

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SACOMM
Thursday 13 September 2018 at 14:15
University of Johannesburg

PRESENT AS CHAIRS:

President	Prof Ylva Rodny-Gumede
Vice-President	Prof Elnerine Greeff

ATTENDANCE REGISTER



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1. HOUSEKEEPING

1.1 Opening and welcome

The current SACOMM President, Prof Ylva Rodny-Gumede, opened the meeting and welcome everyone present.

No additional items to be discussed were received.

Herman Wasserman requested the members present to come up with ideas for the 2019 conference.

1.2 Minutes of the 2017 Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the 2017 AGM were approved by the members present.

1.3 Personalia

As honorary members of SACOMM, Prof Keyan Tomaselli and Prof Pieter J Fourie were congratulated on the launch of their individual new books. It was a tremendous undertaking for both of them.

Prof Keyan Tomaselli was thanked for his continuous support towards SACOMM.

The honorary life-long members of SACOMM were acknowledged.

1.4 Declaration of conflict of interest

None.

2. INTEREST GROUP FEEDBACK

2.1 Media studies and journalism

Mvuzo Ponono

A big project is underway together with the Emerging Scholars. Rhodes University has the idea to establish a journal for the Emerging Scholars. The idea is to revamp the Journal Africa at the University of Stellenbosch, and change the name during December 2019 with the launch of the first edition. The theme issue will be "Marginalisation in the 21 century". Although the panel members for this discussion dropped out before the conference, the project is still going ahead. The aim is to accredit this journal in the future, and to align it to the activities of SACOMM to act as platform for SACOMM members to publish in.

2.2 Screen studies

Francois Smit AFDA

Collaborations with INPUT is ongoing and a huge success. A mini-input will be held on 28-29 September 2018 showing productions (info was circulated on the Listserve). The screen studies group is very active. The website was re-designed by AFDA, which was appreciated and accepted by all SACOMM members.

2.3 Corporate communication

Lida Holtzhausen

Although this stream had a small conglomerate this year at the conference, great topics were discussed. All members were thanked for their contributions and insight. There is a need for this stream to collaborate more with industry and to apply and cross theory into practice. The new and upcoming scholars are a great source of information and inspiration.

2.4 Communication studies/general

Martine Van der Walt Ehlers

This is the general stream, and a home for everyone. The papers delivered were impressive. No new projects are undertaken, but the stream is open to suggestions and new programs. There is interest on the total shutdown movement and media activism.

2.5 Communications advocacy and activism

Pier Paolo Frassinelli

This stream is well-established in SACOMM and open for everyone. This includes freedom of expression, petitions on the crisis at the SABC and so forth. Members were urged to make use of this stream to intervene where needed. The discussion panels that were organized by this stream for the conference was a huge success.

2.6 Communication education and curriculum development

Bruce Mutsvairo

Although it is a very important stream, it was small this year. Urgent calls for contribution and support towards this stream were made.

2.7 Emerging scholars

Linah Nkuna & Theo Ngongo

The Emerging Scholars has done well during 2018. They were the biggest group at this conference. JUTA & SACOMM was thanked for their support and sponsorship towards their conference, and it is hugely appreciated.

This group focused on their journal, and Viola Milton was thanked for her continuous support. Overall, the emerging scholars group have been doing good work.

Still to be discussed is whether there will be a separate pre-conference (full day before annual conference) as it might turn out to be too expensive and exclusive from the main conference. Unfortunately additional expenses were occurred during this conference due to lack of good planning. This needs to be seriously avoided during future conferences. The emerging scholars conference can be held half-day during the main conference. The call for papers for emerging scholars should go out together with the main call for papers.

The organiser/administrative officer of the emerging scholars group is to become part of the SACOMM EXCO for future arrangement.

Going forward 2019:

The following were discussed:

Will there be additional costs for the emerging scholars' conference/pre-conference? A detailed proposal from the emerging scholars are needed.

What will the conference fee be for 2019 for emerging scholars? It is important to keep the fee for emerging scholars as low and affordable as possible, but also high enough to cover the conference expenses.

Emerging scholars need to provide a number of active scholars in their stream.

The emerging scholars need to organize an active committee to assist with conference arrangements.

A decision on whether the emerging scholars will be a separate stream or form part of the main conference will be discussed with the EXCO during November 2018.

3. THE RUNNING OF SACOMM

3.1 Finances

SACOMM finance is in good standing and financially stable. The conference could be paid in full and we broke even. This is due to strictly keeping to final registration and cut-off dates for delegates. An audit of the books will be done and a search for auditors will be undertaken soon.

3.2 SACOMM 2018 conference host feedback

Prof PP Frassinelli

The most important points to remember, and the secret to success, are:

Start planning early.

Know exactly how many delegates will be attending.

Be aware of, and keep to deadlines.

The 2018 conference went very well, and Prof PP Frassinelli emphasized that we had close to 200 delegates, 31 sessions, two plenaries and five book launches and a special screening of filmmaker Rehad Desai's movie 'Everything Must Fall'. And this year our delegates, apart from representatives from a wide range of South African universities, also came from Zimbabwe, Kenya, Nigeria, Zambia, Swaziland, Namibia, Malawi, Australia, Sweden, England, the United States and apart from the academic community we also had independent scholars, activists and civil society representatives from among others the Tembelihle Crisis Committee, Right2Know campaign, and the South African Department of Communication, as well as media houses and journalists.

