

**Minutes – Research and Theory Section Meeting  
November 6, 2008  
Little Rock, Arkansas**

Attendance: 30

Ron Sabatelli opened the meeting at 8:10 pm.

Minutes were passed out and emailed to listserve. A sign up sheet was circulated as well.

Current section officers were introduced: Ron Sabatelli (Chair), Kevin Roy (Sec/Treasurer), and Paula Goodwin (absent).

Minutes from the 2007 meeting were handed out, as well as a treasurer's report and the agenda for this meeting. Minutes were approved by attendees.

Treasurer's report

David Klein clarified questions about the royalty account, relative to proceeds from the new Sourcebook. NCFR will pay into the acct about \$13,000 in the next year. Attendees moved to accept the treasurer's report, which was accepted.

Award winners

Ron gave appreciation awards for the work of chairs of the awards committees: Frank Fincham for Reuben Hill award committee, as well as Kim Updegraff and Bill Marsiglio for the nominations committee.

The Student New Professional Award was given to the SNP who is deemed to have submitted the highest quality paper. The Chair of RT section makes this decision after reviewing all submissions' comments. This year award was presented to Jill Walls, who co-authored a paper with Heather Helms, entitled "Spouses' provider role ideologies and their links with marital relationships and personal well being: A dyadic approach."

The Anselm Strauss award was presented by Todd Goodsell (who worked with a committee including Elise Radina, Tara Woolfolk, and others). The recipient was Trudy Reed, who was unable to attend the conference. Her paper focused on daughters who gave years of their lives to care for dying parents in rural communities in Canada. Her paper was inspired by personal experience in 1996, when her own father died after complications from stroke. She wondered if other women go through similar experiences in caring for their parents.

The Reuben Hill award is presented annually to the best RT paper regarding family issues, and was presented to Paul Amato. The Burgess Award was also presented to Paul Amato.

Discussion of the Burgess Award process followed the presentation. In the past, the chair-elect was assigned the duty every other year, although this year, Ron was spared the duty because it wasn't published in advance. Shelley MacDermid took on the responsibility and deserves credit for her hard work in arriving at the award choice. Competition, according to her, was "very tough...and the process

was intellectually stimulating, to see the records of luminaries in our field, look at the corpus of work to date.” Each nominee was considered a strong choice by the Burgess Award committee. There was discussion of how to clean up the nominations process, and whether to carry over nominations from the previous year.

## Reports

In past years, editors for JMF and FR have reported to the RT section, although this year, reports were not given for the journals.

Hilary Rose reported on TCRM for 2008, however. Submissions to TCRM were down, but attendance at the meeting in general was lower too. The workshop was well-received, however, and Hilary heard many compliments but no complaints. The TCRM committee has decided to return to awarding the best SNP paper, which was not done in recent years, in an effort to counter the impression that TCRM was only for senior scholars or only by invitation. Katherine Allen and Kevin Roy will chair in 2010 and 2011, with Dan Perlman chairing in 2009. Hilary mentioned numerous problems with submissions being completed by the September deadline, and the TCRM committee decided to push back the call deadline to March 15, with final papers due on August 1. Kay Pasley has taken on a huge commitment to archive TCRM papers. All participants’ papers from present back 35 years to 1973 have been scanned and digitalized.

## Section Officers Realignment/Transition of Section Officers

Proposal for realignment and transition was handed out to attendees. Ron described the back ground for the realignment proposal, which addressed how the NCFR annual meeting program planning committee met in April. Prior to discussion of the program, the committee noted that the sections were each organized very differently – specifically, different titles for officers, different responsibilities, and election on different time tables. Plans were proposed to better organize responsibilities across sections.

In RT, we have chair, chair elect, secretary treasurer, SNP, and past chair as officers – some of these positions have specific responsibilities, and some have less specific responsibilities. To move forward, we will have very specific responsibilities. The proposal is for:

- An addition of the position of past chair;

- Two year term for chair-elect

- Two year term for chair, after which chair moves to past chair role.

