

Draft Minutes of the 16th Triennial Executive Meeting

held at Sandals Grande, Gros Islet, St Lucia on 5th August, 2013

Present: Dr Michael A. Bucknor (Chair ACLALS), Susan Gingell (CAACLALS), Geoff Davis (EAACLALS), Alex Wanjala (EAACLALS), GJV Prasad (Vice Chair IACLALS), Susan Philip (Vice Chair MAACLALS), Cheryl Stobie (Rep. SAACLALS), Walter Perera (SLACLALS), Selina Tusitala Marsh (SPACLALS), Victor L. Chang (WIACLALS), Tanya Shirley (Treasurer ACLALS)

Invited Observers: Shaun Viljoen (South Africa)

Dirk Klopper (South Africa)

Apologies : Evelyn O'Callaghan, Vice chair, ACLALS
Haresh Trivedi
Shalini Fernandez

Corrections to Mins of 15th Exec Meeting in Cyprus:
Shalini Fernandez was not at the meeting in Cyprus.

Minutes were approved by Walter Perera, and seconded by Selina Tusitala Marsh

1. Welcome by Chair and Chairman's Report:

The handover from the former ACLALS Executive had taken a long time because a bank account could not be opened until May 2011 since this required many documents and paper support which were not available. He also raised the question of what was to be done with the ACLALS Archives since resources at UWI were not conducive to the transfer of these files, and he proposed that the website remain in Europe.

The CW Foundation had approved the final allocation of funding but to date there was no proof of its arrival in Jamaica.

The Chair attended CW meetings in London and Birmingham in November 2011, as well as a CHOGM Meeting in Australia. He participated in the People's Forum

in Trinidad and Kampala. The next CHOGM meeting is scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka.

As the Council on Education wanted a Caribbean representative, the Chair attended the CW Education Ministers' Conference in Mauritius in 2012 along with Geoff Davis, so ACLALS had a presence on one of the panels and chaired a session on Language as well as being a member of the group drafting the Final Statement by the Forum.

Commonwealth Foundation Grants: All the grants applied for had been approved over the three years as well as the £10,000 for transitional funding to cover the new policy of funding purely for CORE activities with no support for conferences. ACLALS was one of the few organizations to receive such a grant.

The last Grant Application submitted in January 2013 included a book project for St Lucia and South Africa, "Reading Across The Commonwealth" which proposed getting young people involved in reading by members donating books to the various countries involved and also setting up a FACEBOOK account to communicate with each other.

Up to June 2013 there had been no response to the matter of participatory grants or interfacing with governments.

The Chair reminded the meeting that CORE REPORTS had to be submitted by the end of AUGUST 2013 .

He also reported that he had made three side visits to the St Lucia conference site, 2 funded by Executive Travel.

At this point Geoff Davis was invited to update the meeting with his ZIMBABWE REPORT. The Chair thanked him for representing ACLALS in London and for his tremendous support generally.

2. ZIMBABWE REPORT :

The Executive in Nicosia had voted that ACLALS should be represented on the CW Organizing Committee on Zimbabwe which meets quarterly and whose goal was to re-engage with Zimbabwe. The Committee was split into clusters and since ACLALS became part of the "cultural cluster", we attended several meetings with the Director of the Cultural Audit of Needs in Zimbabwe.

We received a £5,000 grant to visit Zimbabwe and we were at the Harare International Festival.

The REPORT on engaging Zimbabwe through the Arts was well-received and would be sent to the Executive, on request.

At a meeting of the British Zimbabwe Society, it was proposed that two Professional Fellowships be established, one to the UK and one to Tanzania, and we were granted a 6 week one for London: the U of Innsbruck's Philosophy Department also agreed to have a Zimbabwean Writer in Residence.

Geoff was also a co-editor of a cross-cultural series with Ranjini Mendis and there was a book proposal on the Arts and Culture in Zimbabwe. He felt that the involvement with Zimbabwe helped our profile and was not only exhilarating but also useful.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT (Tanya Shirley)

Copies of the report were distributed and one is appended here. We were saved by EACLALS offering us the resources of their PAYPAL Account. The setting up of an ACLALS bank account had been delayed by difficulties and the transfer from the former Executive took time and was not opened until May 2011.

She reported that dealings with the bank had been protracted and tedious as well as expensive and we had been charged for returned transfers (such as one to India), then for re-sending and even for acceptance of payments.

