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15 July 2006

ACL Business Office Report

I am very pleased to report that John Kirby, my new office assistant, is working out beautifully...innovative and clearly anxious to help in any way. He was incredibly helpful with HLT/NAACL 2006 both in the office and onsite. He also was a major part of why we were able to make the recent office move as painlessly and inexpensively as could be possible when moving such a large volume of boxes of books (as well as furniture) in such a short timespan!

I am also thrilled to report that the April 1st move to another location has been a very good move for us. When I returned from the Prague site visit, there was a letter from the landlord saying our lease would not be renewed (which came as quite a surprise!) and that we had until July to make the move. Of course, with both HLT/NAACL and COLING/ACL conferences approaching, we had to move quickly. I was able to find a smaller, single-unit office space in downtown Stroudsburg that suited our needs perfectly. We entered into a 3-year lease (with 2 additional years option at minimal cost-of-living increases) which will, over the first three years, wind up being the same rental costs as if we had stayed where we were. Unpacking and setting up the office while receiving registrations and memberships and keeping on top of it all was a challenge but I think we did pretty well.

Publications: Publications orders seem to be holding steady, with a few companies ordering on a regular basis and in multiple-copy quantities each time. We really do not get many orders at all from members any more but, I've reported on all this before. I just want to mention that, in the move, we downsized a bit more in quantities we hold in stock but are keeping ample amounts of all publications to be able to fill any orders that do come in. And, I am now downsizing the quantities I ask for from each conference which saves both the conference and ACL some money.

Membership: We now have a total of 1,409 members (down by 151 from the end of 2005; about 100 were student members lost). The Trento Local Organizing Team and I worked very closely pre-EACL 2006 to verify current membership and those who were not members were told to complete the online membership directly with ACL. We monitored their completion of the memberships and this worked quite smoothly. Of course, for HLT/NAACL 2006, we gave the now-standard extra year of membership, bringing up our current year membership by 540 and extending 126 current members by one year. Please refer to the Membership Statistics Report for further breakdown of the membership.

However, I think we missed an opportunity to keep our membership up to between 1500 and 1600 and possibly bringing in some new members who might remain long-term through renewals, by not requiring ACL membership of those attending COLING/ACL 2006. We had made this a requirement the last time COLING and ACL were held jointly (in 1998) and I'd recommend we do so in the future for any joint meetings.

Walker Fund: At COLING/ACL 2006, we made four awards totaling \$3,200. Two were for \$700 each to students from the USA, one was for \$1,200 to a student from Romania, and one was for \$600 to a student from the USA/China. Both USA students are also serving as Student Volunteers. Originally, I was not going to award volunteerships as well as Walker Fund awards but we wound up needing extra volunteers, they were anxious to be volunteers, and this was a way of extending their awards.

Conferences: Both HLT/NAACL 2006, with almost 700 registrations, and COLING/ACL 2006, with over 725 registrations, are very successful! While I haven't finalized the budget of HLT/NAACL yet, it does look like a surplus is definite, despite a few glitches with the hotel. And, of course, it is too early to know for sure, but with the low breakeven Robert Dale and Cecile Paris were working with and the somewhat unexpected larger number of actual attendees, this conference should also do quite well financially (as well as being a wonderful experience!).

Having made the site visit to Prague the beginning of March, I am sure ACL 2007 will be exciting and an absolutely wonderful event. The Local Team already had a great plan in place, good venues for all events, and a quite competent assistant to take on a lot of the logistical details. And, set in such a lovely city, this should be an excellent experience for everyone who comes!

I also made the site visit to Rochester, with Regina Barzilay, for HLT/NAACL 2007. The venue, a combination of two hotels (one as the conference hotel and one at a lower cost for students) and the convention center, all connected by bridges within one block, should work very well. Most impressive was that James Allen, the Local Organizer lead person, managed to mobilize the Tourism and Convention Bureau and others within the city to collaborate in making this a very successful and interesting venue...Just wait until you see the banquet site!