

MME Record

Newsletter of the Media Management and Economics Division of AEJMC

Fall 2001

Number 35

Panel suggestions for Miami AEJMC due Sept. 26

by Sylvia Chan-Olmsted, Division Vice Head

The Media Management & Economics Division requests submissions of panel proposals for the 2002 convention in Miami. Proposals for Research, Teaching, Professional Freedom and Responsibility (PF&R) panels, off-site and mini-plenary sessions are invited, but proposals must be received by Sept. 26.

While the Division welcomes all topics that relate to media management and economics, as the conference will be in Miami next year, the headquarters of many Spanish media and the gateway to Latin America, we are especially interested in proposals that deal with global/Latin American media and/or address Spanish media-related issues. The theme of next year's conference is "Ways of Knowing," so the Division also invites proposals that explore new approaches to teaching and learning.

Co-sponsorships increase our Division's chance to schedule sessions during prime time slots and to reach out to other Division members to grow MME membership, so please identify the Divisions or Interest Groups that might benefit from your proposed topic. Panel selections and possible co-sponsors will be reviewed by the members of the MME Executive Board and determined at the Council of Divisions Meeting in Dallas, Nov. 30 to Dec. 2.

Panel Proposal Format

Please use the template on the MME website to

prepare for your panel proposals. The template includes the following components:

1. Type of Panel (indicate the theme as teaching, research or professional freedom & responsibility)
2. Title
3. Possible Panelists (list both names and affiliations)
4. Panel Description
5. Possible Panel Co-sponsors
6. Panel Contact: (list the contact person and his/her mail/email address and telephone number)

Panel Proposal Submission

Please send a copy of your panel proposal in both hard copy AND electronic copy (using the template) by September 26, 2001 to:

Sylvia Chan-Olmsted

Department of Telecommunication

College of Journalism and Communications

University of Florida

Gainesville, FL 32611

E-mail: chanolmsted@jou.ufl.edu (you may e-mail the electronic copy to this address)

Do you want to have a better chance to get your panel proposal accepted?

Read Ann Hollifield's article in the following pages and increase your understanding of the selection process and your chances of creating a proposal that will be used in Miami!



Mary Alice Shaver gives the top student paper award to Jaemin Jung, Univ. of Florida, who wrote the paper with Jack C.C. Li. (*More photos inside*)

How the panel selection process and chip auction works

by Ann Hollifield, Division Head

With the panel proposal date fast approaching, I wanted to share some insights into how the panel selection process works.

AEJMC's convention programming process and the requirements it sets for divisions' performance influence how divisions select panels from among the proposals. In fact, the convention programming process itself means that division officers have only limited control over what finally makes it onto the MME convention program each year.

If you've heard of the legendary "Chip Auction" but never quite understood how it works, this will explain it. More importantly, understanding the process might help you develop a panel proposal that has a better chance of making it on the program. It may also help explain why some of the excellent proposals that were submitted in the past have vanished without a trace in AEJ's Byzantine programming process. There are few things more frustrating than going to the trouble of developing a good panel proposal only to have it be rejected without explanation. That's an experience I personally know well.

In 2000, MME received 25 panel proposals, most of which came from division members. Six of those proposals successfully made it onto the program for the national conference in Washington, D.C.

As then-Vice Head and Program Chair, I gave the panel proposals I received last fall to Al Greco, Division Head, and the Division's three section heads -- Phil Napoli, Jim Mueller, and Sylvia Chan-Olmsted. AEJ asked that divisions limit the number of proposals forwarded to headquarters for distribution to the other divisions, so we had to make some choices from among the 25.

Each board member identified the proposals that he/she thought were "must haves" for the division's program in D.C. The section chairs identified one or two proposals that were their highest programming priorities in their areas. Then each person ranked the 25 proposals according to those that they considered the Top 5, Second 5, Third 5, etc.

After I received everyone's votes, I used the Borda voting method -- the same one used to determine football standings -- to make the selections.

Those proposals that the section chairs said were the programming priorities for their areas were automatically included. For each rating as a "must have," a proposal received five points; for a top five rating, it got four points; for a second five, three points, etc.

There was tremendous consensus across the Executive Board on the proposals, so the selection was simplified. A small group of proposals immediately emerged as being of high interest because of the topics that they planned to cover.

