

**American Council of Teachers of Russian  
Board of Directors Meeting  
January 8, 2016  
4:00pm-6:30pm  
AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center  
PDR-3  
University of Texas  
Austin, Texas**

**AGENDA**

1. Approval of minutes (April 18, 2015, Washington, ACTR Board of Directors) – Betsy Sandstrom  
  
Minutes approved.
2. Announcements – Betsy Sandstrom
  - Irina Dubinina will take over for now as Membership Secretary for Bonnie Einstein, who has requested a leave of absence from the position.
  - Tony Brown just announced the Post-Secondary National Essay contest.
  - Tony has requested to step down from leadership of the PSNEC. We have someone interested in continuing in that role, Jennifer Bown, so we can finalize that later. We need to get in touch with Tony and Jennifer Bown.
3. Treasurer's Report – Cynthia Ruder
  - Highlights: operating cash decreased by just shy of \$4000. If we continue to decrease our operating cash by that amount every year, we will significantly deplete our fund. We finished the FY 14-15 with a deficit of \$2600. Factors include fewer donations, fewer memberships, a \$3600 increase in travel costs, and a slight increase in printing costs.
  - We need to generate more revenue: contest fees might need adjustment, membership dues need to be raised. Evgeny Dengub's work on website is excellent. Life members need to increase life membership by \$250. Travel costs are the single largest expenditure. Double occupancy alone would have covered the deficit from this year.
  - Betsy: We have not yet come to agreement about dues structure. This deficit points out the need for us to do that.
  - Tom: Three suggestions made at ASEEEES Board meeting: membership dues, contest revenue, room sharing, and possibly a smaller board.
4. Membership Secretary's Report – Evgeny Dengub for Bonny Einstein

354 active members, 77 members who have not been in touch, 4 new members in last 30 days. Evgeny can share those numbers at the membership meeting tomorrow.

5. American Councils for International Education Board of Trustees – Betsy Sandstrom for Irwin Weil

- We had an audit, and the audit came out absolutely clean. That seems to be the case every year.
- Strategic planning is needed.

6. Report on ACTR programs – Dan Davidson

- Three parts: relations with Russia, relations with everywhere else, and the situation in the US
- Relationship with Russia: it has been absolutely steady state, unchanged throughout 2015. Things perked along. Meeting with Russian Academy of Education in February, very much a state structure. Meetings in summer with the Ministry of Education and Россотрудничество. МАПРЯЛ in Granada, Spain supported by American Councils. We were well represented. November: Unity Day annual meeting, the world assembly language group of Russkii Mir, also a major pedagogical forum. All proceeded as usual.
- The US-Russia Foundation was unexpectedly declared a нежелательная организация in December. We are one of their grantees. Their board includes Sergei Borisov, senior vice president of Sberbank; James Collins; and John Byerly. They are not allowed to operate on the territory of Russia. We can have people from Russia come to visit us, paid for by that organization, but no activities sponsored by them can take place on the territory of the Russian Federation.
- RLASP placed 60 students in Russia last year in Herzen and International University, and at the KazNU International Relations faculty. The Texas group is counted separately. Also the Russian Teachers' group and the Naval Academy. Total: 193 persons in Russia last year. Adding CLS-Russia, NSLI-Y, and travel grants, brings total to 354, most of them financially supported by American Councils. Quotas are being held firm.
- Kazakhstan has been a wonderful partner to work with. Moldova has been in turmoil this year. We also operate a program in Narva, and there is someone now at AATSEEL who makes a very good case for Daugavpils, Latvia as well, but people really want to be in Russia if they can.
- Title VIII is again locked in at the \$3 million level in both the House and Senate, signed off by the President on 21 December. That's FY 16 budget. We'll see the FY 17 budget on 7 February. We were the best funded by Title VIII, with \$675,000 to pass through to our graduate student researchers in Eurasia. We hope that we can send more people next time, when the amount is doubled at \$3 million.
- 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary: Has doubled the donor base of individual donors who give money to American Councils. This includes many alums of the program, including many people who

understand the value of a gift to ACTR to enable a scholarship for an American to study overseas as they once did. We try to set the categories so broadly that we can use the donations as broadly as possible, so long as they fund scholarships. We don't normally apply that to a federal program. The outbound federal programs are the most obvious candidates for that.

