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WSCA Annual Meeting, March 5-9, 2010 , Anchorage, Alaska

Anchorage Awaits WSCA



by Mark Bergstrom, WSCA Executive Director

I have two goals in writing this column; one is to share with you my enthusiasm for the upcoming convention in Anchorage. Heather Hundley has planned an amazing program around the theme of "Power and Communication," and our local host team of Doug Parry and David Stevenson are working hard to provide members with exciting activities to enjoy in downtown Anchorage as well as scenic opportunities in the surrounding areas.

My second goal in writing this column is to alert members that the Local Chapter (878) of Unite Here! has contacted WSCA and notified us that they are currently in contract negotiations with the owners of the Hilton property (Columbia Sussex) where our convention is located. They have requested that we support their boycott of the property until negotiations have been completed. Obviously, this situation is extremely complex, and I am hoping that both sides can successfully resolve their differences before our convention. Having served WSCA (as Executive Director Elect) during the San Francisco convention, and having followed all of the discussion revolving around NCA's last convention at the Manchester Grand Hyatt, I know that strikes and boycotts are complicated issues, involving many stakeholders, and members want and need to be fully informed of all developments and decisions that WSCA makes as the two sides continue to negotiate.



Here I will layout a brief history of developments, share how WSCA officers are currently thinking about the issues, offer some sources for more information on the issues if you are interested, and offer to receive any input you wish to provide.

After the San Francisco convention, WSCA committed to increasing our awareness of Union activities. We have continued to improve our practices along two major fronts. First, we consulted attorneys regarding specific language we needed to include in our hotel contracts to protect us against financial damages and potentially allow us to break a hotel contract should a Union strike our convention hotel. We adopted "Force Majeure" language in the contracts that allows us to support Unions actions and break hotel contracts should the need to do so arise in our future convention planning.

Second, as part of our convention practices, local hosts often run an undergraduate class that teaches students about the convention planning industry, and then students apply course materials while volunteering in various roles at our convention or another convention. We welcome all perspectives and introduce students to hotel management philosophies, convention bureau practices, planning industry perspectives, and often include class visits from Union representatives as well. For example, during the Denver convention class, Sue Pendell had a local representative of Unite Here! speak to her class about the working conditions of hotel employees. We have tried to keep the educational mission of WSCA at the forefront of our convention and hotel selection philosophy.

When I was first contacted by Unite Here! I immediately consulted our contract, contacted our Association Meeting Management firm, and consulted legal services regarding contract options. Unfortunately, while our contract language does include the word "strikes", consensus emerged that the language would not legally extend to "boycott." The cost to break our contract with the hotel at that time was \$68,120.00. WSCA is a relatively small nonprofit; we keep costs extremely low, and we simply cannot afford to break this contract.

Given this brief background and history of develops, how are WSCA Officers currently thinking about the issues and planning for the convention? As Executive Director of WSCA, I am in constant communication with both hotel management and the local Union representative. I have talked with the local union representative, and she appreciates WSCA's efforts to strengthen our hotel contract language and our inclusion of union voices in our convention classes. Recognizing our educational mission, Program Planner Heather Hundley has graciously agreed to use the convention Kick-Off session as a discursive space where WSCA intends to allow the union workers and/or representatives an opportunity for their voices to be heard. We are still brainstorming ideas regarding the details of the session, however, I have stressed the educational mission of WSCA to both sides and issued informal invitations for participation to both sides. This year's convention theme, "Power and Communication," will help guide our shaping of this session.

There are several good sources of information on the current negotiations. I have posted a letter from the General Manager of the Hilton Anchorage on our website at: <http://www.westcomm.org/conventions/wsca-2010-Anchorage/hiltonletter.pdf> The Union has a very good webpage at: <http://www.unitehere.org/>. And the local press has ran a couple of articles: <http://www.adn.com/anchorage/story/802987.html>; <http://www.anchoragepress.com/articles/2009/06/17/news/doc4a39626b4aceb743483296.txt>

Finally, let me conclude this article by inviting you to give me any feedback or advice you have for WSCA as we move forward in this process. Please email me directly at mark.bergstrom@utah.edu

Anchorage 2010

One Step Closer...



