

FALL 2007

Women's WORDS

Strength in Diversity

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necessary to
worry about the
fate of women in
the academy?**

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Editor's Note:

Can you believe fall is not only here, but we're on our way to winter? This newsletter is full of information of celebration, suggestion, and contemplation as we go inside and indoors over the coming months.

I want to thank everyone who contributed to this newsletter. It's a real show of solidarity and belief in the interest group when people contribute items. It keeps the newsletter vital and interesting and our community energized.

I also want to thank Dawn Paine for her ongoing and excellent work with this newsletter. It's the first time we're completely online and with Dawn at the helm, it will be an exciting change of venue.

Best wishes everyone.

Debra Merskin
UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

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Women's WORDS
Announcements

Ann Jabro

Ann Jabro was promoted to the rank of University Professor at Robert Morris University. She is the first woman to earn this prestigious promotion, which recognizes sustained career contributions in the areas of teaching, research and service. After working in regional and national media for close to 10 years, Jabro began her academic career serving as chair of the Communication Department at Wilson College.

Wilson's mission was to enrich women through a well-rounded liberal arts curriculum designed to develop the whole woman. Her work in the School of Communication at Penn State University focused on the enhancement of pedagogic practices utilized during small group and team experiential and service learning projects. She was the first recipient of the PSU Constituent Alumni Society's "Excellence in Teaching Award." At Robert Morris, she has chaired the Middle States Periodic Review Committee, Graduate Curriculum Committee and served on the Executive Council of the Faculty Federation. She earned an Honorable Mention from Lambda Pi Eta - Tau Sigma Chapter "Outstanding Communication Faculty Award." Jabro has served as Chair of the Broadcast Education Association's Gender Issues Division, President of the Pennsylvania Communication Association, and Secretary of NCA's Environmental Communication Commission.

Radhika Parameswaran

Radhika Parameswaran's (Associate professor, School of Journalism, Indiana University, Bloomington) book chapter, "Reading the visual, tracking the global: Postcolonial feminist methodology and the chameleon codes of resistance" is forthcoming in the *Handbook of Critical Indigenous Methodologies* (Editors, Norman Denzin, Yvonna Lincoln, Linda Tuhiwai Smith), Sage Publications. Her article "The others sides of globalization: Communication, culture, and postcolonial critique" is forthcoming in the inaugural issue of the new ICA journal *Communication, Culture, and Critique*. She served as a faculty expert for the media studies division of the National Communication Association's doctoral honors seminar in July 2007 at University of Colorado, Boulder. She organized a conference (with two other faculty) on cultural studies and activism, which was held at Indiana University, Bloomington, in February 2007. She joined the editorial board of the new journal *Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture* in fall 2007.

Diana Rios

Diana Rios is the new Chair of the elected Standing Committee on Teaching for AEJMC. She is also Program Chair for the Feminist Scholarship Division of the International Communication Association.

The Fate of Women in the Academy



Brenda J. Wrigley, Ph.D., APR
Syracuse University



This summer I made a commitment to read a couple of books I'd been saving up for beach reading. *One of them was Are men necessary? When sexes collide* by Maureen Dowd, a regular columnist for The New York Times. The book's title provoked raised eyebrows by some of my fellow beach-goers, particularly the guys, but I read on.

When I was finished I had learned some things, laughed a lot, and concluded that gender really is an organizing function for society in more ways than I had imagined. Nearly every day we see gender in the headlines, whether it's Larry Summers apologizing to the girls who do math and science, or John Edwards swearing he'd never wear pink to a presidential debate.

So, it's especially interesting that talk is afoot to possibly reconsider the continued existence of groups such as the Commission on the Status of Women in AEJMC. We might title the book, *Is it necessary to worry about the fate of women anymore in the academy?* Yes, boys and girls, it is necessary. Whether we look at recent studies on salary, promotion and tenure, or gather anecdotal evidence from our colleagues, the picture is still pretty clear. Things can sometimes be different for women in the academy—and just about everywhere else in our culture, for that matter.

The reasons for this are yet to be quantified, but here are some reasons why continuing to have a commission that represents and explores our issues is a good idea:

- Women are the majority in today's college classrooms. We want them to aspire to careers in the academy. If they see discrimination, they'll graduate and leave, never to return again.
- In many fields, it's getting harder and harder to find qualified faculty. Why would we limit the pool by ignoring the concerns of half the population?
- Recruiting top administrators in higher education has become even tougher.

