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## Internationalisation, transparency, visibility

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## **President's column for ICA Newsletter, May 2008**

### **Internationalisation, transparency, visibility**

Sonia Livingstone

In writing this final column in my role as ICA president, I began by looking back at my candidate statement when I stood for election in summer 2005. The priorities I set out there were internationalisation, transparency, visibility. Once elected, I made myself a huge 'to do' list and, I'm afraid, I made similar lists for quite a few others! I'm grateful that they took this in good part and, nearly two years on, I am delighted that ICA has made good progress regarding each of these priorities. Let me elaborate.

### **Internationalisation**

Making ICA more international has been a priority for the association for some years, for it has required some significant structural and cultural changes. I think there are good signs that ICA is, indeed, becoming more international – in its membership, its conferences and publications and, most important, in its awareness of diverse modes of scholarship world wide and its ambition to bring these together constructively. Our new journal just launched, *Communication, Culture, & Critique*, is an excellent illustration of this ambition.

In the past year, the internationalisation committee especially has been very active, and several further steps have been taken. These include a Board policy on regional conferences (several of which are to be held this and next year, in Mexico City, Melbourne and Budapest) and the decision that its members-at-large should each nominate two candidates for ICA awards each year. The board also agreed, at the last meeting, that efforts to further internationalise the association would be an agenda item for each division and interest group business meeting in Montreal – so, if you have further ideas as to how to advance this agenda, these meetings, and those being held by the internationalisation committee, are good opportunities to do so.

The composition of ICA's committees this year was roughly half US scholars and half from a wide range of countries, and we will continue to report these, and the gender breakdown, to the board annually. The publications committee has debated styles for manuscript submission, determining that though APA would remain the publication style, though for submissions from those unfamiliar with APA, style should not affect the decision; and Blackwell's author assistance program should help here also. The decision taken last year to translate all our journal abstracts into French, German, Spanish, Mandarin and Korean is now well established and, we hope, useful.

I've been working to increase our association memberships – the newly formed European association (ECEA) has now joined, and discussions are underway with the Asian Media and Information Centre (AMIC) and the Spanish Communication Association, among others. Following a request from the International Federation of Communication Associations, the Executive Committee has agreed to provide resources, both financial and in kind, to help its efforts especially to support the formation of new communication associations in developing countries.

Some of you have noticed that I work down the corridor from the current president of IAMCR! I have, therefore, taken this opportunity to clarify and extend our friendly working relations with IAMCR by negotiating a formal Memorandum of Understanding (see website, under 'governance'). Approved by the January board meeting, this accords IAMCR honorary association status in ICA, as well as encouraging more informal collaboration between the associations.

One long-hoped for task is now coming to fruition, namely that the ICA website should provide a resource by which to locate communication associations around the world, whether or not they are formally linked to ICA. The Internationalisation Committee and others have been collecting names and urls for as many associations as possible, and Sam Luna is, as I write, linking them into an interactive world map on the website. The idea is that, if you are visiting another country, or want to find information about communication scholarship outside your own country, this would be a great place to start. The list of communication associations that we have so far, while growing fast, is nonetheless very incomplete. So, we're putting the list in your conference pack, and you are invited to add to the list if you can. Thanks!

## **Transparency**

I was partly inspired to stress the importance of transparency in my election statement because, when I first stood for election, so many people asked me – but how does ICA work, who does what, how is the money spent and, most important perhaps, I don't know how to get involved. So, working closely with the ICA office – especially Michael and Sam, and my great assistant at LSE, Yinhan Wang, we've put a lot of effort into the website this year to improve transparency, building on the big redesign of the website in the previous year.

The Board of Directors' meeting minutes are now posted on the website (under 'Governance'). It's easier to find out what all the committees do, what task forces exist, who won previous years' awards, and more. Since transparency doesn't only mean putting the information online, but also means helping people find it, we've introduced a Frequently Asked Questions feature, both to address questions directly and to provide a series of links in the answers to different parts of the website. The idea is that these are for members and also for anyone wanting to know more about ICA, including those who might join and want to learn more first. Do check these out on the home page, and if you want to add an FAQ, please let us know.

