

ARPA CONSTITUTION: NOTES
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The Atlantic Region Philosophers Association has no constitution. It has only institutional memory. Since I am the only remaining (assistant) organizer of the inaugural conference in 1970, I was nominated "Regent" by Will Sweet and duly elected at the ARPA meeting at MUN in 2005. This was a friendly joke, and there is no such position. So these fallible comments are from a nonentity concerning a nonexistent. But I hope that they are helpful, and of course I welcome corrections.

The Franco-Anglo question

David Braybrooke, who inaugurated the institution in 1970, worked closely with other Halifax universities (SMU and MtStVincent in particular) in planning the first ARPA conference. But his prime collaborator was Serge Morin of l'Université de Moncton. The conference was resolutely bi-lingual, on the ACP/CPA model. We all assumed that with many of our children and future students enrolled in French-immersion schooling this would become a non-issue for future generations of Anglophone-Canadians. UdeM for the first several decades hosted the conference the year after the Dalhousie one, with the intent that the bi-lingual nature of the event be emphasized. And other campuses also took leadership roles: Greg MacLeod at what is now CBU wrote his Calls for Papers, etc., in both languages, as did Jim Crombie at Université Ste. Anne, and others whom I have temporarily forgotten. Unfortunately there is a Law of Anglophone Inertia which has affected both the CPA and ARPA.

We should try to re-establish the founding intentions. At very least we should welcome papers in French, and should make sure that some audience is in attendance and able to comment. And in institutional terms, we could try to set up boiler-plate announcements (like the CFP) in both languages, so that our communications are not always reinvented in the language of least resistance.

Re-invention

It has been, since the beginning, the idea that there would be no executive, no administration, and no constitution for ARPA. It was to be re-invented by each hosting department as they saw fit given the time and the circumstances. This policy has many benefits and some drawbacks. It might be appropriate to re-visit the policy, but I am inclined to favour our collegial and leaderless model. Nonetheless, over the years we have succumbed to the temptation of establishing a common bank account (currently administered by Stephen Boos, King's, and Steven Burns, Dalhousie) and a common web-site (Will Sweet, St. FX).

With regard to the funding of the conferences, I attach the following memorandum:

FINANCIAL NOTES for ARPA conference presenters:

Many years ago, ARPA counted on SSHRCC funding for attracting plenary speakers and paying for travel expenses to each ARPA meeting. But we became ineligible when SSHRCC stopped funding regional events and began to insist on themed conferences with international exposure. We faked that for a few years, but eventually decided that that was not what we meant ourselves to be. So at an AGM (I don't remember where or when) we conscientiously decided on a policy that has never to my knowledge been written down. So here is my attempt, before I become just another institutional memory.

We decided that we could run the kind of annual conference we wanted to hold on a shoestring. The first principle was that it should not be a financial burden to the host department. The procedure was to minimize expenses, and to pay for the necessities through our own registration fees. We agreed that if costs were forced up, then we would pay for them with increased registration contributions. It would remain a communal effort to get together every Autumn at minimal expense.

Therefore:

1. We agreed to dispense with paying speakers' travel expenses, on grounds that most of the speakers could get sufficient support from their own institutions. We were in the beginning just an alliance of the 100 or so philosophers teaching in Departments of Philosophy in the Atlantic Region. We intended to offer ourselves an annual opportunity to get together, to compare work in progress and get to know each other a little better. That has changed somewhat, now that graduate students make up a significant proportion of the presenters. This is a welcome development, and we do, when funds allow, try to offer some travel support to graduate students, in particular those from our own region who are "on the programme". But they, too, often have some support from their home universities, and we take seriously the "when funds allow" proviso.
2. If there were to be a banquet it should be self-financing - user pay.
3. If there were to be a free lunch (typically as an inducement to attend the AGM), or coffee breaks, they should be paid for from registration fees (or some other funding source, such as research funds from the President's Office, or Dean's office, which hosting departments are usually able to attract).
4. Those grants are more and more these days partially clawed back by room booking charges, AV equipment rental, and so on. But the principle remains.
5. The cost of a guest speaker is usually the big item in an ARPA budget. At Dalhousie we have often piggybacked on other groups or grant-holders who have budgets for visiting speakers. That way we can minimize the ARPA cost, and expand the audience and profile for the grant-holders. Sometimes a department has separate funds for a guest speaker, and can build an ARPA event around her/him. If no other funds are available for the purpose, our original intent was that registration fees should cover such costs.
6. For the past few years ARPA has maintained a separate bank account, or contingency fund. It currently holds nearly \$3,000 in reserve. It can be called upon by hosts for seed money, for overruns, and so on. The fund is replenished when a host has a surplus of which it can

dispose, or when registration fees are deposited directly to the ARPA account. (That is more likely to happen when the host is in Halifax, but of course the account returns funds to the host department as needed.)

I hope that this makes clearer the intent of the motions that we originally passed. Any queries or suggestions are welcome.

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Atlantic Region Philosophers Association
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