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19 June 2007

ACL Business Office Report

First a few updates:

I had reported in January that our accountant had suggested moving some of our monies into higher-interest-bearing CDs. With Kathy's approval, in February, I moved \$50,000 into a nine-month CD earning 5.40%--a more than doubling of our previous earning rate.

As usual, I can assure you that the Directors and Officers insurance, as well as the office insurance, have been paid for 2007.

We have also ended our long-term relationship with the New Jersey accountant and will be going with someone in the Stroudsburg, PA area. The distance was great for traveling to see the NJ accountants and, since their move within Westfield, coupled with the loss of the specific accountant who was familiar with our particular circumstances and events, the fees had almost doubled for the same services. In Stroudsburg, the price structure is much more cost effective.

Publications: Publications orders seem to be holding steady. While there are only 19 outside/vendor orders so far, I expect this to grow substantially once our Publications Order Form includes both the NAACL and ACL conferences' proceedings. There were also 8 orders earlier this year from members but, add to this the total of 175 hardcopies of the Main Conference and 40 hardcopies of the EMNLP/CoNLL proceedings ordered by conference attendees as they registered and I think our publications orders will out-strip recent years.

Membership: We had a record-breaking total of 2,123 members in 2006 and it looks like we are on track to surpass this total for 2007! Counting all memberships gained through all registrations for NAACL HLT 2007 and all pre-registrations for ACL 2007, we are already at 2,095 with half a year to go. Last year, I had thought the main reason for this wonderful increase is having held all three major ACL conferences last year but now that the numbers seems to be consistent with last year I might venture a guess that our field is growing and ACL is simply attracting more of the community. You will see in the membership report that NAACL HLT brought in 324 plus 145 who had already paid their dues for 2007 so get a 1-year extension to their membership, and ACL has brought in 790 just in pre-registration memberships with more likely to come from the onsite registrations. Please refer to the Membership Statistics Report for further breakdown of the membership. This increase, coupled with memberships being extended through conference attendance and the usual small number of 3-year and 5-year memberships, means that we began 2007 with 368 members before putting out the call to renew.

I am pleased to report that, in 2007, all difficulties experienced last year with obtaining membership and conference registration information has been completely avoided. In addition, I am now downloading directly from the online registration and membership systems so whatever the individual completes is what goes into the office/final databases. This eliminates typos and other transcription sort of errors except for those handwritten forms received through the mail, fax, and onsite at conferences. It has also greatly improved the speed of entries allowing John and me to pay closer attention to other issues related to memberships and conferences.

Walker Fund: Thanks to the Executive for their approval of increasing Student Travel Awards funding beyond the previously typical 1-3 Walker Fund awards (basically never exceeding 10% of the roughly \$30,000 in the Walker Fund account). I received a total of 34 applications for

Student Travel Awards and was able to extend the \$10,000 to make meaningful awards to 14 students. The criteria I used was: 1) those students with no funding and at least one paper accepted in the main conference (some also had workshop papers or posters), 2) those students with papers accepted in workshops or poster sessions, 3) those students with papers accepted AND some funding from elsewhere. It was difficult to come to dollar amounts to just fund those with main session papers and no funding but this is what I did. I also took into account the area of the world the student was coming from and gave less to Europeans, mid-amounts to north Americans, and highest amounts to those traveling from asia.

Conferences: NAACL HLT 2007, with 469 registrations, was under-attended according to all expectations (2006 had 669 registrants). While Rochester may not have been the most appealing city to draw people, that can only account for a fraction of the under-attendance. I believe another large factor was the competition with Prague for workshops. While Rochester held four tutorials and five workshops, Prague will hold five tutorials and 15 workshops plus IWPT and EMNLP/CoNLL. And, of course, I am sure there are some who would attend an EACL who do not typically attend NAACLs. But, I do believe the wealth of workshops at ACL versus NAACL may be the main deciding point.

In contrast, ACL 2007, already has 1,020 pre-registrations, and may hit more than 1,050 when onsite registrations are included! Our previously highest conference registration was about 725. To clarify, the 1,020 number is the "body count", the total registrations. Of these 112 are only attending workshops or tutorials but not the main sessions. And, I believe the time and effort Kathy and I took to revise the registration fees, based on Robert's and (possibly) others' suggestions, has been successful. In the past, some people complained at having to pay a workshop fee AND a tutorial/workshop-only fee that was often quite high. Now, it is clear that there is a "discount" for those also attending the main conference and a higher registration fee to simply attend a tutorial or workshop. We also changed the wording to encompass co-located conferences, workshops and tutorials – all except the main conference are now called "satellite events". There has not be a single complaint on this, as far as I know.

Chris Brew and I are beginning more serious planning of the upcoming ACL 2008 in Columbus, Ohio and will be meeting while in Prague to begin laying the plans in earnest. We have discussed the possibility of me driving out there this summer to help him pin down the Banquet and Reception venues and go through budgeting and such.

An Issue or Question: I noticed that one of our NAACL HLT sponsors who is also a sponsor at ACL 2007, had requested to earmark their contribution at NAACL as funding the Student Lunch (which was wonderful, or so it seemed). However, they took this opportunity to show a presentation to ALL students of their company. (Many students came out saying it was more like a single-company job fair) I raise this because various General Chairs in the past have been quite emphatic that this not be done, that a company could separately do as they wish (rent a hospitality room, etc) but could not solicit or recruit in any way as a part of the conference. I do not know the plans they have while at ACL but raise this to see what the Executive feels is the proper way to handle this sort of situation should it arise again.