Women can make great leaders. But if they perceive bias, they may opt for the comfort zone of the faculty ranks, shying away from aspiring to top positions. Again, we lose some very good talent.

- Finally, it's fun to debate these issues and learn from each other about challenges and opportunities that confront both genders. It enriches our lives as scholars and teachers.

I would argue that having a Commission on the Status of Women for AEJMC is perhaps more critical today than years ago when women were slowly beginning to join the academic ranks. We have a real chance to shape the future for the next generation of female scholars and educators. Our focus needs to be sharpened. Our determination re-energized. The very future of higher education depends upon it.



Financial Awards for Top Student Papers

Stacey J.T. Hust, Ph.D.

*Assistant Professor,
Edward R. Murrow School of Communication
Washington State University*



Stacey J.T. Hust

Stacey joins the CSW executive board as recorder/secretary for 2007-08.



CSW Officers

(Left to Right): Cory Armstrong (First Year Co-Chair), Dustin Harp (Program Chair), Von Whitmore (Immediate Past Chair), and Jennifer Rauch (Research Chair).

Anyone in attendance at CSW's business meetings during an annual convention can see the group's members span generations. What is not readily apparent, however, is that established scholars have mentored many of the group's younger members, including myself, into academics. In fact, prior to working on research projects with advisors or academic mentors, some of us had not even considered working in academics. It was just not an apparent option.

That's why many CSW members, I believe, consider collaborating with graduate and undergraduate students on research projects as central to the commission's mission. It's one way in which young women and minorities can be exposed to the myriad options graduate education can afford them while learning important professional and academic skills. An extension to this mission, of course, is mentoring students as they take on their own research projects.

In light of this dedication, CSW members voted during the 2007 Convention to begin to offer financial awards for the top student papers accepted into the Commission.

According to the call for papers, "The winner of the top student paper will be awarded \$100 and the winner of the second student paper will receive \$50, to help defray costs of attending the conference. Student papers are those having only student authors (i.e. no faculty co-authors) and should be clearly labeled as such."

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Awards

*The Commission on the Status of Women
is pleased to announce the recipients
of the following awards:*



Lana Rakow

**Top
Faculty Paper**

Lana Rakow,
University of North Dakota.



Barbara Barnett

**Mary Ann
Yodelis Smith
Research Award**

Barbara Barnett,
Kansas University



Ingrid Bachman

**Top
Student Paper**

Ingrid Bachman,
Texas at Austin



Roger Cooper

**Top
Faculty Paper**

Roger Cooper,
Ohio University

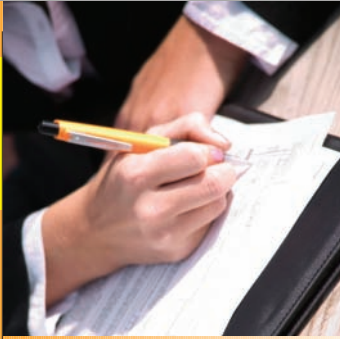


Hillary Lake

**Mary A. Gardner
Award for
Graduate
Research**

Hillary Lake,
University of Oregon,

*Hillary was also
a Top Student Paper author
this year for CSW.*



COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, AEJMC

Business Minutes

Friday, August 10, 2007 • 6:45 p.m.

PREPARED BY JENNIFER RAUCH

Von Whitmore called the meeting to order. The 2006 Minutes were approved as published in the newsletter and on the Web site.

I. OFFICER REPORTS

Co-chair report (Von Whitmore):

- 1) The listserv has been established and is managed by Von, who spoke in favor of open discussions taking place there. The syllabi exchange has also been resurrected on the listserv.
- 2) Von called for contributions to the audio project on CSW history. She has already started interviewing people for podcasts, and offered recorders to anyone interested in helping.
- 3) Financial balances were reported. \$1288.50 remains in the general fund, along with \$25,181.82 in the interest-bearing MAYS account, \$7034 in the interest-bearing Allen account, \$5802 in the Gardner account.
- 4) In response to a member question Von announced that current member count is 198, according to Pamela Price's list.
- 5) Von discussed the AEJ self-study conducted by the genius group. There is a legitimate concern that AEJ could be restructured or some units dissolved/combined. She noted that it's important for CSW to continue establishing itself as a viable party of the organization and distinguish itself from other "diversity" units (e.g. disabilities, minorities, GLBT, etc.). The new AEJ president would like every commission and group to program a panel next year on the "state of its area"—in our case, feminist scholarship and women in journalism, etc.—and to produce a 3-5 page white paper for AEJ headquarters that explains our views. We should start thinking of ideas.
- 6) Member vote on the 2011 conference site. 2008 will be Chicago, 2009 Boston, 2010 Denver, 2012 Chicago for the 100th anniversary of AEJMC, 2013 probably DC again. Options included St. Louis \$145, Nashville \$210, Omaha \$115, Minneapolis #190, San Antonio \$175, Kansas City \$168, Louisville \$160, Detroit \$168, Memphis \$178, Austin \$250, Chicago \$199, New Orleans \$190, Dallas \$169, Knoxville \$138. The top three member choices to be reported to the Council are Minneapolis with 12 votes, Nashville with 6 votes, and Memphis with 4 votes. (All other cities had 0, 1 or 2 votes.)

