

**American Council of Teachers of Russian  
Board of Directors Meeting  
January 9, 2015  
4:00-6:00 pm  
Vancouver, British Columbia**

Directors Present: Richard Brecht, Tony Brown, Robert Channon, Dan Davidson, Karen Evans-Romaine, Tom Garza, Diane Nemec-Ignashev, Jane Shuffelton

**1. Approval of minutes**

Members approved the minutes from the 26 April meeting minutes in Washington. The minutes of the November 22, 2014 meeting at ACTFL in San Antonio were approved after four amendments.

**2. Announcements – Tom Garza**

- Dan Davidson announced that SRLT reviews were excellent.
- Olga Kagan received the ADFL Service Award at the Modern Language Association meeting in Vancouver.
- Ben Rifkin has accepted a new position as Provost at Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY
- Jane Shuffelton shared greetings to everyone from Zita Dabars
- Tony Brown offered greetings and regrets from Irwin Weill.

**3. Treasurer's Report – Cynthia Ruder**

Robert Channon reported for Cynthia Ruder.

The fiscal year is from July 1 to June 30. The present report ends 30 June 2014.

- Revenue support: \$30,292; in the previous year it was \$25,096.
- Expenses: \$25,658.
- Net surplus of revenue over expenses: \$4,634.
- Previous year: deficit slightly over \$11,000, because of higher expenses for travel.
- Travel is a lot higher than had been budgeted, as hotel costs for the spring meeting, previously paid by AC, were shifted to ACTR. The overall deficit is \$3,873. Income from dues, memberships, and subscriptions has doubled.

The term "consultants" means essay readers in Russia. Davidson added that there may also have been additions to the website charges from the outside vendor. The \$1,500 for consultants covers the fees for Russian essay readers.

Davidson noted that American Councils was successful in renegotiating the frequent flyer agreement with Delta Airlines regarding frequent flyer miles. That said, there are continuing policy changes. Board travel is a high priority for that account, along with conference and scholarly travel.

#### **4. Membership Secretary's Report – Bonny Einstein**

Robert Channon reported for Bonny Einstein.

- New membership applications: 43.
- Renewals: 157
- Life members: 123.
- Total active members: 323. Only twelve are student members.

Previous calculations of membership presented active members for the year in the last week of December. Now that the Board meets in early January, new membership numbers appear low. Most member renewals have yet to come in.

ACTR members should continue to recommend that graduate students join ACTR and benefit from the lower dues rate. Tom Garza mentioned that the University of Texas Slavic Department has been paying for one year's membership for every entering graduate student. The investment has paid off, increasing student interest in the profession.

Formerly, participants in ACTR programs received free memberships in the hope that they would continue. This resulted in "Dead Souls" on our rolls.

Discussion included suggestions for reminder notices and questions about where new memberships are coming from. The Board will discuss a membership campaign in April.

#### **5. American Councils for International Education Board of Trustees – Richard Brecht**

Richard Brecht reminded the membership that the AC Board of Trustees is fiscally responsible for overseeing ACTR's activities and those of similar organizations. They are subject to an annual fall audit.

The Board of Trustees has completed five years of strategic planning goals and is starting the next session of strategic planning. Looking ahead is particularly important in these challenging times.

The Board of Trustees has invited two distinguished former ambassadors to return to the Board of Trustees: John Ordway and Richard Morningstar. Morningstar is knowledgeable about petroleum, and Ordway is fluent in Russian.

Tom Garza thanked Brecht for advocating membership invitations that improve the Board's gender and ethnic diversity.

#### **6. Report on ACTR programs – Dan Davidson**

Dan Davidson opened by reminding Board members that there would be a presidential panel at AATSEEL: "New Contexts and New Outcomes on Study Abroad." He thanked AATSEEL for including the panel and recommended that members attend.

American Council's revenue decreased for the first time in 2014. AC did not make targets for revenue because certain parts of the world made it impossible to operate funded programs, for

example, in Ukraine. AC had to return that funding. That created a small ripple effect in the office. AC ended this year with about a \$160,000 deficit, which is about the amount of money it takes to run the office for five hours. More important is what is happening overseas.

In December 2014, American Council's commercial office was reaccredited through 2017. The non-profit is in the process of re-registration. AC's documents were accepted, but the documents may need to be resubmitted, as the current process for registering non-governmental organizations is very slow. The AC lawyer, Olga Khlebnikova, is one of the best in Moscow. AC's operations are in compliance with the legal changes made in February 2014.

The International Olympiada took place in 2014. It had been problematic because of changes in the contracting.

Program numbers for American Councils:

- RLASP: 120 students
- Eureka: 10
- Flagship: 22
- CLS: 50
- NSLI-Y: 75
- Olympiada and other contests: 8
- Travel grants: 15
- Summer Teachers: 12
- Scholars, researchers: 5

RLASP remains entirely Russia-based in Vladimir, St. Petersburg, Moscow. Some of the resident directors say that a person who didn't watch the Russian media wouldn't notice any changes.

Russians value and prize their relationships with long-standing partners. Features of Russian business and corporate personality are evident in their loyalty to American partners.

The Flagship program moved away from ST. Pete to Almaty for a limited time. The CLS Russia program remains based in Russia, for the most part. Next year 50 participants are to be fully funded by the State Department, with no plan to move them outside Russia. In summer 2014, one group in Ufa moved to Tbilisi because of greater difficulty for outlying republics to gain permission to host programs. Kaliningrad, Tuva, Ufa, and others are having difficulty getting permission.

