

**ACTR BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING AGENDA**  
**American Council of Teachers of Russian**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Washington, D.C. – April 29, 2017**  
**American Councils, 12<sup>th</sup>-floor conference room**  
**1828 L St NW, Washington, DC 20036**

**1. Approval of Minutes (9:00)**

February 3, 2017

ACTR Board of Directors Meeting, AATSEEL (San Francisco)

Minutes approved. Diane moved, Bob Channon seconded. Unanimous approval, no nays, no abstentions, no changes.

**2. Announcements (9:10)**

Tom Garza

2016 Service Award: Bill Rivers

The award was given here because recipient was not present at the previous ACTR Board meeting at AATSEEL in San Francisco. Jane had read the citation at the Membership meeting. Jane presented the award to Bill Rivers, reading the citation.

Bill's response: I stand in very distinguished company, and that is quite humbling. This organization, something I have been familiar with since 1987 when I was told to join my first day in graduate school. We teach language well in the US, better than anybody. The medium self-assessed proficiency level in Europe is A2 (CEFR; ACTFL Novice High/Intermediate Low). In the US we can get high school students to IH/AL, and in universities to AH/S/even to Distinguished proficiency. This organization has been a model in that. Beyond that, we have a journal in which I have had the distinct honor of working, not only with people behind the scenes at American Councils, facing the challenge of getting the journal accessible not only in Google Scholar, but also in JSTOR. After a one-year delay, anyone can read it because it is in Google Scholar. This is critical to scholars abroad. All of this really matters. The growth in programs is significant. When I do advocacy workshops, I convey that you in ACTR bring excellence to what you do. This organization represents that excellence in a spectacular way, encouraging deans and provosts to support you in what you do.

**3. Report on ACTR Academic Programs and Conferences (9:20)**

Dan Davidson

Biannual Program Office report to the ACTR Board

Why does US-Russia exchange matter?

Dialog is fundamental to the production and development of knowledge and learning.

Dan presented the results from NSLI-Y programs, AY 2011-12 and 2012-13 and reported

that by lifting the requirement for former training in Russian for NSLI-Y participants, we

made the program more diverse. Thus the results presented show gains of students, most of

whom begin at 0. No one achieved proficiency lower than IM and 48% are AL, 9% AM. Please encourage students to take advantage of that fully funded program.

RLASP is our oldest and most significant program in terms of impact on the study of Russian. Typical entering proficiency has been the same for nearly 30 years, IL to IM. After one semester students are returning either at the Advanced threshold or well within advanced. 25% AL, 24% AM, 1% AH.

RLASP AY: same entering points as the semester, but very strong distribution across the advanced range.

Flagship: Promise of graduating college at 3 (ACTFL Superior).

Overseas immersion is also helping us develop culturally and globally competent individuals, or global professionals.

US-RF student mobility. Dan reported on this in Moscow last week. The number of US students going to Russia has fallen very seriously since 2011. That's not the trend of Russians coming to the US. In 2016, the number of US students going to Russia for for-credit study is likely to slip under 1000. (In 2015 it's 1187, down from 1827 in 2011.) Most of the decline is the result of worries on the part of parents and institutions. Some is the result of fellowship programs going to other countries. American Councils numbers: 127 undergrads, 27 grads, 10 travel grants. 223 to Russia, 99 to Kazakhstan, 83 to Moldova, 70+ to Kyrgyzstan.

2011-12 is the last year of large Title VI Fulbright Hays grants. They are back now but in smaller form. Title VIII is back.

University of Wisconsin – Madison sociologist Ted Gerber wrote a remarkable report for the Carnegie Corporation: “only one in five area social scientists with Ph.D.s report doing their own surveys in Russia. [...] “On average US-based Russian area scholars attend fewer than one talk per year by a Russian scholar.”

The situation for our field is of great concern.

Our fellowship base is growing, and our goal is to support all the students who we say are qualified to study in a Russian-speaking country.

Dan responded to questions from the Board:

What percentage are heritage learners?

Dan and Masha published a study on this about 3 years ago. They went back to the data sets, pulled out the heritage students, and looked at their performance, keeping in mind that they may have a separate track in the Russian Overseas Flagship, in which they take two direct-enrolled courses and write papers. They enter at the same level of proficiency and progress not from 2 to 3 but from 2 to 4 on the Russian Overseas Flagship program. 13% of

the students in this study were heritage speakers, and most of those who achieved 4 by the end of the program are heritage speakers. If heritage speakers are not provided with a separate track, they make the same gains as everyone else: 3 rather than 4. Maria Polinsky studied this cohort and said that they represented to her some of the most impressive examples of balanced bilinguals, equally at home in both, not 50/50, but about 45/55.

How can the ACTR Board continue to convey this information to high school students, so that they understand what they can achieve?

