

Speak Out 2010

Mission Statement

It was suggested that we add both “disability”, “religion”, and “age” to our Mission Statement. The question came up of whether we need to consult the by-laws about making a change to the MS. Also, it seems it would have to go to a membership vote to make the change? Perhaps we could do this as an electronic vote similar to the VP election.

Poster Session

This year’s organizers did not like the idea that the Poster Session was held in another building. They felt that it did not give the posters the exposure they deserve. Conference organizers have already worked out an alternative plan.

The Zantop Winner is expected to present at the Poster Session within two years of completing the research funded by WiG. It was suggested the Zantop Winners identify themselves as such on their posters so conferees are aware of who the winners are.

Add to the CFP “Late submissions may be accepted”. This will reflect current practice.

Cancellations on Panels

This year seemed to have a bigger problem than past years with both presenters and panel organizers cancelling. Can we think about ways to help fund those who cannot make the conference due to funding issues? We have consistent funding for grad students, so is there a way to help out contingent faculty especially, or those whose funding is yanked after acceptance? The suggestion was made to create an “Emergency Fund” for such cases. Perhaps we could introduce a donor fund for this and have a box on the conference registration form people could check and donate while registering.

Business Meeting

Members would like to have the Business Meeting announced at the beginning of the conference. The announcement should include why we have the meeting, what we accomplish, and that all conference attendees should plan to be at the meeting. Be sure to explain the procedures (Robert’s Rules). Finally, while everyone is sympathetic to our efforts to go “paperless” for the meeting, a short summary of the agenda for the audience would be appreciated.

Panels

The suggestion was made to have panel organizers shorten their introductions for each presenter. It was agreed that name, institutional affiliation, and area of research (without further details) would be enough. This will need to be communicated to panel organizers by the conference program coordinator.

A number of members really enjoyed having the “Thursday night session” on Friday and having the guest after dinner without a session beforehand.

Due to excessive cancellations this year, it was suggested that the program coordinator send an email to all accepted presenters right away reminding them of the responsibility they have agreed to and of the fact that if they cancel after accepting to be on the panel they may well be keeping someone else from having the chance to present.

Mentoring Program/Newcomers Table

It was suggested that we institute a mentoring program. New attendees would identify themselves as such on the registration form. Experienced WiGgies interested in mentoring new members would identify themselves as well on the registration form. Then new members would be matched with a mentor who would be responsible for writing the mentee before the conference and sending her/him a copy of the Wiggie Wegweiser,, meeting the “mentee” at the beginning of the conference, and having at least one meal with her.

It was suggested that the Newcomers Table be brought back.

Friday Evening Panel

Sara Lennox and Beverly Weber were pleased with how the discussion after the panel and especially later in the pub went. The slate of panels for 2011 adequately reflects WiG’s engagement with the issue of intersectionality. The question remains re: how to make the conference comfortable for men and women of color. Should we invite attendees of color to participate in the organizing and power structure of the organization, for example? It was brought up that our discipline does not have many scholars of color, who then may or may not engage in this kind of research. How can the discipline help in all this to attract students of color? The last question on this list was embedded in a broader comment about the state of our field and the evolving demographics of our student body, i.e. that German Studies as a whole needs to figure out how to be interesting/relevant to students who are not of predominantly white European heritage.

Some additional ideas: All CFPs should include the WiG Mission Statement. The Mission Statement should be posted physically in then plenary session room as a reminder. Also we should include it on the conference program.

Invited Guest

A couple of members did not like the fact that this year’s invited guest spoke English during her talk. They would prefer that the guests speak German and that it be made clear to potential guest speakers that this is the preference of the conference. Many others did not believe this was a problem and that it would be impolitic to insist that the guest speak any particular language.

Miscellaneous

One member felt that the name tags were too long. Perhaps there could be a different kind of name tag.

It was reaffirmed that undergraduates are welcome to attend the conference.

It was suggested that the awards could also be announced before the guest speaker rather than during the dinner.

The WiGweiser needs to be updated.

Two people were looking for roommates. The hotel reservationist said that they would keep a list and pair people up which he/she didn't do. The suggestion was made that someone could be a point person (much like the shuttle person) who could create a list of roommates. The conference organizers do not believe that finding a roommate should be their responsibility, nor should it be the responsibility of the lodging establishment.

There should be a conference listserv for better communication. The conference organizers are not sure what this means or how this listserv would be used.

Conferences participants should be asked to check an "announcement board" periodically for changes. For example, Sunday morning there was a shuttle schedule change that wasn't announced.