

NASSS Dialogues: A Discussion of the Future

Our November 2004 meeting in Tucson marked the 25th annual conference of NASSS. In recognition of this important milestone, all NASSS members were invited to participate in a Friday discussion of the future direction of NASSS at a special session. The session featured four groups and members selected joined the discussion in one group addressing one specific topic. These topics were:

- Membership, retention and outreach efforts, including promotion of diversity, recruitment of graduate students, and the conference climate.
- Communication among the NASSS membership about organizational matters.
- Conference structure and content, including interdisciplinarity, accessibility and rigor.
- Administrative structure of NASSS, including terms of office and role delineation.

Notes taken by Nancy Spencer

Issue: Communication among the NASSS membership about organizational matters. (NASSS 2004)

A. What does communication include?

- We could virtually *guest lecture* in one another's classes
- Using *newsletter* and *web spaces*; could have more dialog through each
- Could establish own *web pages*; some do not want to move to paperless organization
 - *Html sessions* can be offered for those who want to write their own web page
 - We can scan or put things in PDF format for those who want hard copies
- Book reviews could be made available online
- How do we encourage scholars to read our journals?
 - Impact factor of SSJ is 32nd
- Conference proceedings could be made available online
 - We could post presidential address, keynotes (e.g., Emma Perez) from NASSS

1. Website

- We recognize and acknowledge the efforts of Andrew Yiannakis and Alan Aycok who have implemented and kept up the website until now.
- Appearance of the website could be enhanced even more to reflect more positively on the organization by continually updating. Some of the following suggestions were made:
 - Documents need to open up properly for viewing
 - We can use blogs for current awareness, and they are low maintenance (according to Amy Hribar)
 - What is a *blog*? I googled to find that "A **blog** is an easy-to-use web site, where you can quickly post thoughts, interact with people, and more."
 - We could use blogs to discuss hot button topics; this would enable even greater possibilities to reflect on issues
 - A blog can use free software, or we can buy it; by logging on to server instead of using separate folders, everyone has access
 - Different committees can send email to one another via the website; we can also include procedures to follow for each committee; that way we have a record of what happened before and can provide guidelines online
 - Usually we have to sign in to the server, but this can provide a way to post information about the conference that would not need to be sent out as hard copies (AH)

2. Archival Resources need to be made available

- Eldon Snyder has been long-time archivist and has worked extensively to maintain information from NASSS since its inception (12 boxes currently on file in archives at BGSU)
 - Materials could be re-organized according to dates
 - Materials could be made available or at least listed on website
- We acknowledge work of Vicky Paraschak for labor intensive work of updating By Laws, procedures
 - E.g., Kathy Jamieson mentioned that according to the Bylaws, we are to adhere to certain procedures for submission of papers, awards; we could have a timeline that reflects when things are to be done during the calendar year
- We could do text websites, memorabilia

3. NASSS listserv

4. Keynote addresses from NASSS

- Could these be included on white board? (interactive smart board display)

5. Can we do “virtual teaching” in one another’s classes online?

6. Newsletter

- Newsletter has been updated; perhaps we can include historical moments about NASSS, other issues in Newsletter (Kathy Jamieson)
 - E.g., in 1980 newsletter, boycott of Olympics was discussed

7. Sign-up for Committees (doing the work of NASSS)

- We need to put people to work who sign up; why not spread the work, involvement of different people around

B. Action steps

1. Make the website more collaborative, so it is more communal (Amy Hribar is new webmaster!)

- Redesign of web site for 25th anniversary (Amy will get to do this in her new position)
- Blogs would be easy to update
- White boards could be easy to use for chat

2. We need liaison to archives (Nancy Spencer offered)

3. We could ask archivist at Smith archives for suggestions of how to best utilize archives; theirs are incredible, mostly related to women (Jane Stangl)

4. We could compile written history of NASSS (Jane Stangl suggested; in certain ways, we are beginning to do this with President’s display at NASSS, Vicky Paraschak’s work of documenting by laws, Nancy Spencer’s offer to serve as liaison; new web possibilities should make it possible to go forward on this)

6. It would be interesting to construct our genealogies

- E.g., former presidents such as John Loy always taught about how our area grew
- Greater access to web site would enable this to happen as well