

**April 2000 AULC Meeting
Applied Language Centre
University College Dublin**

Tailoring Resources to Quality

Friday 7 & 8 April 2000

Present

45 Members attended from 30 institutions in the UK and Ireland:

Name	Institution	Email address
1. Christine Burgess	Aberdeen University	c.burgess@abdn.ac.uk
2. Dietmar Wozniak	Birmingham University	D.WOZNIAK@bham.ac.uk
3. Paul Mahoney	Bradford University	p.a.mahoney@bradford.ac.uk
4. Maureen Fleming	Bristol University	Maureen.Fleming@bristol.ac.uk
5. Ray Satchell	Bristol University	ray.satchell@bristol.ac.uk
6. Clare Power	CILT	clare.power@cilt.org.uk
7. Mar Menendez	Diplomatic Services Language Centre	mar.dslc@gtnet.gov.uk
8. Yovo Rozpotnik	Dublin City University	
9. Lieve Van Espen	Durham University	Lieve.Van-Espen@durham.ac.uk
10. Alister Robson	Durham University	
11. John Glendinning	Edinburgh University	j.glendinning@ed.ac.uk
12. Peter Glasgow	Edinburgh University	peter.glasgow@ed.ac.uk
13. Laura Rundle	Goldsmiths College, University of London	l.rundle@gold.ac.uk
14. Jane Baker	Goldsmiths College, University of London	j.baker@gold.ac.uk
15. Eugene Boyle	Heriot-Watt University	e.boyle@hw.ac.uk
16. Colin Richardson	Hull University	c.richardson@selc.hull.ac.uk
17. Marina Mozzon-MacPherson	Hull University	M.Mozzon-Mcpherson@selc.hull.ac.uk
18. Marta Nunez	Kings College, University of London	marta.nunez@kcl.ac.uk
19. Siobhan Murphy	Limerick University	siobhan.murphy@ul.ie
20. John Heyworth	London School of Economics	J.Heyworth@lse.ac.uk
21. Nick Byrne	London School of Economics	n.byrne@lse.ac.uk
22. Jocelyn Wyburd	Manchester University	jocelyn.wyburd@man.ac.uk
23. Anne Gallagher	Maynooth College, National University of Ireland	an.gallagher@may.ie
24. Ines Alonso	Middlesex University	Ines1@mdx.ac.uk
25. John Rees Smith	Middlesex University	John2@mdx.ac.uk
26. Roger Frisby	Middlesex University	Roger4@mdx.ac.uk
27. Trevor Pull	Nottingham Trent University	MOD3PULLTR@NTU.AC.UK
28. Cecilia Garrido	Open University	b.c.garrido@open.ac.uk
29. David Bickerton	Plymouth University	d.bickerton@plym.ac.uk
30. Pam McIntyre	Queen's University Belfast	p.mcintyre@qub.ac.uk
31. Jean-Pierre Mailhac	Salford University	j.p.mailhac@salford.ac.uk
32. Mike Thacker	Surrey University	M.THACKER@surrey.ac.uk
33. Matthew Platts	Sussex University	m.r.platts@sussex.ac.uk

34. Robin Lee	Sussex University	r.a.lee@sussex.ac.uk
35. Barbara Lazenby Simpson	Trinity College Dublin	bsimpson@tcd.ie
36. David Little	Trinity College Dublin	dlittle@tcd.ie
37. W.S. Dodd	University College Cork	s.dodd@ucc.ie
38. Hugo O'Donnell	University College Dublin	
39. Chic Oda	University College Dublin	
40. Anna Nunai	University College Dublin	
41. Veronique Gauthier	University College Dublin	
42. Mary Ruane	University College Dublin	mary.ruane@alc.ucd.ie
43. Dolores Ditner	University College, University of London	d.ditner@ucl.ac.uk
44. Margaret Powell	Warwick University	Margaret.Powell@warwick.ac.uk
45. Bob Powell	Warwick University	Bob.Powell@warwick.ac.uk

Day 1 - Friday 7 April

Opening Session – Welcome and Introduction

Mary Ruane, the Director of the Applied Language Centre at University College Dublin, gave a warm welcome to all attendees at the AULC meeting. She looked forward to having AULC members there over the following day and a half and to showing delegates the facilities at the Applied Language Centre.

