

Fifth EALTA Annual General Meeting
Saturday, 10 May 2008 – 15:45
Hellenic American Union, Athens, Greece

Present: Conference participants who are individual and associate members of EALTA – European Association of Language Testing and Assessment.

Agenda

1. Approval of the Agenda
2. Approval of minutes from the 2007 AGM
3. President's report on EALTA activities and progress in 2007
4. Membership Committee report
5. Presentation of EALTA accounts for 2007
6. Appointment of the auditor for 2008
7. 2009 Conference venue and dates
8. Date of the next Annual General Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Sauli Takala (President of EALTA)

1. Approval of the Agenda

Sauli Takala (ST) called for discussion items under Any Other Business. None were suggested. The agenda was approved.

2. Approval of minutes from the 2007 AGM

Since no changes or clarifications were requested, the minutes from the Annual General Meeting 2007 were approved.

3-5. President's and Executive Committee's report on EALTA activities and progress in 2007

- ST commented on the *2008 conference* and thanked the Hellenic American Union for excellent preparation and hosting of the event. He also expressed EALTA's gratitude to the sponsors for their support. Moreover, ST acknowledged the generous contributions of the pre-conference research colloquium and workshop leaders.
- ST reported on the *EALTA membership renewal process* that was conducted between November 2007 and February 2008. Three messages were issued to individual and associate members before membership was considered terminated. All in all, approximately two thirds of all members renewed their membership during this period.
- EALTA's *membership numbers* at the time of the conference were reported to be the following:
Individual members: 618 (41 countries)
Associate members: 52 (19 countries)
Expert members: 11 (6 countries)
Institutional members: 41 (18 countries)

Feliana Kaftandjieva (FK), Chair of the EALTA Membership Committee (comprising Charles Alderson, Alan Davies, John de Jong, and FK), reported that fourteen new Institutional Members joined EALTA during 2007. One Expert

Member left, leaving eleven members in this membership category. FK invited further applications for expert and institutional membership.

- Gudrun Erickson (GE) reported on the *EALTA accounts for 2007* (balance sheet included in the AGM papers, verified by the 2007 EALTA Auditor, Dorte Velling Pedersen). GE commented briefly on incomes and expenditures and the balance in the EALTA bank account on 31 December 2007: 43,917.50 SEK and 5,231 Euros; in total, approximately 10,000 Euros. The accounts were approved by the AGM.

GE reported that all efforts are made to minimise expenses, for example by relying on committee work incurring no costs, keeping travel expenses down by regular e-mail communication and Skype meetings, and carrying out correspondence with the membership via e-mail, thus avoiding postage and stationery costs. Furthermore, web hosting is offered by Lancaster University, at no cost for EALTA.

It was pointed out that assets roughly equivalent to those reported for 2007 are needed for unforeseen expenses, for example related to conferences. Furthermore, it is essential to have clear strategies for good use of resources that may exceed this amount. Examples given of the latter were summer schools and workshops, publications and support for conference participation.

- ST pointed to the following *achievements and actions* during 2007, which was the year when the association...
 - maintained a large and growing membership
 - remained a forum for versatile cooperation
 - maintained efficient cooperation
 - managed a smooth transition of Presidency
- A *logo policy* has been agreed upon and is published on the EALTA website.
- GE and Neus Figueras reported on the continuing work on disseminating the *EALTA Guidelines for Good Practice in Language Testing and Assessment (GGP)*, adopted at the third AGM in Krakow in May 2006.

Due to voluntary work by a large number of national representatives, and efficient coordination by Charles Alderson (May 2006-January 2008), 32 language versions have been produced, and more are underway. Three products are currently available for free download on the EALTA website: The full GGP text, a Powerpoint presentation and a poster.