See the American Academy report. That kind of information is most usefully conveyed by someone other than us.

There is a body of information we have about the initial effect of immersion, the leap from 0 to 1/1+ in language, and a similar surge in intercultural development. It happens at threshold and level 3, with a plateau in between. The research is showing that there is something powerful happening in initial immersion.

You note that the fellowship base is expanding. Can you tell us more about fellowships?

Enormous efforts have been made to make sure that federally funded programs are open to students of all backgrounds: historically black colleges and tribal institutions. The government has supported efforts to make the study of Russian and LCTLs in study abroad more accessible, not only for students at elite institutions. These efforts have shown that everyone can learn a language, even if English is not their L1.

Announcement from Graham Hettlinger: Margaret Stephenson, after more than 25 years, is leaving her position with American Councils outbound programs. Margaret trained Graham. Margaret has worked with calm and patience even in emergency situations and has brought a generous spirit to her work.

Margaret: Graham will stay on and can answer your questions. Vladka Shikova will be the program manager for outbound programs. Graham will be working with Vladka.

Question to Graham: Is there anything else we can be doing with regard to the dropping numbers?

The biggest challenge is enrollments, getting students on these programs. The two most important factors are the image of Russia today and parents' anxiety. Please get out the word about study abroad in Russia. We're also competing with study abroad providers who invest a lot more money in advertising and outreach. The most productive thing we can do is visit campuses. Help us gain access to your students in class during our campus visits. Remind students about the distinctiveness of our programs. We have Fulbright-Hays funding targeted for study in Moscow and for juniors and seniors. If you have students completing their BA and graduating, they can get excellent fellowships from American Councils funded by the Department of State; they can enroll in an MA program at Bryn Mawr for a semester or a year. We have scholarship funding now for students from underrepresented groups.

#### 4. Report from the American Councils Board of Trustees (9:40)

Tom Garza, Irwin Weil

Functions of the Board of Trustees:

- American Councils government relations outreach
- Advocacy
- Congressional meetings, receptions, briefings
- Testimony/congressional hearings
- Appropriations requests
- External partners in government relations
- Road shows (NH, AR, PA, MA, in cooperation with Alliance)

We work with Bill Rivers, but in many ways AC is a front-line worker, having hundreds of meetings on the Hill, showing the impact of each AC program in a specific congressional district, with a list of each and every town where there was an exchange in either direction. Our database is comprehensive. We had two pages, double spaced, with towns listed, on Arkansas for a meeting with a congressional representative from that state. Nothing has a stronger impact on members of Congress. Their support is not about us in that case, but about their constituents.

In our work under the current administration, we are emphasizing national security impact and economic impact.

We focus on success stories, something Bill Bradley taught us years ago.

American Councils holiday campaign results: \$150,021 raised in 2016, vs. \$78,086 raised in 2015. 198 donors: 74 new donors, 122 return donors.

Financial reporting:

\$15.0 mill in total assets (2015: \$15.3 million)

\$5.6 mill in net assets (\$5.0 million in 2015)

Revenues: 4.5% up from last year

Revenues \$78,258,919

We operate on a razor-thin margin. That is the gold standard for a non-profit. Overhead remains steady over the years.

4.3% growth in investments in 2016

Transition update: search firm Spencer Stuart is working closely with our board. They are at a finalist phase after having reviewed about 100 candidates, down to 6 on the short list. Final interviews will take place next week, so we should know fairly soon whom they pick. Our board has taken an extraordinarily rigorous approach to this; they are not interested in a big name, but in the best fit for the job. Russia pays a lot of attention to who is in this position.

Q&A:

What about credit for teachers' programs?

The board has negotiated and proposed after consultation with the 6 finalists that Dan Davidson stay on in a formal capacity that would preserve our credit arrangements and research arrangements. Dan will have a new title starting in July. Dan will be an emeritus professor at Bryn Mawr starting in July as well and will probably teach in alternate semesters. So the agreement between AC and Bryn Mawr will remain in place.

## **5. ACTR Response to the AAAS Report on Languages (9:50)**

Dan Davidson

American Academy of Arts & Sciences Report: *America's Languages: Investing in Language Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

This is a congressionally chartered, bipartisan report. It is arguably the most important report on language produced by the US in the last 40 years, since the Perkins report in 1979 on the study of language in the US. We get such reports once in a generation. Take this report and use it with your own community for advocacy. It's useful to have a source like the American Academy to discuss the importance of language study. The online version, released only one month ago, has had 25,000 hits so far.

This report is of the best sources of current information on the kinds of questions that our parents, deans, and colleagues ask us. Why invest in language education? What are the benefits of studying languages? Dick Brecht's piece was a signal white paper to launch this report. Bill Rivers has put together one of the best statements available on why language contributes to the economic interests of the country.