After separating out that group, the second phase began. MME has certain programming goals that it has to meet to both serve its members and meet the programming criteria set by AEJ. For example, MME has members interested in a variety of media and mass communications. Therefore, we need to ensure that our panel proposals cover topics across all media types and not are dominated by panels focused on any one type. AEJ also requires that we have proposals that are roughly equally divided among teaching, research and PF&R. We try to program a variety of topics -- not revisiting the same subject year after year. We also need to insure that our panel topics cover both media management and media economics, as well as both news and non-news media. AEJ expects that we will program with a variety of divisions -- not with the same ones year after year. Other divisions have their own interests, which means that the nature of the proposals that make it onto the program will be shaped by the divisions that agree to co-sponsor panels with us.

With these criteria in mind, I went back to the proposals that the Executive Board had not selected, and chose those that would balance our division's offerings. I also combined two proposals that had significant overlap. In the end, we forwarded to the other AEJ divisions 12 of the 25 proposals that the division initially received.

In mid-November, Al, Sylvia, Phil, Jim and I received from AEJ the full packet of panel proposals from all of the divisions -- more than 250 total. We each reviewed the proposals and used the same method -- Must Haves, Section Priorities, Top 5, etc. -- to determine our programming priorities from

Panel selection (cont.)

among not only our proposals, but all the proposals on the table. Again, there was a surprising degree of consensus among us.

At the 2000 MME business meeting, members approved the idea that we should give programming priority to at least one panel selected by each chair as important in that area, so those panels were the focus of my initial negotiating efforts with other divisions.

AEJ gives each division seven programming chips. When you co-sponsor a panel with another division, it only costs a 1/2 chip. Off-site sessions, pre- and post-conference sessions, and the division's business and executive meetings don't cost chips. The first four refereed research sessions that a division schedules also cost only a 1/2 chip each, even if sole-sponsored. All other sole-sponsored sessions, however, cost one full programming chip.

More importantly, AEJ requires that all of the co-sponsored sessions be scheduled before any of the sole-sponsored panels. This means that if a division schedules a panel without a co-sponsor, the panel automatically receives one of the worst time slots in the conference program (9-10:30 p.m., for example) or the last slot on the last day of the conference when there are few people for an audience.

These factors make it critical to find co-sponsors for the division's panels, which makes the chip auction a horse-trading process. "Our division will co-sponsor your session, if you'll co-sponsor ours." As a result, it's not possible to use all 10 half-chips to program Division-developed panels. The goal is to set programming priorities for the division and then try to negotiate

those panels onto the program. But if we can't find another division to co-sponsor a priority panel, MME either has to abandon it or sole sponsor it with the understanding that it will be given a bad time slot and that the division also will give up a second panel in the process.

This makes the programming process something of a crap shoot, with even the Division's officers having only limited control over the final outcome. Success depends on our priorities matching the programming priorities of the officers of other divisions. Then, once a deal to co-sponsor is struck, the two divisions have

to find a time in the convention schedule when neither has anything else scheduled – since no division is allowed to have two events going on simultaneously. That's not always possible.

When seeking co-sponsors, the most desirable are the largest divisions, such as Newspaper or Mass Communication and Society, because they bring the largest audience to a panel. This means that there is competition for those divisions' co-sponsorship. Also, when a panel proposal is narrowly focused, fewer divisions are likely to be interested in co-sponsoring.

Last year, that combination created some problems for MME. The majority of the initial proposals that the division received from its members were focused on the

newspaper industry. That made the Newspaper Division the most likely co-sponsor for all of them – which significantly reduced each proposal's chance of making it onto the program. In the end, we were only able to arrange the co-sponsorship of a joint refereed research panel with the Newspaper Division. We were able to get one of MME's newspaper-focused proposals

onto the final program by expanding the proposal's focus to include both newspapers and broadcasting and arranging co-sponsorship with the Radio Television Journalism division.



Lay your cards on the table and let the chips give us some great panels!

So how can you put all this information to use? When you develop program proposals there are several things that you can do that will help increase the chances that you panel will make it onto MME's convention program:

- 1) Develop proposals that include more than one type of media;
- 2) Familiarize yourself with the other divisions in AEJ and develop proposals that will interest more than one other division. Try to appeal to one of the smaller divisions because there is less competition for their co-sponsorship. For example, you could propose a panel on newspaper personnel issues, including discussion of the recruitment and management of minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities. Such a proposal might appeal to not

Panel selection (cont.)

only the Newspaper Division, but also to the Minorities Division, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Disability Interest Group, and the Critical and Cultural Studies Division.