3.3 SACOMM conference 2019 host affirmation
The University of Cape Town
Organiser: Herman Wasserman

3.4 SACOMM conference 2020 host bid
University of Limpopo
Organiser: Carol Lesame

3.5 Organisation and support for pre-conference through the SACOMM streams
The matter has been discussed under Emerging Scholars.

3.6 Feedback on the running of the LISTSERVE
Prof Keyan Tomaselli was thanked for his continuous hard work and support in the past for building up and maintain the LISTSERVE. The LISTSERVE management was handed over to Prof Elnerie Greeff, who is managing the LISTSERVE very well. The handover went smoothly, and all is well with the LISTSERVE. A huge thank you to Prof Elnerie Greeff for taking on this task.

3.7 Feedback on the website
The website was updated and managed by Francois Smit, who is doing an excellent job. Francois Smit was thanked and well appreciated by all. Francois Smit thanked Prof Keyan Tomaselli for building up the good foundation many years ago. It was mentioned that Prof Arrie de Beer wanted to build up an archive, but received very little to no response from any members. It is important to maintain an institutional memory of the organization.
Abstract of the conference papers will be added to the website soon.

4. ADDITIONAL MATTERS

4.1 Proposal for SACOMM name change
Change South African Communication Association to Southern African Communication Association.
The organization was started years ago as South African.
Prof Keyan Tomaselli reported as follows on the name change:
A number of issues arise from this unmotivated request for what appears to be an invitation for an unofficial vote based on a tentative observation not formalized into a proposal at the 2017 AGM. Amongst the issues that would need to be considered are:

- SACOMM as presently constituted is a **national** organisation, and this is reflected in its current constitution, domicile and sphere of operations. It has no legal remit beyond South Africa even if its annual conference draws members globally and elects international members to the management committee.
- To simply extend the name to 'Southern' without geographical and structural realignment of the currently constituted Association could be seen to be presumptuous by our colleagues in Southern Africa beyond South Africa. Extensive consultation would need to be done with scholars in other states before any proposals are drawn up.
- In other words, changing the name simply to reflect a Southern African delegate presence at SACOMM conferences would appear to me to be inadvisable at this stage.
- A name change thus would, I suggest, require:
 - i) a change of SACOMM's Constitution;
 - ii) a restructuring of its management committee to include ex-officio elected members from all Southern African member countries;
 - iii) the setting up of national chapters and/or offices within the region;
 - iv) election of office bearers from member countries;
 - v) the eligible member countries need to be identified and their offices registered in such territories; criteria for their inclusion;
 - vi) banking facilities in each country, or mechanisms to transfer membership fees to a regional head office;
 - vii) agreement on where that head office will be located;
 - viii) funding of that head office, and so on.
 - ix) If a name change is not accompanied by these costly and time-consuming administrative facilities, the name-change will be primarily cosmetic.
- Members need to be made aware that at SACOMM inauguration in 1977 that it was called 'Southern' in nature. This naming was problematic in the context of the apartheid era, though the SACOMM constitution was non-racial. It was not clear what 'Southern' then signified (e.g., the ethnic homelands, the frontline states, sub-Saharan states).

Members are referred to the following studies that examine the issue of naming in the context of SACOMM's history.

Tomaselli, K.G. (2016): 'Ideological Contestation and Disciplinary Associations: An Autoethnographic Analysis' *Communicatio*, 42(2):276-292.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02500167.2016.1190390>

Tomaselli, K.G. and Teer-Tomaselli, R.E. 2007. Internationalizing Media Studies: The South/ern African Communication Association, The *International Communication Gazette*, 69(2): 179-191.

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1748048507074928>

- I am supportive of regional cooperation and the setting up of structures to facilitate interaction, managed by SACOMM but we do need to be cognizant of the role that SACOMM has played recently in contemporary nation-building in South Africa, which was a key part of its activities during the 1990s. There is a popular misconception now that SACOMM is just a conference organiser. In the past, SACOMM was highly prominent in policy formation and other contributions in the following organisations: NRF rating committees selection, NRF focus area grant evaluations, Dept of Education; National Scholarly Editors' Forum managed by ASSAf. And, it once had its own journal (1980-2004). These are national activities.
- Of course, being international, does not limit the national emphases of the different national chapters.
- Changing the constitution which needs revisiting on other components that need updating also.

A quick online poll was done before the conference. There were 99 responses, and 53 responses "strongly agree" in favour of the name change.

A new task team to investigate changes to the constitution and name will consist of the following members:

Prof Keyan Tomaselli

Prof Ruth Tomaselli

Dr Siya Tyali

Prof Viola Milton

Dr Julie Reid

Prof Ylva Rodny-Gumede

Prof Elnerine Greeff

Prof Colin Chasi

4.2 Establishment of a SACOMM LinkedIn account

A mandate from all members are needed to establish this profile. To be investigated at a later stage.

4.3 Global media journal WJEC

None.

4.4 ICA Conference in Ghana 2018

Prof PP Frassinelli. Prof Colin Chasi and Prof Ylva Rodny-Gumede is to attend. A round-table discussion towards future cooperation with most delegates will be held.

5. NEW ITEMS

5.1 Activities for 2019 conference

Decision on Best Paper Award: it is not compulsory, all up to the organising committee. A Memorandum of Understanding will be drawn up between the host and SACOMM Exco before the conference. This MOU will be discussed during November 2018.

6. CLOSURE

The meeting ended at 13:30.