Program Chair's Report (Cory Armstrong):

- 1) She discussed the turnout at CSW events so far this conference, such as the mini-plenary, feminist teaching, and cross-platform sessions. She noted that 20-35 people have attended most panels. Due to the CHIP auction, we had one less program than usual last year and will have one more next year in compensation.
- 2) Member asked how many programs were held this year and who we co-chaired with. These can be compiled from the AEJ program and made available in the next newsletter.

Awards: Von distributed awards to the top faculty and top student papers, as well as to the Yodelis and Gardner awardees. Top faculty awards went to Lana Rakow and Roger Miller. Top student awards went to Hillary Lake and Ingrid Bachman. The MAYS award went to Barbara Barnett. The Gardner Award went to Hillary Lake. The recipients will be listed in the next newsletter.

Research Chair report (Dustin Harp)

- 1) Dustin noted that doing all online submissions this year for the first time went well. She thought the process was easier and less time-consuming than before.
 - 2) There were a total of 38 submissions. 29 of these were faculty authored or co-authored (per Council rules), of which 17 were accepted for a 59% rate. 9 student papers were submitted and 5 accepted, for a 55% rate.
 - 3) Dustin said that 43 judges responded to her call, so that each only read 3-4 papers.
 - 4) A member called to congratulate Dustin on publication of her book.
 - 5) Another member expressed concern that many critically oriented gender papers may go to CCS instead of CSW.
- D. Newsletter Editor report (Von Whitmore, since Deb Merskin was absent): Two issues of the newsletter have been published this year, with formatting support from Michelle McCoy. As a cost-saving measure, in the future newsletters could be distributed to members as a PDF file and also published online, rather than printed.

II. NEW BUSINESS

CSW Survey (Cory Armstrong)

- 1) The survey results compiled by Cory indicate how CSW is perceived by the AEJ

organization as a whole. She concludes that there seems to be no sentiment that CSW should be dissolved or absorbed, but that we need to do more marketing to ensure that people understand what we do.

- 2) Cory suggested three main missions for CSW: to focus on gender/feminist research, to facilitate networking and promotion of women, and to advocate gender equality in higher education. To achieve these, we could try to get more research submissions and do an annual survey of membership to see what they want and how we're doing. A concerted effort to facilitate new membership would be useful.
- 3) A member noted that 10% of AEJ members participated in the survey (low response rate) and that 72% of respondents were female. Cory replied that the few male respondents didn't seem to care about the status of women, which implies how necessary the commission is.
- 4) Another member asked why we're called "Commission on the Status of Women." A discussion ensued about Yodelis (who was AEJ present when CSW was founded), using the term "gender" vs. "women," and about possible overlap of our mission with other divisions. Lana Rakow noted that women are discriminated against and men aren't, and that we should defend our programming rights since other women have stood firm to earn them in the first place. Another member said that feminist research represents a scholarly field, theories, traditions, methods that are different than minority research and others. One member suggested we might make a case for division status, but Von replied that begin a commission gives us the advantage of getting a board seat, which divisions don't. We also attend business meetings of the AEJ association. Dustin thought that the name "CSW" seems odd and turns people off; she said that many grad programs are changing their names to "women and gender studies" and that ICA is having a similar discussion about its women's unit. Von recommended that we take this discussion to the listserv so that all members could participate.

Proposed Changes to the Bylaws: Von said that 30-days notice to members is required. The basic rationale for eliminating the first-year co-chair and expanding the role of the secretary/recorder is to conform our officer positions with other AEJ divisions. The changes will be distributed by listserv in time to vote at AEJ national conference next year.

