FULL REPORT

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Amelia Arsenault, Georgia State University (Section Program Chair 2016/17 & Section Chair 2017/18)
Babak Bahador, University of Canterbury (Section Chair 2015/16)
Craig Hayden, American University (Section Program Chair 2015/16 and Section Chair 2016/17)
Steven Livingston, George Washington University (2014 – 2016)
James Pamment, University of Texas at Austin (2014 – 2016)
Shayna Plaut, University of British Columbia (2014 – 2016)
Shawn Powers, Georgia State University (2015 – 2017)
Jenifer Whitten-Woodring, University of Massachusetts Lowell (2015 – 2016) (Past Section Chair)

BEST PAPER COMMITTEE
Feng-Yung Hu, Yuan Ze University
Milton Mueller, Syracuse University
Laura Roselle, Elon University (Chair)
Helen Yanacopulos, Open University

BEST BOOK COMMITTEE
Jacob Groshek, Boston University
Nanette Levinson, American University
Ben D. Mor, University of Haifa
Gary Rawnsley, Aberystwyth University
Ken Rogerson, Duke University (Chair)

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH COMMITTEE
Colin Alexander, Nottingham Trent University
Senem Cevik, Ankara University
Tom Jamieson, University of Southern California
Efe Sevin, Kadir Has University (Chair)

ICOMM PRECONFERENCE COMMITTEE
Babak Bahador, University of Canterbury (Chair)
Chiara de Franco, University of Southern Denmark
Emily Metzgar, Indiana University
Gabriella Paar-Jakli, Kent State University
Ken Rogerson, Duke University
Jenifer Whitten-Woodring, University of Massachusetts Lowell
MEMBERSHIP

The section’s membership is international and diverse in terms of institutional affiliation, seniority and geographical reach: The section membership as of 16 December 2015 was 201, which is the highest it has ever been, marking a steady growth pattern over the last decade. We project further growth in the future. In 2015/2016, a membership growth committee was established to reach out to both existing members to renew their memberships and new potential members working in the area of international communication to join the section.

To encourage new membership and enhance the experience of existing members, the section 1) began a preconference, creating 36 new opportunities to present research through six panels and one poster session; 2) continued organizing poster sessions at our annual reception with 12 posters; 3) actively promoted the scholarship of members within and outside ISA both formally (awards) and informally (though social media, our newsletter and our section website).

ISA ANNUAL CONVENTION, NEW ORLEANS, LA, FEBRUARY 2015

The ISA 2015 Annual Convention took place in New Orleans, LA, USA, from February 18-21, 2015. The ICOMM Section sponsored or co-sponsored 33 panels and roundtables, including two poster sessions and a panel honoring the work of Monroe Price, the recipient of the ICOMM Distinguished Scholar Award. Our section was pleased to continue collaborating with a variety of other sections.

The ICOMM Business Meeting and Reception took place at 7.30pm on Thursday February 19, 2015. Routledge, Provalis Research and the USC School of Public Diplomacy sponsored the Reception. Section business covered at the meeting included the recognition of the best paper award, the recognition of the Distinguished Scholar, and the transfer of section chair duties from Jenifer Whitten-Woodring to Babak Bahador. A no-host dinner was organized on the same evening following the event for further networking opportunities.

ISA ANNUAL CONVENTION, ATLANTA, GA, MARCH 2016

The ISA 2016 Annual Convention will take place in Atlanta, GA, USA, from March 16-19, 2016. ICOMM section panels will represent a wide range of interests and disciplinary perspectives. For 2016, 125 individual papers and 25 panel proposals were submitted. Of these, only 10 were not ultimately incorporated into the ISA program with many selected by other ISA sections, indicating strong interest in ICOMM-related scholarship across many sections. Overall, ICOMM is sponsoring 32 panels and roundtables, with 11 sponsored independently, 18 sponsored with other divisions, two poster sessions and a Distinguished Scholar panel.

The selection criteria for papers and panels were based primarily on topical relevance to the division. Panels were also selected on the basis of equity in order to include a diversity of scholarship. Co-sponsorship strategy was driven by similar criteria of topical relevance, and, opportunities to strengthen relations with other ISA divisions or expand exposure of ICOMM related work at ISA. ICOMM co-sponsorships are listed below (please note that some panels are sponsored by more than two sections):

- International Political Sociology 6
- Diplomatic Studies 6
2016 BUSINESS MEETING AND RECEPTION

The ICOMM Business Meeting and Reception is scheduled for 7.30pm on Thursday March 17, 2016. The reception will be sponsored by the same sponsors as the previous year: Routledge, Provalis Research and the USC Center for Public Diplomacy. The meeting will review developments over 2015/16 and outline goals for 2016/17. It will also formally recognize the best book, best paper and Distinguished Scholar award winners.

