations Division has already initiated this process and developed a set of specific division’s guidelines, which makes the division ahead of other divisions in this matter.

The board discussed introducing primary affiliation identification for members. Given that many members are affiliated with multiple divisions, and this creates challenges when planning and scheduling the conference program, ICA members will be asked to declare their primary affiliation.

**Internationalization**

ICA is constantly promoting internationalization. It has been approved to have 3 board representatives from different regions. Jennifer Bartlett announced that she has proposed her candidacy for one of these internationalization posts.

**Student representative**

The student representative post has been implemented across ICA divisions, yet with different means. Some divisions have formalized the post in their by-laws, others have informally elected a student. The PR Division has currently an informal post, held by Alice Srugies. A more formal position will be discussed during next year’s meeting.

**ICA Journals and Visibility**

It has been decided to transform Communication Yearbook into a journal. The board has discussed a memorandum of understanding to have other, non-ICA journals, affiliated with the association, one from China and one from Germany.

ICA is interested in publicizing the research outputs of members and divisions more and more. Jennifer Bartlett calls on members who have research results that could be of some interest for the general society and issues debated in the society, to get in touch with Jean Paul, the communication director, and he will help pitch stories to the media.

**ICA Awards / ICA Fellows**

The PR division has not yet obtained a fellow. Jennifer Bartlett noted that no women were nominated as candidates for this year fellowship and there is a need for more diversity in proposing candidates. Jennifer Bartlett announced her intention to establish a small working group together with Bonita Neff, Chiara Valentini and few other members to work on a plan for increasing the Division chances to promote strong Public Relations scholars as next year candidates.
Increasing the annual membership fee

Last year, the division business meeting approved the motion to ask ICA to increase the amount of fee the PR Division receives from each individual membership, from $4 to $7. This action requires a general, official vote. Jennifer Bartlett reminded members that during the autumn elections, there will be a voting for passing this motion that members will need to participate in.

Conference sites

The sites for forthcoming conferences are:

- 9-13 June 2016, Fukuoka, Japan
- 25-29 May 2017, San Diego, California
- 24-28 May 2018, Prague, Czech Republic

2015 Regional conferences:

- “Responsible Communication and Governance”, 11-13 October, 2015, Copenhagen Denmark

3. Report from the Program Chair (Chiara Valentini)

Papers & Abstracts:

Overall, 159 papers and extended abstracts were submitted, a similar number of submissions as in previous years. 84 were accepted (9 as interactive posters and 73 in regular sessions). The acceptance rate was 53% (40% in 2014, 43% in 2013 and 51% in 2012)

Panels:

There were fewer panel submissions for the regular conference program this year. Three panel proposals were submitted, 2 were accepted. The acceptance rate was 66% (7 panel submissions in 2014, 18 panel submissions in 2013 acceptance rates were 60%)

Preconferences:

Three pre-conferences jointly co-sponsored with the Political Communication and Organizational Communication Divisions, were held successfully this year:

Public Sector Communication: The Challenge of Building Intangible Assets
Advancing Public Diplomacy Research: Bringing together Political Communication and Public Relations
Discussion, Dialogue, Discourse: Meaning and Methods

The second PhD workshop was also successfully held at the ICA (organized by Jennifer Bartlett and Bree Davis). Jennifer thanks senior scholars who volunteered to help in the PhD program, including: Øyvind Ihlen, Maureen Taylor and Craig Carroll.
Implementation of new reviewer recruitment system

The new reviewer recruitment system approved during the business meeting in Seattle, USA in May 2014 was implemented. Faculty scholars who submitted to the division a paper or extended abstract in autumn 2014 and did not volunteer to review were called on, to take on this duty as needed. Chiara explained that this was necessary because the number of volunteers was still too low and needed to be more diverse to cover all submissions. Given that one of the division’s priorities is too boost diversity in terms of reviewer expertise and academic origins, and to keep the number of assigned papers/extended abstract per reviewer to a reasonable amount, the new recruitment system was necessary and very useful. The majority of solicited invitations for review were accepted. Chiara thanks all volunteering and non-volunteering members who accepted upon invitation for their valuable and important support to the division and call division members for a continuing support for the next years.

Feedback

Please send feedback on the 2014 Program to Chiara Valentini (c.valentini@bcom.au.dk).

III PUBLIC RELATIONS DIVISION SUB-REPORTS

Membership (Jennifer Bartlett on behalf of Lee Edwards)

PR division is among those divisions that have the most diversity. A little bit less than half members are non-north Americans. The challenge for the division is the retention of members as many members do not renew their membership every year and may do so only when they register to the annual conference.

Funds (Jennifer Bartlett)

Michael Palenchar has initiated an endowment effort to gather money for the Heath Top Faculty Paper Award. Michael briefly introduced to members what he has been doing and called members for help and support. Jennifer Bartlett on behalf of Bey-Ling Sha (not attending) informed members that Bey-Ling Sha is also working on a similar initiative to support the Grunig and Grunig Outstanding Thesis and Dissertation Awards. All interested members who think they might be able to help should directly contact Michael (mpalench@utk.edu) and Bey-Ling (bsha@mail.sdsu.edu).

