

SACOMM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 14:00 AT AFDA CAPE TOWN

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

PRESENT AS CHAIRS:

President: Dr Julie Reid
Vice-President: Prof Colin Chasi
Minutes by Annelize Vermeulen, SACOMM Administrator

1. WELCOMING

The AGM of 2015 started at 14:00. Dr Julie Reid welcomed everyone present and thanked them for staying on until the end to attend the Annual General Meeting. The two new lifelong SACOMM fellows, Prof Keyan Tomaselli and Prof Ruth-Teer Tomaselli, were also welcomed and congratulated. AFDA was thanked for their support in hosting the 2015 conference.

2. APOLOGIES

Apology for not attending the meeting was received by Prof Arrie de Beer. No other apologies were received.

3. CONSTITUTING THE MEETING

The President and Chair declared the meeting constituted. The minutes of the previous AGM were circulated on the SACOMM Website before this meeting. No hard copies were handed out as SACOMM aims to "go green".

4. MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

FEEDBACK FROM SACOMM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- 4.1 President: Year Report – Dr Julie Reid
- 4.2 Financial Report (Treasurer – Marlene Wiggill – Dr Julie Reid responded on her behalf)
- 4.3 Feedback membership and administration – introducing new SACOMM Administrator, Annelize Vermeulen UNISA – Dr Julie Reid

Up to date, SACOMM had no real functioning administration system. The Presidency of SACOMM moved around from University to University and there was no central point of control. There was no clarity on who should be responsible for the administration, whether it be the host institution or SACOMM it selves. An administrative system needed to be built up from scratch. It was decided to employ a part-time administrator centred at one central place who can look after the membership status (individual, group, institutional, emerging scholars), banking tasks and conference registrations. Some weak processes were rectified by including the annual SACOMM Membership fee in the conference registration fee to ensure that membership gets paid immediately with conference registration. Only one payment needs to be made which covers conference registration and membership fee.

The new SACOMM administrator is Annelize Vermeulen and she is based at the Department of Communication Science at UNISA. Annelize was congratulated on her appointment and welcomed to SACOMM.

Financial Report:

SACOMM has enough reserves/cash available in the bank account and is currently in a good financial position.

In 2015 we instituted some changes to the financial management of SACOMM as well as the payment for conference expenses.

A new structure for paying for the conference was introduced: delegates now pay both their membership fees and conference fees directly into the SACOMM ABSA Bank Account in one payment. This new funding model ensures good financial viability. In previous years it was very difficult to convince members to pay their SACOMM membership fees, since this payment happened separately from the conference fees payment (meaning that delegates would pay the conference fee only, but not the SACOMM membership fee, leaving SACOMM short on funds). Now that the membership fee is included in the conference fee, members are 'forced' to pay membership – this is also more convenient for members because they only need to make one payment for both. This prevents SACOMM from suffering a financial loss due to unpaid membership fees. Anyone who wants to pay their SACOMM membership fee but not attend the conference can still do so.

We also streamlined the process of handling bulk payments for university departments paying for groups – Annelize now handles all these payments. All of the relevant documentation is available on the website to members (membership forms, invoice request forms for individuals or groups etc).

Since the conference fee is paid into the SACOMM bank account, SACOMM now pays for the necessary conference expenses. This means that SACOMM, for example, pays the caterers directly. The host university is no longer responsible for administering the incoming conference fees, and thereafter for paying for the conference suppliers, such as caterers.

Therefore, from now on, SACOMM will pay for all essential conference expenses directly, which includes catering, the Gala Dinner and the printing of conference programmes only.

SACOMM will not pay for any 'luxuries', and for these the host institution should source sponsorships or carry the costs themselves. These include expenses such as conference bags, gifts, entertainment etc. The host institution should try, as far as possible, to source a venue for the conference which can be used free of charge (which is usually possible at residential universities). SACOMM does not have the funding available to pay for conference venue hire, so if this becomes a problem for the host institution, an arrangement must be made with the President.

For example, this year we were not able to find a sponsor for the conference bags. The cheapest quote that we got for the purchase of conference bags was over R10 000. Dr Reid refused to pay this much, and so we purchased plastic folders from Makro in which to place the programme and other leaflets for all delegates. The plastic button folders cost R685, thus saving SACOMM/AFDA a total of R9315. If we cut down on unnecessary luxuries then we can save a lot of money (in the case where we cannot find a sponsor to cover luxuries).