- We have responses in from last summer's Summer Russian Teachers Program. Dan can send a Power Point. Participants rated their experience very highly. They talked about the way in which the program could help them achieve their own personal goals. 8 or 10 felt they had; only 2 did not, of whom one focused on writing. 7 out of 10 said that developing teaching materials was successful. 8 said that collecting classroom teaching materials was successful. 9 out of 10 said that they would recommend it to their friends and gladly do it again. One said they wished it had been longer. SLT is planned as the same kind of program for this coming summer.
- Could they come give a presentation for us if we get our STARTALK grant? This is the first time that STARTALK was an ACTR initiative. We'll find out about STARTALK renewal in early February.
- Jane: The Granada MAPRIAL a real success. Dan and Mara were real hits, as was Aneta Pavlenko.
- Dick Brecht: American Councils Research Center, an entity in AC focused on thought leadership. Right now, at this stage, we're doing a national survey of language enrollments in the US, K-16. One of the reasons it's important, among many, is to write a white paper for the American Academy of Arts & Sciences on language education. Marty Abbott and Rosemary Feals are on the commission, as are Lt General and Ambassador to Afghanistan Carl Eichenberry, the president of Hunter College, and Dan.
- Dan: The Commission had its first session in Cambridge in December and will meet again in February. AC and ACTR can contribute a very rich experience in researching the development of strong, effective programs. We can talk about dual language immersion. We had the best data and best research of any of them.
- Are the white papers available anywhere? The commission has not distributed them; they are marked draft. Dan's hope is that there will be channels for releasing them.
- The commission was requested by the Congress. This Academy was founded in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the second oldest honorary society in the world, with 5000 fellows from all walks of life, but the majority are academics. Support comes from donations; no federal money.
- Perkins Commission: Language and International Studies. 76 priorities, of which about 12 were actually about language. The ones that came to pass had to do with language. The last such commission was the Paul Simon Commission in 1979. There will be small numbers of additional commissioners, on technology.
- Dick: This all started with a conference at the University of Maryland. The British Academy joined us at Maryland, and it was the first time the British Academy and the American Academy had talked in 100 years.

- How can we play a role in the American Councils Research Office?
- Dick: We need to get more people actively involved in filling out the survey. The commission will hear how many people are studying foreign languages in the US. What data states can gather don't include data on independent learners. The trouble is finding the person who can gather the data.
- MLA gave us data early, and they just released it publicly.
- Bill: We should see better action from the new Education Secretary John King going forward.
- In order to get access to white papers, sign up for Bill Rivers's JNCL listserv.
- There has been an ARC event, a major lecture, every month. Dan will find out why that information isn't there. It may be in the AC website News.

## 7. ACTR Website Update – Evgeny Dengub

- The website is ready except for History page and the page about the funds to which donors could donate.
- Complements on automatic membership renewal, but also suggestion to add a link so that one can donate on the click of a button.
- Evgeny: The way the system is set up does not have donations together with dues, so we'll need to rethink our strategy for asking for donations.
- We need an official tax donation letter. Dan or Christine can give Evgeny a template for a tax donation letter.
- History page: Contact Zita Dabars: [zitad@aol.com](mailto:zitad@aol.com).
- Also Carl Beck papers in Slavic Studies through University of Pittsburgh, special issue; this document provides history to about 2005. It's written as a serious history of the association, not for promotional materials. There are interviews with Claire Walker, Irwin, people in government, on the Russian side, etc.
- Pictorial information for 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual Report would be great for the website. Evgeny: We can write an electronic newsletter, and Irina and Evgeny have discussed the idea of introducing an electronic newsletter, in addition to the newsletter we are currently getting.
- Suggestion from Tom: Have Study Abroad have its own tab, and make Contests and Awards be one tab.
- Evgeny will contact Will Morse again, as will Betsy.
- We have a Facebook page.
- Newsletter and electronic news: Irina Dubinina. We need a way to share news with all members of the organization more quickly than the newsletter, including deadlines for applications to conferences. Regular news updates sent to all members electronically. They would not replace the newsletter, would update people in a quick and easy way: program news, grant deadlines, awards and deadlines, contests and deadlines. Maybe once a month?
- Newsletter: Can we redo it in order to adapt to the presence of an e-bulletin?

