

ACTR Board of Directors Meeting  
February 3, 2017  
Parc 55 Hotel  
San Francisco, California

**Directors Present:** Tony Brown, Bob Channon, Dan Davidson, Evgeny Dengub, Irina Dubinina, Tom Garza, Lee Roby, Jane Shuffelton, Alla Smyslova, Mark Trotter, Irwin Weil

**Others Present:** Jennifer Bown

**Announcements:** President Tom Garza called the meeting to order at 4:15 pm. He announced the spring meeting of the ACTR Board of Directors in Washington, DC, on April 29. Directors should contact Carole Gibran about travel arrangements.

**Minutes:** Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting April 9, 2016, were approved as written (Davidson, seconded by Weil).

**Membership Report:** Irina Dubinina, Membership Secretary, reported total membership at 591. That figure includes 391 active members, 286 whose membership renewal is overdue, and 78 who have not renewed in several years. She will send reminders to those who have not yet renewed and let them know that their membership will be discontinued if they do not renew by the end of the month. She reported some problems with the way PayPal functions, including not being able to automatically increase the amount because the new dues structure raised rate above a certain percentage. She recommends a new Board position for someone who would track donations.

She has had questions from members about institutional membership and has had requests for receipts for donations. There were not many objections to the new dues structure.

Tom researched other organizations and found that institutional membership does not cover individual instructors at universities or schools.

Alla asked about tracking membership status when instructors register students for our contests and awards. This still has to be done manually.

**American Councils for International Education Board of Trustees:** Dan reported for Dick Brecht. At the meeting of the Trustees in November 2016, the focus was on the strategic plan and the audit. Regulations for the DC office are ever more complex, yet American Councils passed the audit with flying colors, no findings reported. This gives AC a high degree of trust with our funders.

The budget is around \$20 million, and revenue was up for the first quarter.

The strategic plan, to be completed in 2020, calls for attention to research, teacher training, and more. Relations with the Russian Federation are positive and AC is working to re-establish the main Moscow office. *Russkii Mir* has been renewed.

Dan assured the Board that the organization will remain stable when he retires. Tom is an ex officio member of the transition committee to conduct the search for a new leader of AC. The statement of criteria for the search is available at the AC website. The search began in January 2017, and there will be a report at the March meeting of the trustees. The goal is to have a new leader in place by December 2017.

Discussion followed on the importance of having someone who can deal with the state of affairs in the Russian language field and who understands the relationship with the Russian Federation. Dan reminded the Board that AC's focus is on deep regional knowledge and the deepest example of that knowledge is in the Russian field. Dan can remain in his position as CEO of ACTR and can continue to speak for ACTR with the trustees. ACTR has 2 seats on the Board of Trustees.

**JNCL-NCLIS** – Dan reported for Bill Rivers. He credited Bill with helping to raise membership to more than 130 organizations and other constituents. Bill reached out to professionals in the language industry as well as state language associations, and national language-specific associations, almost all of which are now members.

Work on behalf of languages in the Congress included securing level funding for Title VI/Fulbright-Hays programs, restoring of full funding for the Defense Language Institute, and funding for several other programs.

A project on Global Competencies has led to an article forthcoming in the next issue of *Foreign Language Annals*, on a survey of more than 2,100 U.S.-based employers' needs for linguistic and cultural human capital. A workshop is to be held this summer at AC.

**ACTR Programs:** Dan began with the forthcoming report of the American Arts and Science Academy report on the work of the commission, of which he has been a member. The report will be made available February 28, 2017. The survey of K-16 language enrollment, conducted by American Councils, will be updated on the website. It shows a substantial amount of spending in most states. Some of its findings relate to the need to train more K-12 language teachers, heritage languages, and indigenous languages. He noted that 65 million Americans speak a language other than English and that 61% of that number are speakers of Spanish. Absolute numbers in Russian course enrollment are stable, while enrollment in certain other languages is growing.