by Heather Hundley, WSCA President Elect

Excitement mounts as we get closer and closer to the 2010 WSCA annual convention in Anchorage Alaska. The submission deadline has passed for the WSCA conference, but 2nd Vice President, Cindy Griffin is organizing the Undergraduate Scholars Research Conference with a December 1 deadline. Based on preliminary information from the Interest Group Planners, paper and panel submissions are slightly down, but not significantly. Thus, we are looking forward to the traditionally intellectually stimulating conference replete with top notch research, presentations, and networking. Additionally, the Basic Course Conference organized by Donna Gotch is designed for new and seasoned instructors alike, offering a myriad of ideas and strategies to engage undergraduate students.

Based on my email communication these past months, it appears that the unique location of Anchorage has piqued interested from our colleagues around the country. I expect that many of the WSCA "regulars" will be making new friends and meeting colleagues near and far. This is a great opportunity for graduate students and new faculty as well to extend the circle of relationships.

I remain enthusiastic to venture north and currently I relish the idea to take a break from the lasting summer heat. Enjoy the photo I am sharing from my last trip to Anchorage. The artist drew from the popular animated film, *Ice Age*, to demonstrate skills in ice sculpting. On Saturday you can walk or take the very short drive to this ice sculpting contest.



Anchorage 2010

WSCA Executives Club Spearheads Fundraising Challenge to Support Student Travel to Anchorage Convention



by Robert K. Avery, WSCA Executives Club President

The WSCA Executives Club is challenging its members and all other WSCA members to contribute to a special fundraising initiative established to raise \$2500 in matching funds to support graduate and undergraduate travel to the 2010 WSCA Convention. An existing amount of \$2500 has been contributed by WSCA members through the Memorial Fund that was created for this purpose. If the Challenge Grant campaign is successful the \$5000 will be distributed to students who are selected as the Top Student Paper from each of WSCA's Interest Groups and the Top Papers from the Undergraduate Scholars Research Conference held in conjunction with the WSCA Convention. Those wishing to make a contribution to this important fundraising initiative should write out their checks to "WSCA Memorial Fund" and mail them to Mark Bergstrom, WSCA Executive Director, Department of Communication, University of Utah, 255 South Central Campus Drive, Salt Lake City, UT 84112.

Anchorage 2010

The 7th Annual WSCA Undergraduate Scholars Research Conference: Read Your Student Papers with the USRC in Mind



by Cindy Griffin, WSCA Second Vice President

The Undergraduate Scholars Research conference is an extraordinary opportunity for undergraduate scholars and researchers. Students share original research in the form of critical investigation, experimentation, or analysis at our annual Western States Communication Association convention. We welcome papers from a diverse range of philosophical, theoretical, and methodological approaches to the study of communication. And, the USRC gives undergraduate scholars a place in which to showcase their work and receive feedback from experienced scholars.

The WSCA 2010 convention will be in Anchorage, Alaska, March 5-9. The USRC typically is held at the start of that convention, and we are planning to organize the conference so that our student scholars can attend many of the activities that are bringing us to Anchorage. Log on to WSCA's website for a fantastic slide show of Anchorage and the events planned for the convention.

Undergraduate students benefit from participating in the research conference by crafting and sharing a professional presentation, meeting other undergraduate scholars from the Western region and the U.S., learning about each others' research interests, receiving supportive feedback from scholars in the field and learning about graduate studies in communication.

The deadline for paper submissions still is far off: December 1, 2009. However, it's not too early to begin helping them plan their essays for your class with a USRC submission in mind. Papers should be between 18-25 pages in length, and now is the time to read, grade, and offer feedback that encourages students to submit to the conference. *Students who submit must be undergraduate students at the time of submission.* Students should not submit more than one paper for which they serve as primary author. Co-authored papers are welcome.

WSCA is working on securing some financial support for our undergraduate scholars so they can travel with us to Alaska, as well. For more information, please contact USRC Coordinator, Cindy Griffin (cindy.griffin@colostate.edu).