Study by Judith Kroll and Paola Dussias, Penn State, on the cognitive benefits of bilingualism

Gail McGinn on foreign language, cultural diplomacy and global security, why this is important for national security

Terry Wiley, et al, Center for Applied Linguistics: "Language and the Fulfillment of the Potential for All Americans"

The commission worked on this for 2 years. Only half of those who speak a language claim to speak it well, according to US census. Russian is spoken at home among 0.3% of households where a language other than English is spoken at home. The number of those who speak a language other than English at home has grown by 5 million since 2010; about half of those speak Spanish.

Information on the number of elementary schools teaching language other than English

Information on relative investment in foreign languages by state

Dual-language immersion: 9-month impact of dual-language immersion on English-language skills. Dual-language immersion students operate at one full grade level higher than their counterparts.

Recommendations:

1. Build educational capacity, esp. K-12
2. Involve local communities, businesses, and philanthropies
3. Develop heritage language and revitalize native American languages
4. Encourage international study and language/cultural immersion

American Academy of University Presidents has already endorsed this.

American Councils is known as the action organization.

Shortage of teachers

Dick Brecht, "America's Languages": These constitute the indigenous languages, colonial languages, immigrant languages, the world languages that we study, ASL, and ancient Greek and Latin. This is important: they are America's languages; our country is a bilingual country, in which at least a third of the population is bilingual and soon more than a third.

What we're afraid of is what happens with these reports. We have established a small working group whose job is to facilitate and coordinate implementation.

American Councils will request 100 copies of both for distribution by board members to their home institutions.

## **6. Treasurer's Report (10:00)**

Cynthia Ruder

American Councils' finance office lost 3 of its senior people, including people with whom we worked. They have brought new people on board. We'll be working with Julia Sokolova and Salomon, both of whom understand ACTR. Cindy met yesterday for 90 minutes with them and with John Henderson. Budget and finance is an evolutionary project, so that Cindy and the finance office can better understand each other. John has been helpful and gracious, and I hope we'll continue to have a good working relationship with the finance office at AC.

Given that the finance office works with many grants and entities, not only ACTR, Cindy, after consulting with John, Salomon, and Julia, has instituted a new policy: do not correspond directly with the finance office. All questions on ACTR finances need to go through Cindy. That simplifies the procedure, and Cindy hopes that will expedite procedures with reimbursements, etc.

Julia will take on the ACTR portfolio. Cindy will send out an email to everyone who runs a contest or has other financial activity, so that you know to correspond only with Cindy on matters related to money and budget. Cindy will then send it on to American Councils.

Checks for contest and other fees should go directly to American Councils, but email Cindy, so that she can alert AC to keep an eye out for it. That will help ensure transparency and simplify the process. Cindy will send Julia Sokolova's contact information in an email. Make sure that Julia Sokolova's name is on any envelope with checks or other financial matters.

We have had to implement a procedure that checks must be made out to American Councils or ACIE, not to ACTR. Checks made out to ACTR will be sent back for correction. We put that information in our publications. Irina has made that clear to members, and Evgeny has put that on the website.

Key points:

1. The policy of room sharing for hotel stays for the ACTR Board meeting and the use of only frequent flyer miles has resulted in a 50% drop in travel costs, which means additional moneys for the ACTR operating budget to support our activities and contests. Reimburse American Councils for your hotel room for the second night if you're not room-sharing. Whatever cost we might be personally incurring benefits the organization; that's all the more money we can put to sustaining a good budget over the long haul and financing our programs, activities, and contests. That also provides us with a better pad if costs go up, for example for printing. We are now running in the black, and we need to make sure we continue to do that.
2. Turnover in the finance office already reported.
3. Check policy already reported.
4. Apricot has been a wise investment for setting up our website, as has PayPal. It makes it possible for Irina to process memberships wherever she is or when she encounters someone who wants to join the organization. That gives us great flexibility, for example at conferences.

Presentation of Treasurer's Report

Expenses for the ACTR *Letter* have been moved to Printing and Postage. Everything carries a code, so Cindy will talk to finance office about separating out the ACTR *Letter*.

Cindy submits the budget in May for the Trustees meeting. Cindy looks at the figures as of 30 June to see what we did spend and builds the budget from that. John Henderson has stressed the flexibility of budgets, which gives us some room to maneuver.

Two funds are missing from this report because of questions about expenses: The Clare Walker Fund and the ACTR Scholar Laureate Fund has expenses accrued to them but should not. They took those funds off the list for this report and will research why something was put as an expense that should not be there. Next time we see this report those two funds will be back in the mix.

Action items:

What to do with the Pushkin Scholarship Fund?

Cindy asked John how long the fund would last if we gave a \$500 scholarship every year. He calculated 70-75 years. If we double that to \$1000, that cuts the life of the fund but could offer a trade-off in our being able to award that scholarship.

Cindy has attached a draft proposal to the treasurer's report. She will also send it out by email.

