

Association of University Language Centres Annual General Meeting

Friday 7 January, University of Warwick

Peter Howarth started the AGM with a few words about Robin Lee, an AULC colleague from the University of Sussex, who sadly died in June 2010. Those of us who worked with him and met him at AULC events have fond memories of him.

1. Minutes from AGM, Exeter 2010

These minutes have been on the AULC website since early 2010 and were taken as read and approved.

2. Chair's Report

Peter had circulated his report in note form and picked out a few items he wanted to highlight, in particular progress on the 'Speak to the Future' campaign. He noted the proposed Languages in HE Festival planned for Tuesday 8 March 2011, which coincides with *mardi gras* celebrations. There is to be an evening event at the LSE on this date in 2011 and it is hoped that other universities may hold events at the same time of year in 2011 and in future as the annual Day of Languages at the end of September is not a good time for us. Peter said that he had received some examples of language collaboration with STEM departments and hope to receive more as he felt it was something distinctive about the work of language centres and worth highlighting at this time.

Peter mentioned the LLAS and invited Vicky Wright to provide an update on the situation. She confirmed that the Subject Centre would receive no funding after 1 August 2011 and said that the team in Southampton are currently setting up a continuation strategy. She said that they were grateful for the support they had received from universities and welcomed ideas and suggestions for the future. She said that there would be no problem with Southampton continuing to host the AULC website, for which service AULC pays an annual fee.

3. Treasurer's Report

Evan Stewart reported that AULC funds stand at £7,619 which is £3,000 more than last year. This healthy balance is due to the fact that, apart from payments to LLAS in support of the Languages Conference and to maintain the AULC website there had been fewer expenses in 2010. After a couple of quite expensive conferences money had been saved, primarily through increased sponsorship. Peter Howarth had audited AULC accounts for the year.

4. Report from Ireland

Joan O'Grady spoke predominantly about the English language division in Ireland. She said that the government had launched a 5 year strategy aimed at increasing the number of international students by 50%, up to 38,000, with an increase of 25%

in English language schools. At the same time new immigration rules were to be introduced, designed to fast-track visa applications for degree programme students. The maximum period of study will be 7 years and the graduate work scheme is to be extended. She reported growth in the number of students coming to Ireland from Saudi Arabia and said that there was now a new post of International Education Manager for the 7 Irish institutions.

5. Membership Update

Val Boyle confirmed that although a few institutions had not renewed AULC membership in 2010, the Association had gained 4 entirely new members during the year and 3 lapsed members had rejoined, resulting in membership remaining at the same level as at the end of 2009. Evan Stewart commented that collecting fees had taken a very long time, with some coming in extremely late. He urged delegates to check that their institutions paid promptly in 2011.

6. Terms of Office

Peter proposed a change to the AULC constitution to bring continuity and transparency to the appointment of members to the Executive Committee. The proposal was that the sentence in section 6.2 "Elections shall take place biannually" be replaced by "The terms of office for post officers shall be 3 years, renewable for a further 3 years in the same post or as an other officer." This would mean that post holders would have a maximum of 6 years in office. A delegate suggested the addition of the phrase "subject to re-election". The revised proposal was seconded, put to the vote and passed unanimously.

7. Executive Committee Elections

Leading on from the previous item, Peter noted that the current Secretary had served for 6 years and other post-holders for 3, so elections would be necessary this spring. He said he would be emailing all member institutions with a list of vacant posts, asking for nominations. It was suggested that it would be helpful if a brief description of responsibilities accompanied each post.

8.1 Special Interest Groups – Technical and Resources

Andrew Grenfell reported that a mid-term SIG meeting held at the University of Newcastle in summer 2010 was very poorly attended. Contributory factors may have been a clash with a World Cup football match as well as the location, but it was a disappointment, since considerable effort had gone into organising an interesting programme with guest speakers. Andrew was reluctant to repeat this in June 2011. He suggested that a SIG meeting at the same time as the BETT exhibition might be a better idea, or possibly a meeting hosted more centrally. Andrew also mentioned that the JISCmail SIG list worked very well and that he would very much like to identify a technical representative for each member institution.

8.2 Special Interest Groups – Management and Teaching

Nick noted that two London Language Centres, at South Bank and Thames Valley, had closed in 2010, though the Thames Valley Centre was being run privately.

9. Prizes

Peter suggested that, since there had been no submissions for consideration for prizes for a couple of years the scheme should be suspended, at least temporarily. Vicky Wright commented that it had been a great idea and that it would be a shame to abandon it. She suggested that new colleagues should be encouraged to enter and another delegate suggested that rather than candidates putting themselves forward they be nominated for awards by colleagues. Peter said the discussion could continue by email.

10. AGM/Conference 2012

Chiara Cirillo, representing the University of Reading, had offered to host the next AULC AGM and Conference. There had also been an expression of interest for 2013, though other institutions were invited to put themselves forward if they were interested in hosting an event in future.

11. AOB

Nick mentioned concerns about Language Centres in Scotland and Wales. Val said that though Edinburgh, Glasgow, Heriot-Watt and Strathclyde remained AULC members she had heard nothing from Aberdeen in 2010. The only AULC member in Wales is now Swansea, following the resignation of Glamorgan in 2010, Nick urged delegates to get friends from other institutions on board.

Val Boyle, Secretary 12.01.11