The membership of the Theory Section is down slightly from last year to currently 569 members. According to the figures from ISA headquarters, we have grown from 5 in 2010, 53 in 2011, 260 in 2012, 433 in 2013, 543 in 2014, and 593 in 2015, to 597 members at the beginning of 2016. Now we are experiencing a slight turn backward, in a context in which membership numbers for many (although not all) other sections have also dropped. Like last year, we are the 7th largest of the ISA sections and caucuses, of which there are a total of 33.

Preparation for the 2017 Baltimore Conference

The Theory Section received an allocation of 39 panels this year, about the same as last year’s allocation (38). One of these was used for the distinguished scholar panel honoring William E. Connolly, organized by Jairus V. Grove. This left us with 38 open panel slots.

Through co-sponsorships – sometimes with as many as four or five other sections – our actual presence on the program remains significant. We accepted panels on planetary politics, the materiality of weaponry, the transformation of global politics and genocide and new theoretical trends in politics and time. Key co-sponsorships occurred with international political sociology, historical international relations and ethics and included panels and roundtables with strong cross-field interest: from race, genocide and affect theory, to ethics, temporality, and historical political thought. The program chair’s focus was on selecting panels and roundtables that highlighted niche areas of theoretical innovation. Another goal was to create a pluralistic program of panels and topics that point to the vibrancy of theoretical breadth in international relations.

In total we sponsored or co-sponsored 73 panels and roundtables. Theory created 10 panels ‘from scratch’ and contributed papers to joint efforts at panel construction from other sections as well. The key difficulty here has been, as in previous years, finding good discussants. In part, it is important to encourage our members to volunteer for chairing and discussant duties to facilitate ‘from scratch’ panel creation. In part, we may need to ask ISA to update the keywords list to include terms closer to our section’s interests, so that we can better assess who’s a good fit for what.

Our section received the following submissions for Baltimore 2017: Submitting to ISA Theory as first choice: 31 panels and 11 roundtables, 91 papers; submitting to ISA Theory as second choice: 23 panels, 6 roundtables, 61 second choice papers. Final acceptance rates to the program: panels: 31/54 - 57.4%, roundtables: 10/15 - 66.6%, papers: 60/152 - 39%
These acceptance rates are similar to last year. This may be reflected in the general tapering of the section’s membership numbers for the past two years. In fact, membership numbers have fallen off between 2016 and 2017, from 597 to 569, or a drop of 4.6%. Moreover, we have not noticed a material amount of withdrawals from the program after the registration deadline, as may have been the case in previous years.

**Other Activities**

The main ISA Theory website is live at http://www.isanet.org/ISA/Sections/THEORY. We continue to host most resources at an external site: http://www.isa-theory.org/. For news relating to the ISA Theory section and its substantive concerns, all are welcome to join our Google Group (located at https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/isatheory), follow us on Twitter at @TheorySectISA, and like our Facebook Page (https://www.facebook.com/isatheory/).

The Theory section will hand out its 2016 awards at the 2017 ISA Annual Convention in Baltimore. The Paper Award committee has bestowed the Post-PhD Paper Award to Dr. Louise Wise, of Queen Mary University of London, for her paper “Three Colonialisms, the ‘Developmental’ State, and the Global Constitution of Genocide.” The Pre-PhD Paper Award has been awarded to Gitte du Plessis, of the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, for her paper, “Enemies of the state? The discrepancy between threat and use in the weaponization of infectious agents.” The Best Book Award has been awarded to Professor Patricia Owens, of the University of Sussex. Her book is titled *Economy of Force: Counterinsurgency and the Historical Rise of the Social* (Cambridge University Press, 2015). Impressive as this work was, it was not alone. Four additional books stood out for their combination of originality, intellectual boldness, and rigorous argumentation. We are thus pleased to recognize this year’s 'short list' of finalists: Dr. Alexander Anievas's and Dr. Kerem Nisancioglu's *How the West Came to Rule: The Geopolitical Origins of Capitalism* (Pluto, 2015); Dr. Janina Dill's *Legitimate Targets? Social Construction, International Law and US Bombing* (Cambridge, 2014); Dr. Vincent Pouliot's *International Pecking Orders: The Politics and Practice of Multilateral Diplomacy* (Cambridge, 2016); and Professor Robert Vitalis' *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Cornell, 2015). The Theory Section also introduced a new award: The Theory Section Prize for Edited Volumes, Special Issues, and Symposia. The inaugural winner of this award is Professor Mark Salter for his edited volume *Making Things International, Volume 1* (University of Minnesota, 2015).

Please join us for the Theory section business meeting, where we will present these awards. The business meeting will be held at 6:15 pm on 24 February in Stadium 1 at the Marriott Inner Harbor. We would like to thank the members of all three award committees for their efforts: Drs. Shailja Sharma, Helen Kinsella, Ty Solomon, Eric van Rhythoven, Daniel Levine, Jessica de Alba Ulloa, Harry Gould, Lauren Wilcox, Ilan Zvi Baron, Nicole Sunday Grove, and Tine Hanrieder.

Our distinguished scholar in 2016 was Professor Kimberly Hutchings. The panel honoring her in Atlanta included Fiona Robinson, Christine Sylvester, Mervyn Frost, R.B.J. Walker, Martin Weber, Jane L. Parpart, and Elke Schwartz. Our fourth distinguished scholar, to be honored in Baltimore in 2017, is William E. Connolly. His distinguished scholar panel – including Jairus V. Grove, Waleed Hazbun, James Der Derian, Kathy E. Ferguson, Nisha Shah, Elisabeth Anker, and Debbie Lisle - is scheduled at 4:00 pm on 24 February in the Grand East Ballroom at the Marriott Inner Harbor. Please join us for this event and at
our joint reception with International Ethics, where we will also honor Professor Connolly. The latter will take place at 7:30 pm on 24 February in Peale A at the Hilton Baltimore.

**FINANCES**

The current balance of the Theory section’s account is $4,856.85. That is an increase of $331 dollars over this time last year. For this year’s joint reception with the Ethics section, we have committed $1656.90, which is $82.53 less than last year. Despite spending a little bit less we were able to moderately increase the amount of food and increase the number of drink tickets from 200 to 275 to accommodate either a modest growth in our membership or at least a moderate increase in their desire to drink.

Sponsorship for the event was also secured from Cambridge University Press and Rutgers University totaling $1300. Cambridge University Press expressed enthusiasm for their support and suggested continued support. However, the Press is not likely to increase the support unless there is a specific reason for Cambridge involvement. Rutger’s sponsorship is a one-time contribution related to the Distinguished Speaker Award being given by the Ethics section. At our current earnings trend, we should be able to continue to cover the increasing cost of food and drinks as well as fluctuating sponsorship.

Assuming that membership dues have come in for the year, as the deadline for conference registration has past and therefore likely the majority of membership renewals, then we are experiencing sustainable growth. That is, we are not significantly increasing in size but revenue suggests we are maintaining our size with either slight growth or by gaining a few more members than we are losing. If these modest gains can be maintained, we will be able to continue our reception events as well as our support of scholar travel and scholarly publishing in the form of our annual awards.