

**Rhetoric and Public Address Interest Group  
Eastern Communication Association  
Cambridge, MA April 27, 2012**

In attendance (12): Valerie Schrader, Heather Stassen-Ferrara, Ben Bates, Mike Hostetler, Abbe Depretis, Tim Barney, Trevor Parry-Giles, Tracey Holden, Jill Weber, Elizabeth Thorpe, Jennifer Biedendorf, Christine Hirsch

Nancy Willets called the meeting to order at 6:03pm. She thanked everyone for attending and thanked Hirsch for her service to the interest group and to ECA. Willets requested feedback from the group regarding the extension of programming on Thursday, Friday and Saturday in order to avoid programming on Sunday morning.

1. The minutes were approved by acclamation.
2. Executive Council Report (from Ben Bates)
  - a. Ben Bates is the new editor for Communication Quarterly
  - b. ECA is financially strong
  - c. Executive Council is exploring site selection for 2016; there was discussion about going to Hartford, CT or going outside the region.
  - d. Executive Council discussed what ECA's identity is and how to best communicate that identity. The logo contest has been extended. Some members of Executive Council are looking into an ECA app.
  - e. An ethics statement is emergent.
  - f. The Rhetoric and Public Address Interest Group is healthy. We have 146 members, which makes us the second-largest interest group. Interest groups need 25 members.
  - g. Executive Council voted to make the McCroskey-Richmond Undergraduate Scholars Conference permanent.
  - h. Executive Council (EC) proposed a by-law change concerning representatives to EC. If passed, each interest group will have a representative on EC at all times.
3. Report on Programming (Christine Hirsch)
  - a. We had a low number of submissions this year. Hirsch asked for suggestions on how to increase the number of submissions in the future.
    1. It was suggested that possible reasons for the low number of submissions included travel funding cuts at colleges and universities and the location of the conference.
    2. Bates suggested that program planners email graduate programs to encourage submissions.
4. Elections
  - a. Jill Weber was elected secretary for 2013-2014 by acclamation.
  - b. Tim Barney was elected Vice Chair Elect-Select (Chair for the 2015 conference) by acclamation.

## 5. New Business

- a. Next year's convention will be in Pittsburgh. The theme is "Confluence."
- b. There was a discussion about the importance of program planners attending the interest group's meeting during the year they become chair.
  1. Valerie Schrader agreed to fill out the information required of the incoming chair and deliver it to Danette Ifert Johnson.
- c. Possible panel ideas were discussed. Some ideas included:
  1. Working with other interest groups, such as Voices of Diversity, Political Communication, and Interpretation and Performance Studies.
  2. Confluence regarding the Democratic and Republican parties in Pennsylvania
  3. Social movement rhetoric and the Occupy Movement
  4. J.K. Rowling's new book
  5. Text and context as confluence
  6. A spotlight panel
    - a. It was suggested that we ask several prominent scholars to present what they feel is their best work. Jerry Hauser and Rosa Eberly were suggested as possible names for the spotlight panel.
- d. A discussion ensued about how we can encourage participation at ECA and within our interest group.
  1. Questions arose. Should we tell people that our acceptance rates are high? How can we persuade people that this is the right place to send their papers?
  2. It was noted that ECA is a small, welcoming conference that allows people to meet and talk to senior scholars. It was also noted that ECA is less expensive than many other conferences. Concern arose that people are choosing boutique conferences over regionals – for example, RSA was in Philadelphia this year, which might account for the low submission of papers to RPA.
  3. It was suggested that we use the Blogora to get the word out.

## 6. Comments for the Good of the Order

- a. The interest group thanked Chris Hirsch for her service; she thanked the group for their support.
- b. Announcement of the Top Paper: "A Question of Rights vs. What is Right: A Textual Analysis of the Anti-Defamation League's and President Barack Obama's Statements Regarding the Proposed Islamic Center near Ground Zero" by Valerie Lynn Schrader, Lauren J. Joseph, Barbara Wade, and Stephen R. Couch of Penn State Schuylkill.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Valerie Lynn Schrader  
Secretary