Proposal to focus on one fund per year as a featured fund, focusing on donations to that particular fund that year, with an article or a notice about that fund in the ACTR *Letter* and on the ACTR website. That way we can highlight the funds that are available. That provides further advertisement of our outreach and the diversity of our funds.

We have received confirmation from the information on the treasurer's report that our new dues structure is producing dividends. The pushback has been limited, and Cindy, Tom, and Irina can point out to those who object the concrete benefits.

Institutional memberships need to be discussed.

Q&A

What if we give scholarships of more than \$500 a year?

The life of the fund is shortened. It might make sense for us to give two \$500 scholarships or one \$1000 scholarship. We have to decide that collectively.

Discussion of the merits of \$500 or \$1000 scholarships.

Support of Summer Russian Teachers Program through scholarships is an important issue. American Councils decided to defer the Summer Russian Teachers Program for a year in order to raise funds for it. The International Korean Educators Network in LA has made a challenge to all Korean teachers in the US to subsidize half the cost of each examination for every student in Korean as an incentive for students to participate in the exam. The Qatar Foundation is subsidizing a new foundation for the study of Arabic. The Portuguese Studies Foundation has subsidized including continental Portuguese so that students can click to receive a scholarship for the study of either. ACTR does not have a sponsor for the Russian exam, but it would be wonderful if ACTR could support the prototype Russian exam. The \$92 exam fee is a huge barrier for some. How much we do that would be up to us.

Our AP fund sponsors the development of the exam. What are the other organizations doing?

Dan: One organization underwrote a teacher development seminar.

What about Russkii mir?

American Councils have just signed a new agreement with Russkii mir. They are more likely to support seminars and teacher development.



Proposal to send out a letter to ACTR members and potential donors listing all of these funds, to give potential donors a sense of the scope, later followed by a more targeted focus of individual funds annually.

Please send suggestions to Cindy.

## **7. Membership Secretary Report (10:15)**

Irina Dubinina

Irina presented the membership report to the Board.

559 current members in 2017, of whom 440 are active. This is an increase from last year. That includes those who paid for 2016 and may have paid for 2017. Those will become lapsed members on 1 June 2017.

There is a huge number of those whose are in the system but have been lapsed since 2015. That includes those who do and don't open emails.

The bulk of membership is in the category of lecturer, instructor, pre-college teacher, retired, and independent scholar. This is also the category that most diligently pays attention to membership renewal. The least diligent categories are assistant and associate professors.

We need to work on promoting donations. We have had 13 from April to April, but 6 of them are lifetime supplements.

We need to have clearer policies about when members become lapsed, and when we remove members from membership.

Updates and suggestions for managing membership:

- Archiving members who have not paid for more than 2 years and do not open emails from ACTR.
- Notifying members who have not paid for the past 2 years but do open emails that their membership has been discontinued.
- We're working with members who were ignored by the system (that didn't charge them or didn't charge them enough), because PayPal had to be updated to match the current membership structure.
- Lapsed members (6 months overdue in renewing membership) continue to receive the ACTR *Letter*. Thanks to webinars, some of them do renew their membership, because the webinar registration process makes it clear.
- This year Alla checked faithfully with us to make sure those nominating their students for the Post-Secondary Laureate Award are not members or lapsed members.

Challenges:

- Unexpected difficulties with PayPal
- Recording life supplement, now recorded as a donation

- Difference between independent scholar and non-academic
- Communicating with members. How do we reach out to those who do not open emails? Irina has had people very surprised by the increase in membership; they have obviously missed all of the communication sent to them.

Improvements:

- We have added options to each membership level: one-time PayPal payment or recurring payment (in addition to the old method of sending in checks)
- We activated PayPal app: Irina can now process credit card payments immediately.

Outstanding questions:

- Institutional membership
- Joint membership benefits

Information presented by Irina is on the website.

## **8. Institutional Membership (10:25)**

Irina Dubinina

Why an institutional membership?

- Institutions are interested in institutional membership, so that faculty can enroll their students in National Essay Contest or nominate them for the Post-Secondary Scholar Laureate Award.
- Another issue: single-person departments with changing faculty/lecturer appointments, for which an institutional membership would ensure constant receipt of the newsletter and participation of their students in competitions.

Challenges:

- How can we establish institutional membership that would not discourage individual memberships?
- How can an institutional membership benefit the institution, so that information goes to the head of the language department who isn't a Russian teacher?

What would an institutional membership consist of?

Proposals:

- institutional membership with limited benefits, for example contest registration and access to the website and newsletter, but not webinar participation
- institutional access to webinars
- institutional library RLJ access

- dual-fee structure for university/college (\$300) and secondary schools (\$100)
- eventually a council of institutional members

Action plan: Draft a proposal before the November meeting.