Ray Satchell, Chair of AULC, also warmly welcomed everyone, and introduced the programme for the meeting. The Chair also welcomed the guest speakers, who included Maureen Fleming, Chair of the BALEAP Accreditation Team, who was going to speak at the SOS Special Interest Group meeting, and Jocelyn Wyburd, Director of the Language Centre at Manchester University, who was going to give a talk and lead a discussion on the theme of Assessing Independent Learning: *Evaluating portfolio evidence of independent learning: Focus on process or outcome*, at the TALK Special Interest Group.

Ray also asked for consideration to be given to the venue for the next meeting. The University of Glamorgan had made an offer to host an AULC meeting at the last AULC meeting in Edinburgh in December 1999, though nothing had been confirmed to date.

The moderators for the special interest groups [SIGs] introduced the themes of their individual meetings to be held later in the day.

Roger Frisby, the moderator of the Technical and Resources SIG, announced that they had held a special meeting since the AULC meeting in Edinburgh, on the subject of digital language laboratories. This meeting had been hosted by the University of Coventry. A report from this meeting is available at:

<http://www.aulc.org/minutes/TchFeb00.pdf>

A project is also running among members of the Technical and Resources SIG and mailing list into audio file formats. Details of this can be found at:

<http://www.aulc.org/audio.html>

Keynote Speaker: Professor David Little, Trinity College Dublin, President of CERCLES

David Little, President of CERCLES, gave a talk on the theme of **CERCLES – A European view of University Language Centres**.

Click <http://www.aulc.org/minutes/AULCKEYN.PDF> to see a summary of his report.

Special Interest Group Meetings

The four Special Interest Groups met separately. Reports of these meetings are available on the Internet at:

<http://www.aulc.org/minutes.html>

AULC General Meeting 7 April 2000

- **Minutes from last meeting**

These were approved and accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

- **Website Update – Roger Frisby**

No problems were reported with the AULC Web Site though feedback was always welcome.

- **Treasurer's Report**

AULC Statement of Accounts – 1999

B/f from ALSS	£ 2,138.38
B/f from DULC	£ 2,139.54

Total initial balance £ 4,277.92

Description	Credit	Debit
Subscriptions*	£ 4,748.00	
Payment to CERCLES		£ 2,978.86
Domain name registration		£ 141.00
Bristol Meeting - executive expenses**		£ 321.80
Bristol Meeting - catering / porters		£ 462.85
Logo Competition prize		£ 250.00
Edinburgh meeting - executive expenses**		£ 143.35
Edinburgh meeting - speaker expenses		£ 164.54
Expenses for Prague visit (CERCLES) - RS		£ 131.70
Net Interest	£ 23.74	
Total	£ 4,771.74	£ 4,594.10

Final Balance

£ 4,455.56

* Breakdown of subscriptions

58 x AULC sub @ 35 = £2036

53 x CERCLES sub @ 56 = £2968

Refund of outstanding ALSS sub = £250

** Expenses paid to cover additional costs of attending Executive meeting

The Treasurer sent his apologies for not being able to attend the meeting. His report was presented in his absence. One member queried under expenses the monies paid for the AULC

Chair to attend the CERCLES meeting in Prague and questioned why CERCLES itself did not pay these. The Secretary General of CERCLES, who happened to be present at the meeting, assured members that CERCLES did not pay for its own Executive Committee to attend meetings and that the cost of paying attendance of individual country association representatives was therefore unlikely to happen within current budgetary constraints.