Anchorage 2010

Graduate Student Workshop and Graduate Programs Open House in Anchorage



by Cindy Griffin, WSCA Second Vice President

In conjunction with the 7th annual Undergraduate Scholars Research Conference (USRC), WSCA will host the 2010 Graduate Student Workshop and Graduate Programs Open House. Our goals at the USRC are to expose undergraduate scholars to the best of WSCA, and to give them, and other students, exposure to graduate programs within the Western States region. At the Graduate Student Workshop, panelists representing a range of graduate programs (M.A and PhD) will offer suggestions and advice in applying for, attending, and succeeding in graduate school. At the Open House, prospective graduate students will come to ask questions, seek out graduate programs, and meet students and professors from varying programs. The exact date for the Workshop and Open House are still to be determined, but plans are to schedule them so that participants can also attend the variety of activities that are bringing us to Anchorage. Registration forms for the Open House will be available soon, and if you have questions, feel free to contact the USRC Coordinator, Cindy Griffin (cindy.griffin@colostate.edu).

Anchorage 2010

WSCA Executives Club Invites Roundtable Discussion Participants



by Robert K. Avery, WSCA Executives Club President

Given that the current economic climate in higher education is creating new challenges across all facets of academic life, the WSCA Executives Club will be sponsoring a Convention Roundtable Discussion, titled *LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES IN TIMES OF SCARCE RESOURCES*. This roundtable discussion will provide the opportunity for participants to contribute their own individual experiences with managing shortages that are affecting teaching, recruitment, research, travel, and virtually every aspect of academic life. In short, participants will help convention goers gain a better understanding of the ways departments and individual faculty members are dealing with the need to do more with less. Included in the list of participants are the following:

Moderator: Robert K. Avery, University of Utah
Participants: Betsy W. Bach, University of Montana
Teresa Bergman, University of the Pacific
William Eadie, San Diego State University
Suzanne Larson, Southern Utah University
Brad Mello, National Communication Association
Monique Myers, Stonehill College
Elizabeth Rush, Arizona State University

If you want to join the discussion by sharing your own experiences and lessons learned, email WSCA Executives Club President Bob Avery with your expression of interest: rka@utah.edu

WSCA Finance Committee

Audio-Visual Survey Needs Responses



by Connie Bullis, Chair WSCA Finance Committee

Greetings from WSCA's finance committee!

At the last WSCA conference, the finance committee (Tracey Quiqley, Tom Endres, and me) was tasked with eliciting input from the membership on an ongoing audio-visual issue. I am contacting you to invite your input. Specifically, we were asked to seek opinions as a change in policy is considered. Before we make a recommendation to the Executive Council and Legislative Council, we would appreciate hearing from as many members as possible. We describe the issue here and have devised a very short questionnaire available through survey monkey.

The Issue: The proposal under consideration is whether to raise conference fees by \$5.00 in order to better support audio-visual needs. In an effort to maintain low membership and conference fees, WSCA has traditionally discouraged audio-visual equipment use except in cases where it is essential. Even so, problems arise each year as more presenters request audio-visual equipment to enhance their presentations. Conference organizers negotiate with hotels to purchase the necessary services and the hotels vary each year in their audio-visual prices. Often, hotels also charge exorbitant prices for clients to bring in their own equipment, so this is not an option for all conferences.

Please go to http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=64e_2bejwjqdyT_2fLs0kUK_2f6g_3d_3d and take a minute or two to give us your responses.

WSCA Time and Place Committee

Southern Area Bid for 2014 Sought



by Valerie Manusov, Chair, WSCA Time and Place Committee

The Time and Place committee is currently accepting bids to host the WSCA conference in February 2014. Based on the rotation we try to follow, bids are particularly encouraged from the Southern WSCA regions (Southern California, Southern Nevada, Arizona, and Hawai'i). Serving as a local host of a conference is a wonderful way to showcase the colleges in your area and to provide excellent involvement opportunities for your students and fellow faculty. To learn more about making a bid to host the 2014 conference, refer to the WSCA website <http://www.westcomm.org/> and link to "conventions." Then link to "convention guidelines," particularly pp. 3-4. If you have any questions, or to submit a bid, please contact Valerie Manusov, Chair, Time and Place Committee, manusov@u.washington.edu, Dept. of Communication, Box 353740, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195.

Editor: Bill Eadie, San Diego State University

Submit items for the October issue by October 10 to weadie@mail.sdsu.edu