RECEPTION POSTER SESSIONS 2016

For the second time, ICOMM is hosting a poster session featuring the work of 12 junior scholars at our reception. This is in keeping with our section’s goal of fostering the work of our junior scholars and expanding opportunities for them to present their work.

THE 2016 ICOMM PRECONFERENCE, GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY, ATLANTA GA, MARCH 15, 2016

For the first time, the ICOMM section will hold a preconference on March 15th, 2016 – the day before the start of the annual ISA conference. The conference title is “Communication, Peace and Security in the 21st Century”, keeping with the annual ISA conference theme of “Exploring Peace”. The conference will consist of four keynote speakers, two panel sessions (with three simultaneous panels in each), and one poster session. Keynote speakers are Professors Lene Hansen (University of Copenhagen), Phil Seib (University of Southern California), Robert Entman (George Washington University) and Steven Livingston (George Washington University). Through its panels and poster session, the conference opens up 36 new opportunities for new and established scholars to present their work. As this conference is the day before the main ISA conference, it allows attendees to participate and network in a small-conference environment while also benefitting from the larger ISA conference that begins the following day. As of December 16, 2015, 77 people had registered for the conference.

THE ICOMM DISTINGUISHED SCHOLAR AWARD

For the 2016 Distinguished Scholar Award, the ICOMM Executive Committee received five nominations. The 2016 Distinguished Scholar Award winner, selected through a vote of the Executive Committee, was Professor Robert Entman of George Washington University, in recognition of his significant contributions to the field of International Communication. Professor Entman will be honored at the ICOMM Distinguished Scholar Panel, which will include colleagues and former students who have worked closely with him over a number of decades. He will also be recognized at the ICOMM Section Reception and Business Meeting.
The ICOMM Best Paper Award

Six nominations were received for the best paper award, which aims to select the best paper presented at an ICOMM panel during the 2015 annual conference. All best paper committee members read all the papers, ranked them from 1 to 6 and shared substantive comments about their rankings. A winner was chosen based on the rankings and comments. The winning paper was Rhys Crilley (University of Birmingham) for his paper, "Through the Mud and the Blood to the Chatroom Beyond": The British Army on Facebook 2009-2012". This paper addresses an important issue: how countries seek legitimacy for the use of force. The committee was impressed by the connection between theory and data. The paper contained an interesting argument and used a variety of methods including content analysis, interviews, and focus groups. The analysis was thorough and the paper was written well.

The ICOMM Best Book Award

For the first time, the ICOMM section selected a best book award winner in 2015/16. This was based on a review of three nominations following a section call for nominations. The book selected was Strategic Narratives: Communication Power and the New World Order (Routledge 2013), by Alister Miskimmon (Royal Holloway, University of London), Ben O'Loughlin (Royal Holloway, University of London) & Laura Roselle (Elon University).

Strategic Narratives sets out an ambitious agenda - to define and develop a more robust perspective on the foundations of world order. To do this, the authors guide the reader through the importance of narratives in both foreign policy and public diplomacy. These narratives - their formulation, projection, and reception - are indispensable to the production and maintenance of global order, hitherto conceived primarily in realist-materialist terms. The authors carefully unpack important trends across a range of geopolitical, cultural and theoretical spaces, to present unified frameworks that distil complex systems into meaningful understandings. At a time when acceptance of ‘soft power’ is universally and uncritically adopted by both governments and the academic community, Strategic Narratives reminds us that the concept of ‘power’ is neglected too readily in favor of more cultural approaches to strategic international communications. The book is well written and carefully researched and will serve as a foundation that informs and impacts the next generation of political communication and international relations scholarship (and practice).

Section Communication

The ICOMM section uses a number of tools to communicate with members, including:

- The section listserv, which reaches most of the membership through a mass email. The list serve is regularly updated to add new members
- Through the ISA organization, which sends out mass emails to all current section members
- ICOMM’s Twitter handle: https://twitter.com/ISAICOMM
- ICOMM website: https://isaicomm.wordpress.com
- ICOMM’s newsletter Catalyst (published twice a year)

These communication tools are also available to section members who wish to send out important announcements related to the section and its members.
VIRTUAL MEETINGS

ICOMM’s Executive Committee met in person once at the 2015 ISA conference and held seven virtual between the ISA annual conferences.