Minutes of the Public Relations Division of the 
International Communication Association Annual Meeting 
San Diego, USA, May 25, 2003, 3:45-5:50 P.M. (Unapproved)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by chair Bonita Dostal Neff. She introduced the board members Sherry Devereaux Ferguson (chair elect), Hochang Shin (vice chair elect) and Betteke van Ruler (secretary). Bonita welcomed all attendees. She distributed copies of the minutes, as well as a document for written comments on the online ICA newsletter.

2. Minutes Seoul, Korea, 2002

A member noted some spelling errors. All attending members (23) approved the minutes of the 2002 meeting.

3. Activities Review

a. Online ICA newsletter. In order to save money, ICA has started an online newsletter. Members of the PR Division were invited to comment on this new process. In response, Kirk Hallahan expressed an interest in having a division newsletter again. Some members do not read the ICA newsletter, but they would like to know what is going on in public relations worldwide. The chair will explore possibilities for an electronic division newsletter.

b. Pictures of the previous conference. Photographs are available at the website under “Newsflash”. No other division has pictures.


d. Division and ICA budgets. The PR Division, which has about 300 members, is approximately $200 under its budget. Since ICA has had some financial problems, this money has gone back to the ICA. Because the budget is tight, annual ICA dues for most membership categories (excluding students) will be raised by $30. When members renew, they should not forget that Amazon.com gives a discount to members of ICA. Members should try to pay by means other than credit cards when possible, because the ICA must pay a fee to credit card companies.

e. Research funding. ICA is now affiliated with the UN. This affiliation gives possibilities for funding, and the chair would like for our division to become involved. She also mentioned a Ted Turner fund of $40,000 and the National Research Council as a funding possibility. (Future newsletters will give additional information on these funding sources.)

f. Awards. The chair will put together a committee to encourage people to submit names for ICA awards, and she would like to receive suggestions.

f. Pre-conference. The theme was “What is going on in public relations in different countries?” Bonita suggested that a global update or “roundup” should be incorporated into all future conferences. Thirty-five members attended the session, which also included a workshop presentation on technology/culture by Tom Kelleher and Michelle O’Malley. Students would like to have a reduced rate ($15). The chair will raise the issue at the next meeting of the ICA executive. One member expressed an interest in having this session during the conference itself. Others would like to maintain the pre-conference as an opportunity to connect
informally with other division members and to give time to recover from long voyages and changes in time zone.

g. Deaths and retirements. There will be a tribute to Bill Adams, who passed away. Although Bob Cox is retiring, he will maintain the position of Executive Director Emeritus. He has expressed an interest in teaching public relations and conducting research in the field.

h. Other. ICA has established a new division: Intergroup communication. Some members would like to have joint sessions with the Organizational Communication Division.

3. Program Chair Report

Program chair Sherry Ferguson acknowledged that some problems were experienced with the submission of papers and the review and ranking processes. Despite the difficulties, Sherry noted that Robert Craig was extremely helpful in dealing with the problems as they arose. Since the online submission system was in its first year, we are hopeful that the situation will be better in the coming year. Division members expressed their appreciation for Sherry’s contribution.

Attendees at the business meeting had some suggestions for better functioning of the systems. Michael Kent suggested that submitters mail their papers to the program planner after submitting online. Attendees regretted that there were few papers available at the conference. Why not bring abstracts with email addresses? Members would like for ICA to take care of electronic distribution of the papers. Additional suggestions for system improvements were noted in written format.

4. Future Conferences

The chair welcomed Wolfgang Donsbach, who encouraged the members to come to the 2004 conference in New Orleans. The theme will be “Communication Research in the Public Interest.”

The conference hotel will be the Sheraton at $125 per night. The chair also welcomed Katerina Tsetsura, student representative to the ICA board. Both would like for more students to become more involved in the ICA.

The 2005 conference will be in New York; and the 2006 conference will be abroad, perhaps in Berlin or in Prague.

5. Other Business

Sherry honored Bonita for her four years of hard work.

6. Meeting Adjourned

The chair thanked the members for joining her in this meeting and invited all to join the PR division dinner. She adjourned the meeting at 5:50 P.M.

Submitted by Betteke van Ruler, Division Secretary