

Notes from ICA VCS Division's Internationalization Task Force Initial Meeting (20201208)

Barriers & challenges:

- What to do for people without full-time or permanent jobs? ICA subsidizes membership based on country affiliation and also employment type but these fees are still prohibitive for some.
- Cost, language, distance, and time (especially for those without research allocations in their workloads).
- The perception exists that membership is only useful for those who want to attend the conference (or pre- and post-conferences) but these happen only once a year.

Opportunities:

- **DIVISION LEVEL:** Reciprocal relationships for industry colleagues. For example, could we team up with the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management or the Reporters Without Borders organization to offer ICA membership to their members at a significantly reduced rate (eg, \$15-25 extra?) so they can access relevant scholarship and so research collaborations can be more easily formed between academia and industry? Our task force representative from Africa also suggested: "There are other persons/groups outside the Universities, eg Industry, these too we could encourage to join our division, and have them come on board when we have functions. For example, the Kenya Film Commission could sponsor an event." Would it be useful/necessary to have a new position created for this? A "Partnerships and Connections" officer or some such? Ideally someone who is currently in industry who is keen to work with academics?
- **DIVISION LEVEL:** Have additional events beyond the once-yearly conferences. Eg, have research methods training sessions, sessions on supervising PhD students, sessions on grant writing, etc. Existing officers could coordinate this, or, if desired, would it make sense to have a "Professional Development Officer" or such for the Division who could be responsible for coordinating such sessions?
- **DIVISION LEVEL:** It was proposed that we shift money away from Division awards and instead to travel/registration waivers. The awards are valuable to scholars because they can be listed on one's CV but the monetary value attached to them might be better allocated to encouraging participation from under-represented regions?
- **DIVISION OR ASSOCIATION-WIDE LEVEL:** Platform/way to accept donations?
- **DIVISION LEVEL:** Provide a clear-cut view of benefits of joining the VCS Division/ICA. This should be added to the "Join" page on our website (<https://icavisualcommunicationstudies.com/join/>) and can also be translated into other formats (a one-page flyer/graphic, a series of mini videos with testimonials, etc, as needed)
- **DIVISION OR ASSOCIATION-WIDE LEVEL:** Place to collaborate on/know about ongoing research (T.J. is part of a group of international liaisons who have put together a "research collaboratory" Blue Sky proposal for #ICA21 and he can report back on this. The Link might also be such an avenue.

- **ASSOCIATION-WIDE LEVEL:** Explore the possibility of different membership “products” (“lite” memberships).
- **ASSOCIATION-WIDE LEVEL:** Continue supporting online conference options, even after the pandemic.
- **ASSOCIATION-WIDE LEVEL:** Option to self-disclose if the submitter is a non-native English speaker, so the reviews don’t take this into account?
- **DIVISION LEVEL:** Pre-conferences as a smaller, more intimate way to connect and also to attract a more diverse audience. Opportunity to present membership options at pre-conference and send follow-up materials to attendees.
- **DIVISION LEVEL:** Reviewer best practices guide (or even something as simple as an acronym that distills our aims and intents with the reviewing process).
- **ASSOCIATION-WIDE LEVEL:** Discuss adjusting the reviewer criteria to include internationalization awareness as a criterion? The research doesn’t have to be comparative or international in focus but some critical awareness would be welcome. For example, some submissions just refer to the research being “conducted at a large university on the west coast” or others over-generalize their findings, even in small ways like the title or the abstract (eg, “Visual Cues to the Hidden Agenda: Investigating the Effects of Ideology-Related Visual Subtle Backdrop Cues in Political Communication,” which doesn’t acknowledge a specific country or culture and is likely too over-reaching and broad as a title). To what degree does the research acknowledge the geographical/cultural context in which it was produced and appropriately present it based on that context?