- **European Year of Languages**

The European Commission has adopted a proposal for a Decision of Parliament and the Council establishing 2001 as European Year of Languages. The official Web Site reads:

'This initiative, which the Commission proposes to provide with a budget of EUR 8 million, will consist of a series of information campaigns and the cofinancing of local, regional, national and transnational projects. This campaign, which will target the general public, will be coordinated with the Council of Europe initiative, this institution having already declared 2001 to be European Year of Languages'.

The Chair of AULC was invited to the launch for this initiative at CILT last month. He suggested that AULC should exchange ideas via the mailbase discussion lists to investigate ways of contributing to this year. For further details see:

http://mlt.eudel.com/eudel/newsletter4445/european_year_of_languages.htm

- **Reports from Special Interest Group Meetings**

The Moderators from each Special Interest Group reported back from their meetings and introduced the themes for the next day.

- **External Links**

CILT - Clare Power asked for colleagues to distribute the paper version of the **CILT Survey of Current Research in Language Teaching and Learning August 1997-July 2000**, within their institutions - CILT is in the process of compiling the Register of Current Research. Submissions had been asked for on-line, but hard copies were also available for distribution.

Colleagues were also reminded that the FDTL projects were holding a conference entitled: **The New Communicators: Graduates with Languages: Teaching modern languages in universities in the 21st century** at the East Midlands Conference Centre, University of Nottingham from Monday 3rd to Wednesday 5th July 2000 on July 2000. Further details can be found at:

<http://lang.fdtl.ac.uk/Wwwmat/HE2000.htm>

BALEAP – Ray Satchell stressed the importance of links between Language Centres and the EFL sector. He suggested that it may be useful for AULC and BALEAP to hold joint meetings in the future with the aim of information exchange.

UCML – there is now EFL representation on UCML.

- **CERCLES**

Cercles Bulletin 12 had gone to press and would be distributed to members in mid-April. The **Sixth CERCLES International Conference** would be held in Antwerp, from 14-16 September 2000. Brochures and booking forms would be distributed with CERCLES Bulletin 12. The conference will focus on six overriding themes with the main theme of quality. Election of a new executive will also take place at this meeting.

- **Venue and date of next meeting**

CILT and LSE in London would be joint hosts for the next AULC meeting, at a date to be decided, but probably in November/December time.

- **Any Other Business**

1. Timings of meetings – there was some concern that two meetings a year was too much of members to attend, so those present voted on three potential options for the pattern of future meetings:

Option 1 - A 1-day annual general meeting together with SIG meetings in December/November time

Option 2 - Two 2-day annual general meetings together with SIG meetings in December/November and at Easter.

Option 3 - An Easter meeting only together with SIGs

The results were:

Option 1 - 1 vote

Option 2 - 22 votes

Option 3 - 11 votes

It would seem that those members present preferred the current arrangement but a message would be sent out via the Mailbase list to glean the opinions of those AULC members not present.

Warwick offered to host an AULC meeting in the future.

2. The member from Edinburgh University made the suggestion that the fees for the CERCLES conference should be paid through the AULC Treasurer to prevent costly fees being paid by every institution to convert the cost of the conference into Euros. The Chair said that this would be discussed with the Treasurer, but that because of the amount of extra work that this would entail for the Treasurer it would probably not be possible.

Day 2 - Saturday 8 April

Special Interest Group Meetings

The four Special Interest Groups met separately. Reports of these meetings are available on the Internet at:

<http://www.aulc.org/minutes.htm-l>

Tour of the Language Centre

Members were given a tour of the Language Centre. A detailed description of the Language Centre can be read by [clicking here](#) [taken from CERCLES Bulletin No.7]

Report on Funding Issues in MFL and CERCLES elections with Professor David Bickerton, Secretary General of CERCLES.