Coming any minute now is a second set of FAQs, for members only. This is designed to answer all those questions about governance and participation, providing clear answers and quick links to questions like, how is ICA governed, how are divisions and interest groups established, what does the board do, and how are things decided – officers, conferences, budgets, etc. I know that some of you already know the answers to these questions, but I also know that many don't, so we hope this is helpful. Again, if there's more questions you want answered, let us know – this feature should grow as members want it to, not stay static.

One of my last acts as President is to produce ICA's first annual report. As I have discussed with the Executive Committee and the Board, I think it is vital that an organisation of ICA's scale and ambition should produce a publicly accessible annual

report of all its activities, including all the divisions, interest groups, committees and task forces, as well as noting officers, award winners, budget and so forth. It may not be the most exciting document in the world, but for members and, also, for those casually trawling our website to see what ICA is about, this will surely be valuable.

Beyond letting people know what ICA is up to, the purpose of transparency is to facilitate accountability of officers to the membership and, further, to enable more people to become more involved so as to take forward improvements and new initiatives. Sam Luna has created a social networking facility on the website to make it easier to find colleagues according to member profiles and to hold discussions in division/interest group forums. So, over to you!

## **Visibility**

In my election statement, I expressed concern that, although communication is well established in many countries in terms of teaching, scholarship, publication and policy, it is not always as visible as we would hope to the wider public – both the general public and the specialist publics of other academic disciplines, funding organisations and policy makers.

Some of the initiatives noted above, in terms of internationalisation and transparency, will also work to enhance the visibility of the association and, more importantly, communication scholarship – for example, the FAQs on the website, the journal abstracts in multiple languages, the annual report and the links with other communication associations. The expansion of the ICA awards, to encompass innovative work in relation to urban communication, communication research as a collaborative practice and as an agent of social change, and the award for those outside communication who have contributed to it, should also aid visibility. I hope too that the decision to appoint a content editor for the newsletter – and thanks to Mohan Dutta for taking this on! – will encourage even more people to read the newsletter and learn of our work.

However, this issue will, I think, remain a priority for ICA. I know that both Patrice Buzzanell and Barbie Zelizer have this on their agenda for the coming few years. One difficulty is that publicity is expensive – if there were more money in the pot, I would have loved to appoint a press officer, even part-time or, perhaps, in the run up to the annual conference. In principle, of course, our field is the most experienced of any in terms of producing and implementing a communication strategy so, I hope, further steps can yet be taken.

All the above filled most of my to-do lists, along with guiding the committees and task forces in their work this past year. I may have forgotten some items, though, and I look forward to their reports and proposals at the upcoming conference in Montreal.

## **Last but not least, a thank you to....**

One of the best things about the past year is all the great people I've had the pleasure of working with. Such a lot of creative energy, ideas, care and commitment! It's been an honour to work, both formally and informally, professionally and personally, with so many of you this year.

In Montreal, I shall hand over to Patrice Buzzanell, ICA's incoming president, though I shall remain on the Executive Committee for a further three years. I wish Patrice all the very best!

On behalf of ICA, and myself, I hereby warmly thank all of the following:

The Executive Committee: Jon Nussbaum (past president), Michael Haley (executive director); Wolfgang Donsbach (finance chair), Ron Rice (immediate past president), Patrice Buzzanell (president-elect) and Barbie Zelizer (president-elect select).

The ICA Board of Directors: Mark Aakhus (Language & Social Interaction Div. Chair), Paul David Bolls (Information Systems Div. Chair), Oliver Boyd-Barrett (Global Comm/Social Change Div. Chair), Patrice M. Buzzanell (President Elect), Lynn Schofield Clark (Popular Communication Div. Chair), Lynn A. Comella (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender IG Co-Chair), Wolfgang Donsbach (Finance Chair, ex-officio), Sherry Lynn Ferguson (Board Member at Large), Rebecca C. Hains (Student Board Member), Michael L. Haley (Executive Director, ex-officio), Pamela J. Kalbfleisch (Interpersonal Communication Div. Chair), Yu-li Liu (Board Member at Large), Mikaela L. Marlow (Student Board Member), Vicki Mayer (Feminist Scholarship Div. Chair), Gianpietro Mazzoleni (Board Member at Large), Marion G. Mueller (Visual Communication Studies Div. Chair), Patricia Moy (Political Communication Div. Chair), Amy Nathanson (Instructional/Developmental Div. Chair), Robin Nabi (Mass Communication Div. Chair), James W. Neuliep (Intercultural Communication Div. Chair), John E. Newhagen (Journalism Studies Div. Chair), Jon F. Nussbaum (Past President), David W. Park (Communication History IG Chair), David J. Phillips (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender IG Co-Chair), Elena E. Pernia (Board Member at Large), Ronald E. Rice (Immediate Past President), Juliet P. Roper (Board Member at Large), John L. Sherry (Game Studies IG Chair), Kumarini Silva (Ethnicity & Race in Communication Div. Chair), Cynthia Stohl (Organizational Communication Div. Chair), Douglas Storey (Health Communication Div. Chair), Sharon Strover (Communication Law & Policy Div. Chair), Jan A. G. M. Van Dijk (Communication & Technology Div. Chair), Betteke van Ruler (Public Relations Div. Chair), Ingrid Volkmer (Philosophy of Communication Div. Chair), Bernadette Maria Watson (Intergroup Communication IG Chair).