Member Donations (Jennifer Bartlett)

It is easy to donate via the ICA website; members should click on "My Donations” when paying the membership fee. Jennifer thanks all those who have in a way contributed to the division, yet noted that individual membership donations are very limited and remind that even 5$ could make a difference. Amiso George noted that it may be a good idea to seek outside individual members’ donations as other associations have managed to secure sponsorships from public relations agencies and consultancies. Jennifer replied the division has been looking into this matter, but results are not yet visible.

Sponsors (Jennifer Bartlett)

The PR Division would like to thank: The Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations for continued support of the Top Student Paper Awards; Michael Palenchar for his personal support of Heath Top Faculty Paper Award 2015; and the Queensland University of Technology, School of AMPR for their sponsorship for the 2015 PhD workshop.
**Student representative (Jennifer Bartlett on behalf of Alice Srugies)**

**Responsibilities**

Alice conducted a small survey among the graduate student members. They perceive the following functions of the Graduate Student Representative as most relevant:

1) inform about events, calls for publications, funding opportunities and job offerings
2) foster the exchange among graduate student members within the ICA PR Division
3) organize events that are specifically designed for graduate students of the ICA PR Division

Moreover, the graduate student rep should also 1) foster the exchange between graduate student members and senior scholars with the ICA PR Division, and 2) foster the exchange of graduate student members of different ICA divisions.

**Communication**

Newsletters/e-mail are perceived as the most useful communication channel for informing people about events and initiatives, while Facebook as most useful for networking. Alice will circulate an e-mail regularly with information on events, calls for publications, funding opportunities, job offerings etc. for the graduate student members. A student section on the website could serve as an information repository where information on events etc. is collected. Moreover, information on scholarship programs etc. and region-/country-specific information may also be added in this section of the website.

Facebook can be used for highlighting information on single events, research projects, funding opportunities etc. as well as to foster networking among the graduate student members and communicate on events that are specifically designed for graduate students of the ICA PR Division.

Alice will also be exploring the possibility of setting up an event at the upcoming regional conference in Copenhagen (in cooperation with other Student Representatives) focusing on collecting international experiences at an early career stage (e.g. staff mobility programs).

**Newsletter and website (Jennifer Bartlett on behalf of Lee Edwards)**

Jennifer called on members to provide relevant information on call for jobs, publications and other relevant material to Lee Edwards. She also noted that members can directly post some of this information via our FB page (https://www.facebook.com/groups/icaprdiv/). Jennifer thanks Mark Eisenegger for his constant help in providing a website space for the division website and contributing with his webmaster task. Yet, it was noted that the website needs some updates and some changes to make it more appealing and user friendly. The current ICA web page for the divisions is too static, does not allow us to upload documents and PDF or to send attachments via its mailing list.

Chiara noted the need to consider investing in buying a hosting space and create a site for the division.

**Social Media Policy (Chiara Valentini on behalf of Lee Edwards)**

Chiara briefly presented the social media policy that was developed by the social media policy task force lead by Lee Edwards. The policy was circulated via email prior to the conference. Chiara calls for
comments and amendments. Timothy Penn commented that it may be a good idea also to make the role of the moderator more explicit (what, when and how to moderate). Sherri Veil suggested adding to the policy more specific job description on a social media coordinator. It has been agreed that these revisions will be made to the social media policy before sharing it one more time via the mailing list for the final approval.

Chiara noted that the social media policy will be informally adopted and would not need to have a general voting in autumn. Chiara also announced that once the social media policy will be approved there will be a need to recruit volunteers to implement the Division presence in the three selected social media. Candace White suggested establishing a social media manager in charge of this. Chiara added that this task may be undertaken by the student representative or otherwise discussed by the social media policy task force. Members interested in volunteering for managing social media pages should contact Lee directly.

Craig Carroll proposed to clean up current FB page from non-ICA members, since these will have access to privilege information without actually paying the membership. Craig noted that by allowing non ICA members to be part of the FB group we may de-incentive Division membership. Chiara noted that the information provided in FB is not specifically ICA related and is available also from other sources, thus not compromising the benefits received as ICA members. She also added the need to be more inclusive and noted that it could be a way to attract new members. Craig put forward a motion to clean up the FB page. The motion was not seconded.

Reviewing guidelines (Chiara Valentini)

Chiara briefly introduced the reviewing guidelines developed by the reviewing guidelines task force during the summer 2014 and tested during this year conference reviewing process. The guidelines were circulated via the mailing list prior to the conference.

Chiara informed members about the follow-up survey prepared by Anna Kochigina and thanked her for her work. Accordingly the survey shows that the reviewers found the questions useful for assessing the quality of full papers, extended abstracts and panel proposal submissions. A few reviewers suggested abolishing the extended abstract option. Jennifer added that extended abstract format helps increasing diversity in submissions and allows for the inclusion of new research ideas. Chiara added that the division would like to continue offering this opportunity, but that there may be a need to work more on explicitly providing more information in the call for papers on how to prepare an extended abstract and to the reviewers on how to assess.