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

We talked a great deal at ACTFL about the revision of the Standards. There is a lot of confusion, so Jane provided background. At the ACTFL meeting a year ago in San Antonio Jane had a copy of the publication of the World Readiness Standards. Dan and Dick raised concerns, and ACTFL reacted positively and made the changes we suggested. When you order the World Readiness Standards, you still get the old book. Volume: \$35. You then have 72 hours to download any of the files for 12 languages. But these are old. Access to one Standard can be ordered separately. As each language-specific standard is finished, you then have the right to download the new one. We have wonderful learning scenarios. They have been reviewed, and they're ready to go. We have totally finished two of the five goal areas out for review. We have a third goal area ready to send out for review. We have added a lot of language about social media, post-secondary in learning scenarios and sample progress indicators, and now everything is tied to proficiency levels. We have also tied to academic levels. But we have to do the formatting.

9. ACTFL Assembly of Delegates – Jane Shuffelton

Core Practices in Every Language Classroom. We worked in groups and worked with Google docs. We talked about leadership planning. We talked about practices of an effective organization. We talked about collaborating for effective language learning. Problems of working with mixed classes of heritage and non-heritage students, especially in the secondary classroom, especially when the teacher is a non-native speaker of Russian. It would be good to develop support for that. Betsy: We have talked about introducing that to our STARTALK.

10. ACTR Publications: RLJ; Newsletter

- RLJ. Bill intends to step down from the editorship following the publication of Volume 65. Volume 65 has been delayed somewhat, but it should come out in March. Total of 21 submissions, and we'll have 4 or 5 articles, pending reviews. It remains a competitive and very high quality journal. Editors of MLJ and other major journals have said that some articles would have made it in their journal.
- We are now in JSTOR. American Councils shipped over 60 copies of the old journal that they will cut apart, scan, reassemble, and send back. That will make every single issue and every article available to JSTOR subscribers. JSTOR will also provide a revenue stream, but hard to predict how much: overall pool of library subscriptions (4000), downloads, and reprint permissions. (We cede the right for reprints to JSTOR, and they give us half the revenue.)
- We are indexed with MLA. We are indexed and visible in Google Scholar. Everything is now available in PDF; we had to restructure in order to fit Google's requirements for searchability. It is quite visible. We have a Google impact factor. There are articles that have been cited over 100 times, sometimes more than 200 times.

- Our institutional price is very cheap at \$50. ACTR members continue to receive the journal as part of their membership.
- We reconfirmed today the scope, vision, and bilingual nature of the journal.
- We have maintained double-blind peer review. Bill has sometimes asked reviewers to professionalize their comments.
- Jennifer Bown, recently tenured at Brigham Young, has expressed interest in taking over the editorship. Bill recommends that we retain assistant editor Sofia Kasmeridi at least for the next year.
- MGU: We have to have at least one звездочка per year, and in the last year, the entire filfak had only 11 звездочки.
- Bill: We will not get an impact factor in Scopus or Thompson Reuters.
- How is the editorial board selected? Bill: ACTR Board plus some invited members, including Eleonora Djusenovna.
- Michael Gorham, Associate Editors for Book Reviews, will publish in the next volume what doesn't make it into 65.

#### Newsletter:

- We are talking about publishing fewer issues, and matching the schedule of the academic year. It would be good to have an editorial board. It's important that materials go through board review, so that they represent the organization well.
- Tom noted that under Betty Lou's editorial leadership, pieces were sent out to reviewers.
- Jane proposed that an editorial review board with a chair be reconstituted for the ACTR Letter.

