

National Communication Association
Public Address Division
Susan Schultz Huxman, Past Chair's Report
Delivered at the PAD Business Meeting,
Nov. 17, 12:3-1:45p.m. Chicago Hilton, Continental Ballroom B

PAD delegates on the Legislative Assembly included: Amy Slagel, Lisa Hogan, and Susan Huxman

Very Brief Highlights from the 2007 Legislative Assembly, 7 hrs. worth of meetings on Wednesday, Nov. 14 and Saturday, Nov. 17, include:

1. Record Attendance.

The NCA convention (Nov 14-18th, 2007, Chicago, Ill.) set an all-time registration record with 6200 people attending.

- 2. Pre-registration will be enforced next year in San Diego.** The National Office recommended a plan of action that included dropping from the program all participants who had not pre-registered by the mandated deadline (early August). The policy will be tested for a period of three years and would apply to the 2008 convention. Guest passes will be issued for special experts, so these people do not need to pre-register. Also only those who are sole authors or first authors must pre-register.

Delegates raised many questions about the early August pre-registration date. Most raised objections related to the fact that people don't know if they'll receive funding from their institutions that early. This would be a particularly difficult situation for students and adjunct faculty.

NCA executive committee reiterated that 80% of people attending the conference are on the program---very different than a decade ago. This situation creates special problems if people don't pay but come anyway or simply take a division slot and don't show up.

Lots of discussion continued on Saturday. Many delegates shared that their constituencies were upset about the proposal—especially the early deadline as many people are not even back in school by August 6th.

On Saturday morning a new resolution was proposed that modified the original amendment. "The designated presenter" [not the first author] of any accepted paper must pre-register for the conference by the set deadline."

NCA executive committee reiterated that the association loses between \$80,000 and \$200,000 a year (over 400 people come but don't pay). And that the early August date was non-negotiable in order to get the program to press in time.

The new resolution passed unanimously.

3. The NCA is in good financial health:

Net assets increased; reduced operating expenses; investments increased; and current assets versus liabilities ratio was exceptional: 4 to 1.

4. Budget numbers for Public Address Division:

Our division will have \$580 to work with for next year, down \$10 from last year. Division budgets are tied directly to number of members. We lost about 12 members this year. That modest sum pays for three scholarship award plaques and a \$200 check for the winner of the Marie Hochmuth Nichols Award.

5. Finance Board Action Item:

For the second straight year, the L. A. deliberated over a proposal advanced by the finance board to correct inequities in the membership fee structures. An article in the November *Spectra* highlighted the membership fee structure problem for all members.

The specific issue advanced was that the "bundled fees" for the sustaining and patron members of the Association are the real problem and need to be "un-bundled." The issue was presented as a fairness issue; not as a way to raise money for the Association.

The current structure is not fair because students and regular members pay more on site for convention registration than sustaining and patron members. This problem has become acute because dues are raised only every three years while convention fees are set annually. And virtually all sustaining and patron members attend the convention.

Many delegates expressed sympathy for the proposal but noted that they had no idea that this was a fairness issue and just assumed it was "good shopping" on their part to get the best deal!

So, the proposal before the delegate body read: sustaining and patron members will see a moderate increase in their membership fee: \$35; regular members will see a \$20 decrease; students would see no change in membership dues.

The proposal passed 76 to 33 to change the fee structure.

Questions were raised as to why keep the "sustained" and "patron" categories if they don't really mean anything anymore. The response from the finance board was that changing the names would require a constitutional change and that the Association would soon be launching a capital campaign for which these

categories might prove useful in some other configuration of incentives and rewards.

On Saturday morning, a new motion was made that would allow sustaining and patron members to choose 4 affiliates instead of the regular 3 in order to get a little more for their increased fee. Since that motion would require a change to the bylaws, it was tabled as a formal motion. The finance board assured us that it will be studied and brought back to L.A. next year for review and discussion.

6. Socially Responsible Investing.

Currently, NCA is not invested in socially responsible funds. The argument was presented that with our large size and diverse interests it would be difficult to determine what is “socially responsible.” Others against SRI also noted that SRI funds mean a lower rate of return.

On the counter-position, delegates noted that there is no such thing as value-free investing and that we are mission-driven organization. Several attempts to frame general SRI investing guideline motions failed as we were running out of time.

7. Feedback from Members.

The NCA executive committee asked that we frame this question to our division members: “What are the most important contributions NCA makes to its members?”