RELIGION AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (REL) SECTION

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

This report was prepared by Monica Duffy Toft, REL Section Chair

FULL REPORT

This annual report of the Religion and International Relations Section covers the section’s activities for the period 2018–2019.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM CONTRIBUTIONS:
The REL section of the 2019 annual conference program was organized by Vice Chair/ Program Chair Peter Henne. REL successfully expanded its original panel quota with numerous co-sponsorships. The initial REL quota was 16 panels—the same amount as last year—which expanded to 25 with co-sponsorship. A total of 16 panels were co-sponsored.

REL GRADUATE STUDENT PAPER AWARD:
REL annually gives an award to the best paper written and presented by a graduate student at the previous ISA annual conference. This year’s award committee members were Matthias Basedau (German Institute of Global and Area Studies), Sabine Dreher (York University) and Anita Weiss (University of Oregon). This year’s award winner is Basileus Zeno (UMass, Amherst), “The Political Culture of Sectarianism in Syria: A Critical Examination of the Sectarianization Process in Syria, 2011-2013.”

REL DISTINGUISHED BOOK AWARD
This year’s Book Award Committee was composed of Jonathan Agensky (Ohio University), Emilia Powell (University of Notre Dame) and Gregorio Bettiza (University of Exeter). This year’s award goes to Mikhail A. Alexseev and Sufian N. Zhemukhov, Mass Religious Ritual and Intergroup Tolerance: The Muslim Pilgrims’ Paradox’ (Cambridge, 2017).

The committee also recognized Richard A. Nielsen, Deadly Clerics: Blocked Ambition and the Paths to Jihad (Cambridge, 2017) and Jocelyne Cesari, What Is Political Islam? (Lynne Reinner, 2018).

The book awards will be presented by REL during the REL reception at ISA.
**REL Distinguished Scholar Award:**
REL annually recognizes a scholar who has achieved high distinction in scholarship and service to the field with its Distinguished Scholar Award. The 2018 committee was composed of Mark Juergensmeyer (University of California, Santa Barbara; previous year’s winner), Vendulka Kulbalkova (University of Miami) and Fabio Petito (University of Sussex). The committee extended the Distinguished Scholar Award to Scott Appleby (Notre Dame).

REL will hold a Distinguished Scholar Panel and a reception to celebrate Professor Appleby’s work at the 2018 Annual Convention, and the award will be extended during the reception.

**Reception at the Annual Conference:**
REL raised $2000 for the 2019 Reception. The main sponsors are Georgetown University’s Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs ($1000) and Center for Strategic Studies at Tufts University’s Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

The total cost of our reception will be $3000, so this year, we will be using only $1000 from our section budget for the reception.

**Membership History for REL:**
2015 = 216
2016 = 245
2017 = 250
2018 = 260
2019 = 230

Membership has declined, so the leadership team has been reaching out to colleagues to increase REL’s numbers.

**REL Budget**
Our budget is healthy. Our balance as of November 2018 is $8,804 (for reference, in 11/14 the balance was $2581, in 11/15, the balance was $3228, in 11/16, the balance was $8249, and in 11/17 the balance $8740).

**Elections:**
REL elections were held in 2017–2018. Monica Duffy Toft (Tufts University) was elected to the Chair position, Peter Henne (University of Vermont) to Vice Chair position, Jonathan Agensky (Ohio University) to the Secretary position, and Vendulka Kulbalkova (University of Miami) and Anita Weiss (University of Oregon) were elected to be members-at-large.
MEDIA/SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

REL has a regularly updated webpage under ISA and also has an active Facebook group with 140 members. To boost membership, future administrations might want to consider creating / managing a Twitter account or make use of other platforms to reach out to potential and current REL members and scholars whose work are in the intersection of religion and international studies.