

American Society for the History of Rhetoric Interest Group (SSCA) NCA 2004 Report

The meeting was called to order in the Lancaster Room of the Wyndham Harbor Island Hotel at 4:30 Pm EST. by Chair William Harpine of the University of Akron. The first order of business was the election of John A. Campbell of the University of Memphis as Secretary. Chair Harpine then summarized the action of the SSCA executive committee. Among the items he mentioned were: the '07 convention is scheduled for Louisville the convention for '08 for Savannah; Chair Harpine urged interested persons to contact Trudy Hanson with their preferences for future convention sites; he reported a disagreement as to whether the *SJC* should participate in the EBSCO consortium which would make our journal electronically available; he announced the Political Communication interest group had been elevated to the status of a Division.

Chair Harpine suggested that under new business we might want to consider the possibility of applying for Division status ourselves. He reviewed reasons why this move might be advisable and some why it might not.

Chair Harpine asked for a report from the in-coming chair for next year, Professor Jason Munsell of Columbia College, South Carolina who, as Vice Chair, had been responsible for this year's programming. Vice Chair Munsell reported that this year our paper submissions had doubled. He attributed this in part of the breadth of topic invited by the call he issued and to the various venues in which he submitted it. In addition to *Connections* he submitted the call to *CRTNET*. This year, he reported, we sponsored one full panel submission and ten individual papers which were combined to form two panels. VC Munsell also reported that we had joined in co-sponsoring an additional panel independent of us in origin. He reported on the giving of awards for particularly excellent papers. Elena Strauman won the award for Top Paper. Ben Ponder had been awarded Best Student Paper.

Chair Harpine commended VC Munsell for his excellent work.

Our next item of business was the election of new officers. Christie Moss was elected Vice Chair Elect. Chair Harpine explained that her office carries a three year term and that she will be planner for the convention in Dallas.

Shaun Treat was elected Secretary for next year.

Professor Stan Weiss was elected as representative for a two year term for the Nominating Committee. His term will run from '04 through '05. In subsequent years the term of the Nominating Committee member will be for one year.

Chair Harpine in encouraging the new office holders observed, "The only reason scholarship occurs is because someone creates the infrastructure that makes it possible."

Chair Harpine declared the floor open for new business.

Following the earlier suggestion, John Campbell moved that the organization apply for Divisional status. The motion was multiply seconded and the discussion began.

Paraphrasing arguments introduced earlier by President Harpine, though adding possibly one or more of his own, Campbell presented the following reasons for the move: 1) An interest group gets but 1 convention slot, a Division is assigned 5; 2) A Division is allotted a \$150 budget by the SSCA, an interest group is allotted \$0.00; 3) An interest group has no vote on the executive council, a Division does; 4) As we are the oldest, most central, indeed, the most dignified and venerable part of the tradition, indeed, the trunk or root from which all the other branches sprang, it is but in keeping with the dignity of our station to be a Division.

On the other side of the issue, the downside of Divisional status is that a Division requires a \$5.00 fee from its members while an interest group requires no such fee. But, countering this issue, apparently we have 120 members which is well above the 5% of the SSCA membership that a Divisional application requires. Yet again many, perhaps all, of our membership overlaps with that of the Rhetoric Public Address Division. But again, in counter to that, since only 28 people are required to form a Division it seems reasonable to assume that even with a \$5.00 fee we would be able to qualify. Add to that the sense of property and substance associated with tradition and it seems probable, indeed, highly likely, that people associated with our Division could easily afford, or culturally speaking would feel obligated to feign, the status to which we aspire.

After a debate notable alike for its civility as for its thoroughness the question was called for. The matter was put to a vote and passed with the unanimous assent of the members assembled.

Following the suggestion and example of Chair Harpine a miscellaneous discussion followed in which, seeing as our next meeting is to be at Baton Rouge, the idea of a panel in honor of Andrew King was discussed. Various suggestions were made about panels featuring papers on Andrew King, Richard Weaver and the connection of LSU with Eric Vogelin and with the tradition of dignified, genteel and reflective reaction. Astutely mindful of the situated character of rhetorical discourse, Professor Dan Grano, our incoming Vice Chair, an LSU graduate, and resident expert on Machiavelli, offered a variety of suggestions for potential panels appropriate to our locale.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:18

*We have 4 panels submitted for SSCA.

Officers:

Jason Munsell, Chair
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Dan Grano, Vice Chair
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Christi Moss, Vice Chair Elect
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John Angus Campbell, Secretary (for a term of 48 minutes)
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Shaun Treat, Secretary (following Prof. Campbell's reign)
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