The ICA Office: Michael L. Haley (Executive Director), Sam Luna (Member Services Director), Deandra Tolson (Accounts and Member Services Associate), Tina Zeigler (Administrative Assistant), and Michael J. West (Publications and Website Manager).

The Finance Committee: Wolfgang Donsbach (Chair), Jon Nussbaum, Ron Rice.

The Membership Committee: Michael Haley (Chair), Gianpietro Mazzoleni, Diana Rios, Hiroshi Ota, Jennifer Bartlett.

The Student Affairs Committee: Rebecca Hains (Co-Chair), Mikaela Marlow (Co-Chair), Jianxun Chu, Sabine Fritz, Bing Han, Irina Gendelman, Benjamin de Cleen.

The Liaison Committee: Andrea Press (Chair), Monroe Price, Andrea Pitasi, Jolan Roka, Michael L. Haley, Eszter Hargittai.

The Internationalization Committee: Sherry Lynn Ferguson (Chair), Yu-li Liu, Elena Pernia, Jianxun Chu, Wim Elving, James Anderson, Juliet Roper.

The Publications Committee: Mohan Dutta-Bergman (Chair), Sriramesh Krishnamurthy, Ingrid Volkmer.

The Awards Committees: Christina Slade (Overall Chair)

Outstanding Book Award: Ling Chen (Chair), Valeria Manusov, Paolo Mancini, Clifford Nass, Ted Zorn.

Outstanding Article Award: Nurit Guttman (Chair), Bruce Bimber, Albert Gunther, Debashish Munshi, Don Ellis.

Applied Public/Policy Research Award: Jan van Dijk (Chair), Pat Aufderheide, Kirsten Drotner, Michael McDevitt, Cees Hamelink.

Young Scholar Award: Tamara Golish-Afifi ((Chair), Claes de Vreese, Nadia Caidi, Lidwien van de Wijngaert, Laura Guerrero.

Steve Chaffee Career Productivity Award: Judee Burgoon (Chair), Stan Deetz, Donal Carbaugh, Cindy Gallois, Peter Dahlgren.

Fisher Mentorship Award Committee: Franklin Boster (Chair), Peter Monge, Patricia Moy, Elizabeth Toth, Howie Giles, Elena Pernia.

The James W. Carey Urban Communication Award: Lana Rakow (Chair), Bella Mody, Paschal Preston, leo Jeffres, Casey Lum, Harvey Jassem.

The Social Science Research Council Awards: Ingrid Volkmer (Chair), Monroe Price, Joe Karaganis, Sandra Braman, Myria Georgiou.

Media and Communication Policy Task Force: Bruce Williams (Chair), Georgina Born, Susan Douglas, Dale Kunkel, Shih-hung Lo, Sharon Strover.

ICA Fund Raising Task Force: Stewart Hoover (Chair), Jennings Bryant, Noshir Contractor, Ellen Wartella, John Wiemann.

Division and Interest Group Formation Review Task Force: Barbie Zelizer (Chair), Peter Monge, Robin Nabi, John Sherry, Patti Valkenburg.

I think in the lists above I've thanked some of you, and especially Michael Haley several times over, but that's appropriate! And apologies if I've inadvertently left anyone out. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in Montreal – it promises to be a great conference.