We had been reimbursed for the Chair's trip to Mauritius and had paid out of our subscription to FILLM, and for the Chair's participation at CHOGM in Trinidad.

The sum of £1,829.95 had been received as a b/f amount from the previous Executive.

Payment of £6,050 had been made to partially support travel by Regional Chairs to St Lucia and three Chairs had been allocated £1,500 each.

The Newsletter: This had not been produced so far so she was proposing doing one that covered the period 2010-2013 and send it out electronically. She proposed including the CHOGM report by the Chair, excerpts from the regional chairs' reports.

4. REPORTS BY REGIONAL CHAIRS :

CACLALS (Susan Gingell)

Membership was 140, all paid up. CACLALS helped to fund a senior lecturer at each annual conference under the aegis of the Congress of Social Sciences and Humanities and to feed into the conference theme as well as suggest modifications.

Over the last three years, offered a prize for the best graduate student presentation where Commonwealth Writers' Prize books were part of the award and satisfied the CWF's desire to engage youth and publicity for Commonwealth Writers.

An important part of CACLALS activities was involvement with an Indigenous Round Table, with an Indigenous scholar, and recognition that the annual conferences were held on traditional Indigenous territory. More and more members were working on Indigenous literatures as well as supporting Indigenous language revitalization as a mode of participating in the Canadian Truth & Reconciliation process.

In 2013 invited other associations meeting at Congress to be involved in the revitalization support initiative but few responded. However, CACLALS and the Canadian Applied Literature Association made a donation to the University of Victoria's programme. She felt that the CWF did not granting guidelines did not do enough to enable the participation of Indigenous scholars.

She was further concerned by the news that the CWF would no longer be funding conferences, and raised one major point that had been aired at the CACLALS AGM: whether or not the association should continue to bear the name CACLALS and if a name change would mean no further affiliation with ACLALS.

The CHAIRMAN was not optimistic about this but suggested that the matter be raised at the general business meeting.

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EACLALS (Geoff Davis) :

The main initial focus was the Triennial EACLALS Conference entitled “Under Construction: Gateways and Walls” held at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul from 26 – 30 April 2011, and it represented a welcome further step in our policy of expanding into Eastern Europe. Margaret Daymond from South Africa gave the regular Anna Rutherford Memorial Lecture.

Later the same year EACLALS inaugurated a Postgraduate Conference on “Reworking Postcolonialism: Globalization, Labour and Rights”, at the Institute of English Studies, University of London from 26-27 August 2011.

EACLALS was again associated with two Chotro conferences in India, the first in Delhi and Simla, the second in Baroda. Our input was restricted to organisational preparation and subsequent editorial work on the proceedings. A number of EACLALS members attended both of these and we were once again able to welcome a significant number of participants from Africa.

Annual executive board meetings were attended by Helga Ramsey-Kurz (conference convenor), Ulla Ratheiser (treasurer), Stella Borg Barthet (secretary) and Geoffrey Davis (chair). The meetings were located twice in Innsbruck and once in Malta, where the secretary is based.

The focus of our work now moves to the forthcoming 2014 triennial conference in Innsbruck. The Call for Papers can be accessed on the web at:

<http://uncommonwealthseaclals2014.wordpress.com>. The confirmed keynote speakers are: Shirley Chew, Terry Eagleton, Neil Lazarus, John McCleod, Stephen Slemon and Helen Tiffin.

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EACLALS (Alex Wanjala) :

East African ACLALS was going through a transitional period and in the process of handover. Financial reports and other unfinished business needed to be sorted out.

While helping to formulate a new cultural policy for Kenya, contributing to prizes in the National Book Week Awards, and paying for visits and travel allowances, EACLALS was also trying to change how to open membership to Uganda and Tanzania, and also actively considering bringing the Triennial Conference to Kenya, in six years.

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IACLALS (GJV Prasad) :

IACLALS held 2 major conferences and published two books. Tried to attract young people by offering 2 prizes at the conferences and the best attended sessions were those involving younger people.

Decided to put out the Newsletter on line and a Journal of The Association should appear next year

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MACLALS (Susan Philip)

Membership has plummeted and there has been a scaling back because of fund restrictions. MACLALS sponsored readings by local writers and successfully kept SEARE (*South East Asian Review of English*) going.

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SAACLALS (rep. Cheryl Stobie):

The Association exists but is mostly inactive. Fees are paid only by those wanting to go to the Triennial Conferences. Essentially run by one person, and only one conference held so far.