## **9. Communication with Members, Membership Development and Fundraising (10:35)**

Irina Dubinina and Evgeny Dengub

Irina has a letter from the president thanking for donations. Irina created a thank-you email for renewing membership. An actual letter on letterhead would be better, with additional information encouraging support of a particular program or programs.

In what other ways can we reach out to members? A direct mailing of promotional materials?

Electronic image that someone can put on their CV?

The donation receipt must include the amount of the donation for tax purposes. The letter also needs to have the institutional statement of non-profit status.

Cumulative effect of getting emails and postcards can be even more effective

Action item: Find out how much a written letter or a postcard would cost to reach out to potential members. A postcard would be more effective than a letter.

## **10. Website and Webinars (10:50)**

Evgeny Dengub

Webinars are going well: 10 webinars this past year. We started a high school series with Lee as the first participant. A couple of Russian colleagues gave webinars as well. We hope to have one webinar a month in September to May, post-secondary and K-12, US and Russia.

Suggestion to move the day/time, such as evening, weekend, or 2-3 different time slots.  
Response: Recordings are available. Most members preferred the time of Thursday late afternoon.

Webinars are creating revenue, earning \$1500 this year, of which \$1200 spent on honoraria. What is more important: generating revenue or attracting people to ACTR membership?

Proposal for a group rate for a class or a group of colleagues of \$75 for a group of fewer than 20 and \$100 for more than that.

Approved by affirmation.

We now have a good archive of webinars we have done, and they are available only to those who registered at the time. We could offer to sell access to these webinars. Technical issues and lack of time are the only thing stopping this.

## **Break (11:00)**

### **11. Committee on College and Pre-College Russian (11:10)**

John Schillinger

Founded in 1984, all done by mail. Back then we had about 400 programs that we dealt with by mail. We would then send out the results by mail.

Type in CCPCR in Google and it comes right up. As long as we keep using it, it's at the top.

This year John did an analysis of all the programs that responded at the college and university level. Three-year period: 97 programs, 34 are large (40 or more), 21 medium (20-30 students), and 42 small (tens or single digits). Of those programs, there is stability in enrollments, which is good news. Based on about a 10% change, in the first-year program 20 large programs, stable; 18 medium-level programs, and 32 small, all stable. 70 of 97 programs are stable over the last three years. Second-year stability is higher: 25 large programs stable, 17 medium and 39 small programs that remain stable.

Programs terminated since 1998: close to 250, most of them small, that have disappeared since 1998.

Increases: 4 of the large programs increased, 2 medium programs, and 3 small programs all increased more than 10%. 3 of the large, 1 medium, and 2 small, so 6 of the 97 increased.

Drops: 10 of the large programs, including Michigan State and Wisconsin, had significant drops. American U dropped about 20 students. One of the medium programs, and 7 small, thus 18 out of 97 programs dropped in enrollment. Ohio State and Minnesota had drops in second year: 10 of 97. Not all universities responded 3 years in a row.

Special situations: some places do not have a second-year program. U Texas has first and second year combined in one year: 42 in that program. That's amazing and something that needs to be commended and mimicked elsewhere.

Summer domestic programs: 18 showing this year. How can we better let students know about them?

Pre-college: 16 out of 50 states responded. Last year we had 22 out of 50. Lack of response from teachers is a problem. John typically sends out 3-4 emails a year to get a response. They're much harder to keep in touch with; they disappear constantly. John needs help getting those teachers to self-identify and contact me.

Self-created materials are being used more and more. We need something usable at the pre-college level, both adaptable and affordable.

The site will feature Anchorage next.

When American University switched systems, all previous data and links disappeared.

John is getting information regularly from about 100 programs per year.

John will put report on the website. There will be a May 2017 report.

In sum, there is stability over the past 3 years. We'll see what the current world situation will do to our programs.

Please send enrollments information to John.

If Olympiada national chairs and Laureate organizers could send out reminders, and send out an email to participants, that would help.

Suggestion to provide a link to this on the ACTR website.

It would also be useful to link to information on StarTalk programs.

## **12. REPORTS ON CONTESTS AND AWARDS (11:20)**

### **a. Olympiada of Spoken Russian/OLYMPIADA International Olympiada (11:20)**

Mark Trotter/Natasha Ushakova

Mark provided and presented a written report. It was a turbulent but ultimately successful year, with the highest number of participants since 2010. We reintroduced the Olympiada in Tennessee: 3 schools, 28 students. They just did another Olympiada, the Tennessee-Mississippi Olympiada. North Carolina: 5 participants, up from two in the previous year. They're now up to 16 for 2017.

Typo in #4: delete "will".

Maryland piloted oral communication materials for the Olympiada.

One of the highlights this past year has been Ruth Edelman coming on as co-chair. She has contributed enormously to the Olympiada effort.

