ISA-West President and Program Chair’s Reports 2011
President’s Report, Douglas Becker, University of Southern California

ISA-West’s Annual Conference was held for the first time in Pasadena at the Hilton Hotel, Pasadena on September 23 and 24. In 2010, the executive board of ISA-West made the decision to move the conference held each September from San Francisco to Los Angeles. 2010 was a successful conference because there were a number of schools who committed to supporting the program. These included the University of Southern California, Pepperdine University, and Loyola Marymont University. But the cost of holding the conference in downtown Los Angeles at the Westin was prohibitive, so Jeanne White at ISA negotiated a more attractive rate in Pasadena at the Hilton. The new hotel’s location is more attractive due to its proximity to Colorado Boulevard (and its famed “Old Town Pasadena”). Cab fare from LAX to Pasadena is a set fare and is quite comparable to the cab fare to downtown Los Angeles.

From a business perspective, the conference was successful. We rather easily met the room block, owed in part to a very reasonable hotel rate. The cost of the facilities was also reasonable, so that the Friday evening reception and Saturday afternoon lunch were not prohibitive. The region will likely struggle with these programs in the future, considering some of the changes in the Professional Development Funds procedures. But I will discuss these changes at the appropriate time.

The Friday speaker was ISA President Beth Simmons, and the reception was well attended. The Saturday luncheon speaker was David Kaye from UCLA, who spoke to the growing internationalization of the enforcement of humanitarian law. Both speakers came voluntarily, so the costs were limited. In addition, we held an “Author Meets his Critics” panel featuring former ISA President David Lake, who discussed *Hierarchy in World Politics*.

We continued our undergraduate research program at ISA-West, with the purpose to put all undergraduate submissions on the same panels with a faculty member serving as chair and discussant. This ensures the undergraduates will get a full conference experience, while saving traditional panels for faculty and graduate students.

Pepperdine University and Loyola Marymount provided financial assistance for the conference. Additionally, the Active Learning in International Studies (ALIAS) section of ISA provided assistance for two panels dedicated to pedagogy issues. Finally, the University of Southern California’s Center for International Studies continued to provide logistical support and invaluable expertise for the conference.

Overall conference participation increased. This year, 111 people pre-registered for the conference and an additional 14 registered at the conference. Please see the Program Chair’s report for the number of panels and papers given.

The composition of the Board changed in the following ways: the new Program chairs for 2012 are Jennifer Ramos of Loyola Marymount College and Donna Nincic of California Maritime University. Robert Williams of Pepperdine University assumed the position of President. Doug Becker of the University of Southern California moved to the position of Past President. In addition, Laura Sjoberg, University of Florida, was reelected Treasurer and Lisa Burke, University of Denver, was reelected as Communications Director. Additional members of the ISA-West Board are: Amy Eckert of Metropolitan State College of Denver, Patrick James of the University of Southern California, and Lui Hebron of California Maritime University.
The greatest challenge that ISA-West faces is to broaden its appeal beyond Los Angeles, and to secure more institutional support outside the region. The key is an appeal to the schools of the University of California system. We have had participants from UCSD, UCLA, and UCI, but we would like to cement these ties with membership on the board of some key faculty from those institutions. The shared program chair position, linking both the Southern California schools (Loyola Marymount) with a northern California school (California Maritime University) should work toward that goal.

Program Chair’s Report, Robert Williams, Pepperdine University
The 2011 ISA-West theme was “The Individual and the International.” The ISA-West program participation was once again stronger in Los Angeles than in San Francisco. This year we ran 26 panels and had 102 presentations. We had some first-rate scholarship and want to identify the following works as particularly noteworthy. The outstanding Faculty paper award went to Jessica Peet of the University of Southern California, entitled “Beautiful Souls and Bodies: Understanding Sex Trafficking in Conflict.” The Amy Eckert Award for outstanding paper addressing the theme went to Julia Burdette Moore of the University of New Orleans, entitled “Leader’s Age, Regime Type, and Likelihood of Suffering from Anti-Government Demonstrations and Civil War.” The outstanding Graduate student paper was delivered by Shaina Western of the University of California at Davis, entitled “A Social Explanation of Commitment: A Reevaluation of States’ Commitment Against Torture.” And the second annual winner of the ISA-West Undergraduate Paper Competition was Shane Bilsborough of Pepperdine University, whose paper was entitled “The Strategic Implications of China’s Rare Earth Policy.”

Professional Development Fund Report, ISA-West 2011
Douglas Becker, ISA-West President 2010
One challenging issue the section faces is what is amounting to a potential reduction of support from the Professional Development Funds from previous years. In previous years, the Professional Development Committee would award sections $2000, which was used to subsidize the program quite directly (often to provide support for our Saturday luncheon speaker program). We would insist this speaker address a relevant topic of professional development. In the past, we had speakers address issues of pedagogy, human rights policy, and military policy issues around robotics used by the Department of Defense. This year, the Professional Development Committee limited support to directed support for specific programs, and notably stated that the sections could not use this line of funding to subsidize this luncheon program.

To address this new restriction, the section simply applied its funds to individuals who were presenting on issues on professional development. Some of these presenters were simply asked not to pay their registration. These included speakers from outside ISA (and in one noted instance, one who was not an academic but instead an attorney). In all, 21 presenters did not pay the $80 registration fee, which totals $1680.00. A couple of notes about this funding are necessary. Clearly the section was not eligible for the full $2000 grant, considering that we just did not have enough presentations on professional development issues. 21 presenters is a rather high number of presentations of these issues, compared with past programs. Additionally, many of these presenters likely would have paid a registration fee if we had requested, so the new grant rules did represent a decrease in financial support for the section. Even if we were to develop new programs and invite more presenters to address these issues, the new rules will represent a decrease in historic support for the conference. The funding will need to be made up in other areas, likely through increased fundraising from other sources. While I understand the motivation for the changes in the funding rules, the new result is to place financial burden on the sections.