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SIG/AH 1986 REPORT

PERSONAL STATEMENT

If the SIG/AH membership approves, I would like to take charge of the SIG/AH program for the 1987 ASIS Annual Meeting in Boston. I plan to devote the entire program to philosophy; possibilities are listed on a separate flyer.

I also have ideas for the 1988 conference and beyond, to be delineated later in this report; however, I have some grievances to air before I assume any responsibilities for ASIS beyond 1987.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT ASIS

Monetary: The conference registration fees have become too expensive. Travel and lodging costs are high enough, but this year's outrageous \$195 conference fee puts an intolerable financial burden on conference-goers who must pay their own way. That's why you don't see me here. Of course, if participation in ASIS is intended only for those whose companies subsidize their expenses, there is no problem.

Considering that the humanities is less remuneratively rewarding than corporate and high-tech environments, is an overpriced corporate-oriented organization the place for us?

Organizationally involved persons get to pay large sums of money for the privilege of contributing unpaid labor to ASIS. Is it worth it for those whose primary organizational activity is SIG-related?

I recommend the following measures be taken by ASIS:

- 1) reconsideration of ASIS conference fees, and willingness to endure less luxurious conference arrangements if necessary;
- 2) reduction of conference fees for ASIS members who serve as speakers and moderators;
- 3) allowance of further benefits to speakers/moderators who are not members of ASIS, e.g. more than one free day of attending the conference.

Organizational: These complaints were pertinent at least through 1985:

- 1) 1985 complaints about too many product sessions. Is the conference oriented towards scholarship or is it becoming primarily a product fair?

2) There was never sufficient advance notice about conference plans, deadlines, the number of sessions allotted for SIGs, the session length (60, 90, or however many minutes), page length limit for published papers, etc.

3) SIGs seemed to be peripheral, not to be involved in the overall conference planning process or to be consulted for papers concerning their specialty.

Other complaints about ASIS

The *ASIS Bulletin* is of little value, yet conference proceedings, which are of far greater significance, are no longer included as a benefit in the high membership fee for those who don't attend the conference. The *Journal of ASIS* is of uneven quality, often featuring trivia and pseudoscience.

I will stick to ASIS for a couple more years, but if I remain dissatisfied, I may then decide to devote my energies elsewhere, perhaps to the Association for Computers and the Humanities.

ASIS '87

See the attached sheet for philosophy program ideas.

Please try to get a guarantee as soon as possible concerning the number of sessions allotted for our SIG, the session length (60, 90 minutes, whatever), page length limit for published papers, deadlines, etc. Then, we can pursue co-sponsorship of sessions to get around the limit, if necessary. Likely co-sponsors are SIGs CR, FIS, ALP, CRS.

FUTURE CONFERENCE PLANS

In a previous newsletter, I recommended that we gear our annual meeting programs around either a single discipline or application. Here are some themes I could organize around:

1. Literature

- a) subject access to fiction
- b) literary translations: (possibly by language, eg. from English, to English) social determinants, content analysis, bibliometric studies
- c) book reviews: bibliometric studies, eg. reviews of foreign-lg. books; or by discipline, specialty, or theoretical position

2. International issues (with SIG/III)

- a) international cooperation in humanities documentation
- b) third world: humanities and computer applications

3. Computers and the organization of scholarly work (continuation of 1985 theme)

4. Bibliometrics in the humanities (continuation of 1984 theme)

Other ideas:

1. Regional meetings could ensure participation for those who can't attend the national conference. Any volunteers? I'll volunteer for the DC area. Who would come to Washington?
2. Joint meetings with other related professional groups
3. Does anyone have any ideas for a special program related to the 50th anniversary meeting in Boston next year? Any ideas for a continuing education workshop?

ASIS '86: SESSIONS TO ATTEND

Volunteers are needed to attend the following sessions to report on them for the *SIG/AH Newsletter*:

- 1) Mon. Sept. 29, 10:30-noon: Cross-cultural factors in information transfer: "Scholarly communication in religion & theology"
- 2) Tues. Sept. 30, 8:30-10 am: Scientific/technical users of information: "Cross-disciplinary citation patterns in the history of technology"
- 3) Tues. Sept. 30, 4-5:30 pm: Indexing in specialized areas: "Characterization of content in historical cylinder recordings"
- 4) Wed Oct. 1: 8:30-10 am: Conceptualizing Information I: some philosophical considerations

NEWSLETTER

The newsletter is in the final stages of being edited. It will be an extra large edition to compensate for the fact that it is the only newsletter for the 1985-86 membership year. It will include members' reports, extensive bibliographies, lists of software, and a directory of organizations and online bulletin boards. Since it is the year's only issue, I will direct headquarters to send it to the 1985-86 members as well as to the 1986-87 members. Future issues will include book and software reviews.

ELECTIONS

Our nominating and election process has failed once again. We need volunteers to run for office and people to seek out potential officers. Perhaps we should create two-year terms for all offices except Chair-Elect, since there are so few candidates.

PUBLISHING

ASIS is still seeking ideas for monograph publication. Perhaps we could publish a bibliography, a directory, a collection of papers using one of our conference themes. Does anyone have any ideas?

NON-MEMBER SUBSCRIBERS

I propose that we charge \$5 per year to non-ASIS-members for a subscription to our newsletter. The Upstate New York Chapter started to do this (see ASIS UPSTATE NEWSLETTER, April 1984). We have a large non-member mailing list, most of those people would be willing to pay a modest fee, it is useful for us to have a wide readership, and a small SIG like ours could use the revenue to enhance our newsletter and activities.

SIG MISSION DESCRIPTION

The following paragraph constitutes the official description of the mission of SIG/AH (from the *ASIS Handbook & Directory*).

SIG/AH explores the applications of information technology to: a) humanistic scholarship, such as language, history, philosophy, and archaeology; and b) in the creative process, including literature, music, the visual and fine arts, and dance. It aims to place critical theory within the framework of information science and to improve information flow in the arts and humanities. Illustrative activities include making concordances, collating texts, discovering verbal correspondences between passages, characterizing styles, machine-editing bibliographies, choreographing dance, and computer art.

I propose that we strike the above obsolete description and replace it with the following:

SIG/AH explores the applications of information science and technology to humanistic scholarship and artistic creation. Illustrative concerns are humanities librarianship, databases, information retrieval, textual analysis, computerized bibliographies and textual aids, new methods for the organization of scholarly work, bibliometric and other studies of information dissemination, and social structures of humanities disciplines. SIG/AH also has an abiding interest in the philosophical, humanistic, and social implications of information technology and the information society.

(Original by R. Dumain, dated Sept. 25, 1986. Reformatted by R. Dumain.)