Natasha: International Olympiada in Russia happened during Thanksgiving week in November. New component online. Students were chosen by state Olympiadas. Unfortunately, information came out in August, somewhat late. Mark and Natasha informed state chairs in early June, as soon as they got word about it. We learned about it from Vermont.

Dan: The International Olympiada in Moscow was not organized by MAPRIAL; it was organized by Pushkin Institute under a separate grant, and the organizers had not run an International Olympiada before.

Natasha: It's a completely new staff compared to that in 2014, and not as well organized as in the past, but student participants were outstanding. Russian TV channel called Natasha as soon as she arrived in the airport in Moscow. They got to the hotel, the TV channel was there, and they proposed going to Lenin Hills. So 40 American kids were at Lenin Hills taking questions and talking about how they love Russia. They recited poems, sang songs; they were amazing!

The Olympiada had the students at the institute from 8 am to 5 pm, watching a movie on one day. Natasha took a group to Red Square. The students didn't have time to talk during the day, so they chatted at night. Questions for students were better this year than last, but we still need to coordinate with them better about what we're teaching here.

They are planning to run an Olympiada every year from now on, in November. Now it is in May. We hope to have information about it soon.

Rasetskaya and the Russian government want to do this every year. Do we want to continue to participate, given that it's a different genre from the old Olympiada? Dan had consulted in some detail with Ambassador Tefft about the Olympiada. We wanted to make sure that participants are briefed in advance.

There was great respect expressed for the American kids. It's necessary for our kids to be there.

Can American Councils cover airfares for the US delegation? It has been a 4-year event. What happens about the cost for annual participation?

Response: Delta is reestablishing the direct flight out of NY, and American Councils has been sending students on Aeroflot, since it is possible to use any airline in the SkyTeam alliance.

The Olympiada organizers requested a national song, so Natasha suggested a presentation on a national holiday.

This was life-changing for students, inspiring them and giving them new perspectives. Very few participants were from Europe; most were from Central Asia.

Jane moved that we support annual participation. Lee: Second.

Discussion about having the Olympiada open only to non-heritage students.

Likely that there will be another international Olympiada; please check your email throughout the summer for information.

All ayes, no nays, no abstention. Unanimously passed.

**a2. Olympiada of Spoken Russian materials revision (11:30)**

Mara Sukholutskaya

Report provided. Report showed that the number of heritage speakers in some states skyrocketed. Mara and Natalia Kolodina will meet and discuss revisions of materials, with the goal to complete them by winter 2017.

Discussion:

We need to create our own version of heritage materials to be sure that it's related to us in some way.

How complicated would it be to use the revised standards to develop heritage materials? We see deficits regarding inclusion of heritage students. What can we do to make sure they are included?

Proposal to look at Natalia Kolodina's materials and see if they adhere to the standards.

Heritage speakers form an extremely broad category, a broad spectrum. The way it's set now, where heritage speakers have to compete at a level higher than their counterparts is a good compromise. A separate set of heritage materials could make some students suffer, if will not be able to compete at that level and will be excluded from the regular competition, because if we use the current definitions, they will be regarded as heritage. This might also complicate the process.

Materials needs to be age-appropriate.

Olga Kagan has a good framework for heritage students, based on what heritage students can and cannot do with the language, referring to ACTFL Guidelines and Standards.

The Virginia Olympiada is already using other materials.

What happens if you have younger students at the heritage level? How can you help them out?

Proposal to have a subcommittee work on this and have a teleconference to discuss this, looking at Olga Kagan's materials.

**b. National Russian Essay Contest (NREC) and dues (11:40)**

Paavo Husen

Contest is finishing now. First-round awards were sent out. Evgeny is working on second round, and Paavo will send a notice to teachers. Evgeny will send out results when they are ready.

We have 45 schools in the contest this year. 9 are new. California joined, Vermont, and South Carolina. We need to share information about schools participating in the high school contest, because Paavo could provide Natasha with 20 more schools. For the Olympiada of Spoken Russian there are previously unknown schools, so we need to share lists.

4 new Saturday schools.

Evgeny is retiring from the contest. Thanks expressed to Evgeny. Evgeny will help find a replacement. Evgeny proposes that we should try to involve ACTR members, not just Board members.

Evgeny has issued certificates and medals.

Proposal to invite teachers who participate, since this isn't judging.

Discussion about moving to electronic certificates, because of the time and expense involved in issuing paper certificates. No change proposed at this point.

Paavo has a candidate in mind and will approach him.

### **c. National Post-Secondary Russian Essay Contest (NPSRC) (11:50)**

Jennifer Bown

There were a couple of mistakes on the list of institutions in which students got awards. 14 gold medals, 22 silver, 31 bronze, 128 honorable mentions from 54 of 67 participating institutions. Alla and Jennifer made a special effort to award some institutions that might have not been ranked at the top but had gotten some ranks by judges, particularly new institutions.