Katerina Tsetsura noted that some reviewers questioned whether the reviewing guidelines are too focused on theory building and devalue more practice-oriented papers. Michael Kent commented that the division planner can change and add different criteria in the online submission system, thus making the reviewing process more precise. Chiara added that this was already implemented in this year’s reviewing process, when the guidelines were pilot tested. She also noted that the guidelines should not be considered as rigid criteria that cannot be changed after approval, but on the contrary they can be adjusted along with the concerns of the division and should serve as a starting point for scholars to know what the division is looking for in the program and for reviewers not yet experienced or new to the division to judge the quality of the work.
No additional comments for amendments and corrections were suggested, Chiara concluded that the reviewing guidelines task force will be instructed to finalize the guidelines, which will be circulated via the mailing list and made available to our division website. The guidelines will be used for next year’s conference programming.

**Presentation of Top Papers**

The top 3 student paper awards for 2015 (supported by The Planck Center) are:

1. **Understanding Publics’ Perception and Behaviors in Crisis Communication: Effects of Crisis News Framing and Publics’ Acquisition, Selection, and Transmission of Information in Crisis Situations**
   Young Kim; *Louisiana State University* *winner*

2. **Raising the Standing of Evaluation in Dialogic Research: The Influences of Budget and Evaluation Style on Dialogue Implementation**
   Jin Huang; *U of Southern California - Annenberg School for Communication* **second**

3. **Extending the Life and Reach of Communication: Information Sharing, Resonance, and Aware Publics in the Digital Age**
   Amanda Kehrberg; *University of Oklahoma* ***third***

The Robert L Heath Top Faculty Paper Award joint winners are:

Online conversation and corporate reputation: A two-wave longitudinal study on the effects of social media exposure
*Corne Dijkmans; NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences*

*Peter Kerkhof; VU University Amsterdam*

*Asuman Buyukcan-Tetik; VU University Amsterdam*

*Camiel Beukeboom; VU University Amsterdam*

*Veracity and Transparency as Myths. A Framework for the Analysis of Deception in Public Relations. Kerstin Thummes; University of Muenster*

**IV NEW BUSINESS**

**Nominations for new Secretary 2016-2017**

Katerina Tsetsura nominated Alina Dolea, University of Bucharest, Romania, as secretary, who accepted the nomination.

Dean Kruckeberg nominated Candace White, University of Tennessee, TN, USA, as secretary, who accepted the nomination.

The nominations were moved by Katerina Tsetsura. Seconded by: Several members simultaneously

Nominations were closed.

The Election takes place in autumn 2015.

**Other announcements from the membership in attendance**

Magda Pieczka briefly presented the scope and history of *Public Relations Inquiry* and called for members to consider it as a venue for critical, qualitative public relations and public communication scholarship. Topics that the journal is interested in include: points of intersection between PR and other
issues or disciplines, but also problematic questions such as globalization, national identity, social justice, or topics that are covered in a limited way by PR scholarship, such as tourism, sport, art, historiography, etc.

Following Magda’s presentation, Maureen Taylor asked whether the division has adopted PRI as associated journal and if not whether other journals have been considered. Craig Carroll replied that the question of having an associated journal is ongoing and that a formal decision has not been taken. Juan Carlos Molleda confirmed that no official voting was taken but having an affiliated journal could be beneficial also in term of having a sponsor.

Dean Kruckeberg noted that, while not being against having PRI as an associated journal, this journal scope is too narrow to represent the diversity of research produced by the division members. Many of which do quantitative studies and thus would not be represented by PRI scope. Craig Carroll suggested that the discussion on an affiliated journal needs to be followed up in more detail and proposed to take a decision during next year conference in Japan. The proposal was taken on by the division board.

**Job announcements**

A number of job openings were announced:

Massey University, Waddington Campus, New Zealand, will shortly announce an opening for public relations scholars.

Oklahoma University is hiring at all levels following Maureen Taylor’s and Michael Kent’s departure to a different university. More information will follow. One of the positions may be an endowed chair position.

An opening at Minnesota State University will be announced shortly.

There is a 1 year position as Assistant Professor at Indiana University Northwest.

**Other announcements**

Maureen Taylor reminded members of the recent call for papers for her and Kim Johnson’s edited handbook on engagement. The Handbook is a peer review edited volume that includes theory building chapters as well as case studies of engagement in education, politics, marketing, advertising, public relations, public diplomacy, and employee relations. The Handbook will provide a comprehensive examination of engagement theory and research to advance current thinking in engagement theory, strategy and practice. It will include original conceptual, empirical and practical perspectives. The scope of the book will focus on the concept of engagement in modern organizations and societies from a multidisciplinary perspective. It will draw on international leaders from the academy, corporations, and government.

Kathy Fitzpatrick announced her interest in proposing an ICA interest group in public diplomacy and called for members that are interested to approach her.

**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

Jennifer Bartlett closed the Business Meeting at 5.45.