Boren Fellows will not be based in Russia in 2014-15, due to Department of Defense recent policy decisions, first affecting military personnel, then ROTC, and then any Defense-funded programs, including the Russian Flagship Program. The funder (DLNSEO) has, however, made a small grant to American Councils for maintenance and re-engagement with St. Petersburg State University: test results, conference, to get participants there. It would be helpful if faculty could visit the US. AC paid compensation to St. Pete faculty, staff and host families, following the

decision in early August of 2014 to shift the location of the Overseas Russian Flagship from SPB to Almaty.

The SLT program priority is community college and K-12 teachers. Discussion followed about the Moscow and St. Petersburg options for SLT 2015. AC is seeking other sources of funding for graduate students to go to Moscow.

## **7. ACTR Website Update – Karen Evans-Romaine**

Karen Evans-Romaine reported that there has been no communication about the website recently. Sergei has just recently returned to the office. Discussion points:

- It's not intuitive to find the page to become a member.
- The website is critical for ACTR's outreach mission.

## **8. Report on the revision of Russian Specific Standards – Jane Shuffelton**

Jane Shuffelton raised some concerns to ACTFL about the new World Readiness Standards volume and got an immediate and positive response. The collaborative board and task forces' names will appear in the new volume.

Shuffelton suggested that the Board vote in April to endorse the new volume in its new form with proper acknowledgements.

The learning scenarios are in a review process. Ruth Edelman, Diane Nemec-Ignashev and Karen Evans-Romaine are reviewing the scenarios.

## **9. Reports on contests and awards**

### **a. Olympiada of Spoken Russian**

Robert Channon delivered Mark Trotter's report.

- A limited number of middle schools offer Russian and participate in Olympiada.
- Alaska has two Olympiada contests; Juneau cannot always travel to Anchorage because of weather conditions. A heritage-focused school in Maryland also has its own Olympiada.
- In 2014, over 46 schools and 1111 students participated in Olympiada. Of those 847 received traditional Olympiada awards, medals, or certificates.
- A group of students attended the International Olympiada in Moscow in 2014. The domestic version is held annually; the international one once in four years.

### **b. National Post-Secondary Russian Essay Contest (NPSRC)**

Tony Brown reported, thanking those whose students participated. 1004 students submitted essays this year from 58 institutions, up from slightly over 980 in 2013. The topic: "An Important Decision in My Life."

Three excellent judges in Moscow rank the essays independently, and the Chairs assign awards accordingly.

2015 options:

1. Очень интересный день в моей жизни. (chosen)
2. Кто для вас является для вас героем. à  
Человек, которого я уважаю.
3. Самое большое удовольствие в моей жизни.

#### **10. RGGU and the American Studies Center – Tony Brown**

Tony Brown asked Board members to consider participating in the Biennial Conference on American Studies, May 12-13, at RGGU. This will be the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Studies Center and the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of American Councils. The deadline is 10 March for papers. The topic is War in American Culture, Texts and Contexts. Send proposals to Brown for vetting by him and Irwin Weill.

#### **11. ACTR Service Award Committee Report – Jane Shuffelton**

ACTR presented this year's service award to Dan in San Antonio. Shuffelton will make that announcement at the membership meeting.

#### **12. 2014 Nominations Committee Report – Tony Brown**

Evgeny Dengub and Irina Dubinina accepted nominations for Board Membership. The Board will discuss further nominations in April.

Discussion on an emeritus position followed. Channon agreed to draft an amendment to the bylaws regarding emeritus rights and privileges. He will circulate that draft to the Board membership for approval by the ACTR Board in April 2015, approval by ACTR Membership in January 2016, with final approval requested from the American Councils Board in March 2016.

#### **13. Other Business**

- a. Notes on the Executive Council meeting

Members would like to reconsider the new dues structure. Discussion items should include:

- Salary-based categories resulted in steep rise in some membership fees.
- Disparity between income and outflow
- The need to bring in new membership.
- Organization's operating costs.
- Size, composition and responsibilities of this Board to carry out its functions
- Life membership at \$750 is low.

- Institutional membership considerations.
- Age of the Board
- Sustaining members: a category for retirees.

b. AATSEEL 2016

Tom Garza plans to welcome everyone to Austin next year. Austin by then will have reached 2 million people. 2016 is the last year AATSEEL will meet together with MLA.

c. MAPRIAL 2015 International Congress

Dan Davidson reminded the Board that MAPRIAL is preparing for its 2015 International Congress in the third week in September, hosted by the University of Granada in Spain, a strong center of Russian studies. The Congress should be stimulating, given the politics of international Russian studies.

ACTR, as official US representative organization to MAPRIAL, has the right to designate five institutional representatives to the General Assembly of MAPRIAL, which convenes once every four years at the end of each Congress to elect officers and transact other formal business of the international association. AC and ACTR will do their best to support housing and support costs for our official delegation. Davidson, as Vice President of MAPRIAL from the US must attend; thus there are four openings. Nemeč-Ignashev expressed interest in attending the assembly, but not the whole Congress. Brown, Channon and Shuffelton also expressed interest. Sixty countries will be represented.

**14. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:37.