They will try to issue certificates by PDF this year, so that we could catch institutions before they leave for the year. Certificates should go out next week. Jennifer will be in contact with Evgeny and Irina to check memberships before issuing certificates.

Instructors were able to pay on line, although that caused difficulties because it was difficult to figure out who paid for what.

Next year Jennifer and Alla will co-chair this. Tony did this on his own for several years.

Problem with long review times, but agreement that having essays reviewed in Russia motivates participants and their teachers to participate.

### **d. Russian Scholar Laureate Award (RSLA) (12:00)**

Natasha Ushakova



Report provided. We're very proud of our numbers: 43 students from 38 schools. Thanks to John Schillinger and Mark Trotter for sending information so that Natasha could send out more invitations. Send me information about high school teachers! We sent letters to students, teachers, principals, with a certificate and pin, so over 100 mailings. This is not a revenue generator for ACTR, but it is very important to high schools.

**e. Post-Secondary Russian Scholar Laureate Award (PSRSLA) (12:10)**

Alla Smyslova

This year marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this award, established by Ben Rifkin and Cindy Ruder, with Jane Shuffelton. Alla followed the usual procedures. 76 laureates; last year it was 78. Fifteen programs out of the 76 submitted for the first time. That could be thanks to the webinars, which are reaching people we haven't reached before. We stayed within budget, overspending by one cent. The estimated budget for next year is higher because of the need to buy postage in bulk. Colleges and students want certificates on paper. The list of laureates starting from 2007 is now posted and available on the ACTR website. Thanks to webmaster Evgeny and Irina for checking memberships.

On document: Bold print: programs that nominated for the first time. Pale: those who nominated last year but not this year.

**f. ACTR Service Award (12:20)**

Jane Shuffelton

Recommend contributors of articles to the ACTR *Letter*. It may be time for someone else to take on the leadership of this newsletter. Jane will be happy to help the new editor. Anyone interested should contact Tom or Jane, either with self-nominations or nominations from inside or outside the Board.

Discussion about awards.

**LUNCH (12:30)**

Lunchtime discussion on American Academy recommendations:

- What if we were to extend loan forgiveness to anyone teaching in public education?
- What if student loans were made available for study abroad?
- What about the reintroduction of language requirements? They're coming back: Princeton, Pittsburgh, Columbia, for example. Bryn Mawr have had them for years.
- Many institutions see fit to make language required.
- Columbia U is cited for its unusual success in developing heritage language capacity with a dedicated track, which Alla overseas, as opposed to turning them loose.
- AATs are responding; even the College Board is getting on to this.

Question about the future of the Summer Language Teachers' Program.

The ACTR survey showed that the 4-week option was the most popular. American Councils would be looking at something between 4 and 6 weeks, hopefully again in 2018.

Discussion of job placements of Boren and Flagship alumni.

RLJ 2005: survey of RLASP program participants over 25 years. 780 respondents out of 2400 queried. Within that group, a very large number of people were using their language in their walk of life. We were wrong in assuming they were mainly going to government and academic. High role of language in helping them get their first job.

### **13. ACTR Newsletter (1:30)**

Jane Shuffelton and Elena Farkas

Jane: Team working with Mark, Natasha, and Michele Whaley has worked out quite well. Elena does well and takes time to do layout and production. Jane solicits materials and edits. Zita Dabars continues to help with her well-honed proofreading skills. And the committee has helped in reviewing input and advice. Many thanks to all who have responded to requests.

Three issues: Tom Garza on digital humanities, fall on community learning in school classrooms, Karen Evans-Romaine published a two-part on Russian Flagship. Dan Davidson has promised a front-page dialogue piece. Please continue to consider contributing a front-page dialogue piece.

We need more titles of publications to be reviewed. We have a wonderful review of Alla Kurova's Russian culture book.

We would appreciate feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Proposal to update our reasons to study Russian, and to solicit an article about that by a high school student.

Elena: Please send reports to Jane. We'll upload them to Dropbox for Spring/Summer 2017 issue. It can be hard to crop pictures, so please send pictures formatted like school yearbook pictures.

### **14. REPORTS ON PUBLICATIONS (1:40)**

*Russian Language Journal*

Jennifer Bown

Bill Rivers is stepping down after 2016 issue, so we're in transition; 2016 issue still has articles in copyediting. BYU has a professional editing service and is providing that to RLJ for English articles. Sofia Kasmeridi will continue to do copyediting for articles in Russian. Please continue to encourage people to submit articles in Russian.

Michael Gorham is stepping down as associate editor. Cori Anderson at Rutgers has volunteered to take that post.

No submissions for 2017. Seelangs call for papers?

Tom for the following issue will guest edit, on digital humanities.

Professional competencies: Tony  
Heritage speakers: Alla

Perhaps special issues will help encourage submissions and help journals to come out more frequently.