- 3) Review the conference programs from the previous two AEJ national conferences and avoid proposing panels on topics that have been presented within recent memory. Proposals that revisit recent topics – whether sponsored by MME or not – are less likely to make the program.
- 4) Focus your proposal on specific issues, rather than broad general themes. For example, rather than proposing a panel on the economics of broadcasting – narrow the topic to some specific, interesting aspect of broadcast economics, such as the economics of clustering or duopolies, etc.
- 5) Be wary of proposing something that is the “hot” issue in the fall preceding the conference – when panel proposals are due. Often such hot topics are dead issues by the time the conference rolls around. Other divisions had panels scheduled in Phoenix on the ramifications of the Y2K bug – a tough sell by August 2000. In D.C. panels on the 2000 election coverage had something of a similar fate.
- 6) Make your proposal as detailed as possible. Proposals that lack specifics and appear to have been given only cursory thought don’t stand out among the 250 or so that each Division reviews.
- 7) Recognize that your panel proposal is, in fact, a sales pitch. Sell your idea. Keep in mind that you’re selling it not only to the MME executive board, but also to the program chairs of other divisions.

And at the end of all of that, no matter how excellent your proposal, AEJMC convention programming is still a process of negotiation, timing and horse trading. So if your proposal doesn’t make it on the convention program one year, resubmit it again the next.

Our Vice Head and Program Chair, Sylvia Chan-Olmsted, will run the selection process this year and may decide she wants to make some changes in how it is done for the process I’ve outlined here. However, the types of issues that Sylvia and the rest of the Executive Board will have to consider will remain the same.

Many thanks again to everyone who put so much work into shaping last year’s excellent program. And thanks also to all of you who already are working on next year’s.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to MME Executive Board Members Al Greco and Phil Napoli of Fordham University in Manhattan and to all MME members whose friends, acquaintances, students or loved ones were involved in the devastating events in New York City and Washington, D.C. on September 11.



MME presents top awards at divisional business meeting

At the divisional business meeting, awards were given in a variety of areas. First place in the student paper division (Mary Alice Shaver Award) was given to Jack C. C. Li and Jaemin Jung, Florida, for “Impact of Context Effects on Evaluation of New Shows in Lead-In/Lead-Out Context.” Second place was awarded to “Market Structure and Local Signal Carriage Decisions in the Cable Television Industry” by Michael Z. Yan, Michigan. Third place was given to “Different Voices, Same Script: How Newsmagazines Cover Media Consolidation Issues” by Bryan Greenberg, Syracuse.

Randy Beam of Indiana was given the Stephen Lacy top faculty paper award for “Content Differences between Daily Newspapers with Strong and Weak Market Orientations.” Second place was given to “Managing Internet-Delivered Radio: New Markets, New Revenue, New Operations Issues,” by Cheryl L. Evans, Northwestern Oklahoma State, and J. Steven Smethers, Oklahoma State. Third place was given to “The Globalization of Telecommunications Services: Alliances, Market Development, and Product Convergence” by Sylvia Chan-Olmsted, Florida.

The Robert Picard award for the best research project of the year was given to Douglas Gomery and Benjamin Compaine for their book, *Who Owns the Media?* The Barry Sherman Teaching Award was given to Richard Gershon of Western Michigan.



Upper Left: Sylvia Chan-Olmsted presents the Barry Sherman award to Richard Gershon of Western Michigan.

Top Right: Robert Picard (middle) congratulates Benjamin Compaine (left) and Douglas Gomery for their award-winning book, *Who Owns the Media?*

Lower left: Stephen Lacy shakes Randy Beam’s hand after giving Randy the top faculty paper award.

Washington, D.C. Convention Report

by Ann Hollifield, Division Head

The MME Division marked significant milestones during the 2001 AEJMC convention in Washington, D.C. The division sponsored several special sessions and attendance at MME sessions was high. MME launched new initiatives during its business and executive committee meetings, and awarded the excellence of its members' achievements during the year.

The division named Richard Gershon of Western Michigan the first recipient of the Barry Sherman Teaching Award for excellence in media management and economics instruction. The executive board was expanded to include a

Chair of International Service and Outreach, who will focus on building the division's international membership and activities. The significance of the division's Robert Picard Award for the year's top publication in the field of media management and economics was recognized by the publishing industry as demonstrated by Lawrence Earlbaum's advertisement of the award winner, "Who Owns the Media," on the back cover of the AEJMC convention program. Enthusiasm for active participation in the division continued to increase as evidenced by the large number of volunteers for the executive board for the coming year.

The division co-sponsored 12 sessions during the convention, including a pre-convention workshop on using 2000 Census data in reporting and research, and an off-site visit to the Federal Communications Commission. The division sponsored five competitive research sessions, including the scholar-to-scholar sessions and a research paper session that was co-sponsored with the Newspaper Division and featured the top faculty papers from both divisions.