#### 11. JNCL-NCLIS – William Rivers

- If you have not already subscribed to the weekly e-newsletter, please subscribe. This puts you on a list for policy alerts, for example to support Title VIII. It figures out who your representative is; it is a preformatted letter.
- Good year: everything was increased or level-funded. Saved Title VI from a 48% cut. We have a new elementary and secondary education initiative added. FLAP was defunded. We have commitments to support dual-language immersion as the primary way to support language education at the primary and secondary level. The current national professional development grants for Title III have specific requirements for dual-language teachers. The Every Student Succeeds Act includes foreign language more strongly than was the case in No Child Left Behind. We are working closely with the Department to ensure that language, which is one of the curricular enhancements, is called out. We want the Department of Education to work with state Departments of Education to insist that foreign language education be included.
- JNCL-NCLS now has 114 members, up from 61 when Bill took over. We finished this year in the black, still finishing a manageable deficit. We were badly hacked about this time last year. Last Thursday and Friday are language advocacy days, while they are working on draft appropriation bills for FY 17.

- We expect a small increase requested for Title VI, which is in a very fragile state now. It is not well regarded on the Hill. There is a significant problem with messaging on Title VI, a perception that it is a Cold War relic, with some justification (same regional areas as from the Cold War). The programs that were not refunded will be shed. A good deal of work for groups like AAAS, paper on language and the national interest. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, Vladimir Ivanits, Far East University in Vladivostok, to look at the issue of global talent. We're looking at other languages to revive that effort. Policy letters really do have an impact.

## 12. Reports on contests and awards (if needed) – Committee Chairs

Betsy: One change. Committee chairs, contest chairs. Let them run the program. We have two co-chairs for the national Olympiada. They are proposing a change to how they list those awards. They will probably name them after notable Russians. Send ideas to Mark Trotter. He needs 3 names.

## 13. RGGU and the American Studies Center – Tony Brown

- Conference this past May: Topic: World War II and 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Civil War.
- US delegates were: Jennifer Bown (Brigham Young University), Lauren Brown (Marymount Manhattan College), Tony Brown (Brigham Young University), Roy Scranton (Princeton University), Irwin Weil (Northwestern University). American Councils for International Education provided travel grants to each member of the US delegation.
- Thanks to American Councils for awarding travel grants to everyone.

## 14. ACTR Service Award Committee Report – Jane Shuffelton

This year's awardee will be Cindy Ruder.

## 15. 2015 Nominations Committee Report – Karen Evans-Romaine

All current members whose terms were up for renewal have agreed to serve another term. The Nominations Committee would like to nominate Tom Garza for president and Natalia Ushakova for Vice President.

## 16. New Business

- Slava – Olympiada would like to be under the ACTR umbrella. We should approve them as an affiliated organization. They will be bringing money in. Goals are the same. Greater

outreach to pre-college programs. Having them on the ACTR website would be beneficial to them and to us.

- Betsy: Marian Walters has resigned as secretary-treasurer, but she is replaced by Shannon (Mo) Johnson. Halina Danchenko has stepped down as President, so Betsy Sandstrom will be president.
- Affiliated organizations have the right to send a non-voting member to the board.
- Unanimous vote.
- We tried to establish a summer study trip, self-funded, from Slava, but the idea would be a paid trip, to provide an opportunity for students to go on summer study.
- Dan: NSLI-Y competition reaches 1 to 10, sometimes 1 to 14, with a very strong emphasis on the diversity of the applicant pool. This is a natural response. Let's see if we can have a professionally driven program. This would be a 4- to 6-week program, roughly late June to about August 1.
- Jane: Michele Whaley has received a wonderful honor, the Pacific Northwest Council on Foreign Languages Teacher of the Year Award.
- Thanks to Betsy!
- Tom: President's Reception will honor Michael Katz, who was a member of this board. He will receive the Outstanding Achievement in Scholarship award.
- Paul Richard will receive Secondary Teacher Award.

Meeting adjourned.