Dissemination and use of the GGP continue in different forms and fora:

- in teacher training (languages and general)
- in Masters and PhD programmes
- at national testing conferences
- at national conferences for language teachers and teacher trainers
- at international conferences
 - in surveys and studies, one example being the study presented by Charles Alderson and Jayanti Banerjee at the 2008 Conference in Athens (“EALTA’s Guidelines for Good Practice: A Test of Implementation”)

Plans for further implementation include the following:

- Leaflets on website (by the end of 2008)
- Presentations of GGP related studies and experiences on the website
- National GGP dissemination days/seminars

Furthermore, the following actions are being considered:

- “Templates” and materials for GGP days
- GGP Manual
- Adapted version(s) for students

The participants were encouraged to share their various experiences from working with the Guidelines with the membership, and to submit reports for publication on the website.

- ST reported that, unfortunately and to considerable surprise, the *2007 proposal to the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz* for a project aimed at dissemination of the Guidelines for Good Practice was turned down.
- Further, ST reported that EALTA has submitted an application for *NGO status with the Council of Europe* (NGO = Non-governmental organization). A reply is expected in the early autumn of 2008.
- Two new *Special Interest Groups (SIGs)* have been created. This means that, currently, EALTA has five SIGs, focusing on the following:
 - *Assessing Language(s) at university*
 - *Assessing young learners*
 - *Assessing language(s) for specific purposes*
 - *Language testing in the military* [new]
 - *Translation and Interpretation* [new]Members can join the different groups through the URL “My membership login” on the EALTA website.
- ST, and the Expert Members of EALTA, have been approached by the President and Immediate Past President of the *International Language Testing Association (ILTA)*, James Purpura and Glenn Fulcher (both Expert members of EALTA), concerning the possibility of EALTA becoming an affiliate member of ILTA. Brief comments were given on potential pros and cons of such a relationship. The issue will be analysed and discussed in the EALTA membership during the coming year, and a decision will be taken at the 2009 Annual General Meeting.
- Principles for the selection of papers for EALTA’s annual conferences were briefly discussed. Aspects touched upon were, for example, number of presentations per institution, and number of presentations by the same person at successive conferences. It was pointed out that having a presentation accepted is often required to get funding for a conference. Parallel sessions were mentioned as one possibility to accommodate for an increased number of presentations. However, considerable hesitation was expressed concerning more parallel sessions than has been the case so far. – The issue will be further discussed during the coming year.

- ST pointed to the following *future challenges for EALTA*
 - Activate lists and discussion groups
 - Serve members in their training needs outside conferences
 - Publications
 - Reach countries in Europe not yet reached
 - Gain more visibility and influence
 - Make EALTA's influence felt at European policy fora
 - Highlight how EALTA is similar to and different from existing associations
 - Maintain spirit of cooperation in a competitive environment
 - Retain independence
 - Promote EALTA's distinctive mission vigorously

6. Appointment of the auditor for 2008

The meeting approved the appointment of Dorte Velling Pedersen as the auditor for 2008. ST thanked DVP for accepting the task.

7. 2009 Conference venue and dates

ST announced that the 2009 EALTA Conference will take place on June 5-7 in Turku (Åbo), Finland. The head of the organising committee, Professor Annikki Koskensalo, gave a short welcome address. Dr. Heini-Marja Järvinen, Turku University, will be co-coordinator of the conference.

8. Date of the next Annual General Meeting

The next AGM will be held at the 2009 EALTA conference in Turku (Åbo), Finland.

9. Bids for subsequent conference venues

ST encouraged proposals to the Executive Committee for future conference venues and organisation.

10. Forthcoming elections

Referring to the EALTA constitution, ST pointed out that the following elections will be held during the next two AGMs:

2009: Secretary/Treasurer

2010: President

Between the 2008 and 2009 AGMs, the EALTA Executive Committee will have the following members:

Sauli Takala – *President*

Gudrun Erickson – *Secretary/Treasurer*

Christine Irvine-Niakaris – *2008 Conference organiser*

Annikki Koskensalo – *2009 Conference organiser*

Feliana Kaftandjieva – *Chair of the Membership Committee*

11. Warmest thanks

The Executive Committee and the participants at the AGM expressed their gratitude to Neus Figueras, past President and 2007 Conference organiser, for her contributions during the past four years to the work of the Executive Committee, and to Dianne Wall for co-ordinating the paper selection for the EALTA 2008 conference.