



Meeting Minutes for the General Assembly of the International Rhetoric Workshop

July 9, 2020

Members Present: Frida Buhre, Brent Lucia, James Proszek, Dave Molina, Ida Andersen, Marta Rzepecka, Ana Vlah, and José Quintero Ramirez.

1. Thank you to the planning committee and introductions. Planning committee shared some experiences of what it was like working together during the COVID-19 outbreak. Started the recording, opened the meeting officially.

2. Appointed Marta as revisioner for the meeting minutes.

After the GA session is over, James and Frida will sign the minutes. Marta will review and make any revisions to the minutes before signing.

3. Approved the meeting agenda by unanimous vote.
4. Invitation of new members to the Advisory Board: Marta, José, Ana & Kacper.

Marta, José, and Ana accepted the invitation to the board. Kacper was not present so his invitation will be sent via email for confirmation after the GA.

5. Confirmed Ida as the election officer by unanimous vote.
6. Presentation and Review of the Activities Report (see Attachment 1)

Brief description of IRW's background starting from its founding to some major milestones along the way. James had circulated an old version of the report, we will make sure to give a final updated version of the report along with the approved minutes. Report was approved by unanimous vote.

7. Presentation and Review of the Financial Report (See Attachment 2)

Brief description of three areas which attend to IRW's finances – biennial workshops, website, and incorporation as a formal organization. Dave presented past efforts and

foreshadowed future challenges and suggestions for what IRW can do in the future for long-term fundraising. The financial report was approved by unanimous vote.

8. Voting on Freedom of Responsibilities from the Executive Board

Acknowledging that those who are leaving their roles in the Executive Board (Frida, Dave, & James) no longer maintain any financial or active obligations to the roles. The Freedom of Responsibilities was unanimously approved.

9. Election of new Executive Board positions.

Ida took over as chair for the voting portion of the GA session and introduced each of the candidates. Electronic voting took place during the session.

- a. Ana was unanimously voted Chair-Elect.
- b. José was unanimously voted Secretary.
- c. Marta was unanimously voted Treasurer.

10. Decision to postpone inviting faculty members to the Advisory Board.

Normally, we would invite faculty members after the General Assembly session at the workshop, but because the workshop itself was postponed until 2021, we decided to postpone the invitations to faculty accordingly. This decision was unanimously approved by all those in attendance.

11. Additional concerns.

José noted that ongoing health and economic concerns may hinder our ability to host the workshop in 2021 in Mexico. José also brought up the possibility of adding more members to the planning committee and offered a few suggestions for how that can take form.

Following this we discussed Dr. Ramirez's role and agreed to extend a faculty invitation to join the Advisory Board at the next workshop based on our previous decision.

James also suggested creating a digital form of participation as either a hybrid or completely remote option IF COVID-19 continues to be an issue leading up to the time of the workshop.

Final comments were about individuals who are exiting their role on the Advisory Board, would they want to stick around and what does that look like? Frida noted that the decision should be made on an individual basis.

12. Closing of the meeting.

Meeting Minutes Reviewed and Approved by:

Stockholm, July 10, 2020



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Frida Buhre, Outgoing Chair

Chicago, July 10, 2020



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James Proszek, Outgoing Secretary

Rzeszow, July 18, 2020



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Marta Rzepecka, Revisioner

Appendix

Appendix A: Activities Report from Outgoing Chair

During the period of 2019–2020, IRW has undergone seminal changes and developed significantly as an organization. The most significant event is that the people committed to the IRW project decided in fall 2018 to move towards forming a formal organization and has since undertaken a series of steps towards this goal. Therefore, this is the first ever written activities report of the IRW and a short summary of the events leading up the creation of IRW as an organization is therefore in place.

Initial stages, 2013–2018

IRW was founded in 2013 by Erik Bengtson, Frida Buhre, David Molina, and Rob Topinka, after they all identified the need for an international network of young scholars committed to enhancing the field of rhetorical studies globally. Initial important features of IRW were: the workshop was to provide an alternative format more directed at dialogue and peer-review than traditional conferences with paper presentations, the workshop was to be student-led, and it was to work actively to engage with scholars beyond the Euro-American field of rhetorical studies. The first workshop took place at Uppsala University, Sweden, in 2016. Besides the workshop, other events between 2013–2016 worth mentioning are: Anneli Bowie designed the logo of IRW, the website was launched, the initial structure of communication was put in place; and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between IRW and RSA.

After this first workshop, a group of participants from the Uppsala workshop got engaged in IRW and decided to take on responsibilities for planning the second workshop. These were Ida Andersen, Brent Lucia, Moran Pollack, James Proszek, and Kris Rutten, Matthew Houdek, Justine Latenda Amakali, Helena Calleeuw and Laura Van Beverenand the second workshop was held at Ghent University, Belgium, in 2018. Other noteworthy events between 2016–2018 were: the collaboration with RSE was strengthened, the IRW presence on social media (mainly Facebook) increased, the homepage became more informative and structured.

The success of both workshops proved a continued interest among young scholars in rhetorical studies for the workshop format of IRW. Initial discussions therefore began on how to build an organizational structure.

Creating an organization, 2018–2020

The group of people involved in planning the first two workshops took on the task to creating an organizational structure for IRW. During the Fall of 2018, Bylaws were drafted and discussed extensively in the group, and by February 2019, they were ratified unanimously. According to the Bylaws, the first purpose of IRW is “to enhance the development of international rhetorical scholarship and support the globalization of the field of rhetorical studies for graduate students and emerging scholars.”