Dan requested the help of the Board in two areas. One is for those whose students are considering study abroad to encourage them to look carefully at all that is involved in study abroad programs, including support services available. The other is to spread information about the Prototype AP® Russian and NEWL exams. They are endorsed by the College Board. When

post-secondary institutions request scores, they will receive four sub-scores (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing). American Councils will be able to guide students in choosing colleges to attend. He explained that teacher workshops are available to train teachers and that heritage learners are welcome in all the exams. Lee Roby mentioned the possible need for more testing centers.

A new program is the Business, Technology, and Innovation Scholarship. It supports an 8-week summer or 15-week semester program that combines intensive Russian language study with internships at Russian or international businesses, technology start-ups, and STEM centers in Moscow.

Reviewing the overall AC exchange and placement numbers for US outbound students and researchers in 2016, Dan noted overall steady levels of participation across the four major host countries in comparison with 2015:

|                    | <u>Outbound</u> | <u>Inbound</u> |
|--------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Russian Federation | 223             | 392            |
| Kazakhstan         | 100             | 304            |
| Moldova            | 83              | 125            |
| Tajikistan         | 72              | 135            |

The breakdown of participants by categories included 118 (NSLI-Y), 82 (CLS), 144 (RLASP), 25 (Flagship capstone), 66 researchers, teachers, 43 conference and Olympiada travel grant recipients. Of the 478 ACTR supported participants in 2016, 343 were undergraduates.

**ACTR Webinars:** Evgeny Dengub reported on the three webinars that have taken place since the last ACTR Board meeting in April. The presenters were Dan Davidson, Cindy Martin, and Lee Roby. Registration totaled 236, with 75 non-members paying the registration fee. He noted an upcoming series on heritage learners as well as another forthcoming webinar on K-12 Russian. Archived webinars will eventually be made available.

**Publications:**

*Russian Language Journal:* Tom Garza gave the report for Bill Rivers. Volume 65 is the 11<sup>th</sup> one since ACTR took on publication of the journal. He noted the contribution of Masha Lekic, Michael Gorham, and Bill Rivers in the journal’s success. Issues are now accessible on JSTOR. There are 187 institutional supporters. Tom introduced Jennifer Bown, who has agreed to take on the position of editor. She hopes to “stay the course,” continue to raise visibility for the journal, and possibly put out more issues per year. She noted that a replacement is needed for book review editor Michael Gorham.

*ACTR Letter:* Jane Shuffelton thanked members of the Board who have been exceptionally helpful in responding to requests for submissions. Those include Front Page Dialogs from Tom Garza, Lee Roby, and Karen Evans-Romaine. Issues have appeared in relatively timely fashion and the winter issue is at the printer.

**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 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.

**ACTR National Post-Secondary Russian Essay Contest:** Tony Brown reported 1,107 registered as of the meeting date. The number represents 69 institutions, down from 79 in 2016. The topic for 2017 is “Важный человек в моей жизни». Essays will be uploaded to a Dropbox folder and certificates in pdf format will be sent to all participants for the first time this year. He noted that it would be useful to digitize the corpus to make essays available for possible research projects. Jennifer Bown is replacing Tony as contest administrator.

**Russian State University for Humanities:** Irwin Weil announced that the conference for May 11-12 will address the topic “Revolutionary Ideas in America.” It is intended as a broad-range topic for presentations on every form of communication. Board members are encouraged to spread the word among their colleagues and Tony Brown is the contact person.

**Nominations Committee:** The committee consisted of Evgeny Dengub, Peter Merrill, and Betsy Sandstrom. All Board members whose terms expire as of the end of 2016 have agreed to continue. The Board agreed (Bob Channon, seconded by Dan Davidson) to recommend the slate to the ACTR Membership meeting. Nominees for re-election are: Nina Bond, Dan Davidson, Karen Evans-Romaine, Elena Farkas, Paavo Husen, and Mark Trotter.

**New Business:** Karen Evans-Romaine would like input on agenda items for the April meeting. She suggests a discussion of the constituency of the Board and the issue of possible term limits. Dan noted the remarkable quantity of work that members of the Board are doing.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 6:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Shuffelton for Karen Evans-Romaine (Secretary)