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# **New PD Interest Group Established** <sup>[1]</sup>

In January 2016, the board of the International Communication Association (ICA) approved the formation of a Public Diplomacy Interest Group within ICA, the academic association for scholars interested in the study, teaching and application of all aspects of human and mediated communication.

The aim of this newly established Public Diplomacy Interest Group is to bring together scholars investigating topics related to public diplomacy, nation branding, country image and reputation, public relations for and of nations, as well as political, global and cultural communication influencing international relations. It seeks to gather all perspectives, research methods, methodological approaches, and theories including the recent critical approaches, to encourage dialogue and debate on these growing interdisciplinary topics.

The idea to set up this group arose in May 2015 at an ICA pre-conference in Puerto Rico. Titled “Advancing Public Diplomacy Research: Bringing Together Political Communication and Public Relations,” this discussion was co-sponsored by the Political Communication and Public Relations ICA Divisions and the USC Center on Public Diplomacy. Its aim was to spark discussion that could lead to new collaborative initiatives between these interdisciplinary fields, and illuminate tangible methods to investigate public diplomacy and nation branding from different angles and perspectives. Here’s the program for that morning:

8:30-9:00

Welcome, introduction and overview

(Diana Ingenhoff)

**Roundtable Discussion:** *Challenges of investigating public diplomacy from different angles and perspectives*

(Candace White, Spiro Kiouisis, and Diana Ingenhoff)

Moderated by Kathy Fitzpatrick)

9:00-10:00

**Panel 1: Applied Research and Practical Insights**

(Moderator: Kathy Fitzpatrick)

Respondents: Spiro Kiouisis and Candace White)

- *Heather LaMarre (Temple University): Strategic Narrative Messaging in Public Diplomacy: Applying the Narrative Policy Framework to Foreign Affairs and International Public Relations Efforts*

- *Aimei Yang / Rong Wang / Jay Wang (University of Southern California): Towards a Relational Approach to Public Diplomacy: A Network Analysis of U.S.-China Diplomatic Relationships.*

- *Meital Balmas (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem): Tell me who your leader, and I will tell you who you are: Projection of foreign leaders' image on their countries and citizens.*

- *Melissa Dodd/ Steve Collins / (University of Central Florida): Twitter Diplomacy in Central and Eastern Europe*

10:15-10:45

**Keynote speech:** *Jian Wang, USC Director, Center on Public Diplomacy*: Conceptual and practical connections in political communication and public relations: How interdisciplinary research could inform public diplomacy thinking and practice.

10:45-11:45

**Panel 2: Advancing Theoretical Insights in Public Diplomacy Research**

*(Moderator: Candace White*

*Respondents: Diana Inghoff and Spiro Kiousis)*

- *R. S. Zaharna (American University)*: Contested Narratives, Contested Identities: Exploring the Relational Dynamics and Identity Function in Public Diplomacy.

- *Jami A. Fullerton (Oklahoma State University) Alice Kendrick (Southern Methodist University)*: The Model of Country Concept: How attitudes toward nations are formed.

- *Jacquelyn Chinn (Texas A&M University)*: Israeli Digital Diplomacy in a Network Society: Appropriating Castell's Theory of Communication Power

- *Alina Dolea (University of Bucharest & Fribourg)*: The need for critical thinking in country promotion and public diplomacy.

11:45-12:15

Open discussion - next steps, development of research agenda; formation of Public Diplomacy Interest Group  
(Moderator: Kathy Fitzpatrick)

At the end of the event, the organizing committee, comprised of Diana Inghoff (University of Fribourg), Kathy Fitzpatrick (American University), Candace White (University of Tennessee) and Spiro Kiousis (University of Florida), proposed the formation of a dedicated Interest Group and participants voted in favor. Consequently, they formed a volunteer working group and I, Alina Dolea, joined them to coordinate the collection of required signatures and the submission of the official request to the ICA board.

Now that the ICA board has approved the Public Diplomacy Interest Group, we will have our **first business meeting** during the ICA annual conference in Fukuoka, Japan, on **Saturday, June 11, starting with 9:30am at Fukuoka Hilton, Kusu**. The organizers of this meeting are Diana Inghoff (University of Fribourg), Spiro Kiousis (University of Florida), Jian (Jay) Wang (University of Southern California) and myself, Alina Dolea, should you want to get in touch with us for other details.

**Join us!** If you are interested in joining the Public Diplomacy Interest Group, please fill out this survey. We will add your name to the database of the Interest Group and keep you informed of all its activities.

The Interest Group will have **its own panels and sessions starting with the San Diego ICA** conference in June 2017, and a **call for papers** will be distributed shortly after the Fukuoka ICA Conference.

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