SLACCLALS (Walter Perera)

The association has not been active for quite a few years but the new chair was appointed in 2010, and the organization has received a new lease of life. Originally a conference was held every financial year but none was held in 2012 because of a strike for 5 months, but it was held eventually in June 2013. Two numbers of the journal *Phoenix*, Vol 8 and Vol 9 were published.

The Conferences on “Post-Colonial or Post-Modern” and “Post Colonial in Transition” drew significant international attendance. In the last year of the

Executive, SLACLALS organized a competition with prizes of 10,000, 20,000, and 30,000 rupees and all three winners were already members of the association.

Finally, SLACLALS agreed that the life membership fees of 120 rupees was absurd and needed to be changed.

SPACLALS (Selina Tusitala Marsh)

In 2010, SPACLALS published *SPAN* with a new cover and another in 2011 with the papers from another Conference. In 2013 a new Journal containing both creative and critical work was launched, though with difficulty, because of the lack of university funding.

In 2012 the co-chair resigned for personal reasons and the passing on is still an issue. In 2012 SPACLALS organized a symposium though no money was contributed to the conference and the web site has been discontinued. However, SPACLALS, by creating an account on Facebook, was able to tap into non-traditional membership, and signed up 12 PhD students from around the Pacific.

WIACLALS (V.L.Chang)

Our membership remains a disappointing 50 because of the widely scattered location of our members but our main activity was the publication of 6 issues of the *Journal of West Indian Literature*, supporting the annual Conference on West Indian Literature held at UWI St Augustine, U of Miami and the College of the Bahamas later in 2013. We also supported the three distinguished lectures in honour of Professor Edward Baugh, and published those lectures. We also gave our support to Graduate Seminars in English sponsored by the Department of Literatures in English at UWI Mona.

The New ACLALS Executive 2013-2016:

The ACLALS Chair noted that at the last meeting in Cyprus, there had been a strong feeling that it was the turn of South Africa to take on the ACLALS Executive and it had been agreed that over the following three years we should work at how to get the organization and the mounting of the next Triennial to Africa.

The three South African members present were asked whether it would be possible for this to be a collaborative event, and if so, then an Executive would have to be formed, with the present Chair being a part of that Executive which would have to manage relations between the regions and the Commonwealth Foundation.

Cheryl Stobie (SAACLALS) said they had discussed the holding of the Triennial in the Cape region as a collaborative effort between three universities, and that the Association of English Teachers in South Africa would be prepared to interface with SAACLALS once they met in September/October.

Shaun Viljoen felt that the logistics and economics of such an arrangement would be problematic because of the distances involved. Capetown would be a more attractive venue because the Eastern Cape already had an interface with the rest of Africa.

Geoff Davis noted that such a sharing was not unknown and could be done since Germany and Belgium as well as India and Germany had already done just that in the past.

The Chair suggested that we could have several options and also have a fall back plan while Geoff Davis supported a split location.

On the matter of the timing of the next Triennial, the Chair noted that this was traditionally in August but the South Africans felt the second or last week of June would be a good time because of its back-to-back proximity to the 11 days of the Arts Festival. Cheryl then wondered if accommodation might be a problem but Shaun felt that this could be solved by early reservations, and that there was an advantage to such an overlap because it would incorporate the local community.

Chair (CAACLALS) then asked if we needed to have a larger plan or project to tie in with the demands of the CW Foundation, such as the concept of Truth and Reconciliation that would foreground the Indigenous. Chair (EACLALS) expanded on this and suggested Ecology and the Environment as possible items.

Shaun liked the Ecology theme very much since any consideration of the Environment vs Development had particular interest to the Cape and if we got the government involved since it would appeal to them. We also discussed a project to take creative writing into prisons.

The Chair suggested that the Executive re-convene on Thursday since the meeting had not come to a final decision.

In a closing note, Chair (CACLALS) raised a different matter for the Executive to consider. She had been asked by her constituents to find out whether it would be possible to change the name of the Association from CACLALS without the risk of losing a continuing affiliation with ACLALS.

Geoff Davis felt that such an action would initiate the demise of ACLALS , and the Chair --while noting that there was nothing in the Constitution about such an action-- said he didn't see how this would be possible, and suggested that the matter be brought to the General Business Meeting.

The Meeting Adjourned