A cut-off date for conference registration was introduced this year to ensure timeous payment of conference fees. The cut off deadline for the payment of conference fees (two weeks before the start of the conference) did encourage most delegates to pay on time. Some delegates still ignored this deadline and by the time of the conference, still had not paid their conference fees, but this number was lower than in previous years. On this day, about 27 conference delegates have not paid yet, but it will be followed up directly after the conference (which includes mostly Universities).

Each year we are asked by publishers whether their representatives at the conference are expected to pay the conference registration fee. The answer is YES. Although representatives from the publishers do not need to pay the SACOMM membership fees, they do need to pay the conference registration fee. This is because if they do not, then SACOMM will need to cover the costs of catering for these individuals out of its own pocket, which we can ill afford. We do not charge the publishers any fee for hosting a display table at the conference – the conference fee per individual is all we ask.

The financial statements and bank accounts should be audited as an audit is overdue at this stage.

4.4 Feedback publication committee

Some policy issues were covered by Prof Keyan Tomaselli during the Strategic Planning Workshop held on Monday 28 September 2015 from 09:00-12:00. More information will be made available on the SACOMM website.

AFDA wish to publish digital online presentations from the conference outcomes and proceedings. The official AFDA Editor will edit submissions and place it on the website. However, the national policy needs to be consulted (as publications earn subsidy in public universities) before it can be published by AFDA on their website. The SACOMM Publications Committee Chair is to liaise with AFDA and their Principal for final resolution on publications. The different panel organisers have procedures in place to publish articles in certain journals. Special editions should be considered by the different panel sections.

4.5 Feedback on Conference 2015 by AFDA – Chipu Zhou

The conference coordinator, Chipu Zhou, apologised for some technical difficulties experienced. Their Telkom line was hit by lightning the week before, therefore they had some delays with communication and e-mails. Overall, the conference went well, despite a few presenters dropping out. The program convener was on leave the previous week which made organising a bit more difficult. It was a good learning experience for AFDA. In future, the parallel sessions should be re-considered.

5. ELECTION OF NEW DEPUTY PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: PRESENTATION OF NOMINEES AND VOTING

The term of the President, Deputy President and people in charge of the different streams are two years. There are currently four interest groups. As the president steps out, the new deputy president takes over.

New President: Prof Colin Chasi – University of Johannesburg

New Deputy-President: Mr GP Van Rheede Van Oudtshoorn – North-West University Potchefstroom

The strategic planning workshop proved to be valuable as three new focus areas/themes were suggested to be approved.

They are:

- a. The emerging scholars group
- b. The concern for curriculum development group: transformation of current syllabi, Africanisation of communication studies, less focus on European Theories, different teaching methods. A task team for this stream is to be convened for further action and discussion.
- c. The response to political movements, student uprising, policy makers, activism, participation research, advocacy convener. A task team for this stream is to be convened for further action and discussion.

A few questions arised:

Should the existing streams be retained?

Should the focus be placed on new urgent issues and themes?

Should SACOMM re-focus the interest groups and re-asses their effectiveness at a later stage?

A suggestion was made:

To keep the existing sections as is for conference purposes.

Add on any additional new issues to feed into the existing structures.

More active participation and activities should be generated between conferences. Should there be more educational discussions and less formal conference papers? Pre-conference workshops can be held on the new streams. Certain themes should have a specific focus, for instance curriculum development. SACOMM is a national organisation with different research focuses.

The following new themes and members were introduced:

1. Emerging scholars

Students need to have an interest in SACOMM. Student representatives from each University are to be in contact with each other. SACOMM can plan a pre-conference colloquium where students can submit their work and research. Master classes should be presented on how to write a conference paper and a space should be created to ask questions, have discussions and provide support. A funding model needs to be created and support from Universities and SACOMM should be provided to students.

Students to represent this theme:

Mvuzo Ponono

Taryn Jade Isaacs

2. Communication education and curriculum development

SACOMM Member to represent this theme:

Dr Elnerine Greeff Unisa

Dr Greeff is experienced in student assessment.

