International Studies Association
Diplomatic Studies Section

2013-2014 Annual Report

The Committee

The Diplomatic Studies Section (DSS) Committee consists of Geoff Pigman (Chairman), Jason Rancatore (Programme Chair), Kathy Fitzpatrick (Treasurer), and Stuart Murray (Secretary). The terms of office of Drs. Pigman, Fitzpatrick and Murray expire at the DSS annual general meeting in 2015, in accordance with ISA term limitation rules, at which time an election for new committee members will be held.

Section Membership

Membership in DSS appears to be stable. Membership (which varies month-on-month as members’ memberships expire and they renew or not) as of November 2013 had reached 282, essentially equal to the January 2013 number of 288. It is not possible to present accurate year-over-year comps, as ISA has changed the calendar under which they report these data.

Programme

The following report on preparing the 2014 programme was prepared by Programme Chair Jason Rancatore:

Objectives

The Diplomatic Studies section was allocated 13 panel slots on the ISA 2014 program (a drop of one from 2013). For context, a total of 870 slots were allocated to 30 sections and caucuses. As the Section Program Chair, my task was to utilize these slots to fulfill three objectives:

1) To get as many papers and panels submitted to the section and/or related to diplomacy on the program;
2) To track as closely as I could with how things were done in the past in terms of the a) distribution of roundtables and panels; b) diversity of research on diplomacy; and c) co-sponsorships with other sections;
3) To achieve a 50/50 split of papers drawn from prepared panels and those submitted individually (as instructed by the ISA 2014 Program Chair).

I examined the allocations in 2013 to gain some sense of how things were done and spoke with the previous DPLST program chair, Halvard Leira.

Process
To achieve the first objective, the primary method is to gain co-sponsorships. The second and third objectives required reading all the submissions and making careful selections.

**Co-sponsorships.** This entails finding other section program chairs who have a common interest in sponsoring a panel, contacting them, and getting an agreement to co-sponsor (one indicates this in the ISA online interface). In this manner, each section allocates 1/2 of a slot to get a panel of interest onto the program. In short, the more co-sponsorships, the better. With one exception, co-sponsorships were drawn by looking at the two sections that prepared panels designated.

Consequently, all of the prepared full panel submissions that were selected were also co-sponsored. I was able to only obtain one co-sponsor for a panel created from the submission pool of individual papers. This all seemed to be common practice for section chairs.

**ISA online interface.** To select and build panels, I was given access to all papers submitted to the section first, and then later on to all the papers submitted for ISA 2014. There were 94 individual paper submissions that listed DPLST as a potential section. This was my primary submission pool. I added papers from outside this pool sparingly. Now because co-sponsorships almost always involved a prepared full panel, I essentially alternated between selecting a prepared panel (and finding a co-sponsor) and creating one from the submission pool. To prepare panels drawn from the pool, the ISA interface allows chairs to utilize a pre-determined set of 'keywords' to search. The interface does not allow keyword search of abstracts, only titles. In the end, I searched titles and carried out keyword searches from the primary submission pool. It was also helpful to download searches into a spreadsheet, and then read abstracts of potential submissions.

Access note: I was first given access to the 52 paper, 5 full panel, and 5 full roundtable submissions that listed Diplomatic Studies as the primary section. After three weeks, I then had access to the 42 paper, 4 full panel, and 9 full roundtable submissions that listed DSS as the secondary section.

**Acceptance rates.** Of the 9 full panel submissions, 5 were accepted (56%). Of the 14 full roundtable submissions, 3 were accepted (21%). Of the 94 individual paper submissions, 50 were accepted (53%). I do not have submission data for the 2013 ISA. I should note that DSS sponsored 3 roundtables in 2013.

**Finances**

The finances of DSS remain robust. At the end of January 2013 our account balance stood at $5938.20. As of 31 January 2013, our account balance stood at $4890.20. Our expenses were $1862, paid towards our share of hosting the joint conference reception with the English School and CISS. 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. Beginning in 2014 payments of prize awards will begin to be reflected in the annual budget.

Activities and Issues

At the DSS Annual General Meeting at the ISA 2013 Annual Conference in San Francisco, the president, secretary and treasurer were re-elected unopposed, and the programme chair was elected unopposed. All were elected to three-year terms, although the terms of the president, secretary and treasurer are term-limited to two years in this instance by ISA regulations. A number of topics were discussed. The work soon to begin of the recently constituted prize committee was acknowledged. A proposal to add up to three at-large members to the DSS committee for purposes of advising and consulting with the officers on issues that arise during the year was made. The meeting agreed to put the proposal to a vote of the membership at the 2014 Annual General Meeting in Toronto and, if the proposal passes, to elect the at-large members at that time.

Many members of the section were deeply upset and concerned by the submission process for panels for the 2014 ISA Annual Conference. The ISA exec changed the rules concerning the number of papers permitted on each panel from six to five without adequately publicising the change and making sure that members were informed. Many members did not discover the change until the day that panel submissions were due, when they found their panel submissions being rejected by the ISA's computer system. This is a matter of greatest urgency for the ISA Governing Council to address at its meeting in April in Toronto.

Many members of the section also expressed concern about the number of panel proposals that were not accepted this year. This is the first time that this has emerged as a significant issue during the tenure of the current DSS committee. It appears to be owing in part to an increase in the number of highly qualified panel and paper proposals submitted to the section, coupled with the loss of one panel allocation by ISA. This issue will need to be addressed by the ISA bureaucracy in the context of the formula used to allocate numbers of panel slots to DSS. ISA's summary decision to cut the number of papers per panel from 6 to 5 appears to have had a massive knock-on effect as well, i.e. with 6 papers/panel, more individual paper submissions would have been bundled into fewer panels composed by the DSS programme chair, and panel submissions would have incorporated more participants.

The awarding of the first DSS prizes, one for an article and the other to a young scholar, will be made at the DSS Annual General Meeting in April in Toronto. The first DSS book prize will be awarded at the 2015 AGM.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the DSS Committee,
Geoff Pigman, DSS Chairman, 1 February 2014.