The chair plans the RT sessions for the annual program and represents the section at the planning meeting in April. The RT section gets 3-4 times as many proposals as other sections. The chair elect will be in charge of the RT section awards: chairing the Burgess award and managing the Hill award, including setting up the committee and dealing with it in-house, not by election. The secretary treasurer will submit items for newsletters. The SNP will serve a two year term and participate on the nominating committee. The past chair will also serve a two year term and become chair of the nominating committee.

Current officers are positioned in line with the proposal, and there was discussion of these proposed transitions. Paul Amato suggested that 10 yrs ago chair of Reuben Hill was picked by RT chair anyway, without election, and that worked out fine. Other suggestions included:

Make sure we spell out responsibilities for the SNP award (chair of RT – or chair elect?) ;

Make explicit that chair elect needs only to develop list of 2-3 names;

Make explicit what “develop committee for RH award” entails (note: For Frank Fincham, there were carry over members on RH award, and then he added a few more...so that members signed up for 2 yrs, with about 12-15 on committee).

Ron said that the SNP award should stay with the chair. Bonnie asked if it was too much responsibility on the chair elect to do the Reuben Hill and all other awards. Shelley responded that the responsibilities are significant for each two years over six years (2 yrs on awards, 2 yrs on program, 2 yrs on nominating committee). Kay cautioned that six years of commitment is too much, that four years is enough. We wondered if these suggestions may not have come from NCFR members but from NCFR staff, who saw inconsistency from year to year for each section, with no knowledge carried over. Ron admitted that he felt lost over first year, that all section chairs feel overwhelmed, and that they were told to read the bylaws as only guidance.

There were two motions for a vote on the proposal, and further discussion was held prior to the vote. Catherine Surra asked why it was important to streamline sections. Ron answered that this proposal did not feel imposed from top down. Members noted that if we voted in favor of these changes, it would change the bylaws. Ron said that he felt “like it’s the right thing to do,” as the current configurations appear very chaotic. Bonnie asked if there were hybrid solution, to elect a few on nominating committee, then hold few open spots. Ron replied that it seemed easier than finding people to run in nominating committees, wait for election, etc. an amendment was discussed to make more nominating committee members.

The proposal was called for a vote at 9:15, with 25 in favor, 1 opposed, and 1 abstention.

#### Update from nominations committee

Jennifer and Larry provided an update on nominations, with two nominees for SNP, none for chair elect, and none for secretary/treasurer. Each of these positions will be open for election in the next year.

#### Plans for 2009 conference

There was a discussion of current session frameworks. Attendees argued to keep shared responsibility for discussion/preside. Attendees noted that other sections have 4 papers in each session, but RT has 3. The precedent at RT has been 3, which allows for comments. It was argued that “less is more” and that with 4 papers in session, everyone runs over, leaving 4 min for discussion. In 2008, there were 9 paper sessions and 4 symposia, but only 5 paper slots.

Other comments/questions/concerns included attendees who wanted to see well known authors presenting papers, not just less known second authors. An attendee suggested introducing an invited session, with 4 invites to better known authors?

Suggestions on special topic session ideas or speakers included Andrew Fuligni on immigrant families; finding scholars in Bay Area; Ford Foundation scholars looking at Gay lesbian, Hispanic sexuality. Some attendees thought that the RT section does not sponsor many sessions. Another suggestion was to find a lead author and paper, with 4 researchers in field who commented on their own work, then critiqued the lead speaker. Was this the way to bring more senior people into paper sections?

Dan Perlman discussed new business with 2009 TCRM. He noted the overlap between constituencies of NCFR and TCRM. He expressed hope to combine theory and methods in sessions, and to experiment with half day workshops with methodological technique training (such as a focus on which intervals of data to use for longitudinal design). Dan noted that when section chairs met at the 2008 meeting, all thought that their own section members could not attend TCRM – that it was limited to RT members only. This was a mistaken impression that needed to be corrected in order to ensure continued success of TCRM next year.

Ron thanked everyone for their willingness to serve as discussants and reviewers.

Motion was entertained to adjourn at 9:40.

--- Submitted by Kevin Roy