

Publications Committee Meeting Minutes
10/9/21

Present: Chair: Vice President for Communications - Rafael Jaen
Members - Dan Culhane, Ashley Bellet, Peggy Rosefeldt, Margaret Mitchell, Tina Shackelford, Rich Bryant, Mike Monsos, Carey Gillet, Jessica Hansen, Mark Shanda.
Sherry Wagner-Henry Board Fellows: Adrian Hernandez and Caitlyn Garrity.
Ex-Officio Members: USITT Office Staff – Mark Blackmon, Editor of TD&T – Eileen Curley.

Chair Jaen opened the meeting at 11:05 Eastern with an overview of the agenda and shared a Land Acknowledgement statement honoring the traditional territory and homelands of indigenous people.

Shanda volunteered to serve as meeting Scribe.

Those present shared introductions. Welcome was extended to all.

Nominees for the Herbert D. Greggs Awards and the Oscar G. Brockett Golden Pen Award were discussed. The voting members of the committee made their recommendation for both awards to be ratified by the Board at their next meeting.

Following some conversation about the scoring and ranking process, committee chair Jaen established an Ad Hoc committee to be chaired by Margaret Mitchell, with members Eileen Curley, and Mike Monsos to review the rubrics for both the Herb Greggs and the Oscar G. Brockett Golden Pen award and report back to the committee with suggested revisions. Jaen is to set up a Basecamp site to assist in this project and the group is to report out with preliminary efforts by the time of the Annual Conference & Stage Expo with a goal to have a revised criteria in the next scoring cycle for both awards.

Guest

At 12:30 - Guest Susan Tsu joined the meeting as a representative of the current PQ 2023 planning effort. Tsu spoke about advocating for greater and broader engagement in the PQ 2023 through a variety of targeted focus groups being outreached in addition to the USITT membership, including USAA, Regional Theatres, Theatre Schools, AAPI, Accessible Performance group, Black Theatre group, Carnival and Pageantry, Latinx groups, Non-traditional groups, LGBTQ+, Incarcerated Theatre groups, Theatre of the Oppressed, Boal workers, US Territories groups, and Veterans groups. The national office has provided the PQ group with webspace to support the content that is currently under development by Ian Garrett and the group would like to see this site go live asap.

In addition, there was conversation about what other information can be linked to the site. (Curley is to assist in identifying potential linked articles that advocate for PQ.) The discussion also focused on what tangible; printed materials might be possible to be distributed to the membership at the Annual Conference & Stage Expo. Jaen is to speak with Executive Director David Grindle about what might be possible. The USITT Weekly Newsletter also has “space” to have a regular feature to promote the PQ. Mitchell was volunteered to assist with providing

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that content. Jaen and Curley will work to develop a pro-active approach to identifying an official “correspondent” to support a potential PQ 2023 focused issue of *TD&T*.

2022 Annual Conference & Stage Expo

Given the many variables in planning for Baltimore the committee identifies the following events that are of importance to the committee

- Book signings – need to focus on both the actual signing (book plates are an acceptable alternative) and the opportunity for people to meet the authors
- Greggs Award and Brockett Golden Pen award presentation should be significant and might include a session that features the Golden Pen Award winner
- Need to take an opportunity to recognize 2019, 2020, and 2021 award winners and extend invitations to previous Portfolio subjects (Susan Hilferty 2020, Wendall Harrington 2021, and Designers of August Wilson 2022)
- A creative forum to encourage writing and publication through active mentoring and engagement
- Access for members to purchase printed materials and published resources

Gillett, Bellet, Shackelford, and Curley are to work to advocate for publications integration into conference planning as it unfolds.

Board Reorganization and Standing Committee Status

As a result of the current structural and administrative changes underway within the Institute, several issues were discussed. Jaen created an ad hoc committee with membership of Hansen, Shanda, and Culhane are to be tasked with reviewing the current committee compendium, identify the questions that need to be answered to bring our practices in alignment with the state mandated restructure (shifting to a “committee of the corporation”) and to develop a revision for first reading at the Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Baltimore.

The meeting was recessed for a one-hour break at 1:30 pm.

Chair Jaen called the meeting back to order at 2:30 pm. Monsos and Blackmon did not return.