Under the heading of **AULC and AUTHORITY** David Bickerton gave a talk on the funding of Modern Foreign Languages in the UK/Ireland, CERCLES in maturity and AULC's mission:

AULC and Authority

David Bickerton
Secretary General, CercleS
Research Professor, University of Plymouth

1. Funding of Modern Foreign Languages in the UK / Ireland

The gloom

- Review of recent trends in the take-up of specialist courses in (or containing) MFL at university in the period 1995-1999 suggests language degrees have fallen by some 15%, which is the same as the growth in the sector generally; MFL is certainly not keeping pace with the rise in people studying English (18%).
- There is therefore a net fall of some 30%, and the trend continues downwards for languages. The effect upon language departments is very serious, and budget deficits are leading to closures. There are many factors behind this trend, all of which are addressed in the report from the Nuffield enquiry.
- The position in Ireland appears to be somewhat different.

UCML's fight

The University Council for Modern Languages in the UK has successfully fought for a re-banding of languages (except for French, which it is anticipated will follow suit in 2001) to effectively increase central funding for languages by approximately 50%. This will help compensate for the fall in student numbers in 2000-01.

IWLP data

UCML has commissioned data on student numbers and these confirm its case for a higher unit of funding. The one area in which data have proved very hard to collate is in the non-specialist area represented by IWLPs, a sector central to Language Centre activities. There is good anecdotal evidence that IWLP's may have benefited from the down-turn in specialist study by recruiting more non-specialists. However, UCML's experience in running the re-banding campaign is that we desperately need solid data in order to lobby with authority and plan our strategy.

the positives

- the data collected for UCML by Keith Marshall (Bangor) [- see tables below*] taken from *The Guardian Education Higher 29 Feb. 2000, p. 14* - shows that language students are highly employable, come second only to medicine, law and education for the speed with which they find work, and enter a very wide range of work areas; very few now enter teaching as a profession.
- The Nuffield Report is attracting attention and requires a clear answer from the UK government and universities (UCML and other bodies will lobby for answers); it provides an important political opportunity.

NB. Since the meeting the summary report from the enquiry has now been published and can be found at:

http://www.nuffield.org/language/news/nws_0023732.html

- The EYE (European Year of Languages - 2001) will provide some high profile activity, and a new LINGUA Action Line for lifelong learning will provide a funding stream (see CercleS Bulletin 12 p.15).
- The new UK-funded Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies will provide a good focus for university language-teaching staff, given its remit to disseminate and to encourage collaborative action

***Destinies**
Jobs UK language graduates really do

	%
Business Services	26.9
Manufacturing	12.7
Wholesale/Retail	11.6
Banking/finance	10.4
Health/community/social services	11.1
Transport/comms	9.4
Public administration	5.9
Education	5.3
Hotels & Restaurants	3.7
International orgs	0.2
Other areas	2.8

Job Records
Unemployment rates among new UK graduates [1998]

	% unemployed
Medecine/Dentistry/vet science	0.5
Law	3.0
Education	3.3
German	4.2
French	4.3
Mathematics	4.4
Architecture, building/planning	5.2
Physical sciences	5.8
Computing	6.0
Biological sciences	6.0
English	6.1
Psychology	6.1
Humanities	6.2
Business/Admin	6.3
Engineering/technology	6.6
Sociology/economics/politics	6.6
Agriculture/forestry	6.9
Media Studies	7.5
Creative Arts/Design	9.2

the threats

- a UK review (planned by HEFCE) of central funding for all subjects after 2001 may, in fact, produce a fee mechanism which damages Language Centres; the only way to fight back will be through command of the facts
- some down-sizing of MFL in the UK seems inevitable

- representation of the non-specialist sector in decision-taking bodies is often not in proportion to its size and strategic importance, hence the need for bodies like AULC to be visible and heard, and to work well with other similar Associations
- the competition for students will understandably encourage some specialists to switch to IWLP-type activities; this can threaten the equilibrium within universities where degrees for specialists and IWLPs are separately structured; it can also undermine the professionalism (hard-won methodological specialism) found in the best Language Centres. On the other hand, the days when different actors within the HE languages sector ran the risk of competing with each other, and therefore of cross-subsidising each other, may be passing; management data is now much more sophisticated within universities, and budgets tend to follow work.