Bill has done tremendous work to get RLJ indexed in JSTOR. Here the IT department has done a huge amount of work. As a result, we have \$3000 in revenue from JSTOR. We're looking to get RLJ indexed by Project Muse, and possibly Epsco, but the latter might be too expensive.

Jennifer requests help soliciting articles, reviewing articles, and guest editing special issues.

Suggestion to announce on ACTR Facebook page, ACTR website as special announcement, to put ads in the AATSEEL and ASEEEES about seeking submissions, indicating that it's double-blind peer-reviewed. Also, from time to time send out emails to Board members about submissions or people to recommend to solicit for submissions.

Also work with graduate departments: as students complete their dissertations, they can publish a chapter of their dissertation there.

### **15. Report on the Revision of Russian-Specific Standards (1:55)**

Jane Shuffelton, Tom Garza, Peter Merrill

We're waiting for ACTFL. They are setting up a review committee of the collaborative standards board.

### **16. Report on partnership agreement between Staten Island Technical HS and the Pushkin State Russian Language Institute (2:05)**

Natalia Ushakova

Announcement that Pushkin Institute is seeking connections between US educational institutions for partnership. We're not yet clear what kind of partnership they have in mind. They want to send teachers to our school for professional development. Rasetskaya is signing a contract with our school.

They're planning on opening partnerships with 100 schools around the world. Have already opened up a partnership in India. Anyone interested should contact the Pushkin Institute. Perhaps better to go through Dan.

## **17. Membership Term Limits (2:15)**

Tom Garza

Tom handed out a one-page summary of possible revisions.

Tom came on in 1997; this is his 20<sup>th</sup> year on the board.

Discussion of pros and cons of term limits.

Bylaws would need to be changed if term limits are set.

Discussion of reducing the size of the Board, both to reduce the financial burden on ACTR (from travel expenses) and in order to have a quorum at conference meetings.

Proposal to explore videoconferencing in order to maintain a quorum.

Proposal to strengthen committee functions within the Board.

Proposal to have nominees for renomination provide a paragraph on their contributions and a self-nomination statement on why they would like to be renominated.

Proposal to have a graduate student on the Board.

Election procedure: membership vote counts. They are presented to the membership as a block, but additional nominations are solicited. That can be changed if the Board wishes.

Proposal to make nomination procedure longer and more systematically drawn up, so that people can take time to consider their own contributions or bring on someone else.

Proposal to have regional boards and a national board: one way to make this body smaller would be to have multiple bodies with smaller functions, like ACTFL regional boards.

Proposal to involve more members who are not currently on the Board in our activities; in the process they will start to become more involved and aware. That could also be the incubator for those who want to become board members.

The issue of reducing Board size has been discussed for three years. Proposal to bring a resolution at a November meeting.

## **18. 2017 Nominations Committee (2:45)**

Tom Garza

Alla Smyslova and Nina Bond and Jim Sweigert, with Alla as chair

## **19. Announcements and Review of Travel Reimbursement Procedures (3:00)**

Travel reimbursement procedures are going to be revised. Cindy will revise the procedures and send the document to the American Councils finance office (John Henderson).

Karen will send around an electronic reimbursement form to Board members.

Consider not applying for travel reimbursement, or donating an equivalent amount to ACTR.

#### **20. MEETING DATES FOR 2017-18 (3:15)**

**AEEEEES (AAASS)** – November 9-12, 2017 Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile

**ACTFL** – November 17-19, 2017, Music City Center, Nashville, TN

**AATSEEL** - February 1-4, Grand Hyatt, Washington, DC (note: no longer meets with MLA)

**ACTR Board of Directors** – Spring 2018, Washington, DC

We will determine April date during AATSEEL meeting.

Proposal for 27-28 April 2018. YES. No objections. Does not conflict with holidays.

#### **21. NEW BUSINESS (3:30)**

ACTR Board support needed in the following areas:

1. Encourage your student to participate in AC programs.
2. Participate in National Examination for World Languages (NEWL), also known as the Prototype AP Russian. At universities be on the lookout for AP Russian results and take that into account in placement at your institution's Russian program. Proficiency-based subscores.
3. Contribute to RLJ.
4. Contribute to the *ACTR Letter*.
5. Consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Legacy Fund or the Pushkin Fund.
6. Make use of the AAAS report recommendations, including the newly released AC Census of K-16 Enrollments in your outreach and advocacy.
7. Consider offering an on-site workshop or seminar at an ACTR institution in Russia, Kazakhstan, or Moldova. This is a wonderful form of mutual professional development.
8. Support AC congressional relations initiatives and meet with your legislators. If we have to come back to you for constituent outreach for a statement of support, it's better if the letter comes from us than from AC.

4:07 pm: motion to adjourn passed.