Jaen reviewed the official charge to the Publication Committee as described in the By-Laws of the Institute. Article VIII, section 1, c. reads:

The Publications Committee shall be responsible for:

1. the development of new publications;
2. the establishment of policy for all publications;
3. recruitment of editors for all publications;
4. recommendation of annual publications awards and awards recipients.

Following some conversation about the role of the Publications Committee, committee chair Jaen established an Ad Hoc committee to be chaired by Bryant, with members Garrity and Hernandez to draft a brief statement of purpose for the committee that aligns with the Institute’s core values and mission and speaks to the Publication Committee focus for the next

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several years. The committee will report out at the Pubs meeting at the Annual Conference & Stage Expo. Jaen will provide to the group with notes taken on this topic from the last year.

Electronic Data Distribution

Editor Curley reported out on the ongoing contract with the *Gale Cengage* academic data resource that was signed “over ten years ago” that renews automatically every three years. (Next renewal is June 2023). The Institute provides them with *TD&T* content, and they place the content on their distribution platform. In exchange USITT receives some royalty for the number of uses.

The Committee requests that our “author rights agreement” be reviewed by counsel to reflect appropriate authorization for contemporary access through various academic data bases.

The Committee recommends that the Institute seek greater clarity to the ethical and legal questions related to this relationship and others of a similar nature that balances our obligations to authors and supports and access to *TD&T* content. Jaen and Curley will work with Grindle on these issues, specifically of concern is our obligation of protection of author intellectual property and fair distribution of income produced from this type of arrangements.

Revised Author Publication Agreement

Curley reported that a new author agreement is now in use, with authors maintaining their rights to the text and the Institute holding the rights to the content and layout as published in *TD&T*. The recently revised agreement is being placed by Curley in the Publications Basecamp “Documents” site.

Regular *TD&T* content

Content pipeline is returning to pre-pandemic days. Many articles are in the works.

The recent publication of *Portfolio* on the work of Wendall Herrington is being reviewed by the Harrington and Grindle to provide insights for improved development for future *Portfolio* issues. *The Design of August Wilson Plays* is currently in process. Jaen, Curley, and Grindle to follow up with potential revised processes. For the 2023 *Portfolio* Michael Mehler is editing a focus on community and regional theatre designs. For 2024, Jesse Portillo is working with Curley on some ideas.

Curley is looking for some new associate editors (content specific), to take the place of those whose terms are coming to an end. All members of the committee are asked to consistently be on the lookout for potential *TD&T* content to refer topics and authors to Curley for future publications.

TD&T advertising revenue is below projection, undoubtedly affected in part due to the pandemic.

Bryant – OISTAT Liaison

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OISTAT world congress is currently happening, and Bryant provided links to access their work, encouraging committee members to become more engaged with OISTAT. <https://oistat-community.wildapricot.org/sessions>

Vice President for International Activities Kevin Rigdon, will be voting on the Institute's behalf in the OISTAT election.

OISTAT's Publication Group has a new chair, Cyril Lamy currently based in Viet Nam.

Bryant shared OISTAT conversations regarding "official language" status within the organization. OISTAT is seeking to expand its international representation including intentional outreach to the Middle East, north and east Africa, Syria, Iran, and UAR.

Bryant will post the link on Basecamp to an event on Monday, October 11, that is Live-streaming entitled: Indigenous People Panel – Native Women Leading.

New Business

The committee requests of the National Office the opportunity to receive and review the readership statistics for the weekly newsletter, the opening rate of the electronic version of *TD&T*, and other distribution statistics to better understand the Institute's communication strategies and effectiveness.

A friendly reminder was provided that the national office communication team consider multiple means for communication with our membership including both print and electronic modalities and not to assume that electronic is the only way to go.

In light of the retirement of Carol Carrigan, the National Office is encouraged to identify a liaison for the Member Author Signing and the Pubs at the Pub event, which we hope are still scheduled or have some sort of successor plan for Baltimore.

A brief discussion was held about the value of the traditional Bookstore as part of Annual Conference & Stage Expo. The committee expressed their feelings that access to books, authors, and other published resources should be a primary consideration in planning. The loss of such access is significant. A variety of creative ways to address this desire were discussed.

Bellet reported that a conference-wide, non-commission specific "Poster Session" is being planned for the Baltimore Annual Conference & State Expo.

A question was raised regarding Tech Expo (Design Expo as well) and the publication of the catalog of such content. Jaen and Curley will investigate the status of these historic projects and report back.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:23 pm.