The Committee

The Diplomatic Studies Section (DSS) Committee consists of Brian Rathbun (Chairman), Jason Rancatore (Programme Chair), Antoaneta Vanc (Treasurer), and Susan Harris Rimmer (Secretary), and the following at-large members: J. Simon Rofe, Gregory Shtraks, and Hugo Renderos. The at-large members of the committee were elected at the DSS Annual General Meeting at the ISA 2014 Annual Conference in Toronto in March 2014. The chair, secretary and treasurer were elected in November-December 2014. The programme chair's term of office expires in 2016.

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 2014 had reached 296, 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 15 panel slots on the ISA 2015 program (an increase of two from 2014, and the most since at least 2012). For context, a total of 902 slots were allocated to 28 sections and caucuses. The task of the Section Program Chairs was to utilize these slots to fulfill five objectives:

1) To have as many papers and panels submitted to the section on the program;
2) To gain co-sponsorships with other sections (to help achieve #1);
3) To continue to follow the traditional distribution of roundtables and panels;
4) To achieve a 50/50 split of papers drawn from prepared panels and those submitted individually (as instructed by the ISA Program Chairs);
5) To reflect the diversity of research on diplomacy.

Submission and Acceptance Data

For ISA 2015, there were 74 individual paper submissions, 8 assembled panels, and 5 assembled roundtables that listed DPLST as a potential section. These numbers are lower compared to 2014 (94 papers, 9 panels, and 14 roundtables). DPLST
accepted 49 individual papers (66%), 4 panels (50%), and 4 roundtables (80%). We achieved the 50-50 split of panels created from the individual paper pool and those already assembled.

DPLST was very successful in obtaining co-sponsorships with other sections this year. There are 24 panels (compared to 18 last year) that have some level of sponsorship from the section (i.e. are related to diplomacy).

Finances

The finances of DSS remain robust. At the end of December 2013 our account balance stood at $6525.20. As of 30 September 2014, our account balance stood at $5110.06. Our expenses were $2000, paid towards our share of hosting the joint conference reception with the English School, Historical Studies, and CISS, and $200 for the first award of the annual young scholar prize (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. Beginning in 2015 payments of all three prize awards will begin to be reflected in the annual budget.

Activities and Issues

At the ISA Governing Council meeting in April at the ISA Annual Conference in Toronto, the DSS Chair, Geoff Pigman, raised concerns of members of the section regarding procedures for submitting paper and panel proposals and for allocating panels between sections. Governing Council adopted a proposal to change the allocation formula for panels by section and caucus. This has resulted in Diplomatic Studies being allocated two additional panel slots for the 2015 Annual Conference, with the possibility of an additional slot to be added. This should be seen as an achievement for those who were concerned about the number of panel proposals not accepted this past year. The ISA Executive Board also agreed to give better warning in future when they change key regulations concerning panel submissions, particularly changes in the number of papers required for panel proposals. They showed no flexibility concerning their current (i.e. most recent) policy that no more or fewer than five papers per panel proposal are to be permitted.

At the DSS Annual General Meeting at the ISA 2014 Annual Conference in Toronto, the members of the section voted to elect up to 4 at large members of the executive committee to three-year posts to assist and advise the existing committee members (president, secretary, treasurer, programme coordinator) as and when required. Members then elected 4 at large members: Antoaneta Vanc (Quinnipiac), J. Simon Rofe (Univeristy of London - SOAS), Brian Rathbun (University of Southern California), and Gregory Shtraks (University of Washington). Kiron Skinner has volunteered to assist our programme coordinator, Jason Rancatore, on an informal basis. Antoaneta Vanc and Brian Rathbun vacated their posts upon election to the posts of chairman and treasurer in December. Hugo Renderos, runner up in the
election for secretary, agreed to be co-opted by the committee to fill one of the vacant at-large posts.

At the AGM, the award of the first DSS Prize, the Young Scholar Prize, to Anthony Deos (University of Otago) for his recent article in Sport in Society, 'Sport and Relational Public Diplomacy: The Case of New Zealand & Rugby World Cup 2011', was made. The first DSS article prize and book prize will be awarded at the 2015 AGM.

In November-December 2014, members of the section voted to fill the three executive posts of committee members Geoff Pigman, Kathy Fitzpatrick, and Stuart Murray, who were term-limited by ISA from serving beyond the 2015 AGM. The election was conducted online by ISA, a first for the Diplomatic Studies Section. Participation in the voting process was the highest ever for the section membership, for which the committee is grateful. The new committee members took office, Commonwealth-style, immediately upon confirmation of their election.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the DSS Committee,
Brian Rathbun, DSS Chairman, January 2015.