AULC's opportunity? - We must ask ourselves how AULC can best respond, and serve its members, in the present climate. It has major strengths: institutional links with Europe (through CercleS); and authority - conferred by the work its members perform and their responsibility for what, by any measure, is a key sector in HE languages.

2. CercleS in Maturity

David Little (q.v.) has summarised the priority areas for CercleS. These will affect the way languages are taught and certified for non-specialists throughout Europe in the next few years.

- Electoral Opportunity - the renewal of the CercleS Executive on 16 September 2000 (at the Antwerp Conference) - with the departure of the President and Secretary General and the re-election of the Treasurer and all deputies - provides a major opportunity to build on the achievements of the first decade and establish CercleS as a unique force in European education.
- Electoral rules - see CercleS Bulletin 12 (April 2000), p. 19. The statutes were modified in 1998 precisely to ensure that the national associations and their members would have a direct input into the electoral process.
- Ideal Result - we shall get a balanced and experienced team, drawn from many different countries, able to ensure continuity and growth.

3. AULC's Mission

AULC has a mission established by its statutes. AULC also has a duty and an opportunity: to speak and act with the authority that comes from what its members do, and are well qualified to do. To do that it must monitor and quantify what its members do. Its members manage resources, apply and manage new technologies, research, analyse and apply methodologies, and deliver quality teaching to clearly defined and very numerous sets of learners. There has never been a better time, given the sectoral need for all to co-operate, to define the work of Language Centres, and make AULC's voice heard.

NB. Since the meeting the summary report from the enquiry has now been published and can be found at:

http://www.nuffield.org/language/news/nws_0023732.html

Discussion. A discussion then followed regarding how this data on language centre provision could be collated. Certain statistics were already collected on a regular basis by UCML and a survey regularly sent out by SCHMOL. In addition, CILT offered assistance in this process in the form of information provision using existing data.

Nick Byrne [London School of Economics] and Anne Gallagher [Maynooth College, Dublin] agreed to be the contacts for the UK and Eire in this collection of data.

Closing Plenary

Statements from Special Interest Group Moderators

- **Teaching Advising and Learning Kollaboratively SIG** It was reported that a generic framework for a nationwide survey of Language Centres would be devised and this would include information on space, personnel, and usage. This would rely on some data already collected by the FDTL Languages Projects [CIEL, SMILE, etc] and would be coordinated by Hull University. There was a request for volunteers to help with the detailed survey structure and analysis of the results.
- **Technical and Resources SIG** As part of an on-going project, the group discussed digitalisation of audio and video materials and the different file formats for doing this. Site visits to view other digital language laboratories are planned. The group is also closely following developments regarding changes to European copyright legislation due to be announced some time in the autumn, as these may effect the rights that HE institutions in the UK enjoy with the ERA licence, as this could mark the demise of the ERA. The suggestion is that members write to their local MP or MEP – a draft letter would be designed which could then be downloaded from the AULC Web site.
- **Structures Organisation and Strategies SIG** This group continued with their discussion regarding rates of pay for VTs – it was noted that the creation of a stable working environment was key to quality assurance. Those present revisited the talk given by Maureen Fleming, Chair of the BALEAP Accreditation Scheme for EAP programmes in HE, and discussed to what extent modern foreign languages could take up this kind of model for accreditation. The SIG also felt that each Special Interest Group within AULC was like a microconsultancy and discussed the possibility of a consultancy arm to the organisation. The key role of administrators in coordinating and aiding decisions on the way to assuring quality was also acknowledged.

Chair

The AULC Chair stressed the importance of encouraging others to attend from members' individual institutions, though he felt that there had been a good turn out for the Dublin meeting considering the distance and the fact that this was only the third AULC meeting.

A great vote of thanks went out to all staff at UCD who had worked so hard to organise such a smoothly run meeting, and who had been extremely hospitable and welcoming throughout.