3. Communication advocacy and activism

SACOMM Members to represent this theme:

Dr Julie Reid

Existing streams and their convenors:

4. Media studies and journalism

SACOMM Member to represent this theme:

Dr Ylva Rodny-Gumede University of Johannesburg

5. Film

Francois Smit from AFDA

6. Communication in general

SACOMM member to represent this theme:
Mrs Martine Van der Walt Ehlers UNISA

7. Corporate Communication

SACOMM member to represent this theme:
Dr Tanya le Roux North-West University

Small teams are needed to work on each stream, and the representatives will convene and set up their teams. The executive committee of SACOMM (President, Vice-President and theme convenors) will take all discussion matters further.

6 GENERAL ISSUES

6.1 Presentation by Zubeida Jaffer - University of the Free State

The Journalist – a multimedia website:

The Journalist is an organisation started in 2014 that would tell the stories of our pioneers and encourage exceptional student writing. It would encourage young intellectuals and academics to write into the national discourse. It was suggested that this project be brought to SACOMM so that other Universities could consider joining.

The following proposals were made:

1. That SACOMM becomes a partner organisation of The Journalist.
2. That Universities keen to join individually discuss this option with their departments and inform Zubeida Jaffer if they are willing to participate further.
3. A small sub-committee to be set up to report to SACOMM next year about progress.
4. That work be done along their other partner, The Africa Editors Forum, to collect stories of pioneers of other African countries. Propose at the next SACOMM conference when they would be ready to launch THE AFRICAN JOURNALIST.
5. That SACOMM considers how this would be developed into a module for possible study at all universities who choose to do so across the continent.

There is a need to shape an understanding of how the story of the great journalism pioneers in South Africa could be told and studied as part of the undergraduate programmes of universities.

The proposed partnership with SACOMM was already discussed with Dr Ylva Rodny-Gumede. Rhodes University showed interest in becoming involved. A committee from the media studies and journalism stream should be set up to work out the logistics. The proposed partnership is to be formalised and cleared up with the President of SACOMM, Dr Colin Chasi.

6.2 Host University for SACOMM 2016 & 2017 conference

2016: The University of the Free State to host the conference

2017: Rhodes University to host the conference

6.3 SACOMM lifelong fellowships

Two new lifelong fellowships were awarded to Prof Keyan Tomaselli and Prof Ruth-Teer Tomaselli.

They were congratulated and welcomed as lifelong fellows at SACOMM. The announcement was made at the cocktail event the previous evening and accepted by all SACOMM members.

6.4 SACOMM strategic discussion workshop and 2016 pre-conference

Prof Keyan Tomaselli was thanked for leading the strategic discussion. Prof Arrie de Beer was thanked for suggesting this discussion as it proved to be very fruitful. Three new streams were suggested during this discussion (see point 5). In future this separate pre-conference strategic discussion will be held annually, possibly as a pre-conference the day before the annual SACOMM conference.

6.5 Conference keynote speakers

The need to have a substantial intellectual speaker to present was expressed. The suggestion was made that the executive committee of SACOMM decide on their choice of speaker and not the host institution, however both parties should decide together on the choice of speaker. The focus areas of the SACOMM Conference should be addressed and highlighted by the speaker. The speaker can be either from abroad, Africa or South Africa. A honorarium payment for the speaker should be considered. Two keynote speakers can be invited to present on the first two days of the conference, one be the choice SACOMM Executive Committee and the other the choice of the host institution.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following motion was passed:

World Journalism Education Council (WJEC) Conference 2016 in Auckland, NZ. That Prof Arrie de Beer continue to officially represent SACOMM at the WJEC, and consequently also at the WJEC's AGM 2016 in Auckland NZ.

No objections were made and the motion was adopted by SACOMM.

8. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE VOTING RESULTS: DEPUTY PRESIDENT AND EXCO MEMBERS

No voting was needed.

9. MEETING ADJOURNS

The next SACOMM Conference will be held in 2016 at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein.

Dr Julie Reid thanked everyone present and the EXCO for all the support given to her during her Presidency term. All Unisa colleagues were also thanked, and in particular Prof Viola Milton. Dr Colin Chasi also thanked Dr Julie Reid for her hard work, dedication and commitment to SACOMM.

The meeting adjourned at 15:50.
