International Studies Association

Diplomatic Studies Section

2012-2013 Annual Report

The Committee

The Diplomatic Studies Section (DSS) Committee consists of Geoff Pigman (Chairman), Halvard Leira (Programme Chair), Kathy Fitzpatrick (Treasurer), and Stuart Murray (Secretary). Our terms of office expire at the DSS annual general meeting in 2013, at which time an election for a new committee will be held.

Section Membership

Membership in DSS has continued its upward trajectory. Membership (which varies month-on-month as members’ memberships expire and they renew or not) as of January 2013 had reached 288, a significant increase over the prior year’s 249. Following a massive jump from 135 in 2008 to 224 in 2009, each subsequent year numbers had been increasing gradually, but an increase of 39 in this past year is suggestive of a further broadening of interest in diplomacy and diplomatic studies.

Programme

Thanks once again to the skill of Programme Chair Halvard Leira in negotiating joint sponsorship of panels and roundtables with other sections, our allocated 12 or 13 slots were turned into 19 panels and roundtables, including 7 panels created from scratch based on submitted papers. Of the 12 panels submitted to DSS (8 first choice, 4 second choice), 9 found their way to the programme, while 75 of 101 papers (46 first choice, 55 second choice) did the same. The rejection-rates are thus relatively low (13 % and 22 % respectively), and relatively similar to other sections of our size. Three of eight roundtable proposals were accepted. A number of the suggested roundtables were thematically very similar (dealing in particular with public diplomacy), so proposals were selected on the basis of maximizing participation for as many individuals as possible. As in previous years, we have had the most interaction resulting in co-sponsorships with the English School section, International Communication and Foreign Policy Analysis.

Finances

The finances of DSS continue to be robust, given that membership continues to increase, and in recent times our only significant expense has been for hosting our annual
reception. At the end of January 2012 our account balance stood at $5151.85. As of 31 January 2013, our account balance stood at $5938.20. Our expenses were $2038.65, paid towards our share of hosting the joint conference reception with the English School and CISS. Our solid and improving financial position was one of the motivating factors that led us to institute three annual prizes (see below). At the 2012 general meeting the membership took the decision to peg the two annual and one biennial prize awards at the average amount awarded for prizes given by all ISA sections.

Activities

The DSS Annual General Meeting at the ISA 2012 Annual Conference in San Diego was not as well attended as in some years, but those in attendance made up in enthusiasm for what they may have lacked in sheer numbers. A number of topics were discussed, with enthusiastic input from members. The most important issue to occupy members’ attention was the proposal from the DSS committee to create annual prizes for scholarly work in diplomatic studies. Input from members who could not attend the meeting but made written submissions in advance, for which the committee were grateful, was relayed to the meeting. Questions discussed included what would be the format of the prize submission (conference paper, doctoral thesis, paper based on doctoral thesis), how the prize would be judged, whether there would be a specific content focus (e.g. work acknowledging the growing centrality of public diplomacy in diplomatic studies), and for whom the prize might be named. The meeting decided to create three prizes instead of one:

1. a scholarly article prize;
2. a young scholar’s prize for an article or paper (with eligibility limited to those within 3 years of receiving their doctorate); and
3. a biennial book prize.

After considerable discussion, the group took the decision not to name the prizes for anyone, considering that the title International Studies Association Diplomatic Studies Article/Young Scholar/Book Prize is sufficiently prestigious on its own! The group decided that the DSS committee would solicit volunteers from amongst the membership to serve on the new DSS Prize Committee, which will be tasked with issuing the call for prize submissions, reviewing and assessing the submissions, and awarding the prizes.

For the past several years DSS have held a joint reception with the English School and CISS. In San Diego a very well attended reception took place, which was enjoyed by all. We owe a debt of gratitude to English School chair Cornelia Navari for taking the lead in planning a superb menu of local fare that provided attendees with more than enough for a satisfying evening meal! This joint hosting arrangement with the English School will continue at the 2013 annual conference in San Francisco.

Following up on decisions taken at the general meeting, the DSS committee put out a call for volunteers to serve on the Prize Committee in April 2012. It took some time to recruit
enough committee members to constitute a viable working group. By January 2013 a full complement of committee members was secured. They are as follows:

Stuart Murray (Bond University)
Rhonda Zaharna (American University)
Julie Gallagher (Pennsylvania State University - Brandywine)
Roberto Duran (Catholic University of Chile)
Marios Efthymiopoulos (Strategy International)

The Prize Committee will hold an organizational meeting at the San Francisco conference in April 2013 and will announce its call for prize nominations shortly after the conference, so that the first DSS prizes can be awarded at the 2014 annual conference.

In December 2012 the committee notified the membership that the committee’s term of office expires at the San Francisco conference and invited expressions of interest from any members interested in standing for any of the open posts. Of the existing members of the DSS committee, all indicated their willingness to continue to serve, with the exception of our programme coordinator, Halvard Leira, who is taking on other obligations within ISA. Two section members volunteered to serve as programme coordinator for the next year: Marios Efthymiopoulos (Strategy International) and Jason Rancatore (American University). Marios and Jason expressed willingness to undertake the task jointly and will be ready to take over from Halvard Leira in April, subject to the approval of the section membership who attend the annual general meeting in San Francisco. As of this writing, no members have indicated interest in standing for any of the other open posts.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the DSS Committee,
Geoff Pigman, DSS Chairman, 15th February 2013.