

ACTR Membership Meeting  
February 4, 2017  
Parc 55 Hotel, San Francisco, California

ACTR President Tom Garza called the meeting to order at 5:15.

**Minutes:** Minutes of the meeting January 9, 2016 were approved unanimously on a motion by Irwin Weil, seconded by Alla Smyslova.

**Announcements:** Tom Garza announced that the next meeting of the ACTR Board of Directors will take place in Washington, DC, on April 29.

**Membership Report:** Membership Secretary Irina Dubinina reported that total membership stands at 591. That figure includes 391 active members, the others being lapsed memberships or renewals that were started but not completed. She will be archiving records of those on the list who do not open email messages. She thanked Evgeny Dengub for his invaluable help. She noted that Paypal now presents recurring payment as one option. She encouraged the members present to work on recruiting new members.

**American Councils for International Education Board of Trustees:** Dan Davidson gave the report. AC has seen a modest increase in revenue. The most recent audit was approved with an unqualified opinion, the highest evaluation possible.

The new strategic plan for AC provides support for policy-related research and R&D related to language study in the US, overseas immersion learning and dual-language immersion in the US K-12 system. Dan reported that AC has just completed a comprehensive survey of K-16 foreign language enrollments in the US, with full data and graphics that will be available for each state and for each language, as well as full background on the study methodology to the public on the AC website.

The strategic plan also calls for stepping up the use of social media and outreach to members of Congress in support of international exchange and the importance of language study for all Americans. Finally, the Board took note of the importance of the Prototype AP Russian Examinations and the new portfolio, National Examinations in World Languages (NEWL), of which Russian is a part, which is launching this year for Arabic, Korean and Portuguese as well.

**JNCL-NCLIS:** Dan Davidson reported for Bill Rivers, who was unable to attend the meeting. He noted the group's work in tracking and supporting funding for programs such as TitleVI/Fulbright-Hayes and restoring funding for the Defense Language Institute.

The report of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences on the state of languages in the US will be released February 28, 2017. It will make strong recommendations for attention to heritage

learners, to immersion learning, and to the growing shortage of K-12 language teachers in many US states.

**ACTR Webinars:** Evgeny Dengub reported on the three webinars that have taken place in the last three months. Webinars have produced some revenue and some growth in membership. An upcoming series on heritage learners is scheduled, as well as another forthcoming webinar on K-12 Russian. Archived webinars will eventually be made available.

In answer to a question about promoting the webinars, he agreed that there might be interest beyond the Russian field. The national foreign language centers might be willing to advertise the webinars, for instance.

**ACTR Programs:** Dan Davidson gave some statistics on academic programs. The overall number of American students on credit-bearing programs in the Russian Federation has gradually dropped in recent years to approximately 1000, as numbers of students pursuing Russian studies in neighboring states such as Kazakhstan and Moldova has increased. In addition to 233 US participants in the RF, there were 100 students in Kazakhstan, 83 in Moldova, and 72 in Tajikistan (some studying Farsi). The past year has been free of incidents of a political nature related to AC students or scholars studying and researching in Russia, there were no incidents of students being detained.

The financial aid situation has improved for US students applying for assistance to AC programs and Dan called on Margaret Stephenson to give details. There is a variety of funding available for AC study abroad programs, including some from alumni and other donors, Title VIII and Fulbright/Hayes. A new program, the Business, Technology, and Innovation Scholarship, offers internships and accommodates students with no prior study of Russian as well as those who have Russian language experience.

### **Publications:**

Dan Davidson reported on *Russian Language Journal*. Volume 65 is out and is the 11<sup>th</sup> volume since ACTR took it on. *RLJ* is now in the MLA electronic bibliography and on JSTOR, where it had 2,289 views. There has been some unexpected revenue from this source.

He introduced Jennifer Bown (Brigham Young University), who is the new editor. She commented that she would like to increase the number of yearly issues and also the number of thematic issues. A new book review editor is needed to replace Michael Gorham.

Tom Garza encouraged members to contribute articles.

*ACTR Letter:* Jane Shuffelton reported that the winter 2016 issue was sent to the printer. She thanked members for their contributions, and for helping to streamline production so that the newsletter is now appearing in a more timely fashion.

Evgeny Dengub mentioned that authors of new books could become sources for future Front Page Dialogs based on their articles. Lee Roby's FPD is one example of that model.

**Russian-specific World-Readiness Standards:** Jane Shuffelton announced that the work of the task force (Tom Garza, Jane Shuffelton, Peter Merrill), has been completed. The revised document is now waiting for approval by the Standards Collaborative Board. The board agreed at its November meeting to establish a review committee for the revised language-specific standards.

**ACTFL Assembly of Delegates:** Betsy Sandstrom and Jane Shuffelton attended the Assembly in November, as part of the ACTFL conference in Boston. The morning was devoted to presentations about advocacy, while the afternoon used table discussions to talk about issues such as recruitment and certification of K-12 teachers.

### **Contests and Awards:**

**ACTR National Post-secondary Russian Essay Contest:** Jennifer Bown announced that as of the meeting date 1,126 students had registered for this year's contest. The topic is Важный человек в моей жизни. She hopes to have results by mid-April. This year's plan is to use pdf certificates. Among her goals are to issue certificates to all participants, to refine the heritage speaker category, and possibly digitize the corpus of essays for future research. There was discussion of having students submit computer-written essays rather than handwritten ones.

**ACTR National Russian Essay Contest:** Jane Shuffelton reported for Paavo Husen that registration for the 35<sup>th</sup> NREC was 1,207. They represent 45 schools and 52 teachers in 16 states and the District of Columbia. There were 12 new schools involved. The topic was «Письмо историческому персонажу». Essays are judged for ability to communicate in Russian, content, style, and grammar. First-round results are expected in February.

**RGGU and the American Studies Center:** Irwin Weil reminded the membership that there will be a conference May 11-12 on the topic of Revolutionary Ideas in America. The topic is intended to include all fields related to the humanities. Anyone interested in attending should contact Tony Brown.

**ACTR Service Award:** Jane Shuffelton announced the award to be given to Bill Rivers for his service both within ACTR and in the wider community, as Executive Director of JNCL-NCLIS. Bill was not able to be present and will hopefully be able to receive his award in person at the April meeting of the ACTR Board of Directors. Jane read the full citation for Bill, which will be published in the *ACTR Letter*.

**Nominations Commission: Nominations Committee:** The committee consisted of Evgeny Dengub, Peter Merrill, and Betsy Sandstrom. Evgeny reported that the ACTR Board recommends new terms(2017-2019) for all the Board members whose terms expire as of the end

of 2016 Nominees for re-election are: Nina Bond, Dan Davidson, Karen Evans-Romaine, Elena Farkas, Paavo Husen, Lee Roby, and Mark Trotter. The slate was approved unanimously on a motion by Bob Channon, seconded by Irwin Weil.

**New Business:** Tom Garza noted that next year's AATSEEL conference will take place in Washington, DC and that the membership meeting will be held on February 3, 2018.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 ( motion by Dan Davidson, seconded by Tony Brown).

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Shuffelton for Karen Evans-Romaine, ACTR Secretary