Proposed Dues Increase: Noting that the current \$7 dues limits our ability to offer programming, off-site activities and networking events, Von moved to raise dues to \$20. Dustin proposed that grad students get a lower rate, such as \$10. Member discussion focused on the tradeoff between raising dues and potentially lowering the number of members. One member noted that most divisions charge more than we do, although some also include a journal. A motion to raise dues to \$15 for faculty and \$10 for grad students was seconded and carried with 14 in favor, 4 against, and no abstentions.

Proposed Cash Awards: To generate more submissions, Von proposed giving a monetary prize of \$25 or \$50 along with certificates to the top student paper and top faculty paper. Dustin noted that it's hard to say which is #1 and which #2, since rankings are very close and depend on readers. Some members thought the amount should be higher or wouldn't give sufficient incentive, while other noted that grad students needed the cash more than faculty did. A motion was made, seconded and carried to give \$100 to the top student paper and \$50 to the second student paper. The vote was 15 in favor, 9 opposed. Von said that all four top paper winners would continue getting conference fees waived by AEJMC (as always).

Ad-Hoc Task Force on Diversity: Von distributed this proposal, and a member asked her what she thought. She abstained from explaining her position since she didn't consider her view to be objective, but said she couldn't support it strongly because it seemed like an unrealistic wishlist. The CSW membership didn't want to "vote against" diversity. CSW moved by consensus to study the issue further but take no action at this time.

New Officer Slate: Stacey Hust was added as the incoming secretary/recorder. It was decided to keep titles as they were rather than move to the new titles before they were approved by members. Von called for nominations to other positions; none were offered. The slate was accepted by consensus. The membership applauded at a suggestion to recognize the excellent job that Von and Cory did this year, especially Cory, who ran the meeting last year.

MEETING WAS ADJOURNED.

The Results Are In

Cory Armstrong
CO-CHAIR
University of Florida

The mission of CSW seems to have much support within AEJMC, according to a recent study of organization members. In an attempt to understand the role of the Commission on the Status of Women within AEJMC, we conducted an organization-wide survey, asking members about the mission and goals of CSW. The results were reported at the August members meeting in Washington, DC. We had 191 respondents, which was roughly 10 percent of the AEJMC membership.

Nearly 65 percent of participants identified the mission of CSW as an advocacy group for mass communication academia, while 60 percent suggested that the main goal of CSW is to present gender- or feminist-based scholarship. Nearly 85 percent said that gender bias is still a critical concern within the academy, according to the results. For those that were not members of CSW, 52 percent reported that they served in other divisions within AEJMC. Roughly 25 percent said they would like to get involved in CSW leadership.



Finally, many participants asked for CSW to engage in more events and workshops to allow more networking within AEJMC.

The survey was an attempt to gather information from the organization about how to keep CSW thriving within AEJMC. The information gathered will be used to help format the future goals of the commission. We appreciate everyone's willingness to participate.

More information on the survey results can be obtained by contacting Cory Armstrong at carmstrong@jou.ufl.edu.



Dustin Harp
University of Texas, Austin

We're Already Planning for August

A REPORT FROM THE PROGRAM CHAIR

Thank you to everyone who submitted a panel proposal for the Chicago convention this coming August. We have some great options and now I'll be working to find co-sponsors. In fact, I've already been contacted by a couple of other program chairs who are interested in teaming up with CSW on something. None of this will be finalized, though, until after our mid-winter planning meeting in St. Louis (November 30-December 2). That's where I'll be introduced to the chip auction. For those who haven't experienced that, the chip auction is where all of the divisions, interest groups, and commissions determine the days and times of their programming. In other words, this is where I will be trying to get a Friday at 10 a.m. slot for a

panel discussion rather than something scheduled at 8 a.m. on Sunday.

Also, if you submitted a panel proposal this year and it doesn't get programmed please don't take it as a statement on the quality of the proposal. I honestly received all very high quality and well-considered proposals. Of course, we only get a few slots (and each must be co-sponsored) so obviously lots of good proposals won't be programmed for the convention. Instead of feeling discouraged, please either resubmit the proposal next year or just try another idea. The more active our members are, the easier our jobs are as officers of the Commission.

Stay tuned.

Thank You

to our many writers and contributors. Your efforts mean that Women's WORDS continue to be heard throughout the nation.

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These are the officers of the Commission on the Status of Women from October 1, 2007, until September 30, 2008.



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Women's
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