The Division's panels featured an impressive list of nationally and internationally recognized industry and government leaders including John Abel, Abel Wireless and Former Executive Vice President of NAB; Barry Ballow, Office of Academic Exchange

Programs, U.S. Department of State; Art Beko, ESPN; Jim Bird, Head, FCC Transactions Team; William Drake, The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; Michael Bracy, Low Power Radio Coalition; Douglas Feaver, Editor, Washington Post Online; Staci Feger-Childers, News Director, WMAR-TV; Ellen Foley, Managing Editor of the Philadelphia Daily News; Jill Frumin, FTC Attorney; Douglas Galbi, FCC; Francine Jefferson, NTIA; Kenneth Kolson, Research Programs, National Endowment for the Humanities; Cheryl Leanza, Media Access



Robert Pepper, Chief of the FCC's Office of Plans and Policy, talks to Phil Napoli at the MME off-site visit.

Project; John Morton, President, Morton Research; Robert Pepper, Chief, Office of Plans and Policy, FCC; Jan Schaffer, Director, Pew Center for Civic Journalism; John Sturm, Newspaper Association of America; K. Viswanath, Health Communications & Informatics Research Branch, National Cancer Institute; and Scott Woelfel, Founder of CNN Interactive.

Not listed here because of last minute additions and replacements were additional representatives of the FCC, the National Science Foundation, the Dallas Morning News, and several other media companies and industry associations.

Thanks go to all of those who had a part in organizing MME's panels and research sessions: Randy Beam, Janet Bridges, Hugh Fullerton, Geoff Hull, Gracie Lawson-Borders, Phil Napoli, and Ken Smith.

Attendance at the division's sessions was generally excellent and remained so throughout the convention. The division's last panel of the conference, which was scheduled in the second-to-last convention time slot, drew 30 people, nearly the same number as for the first panel of the convention and roughly the average attendance for MME panels across the conference.

Among the non-traditional panels organized during this year's conference were a back-to-back session co-sponsored by MME and CT&P that examined both

Convention Report (cont.)

management issues and research opportunities in new media; a session presenting the research from an on-going consulting project on the economic health of the academic book publishing industry to which members of AEJMC's Standing Committee on Research, its Publication Committee, and representatives of publishers at the convention were invited; and a visit to the FCC to discuss emerging policy directions and opportunities for university/government collaboration.

Other highlights of the division's program included panels on the effects of the clustering strategy on media company economics and the public interest; a mini-plenary on low-power radio and the public interest; sources of federal funding for mass communication research; issues in the management of community newspapers and civic journalism; teaching diversity in courses that do not focus on diversity issues; and the changing market for sports news and the implications of those changes for media management.

The divisions and Interest Groups with which Media Management and Economics worked this year in organizing panels and research sessions included Civic Journalism; Communication Technology & Policy; Cultural and Critical Studies; Law; Magazine; Media Ethics; Minorities & Communication; Newspapers; and Radio Television Journalism.

Enthusiasm for being active in the division has increased over the past two years. Only a few years ago, division officers had a difficult time finding enough volunteers for the division's executive board to fill the necessary positions. Over the last two years, the division's executive board has expanded greatly. This year, 24 members stepped forward to volunteer for leadership responsibilities. The division gratefully accepted their offers and with a such a strong board in place, made plans to launch a number of new initiatives for the coming year.

Building division membership and increasing paper submissions will be primary goals for the coming year. To that end, three new positions on the executive board were created and officers named.

The division now has a Chair for Recruitment and Retention, who is charged with developing programs and strategies to build the division's membership. Working with that person will be the new Chair of International Service and Outreach, who will take responsibility for building the division's international membership, as well as for suggesting ways that the division can better serve the needs of its international members. Finally, a new Vice Chair of Research and Paper Competition Marketing position was created. The holder of that position will work closely with the Paper Competition Chair to market the division's research competition throughout the year, as well as generate ideas for programs that the division might develop in coming years to increase the number of papers received.

The division also made plans with three other divisions and interest groups to hold a Midwinter Convention in February 2002. MME, CT&P, Civic Journalism, and Visual Communication will co-sponsor a two-day Midwinter conference. Details of the convention are still being developed. But current plans are for the conference to be held at the University of Georgia in early February. The conference theme is expected to revolve around some aspect of media personnel and career development.

The division also welcomed Gary Corbitt of the National Association of Broadcasters to its business meeting in Washington. NAB is seeking ways to work more closely with faculty members on research initiatives. The MME Executive Board expects to work with NAB this year to explore opportunities for increased collaboration.

Finally, the division board agreed to try to develop more non-traditional panels for the 2002 Miami convention, provided that co-sponsors can be found. Suggestions included the development of a case study during the year, with panel representatives including industry leaders presenting potential solutions during the session. Ideas are still being developed and co-sponsors are being sought.