The Bylaws also stipulates an organizational structure of IRW:

- The Advisory Board (hereafter AB) is the general organ of direction of IRW. It is comprised of former Planning Committee members and invited senior members.
- The Executive Board (hereafter EB) is responsible for governing IRW in an efficient manner, and consists of Chair, Chair-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer.
- The Planning Committee (hereafter PC) is responsible for planning the upcoming workshop. It has a less formal structure and is open to anyone who wishes to help in planning the next workshop.

With the ratification of the Bylaws, the first elections were also held for the position of Chair (Frida Buhre), Chair-Elect (Brent Lucia), Secretary (James Proszek), and Treasurer (David Molina).

Planning the third workshop, 2018–ongoing

Simultaneously, the planning for the third workshop has been underway, with Linh Hua, Jelte Olthof, José Quintero, Cristina Rodriguez, Marta Rzepecka, and Ana Vlah constituting the Planning Committee. The workshop was planned to take place in July 2020, but had to be postponed due to the pandemic Covid-19. The workshop is to take place at COLSAN in San Luis Potosi, Mexico, in 2021, and will be bilingual. The collaboration has already increased IRW visibility in South and Central America, and promises future building of networks in this region.

Other events 2018–2020

Memorandum of Understanding was signed between IRW and GSOLE.

Ongoing discussions for the future are:

- Whether to create a bank account and in which country to do so.
- Apply for more long-term funding or create a list of resources of possible stipends.
- Work to enhance networks and collaborations globally, especially in Africa and Asia.
- The double workload of some PC and AB members due to the postponement of the 3rd IRW needs to be acknowledged and balanced by the other members of the AB.

Appendix B: Financial Report from the Treasurer

In accordance with the bylaws of the International Rhetoric Workshop (IRW), the Treasurer is charged with presenting a Financial Report at our organization's biennial General Assembly. However, as the IRW is still in the early stages of institutionalization—a process formalized by the ratification of Bylaws in August 2019—this initial report will offer an overview of three areas in which attention to finances will be particularly critical as we build our organization: the biennial workshops, the IRW website, and the question of incorporation.

The first area to address is the IRW's role in the biennial workshops. Starting with Uppsala 2016, funding for IRW conferences has been the responsibility of their respective Planning Committees. This is reflected in Articles 3 and 7 of our Bylaws, which empower these Committees to design and implement the upcoming workshop. Accordingly, the newly established IRW Advisory Board is designed to function in a supporting role for each Planning Committee. To date, this has typically taken the form of sharing documentation, experience, and advice on fundraising and budgetary matters. As more IRW workshops are conducted, it will be important to develop a method for recording and/or routinizing this exchange of institutional memory—workshop budget templates, recommended fundraising strategies, etc.—in order to better assist future Planning Committees in realizing their own vision for the biennial workshop (and not “re-invent the wheel,” so to speak).

There is also a long-standing question of the Advisory Board seeking out additional, long-term funding to support the IRW the biennial workshops. This will be addressed later during remarks on incorporation.

Secondly, the IRW website. Article 2 of the Bylaws dictates that the IRW organization “shall establish and maintain a website functioning as an information channel and [an organizational] forum.” In October 2014, Erik Bengtson purchased the domain www.internationalrhetoric.com and web-hosting services from www.one.com as part initial planning efforts for what would become the first IRW in Uppsala. Additionally, in 2015 organizers for the Uppsala workshop purchased a WordPress theme to aid in site design and commissioned the current IRW logo (note: the designer waived payment). Since those initial expenses, IRW has been responsible for yearly web hosting fees from www.one.com. This is currently the only ongoing financial obligation for our organization. In the appendix, I have provided a list of past such expenses and their resolution. Also, it’s important to highlight: the domain name and logo are the property of our IRW organization.

As we continue to grow institutionally, it is important to call attention to IRW’s history of resolving website expenses. While costs related to the domain name, web hosting, theme, and logo were all incorporated into the Uppsala 2016 budget, subsequent web hosting fees have been paid directly by IRW co-founders Erik Bengtson (2016, 2017, and 2018) and Frida Buhre (2019). For 2016 and 2017, Erik was reimbursed for these fees indirectly—through a PhD expense account at Uppsala. For the last two years, both Erik and Frida have indicated that these payments be treated as personal gifts to IRW. Moving forward, we should develop a clear strategy for resolving these expenses. Two potential strategies are: (1) Planning Committees are charged with including web-related fees as part of their budget for the biennial workshop, (2) the Advisory Board raises funds to cover web-related fees as part of its operational expenses.

Finally, the question of incorporation. If IRW is to move forward with raising funds—for operating expenses, to support biennial workshops, etc.—we will need to establish banking to hold these funds. Coincident with this is the formal status of our organization—i.e. the entity who initiates, owns, and administers these accounts. Currently, IRW has no legal status, which puts us at an impasse in terms of accepting or distributing funds. This does not, however, mean that we must

acquire a legal status and open a bank account. It is possible, given our low operating expenses, to begin requesting Planning Committees cover web services during their tenure. Additionally, it may be advantageous to seat IRW within a university or other organization—which may resolve the banking problem and aid in long term fundraising. At such an early stage, it's not clear which of the many combinations of institutional and financial status is best for IRW. Whether, and where, we incorporate our organization or establish our banking has been a longstanding question, though it is one that demands our increased attention as we complete our first year under our adopted Bylaws.

