



Costume Society of America

Education • Research • Preservation • Design

FAQs Regarding the Proposed CSA Name Change

Q: *How did the idea for a name change get started?*

A: For some time CSA members have reported that they find it difficult to explain ***Costume Society of America*** to people outside the organization. At the Hartford Symposium attendees had the chance to be drawn into the debate about how well the name “Costume Society of America” serves the organization to communicate who we are and what we do. The question has been the subject of dialogue ever since it first surfaced at a Board Futures Development Workshop in Nashville in 2001. In today’s world (as Madison Avenue knows all too well) people are bombarded with names and messages. Unless instantly understood they may as well be invisible. Some of the questions that have been asked are: How well does the name Costume Society of America do the job for our organization? Is it an instantly understood name? Are we perceived accurately? Does Costume Society of America immediately convey who we are, and attract the people who would want to be part of the organization?

Q: *To be better informed, how can one research information about the significance of name?*

A: Definitions of terms that CSA members typically use in their work and enjoyment of costume/dress/fashion can be researched. Some of these words include: apparel, clothing, costume, culture, dress, and fashion. Google has a service called “Google Trends,” which allows one to search the frequency of these terms in internet searches and in print literature. Trends over the last five years are reported in graph form. We invite you to search Google Trends to see how these terms compare. Additionally, the next time you read *DRESS*, the journal of the Costume Society, note which terms authors use in reporting their research. Also, look at CSA News, the CSA website, the newsletter, and dialogue in the CSDF Forum. Which periodicals or other literature do you use to learn more about costume/dress/fashion topics important to you? Which terms are used?

Q: *How will dialogue concerning a possible name change be carried out within the Society?*

A: Newsletter articles appear in the Fall 2011 issue of CSA News, with articles both for and against the name change. Dialogue also has appeared in previous issues and can be found online. Anyone is welcome to voice an opinion on CSA Facebook, Twitter, or on the CSDF Forum. Discussion at regional meetings is desirable. Results of these discussions can be reported back to the leadership through regional presidents or Board members from your region.

Q. *How will my individual opinions be taken into account by the CSA leadership?*

A. The Membership Committee will be sending a survey to every member. It will solicit information about a possible name change and other issues related to your satisfaction with the Society.

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