

**Council for College and University English
Minutes of the OGM Business Meeting**

INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDY
SENATE HOUSE, LONDON

The Chair, Professor Clare Hanson, welcomed members to the business meeting.

1. Minutes of the 2008 Annual General Meeting, 29th March, 2008

These were accepted as a correct record and approved by the meeting.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising which were not covered under other headings below.

3. Chair's Report

(i) The Executive. Professor Clare Hanson, CCUE Chair, reported that there had been various electronic discussions and meetings.

(a) CH had attended the **AHRC** Consultation with Subject Associations event in May 2008, at which both Prof Philip Essler (Chief Executive of the AHRC) and Prof Shearer West (the newly-appointed Director of Research) gave presentations. The main themes were the development of an 'impact' agenda for arts and humanities research, the cuts in postgraduate funding for this current academic year, and the future of the Research Leave scheme. The shift from rewarding research quality to rewarding research impact, which seemed to be driven by government, was questioned by many as a matter of principle; there was also a widespread view that if any cuts in funding had to be made, postgraduate funding was the most important area to protect, as postgraduate research was essential for the future vitality of arts and humanities research. There was overwhelming support among delegates for the continuation of the Research Leave scheme, even if in a changed or somewhat reduced form and much of the discussion in break-out groups focused on ways in which the scheme might be made to work as flexibly and efficiently as possible in the future.

(b) The **ERIH** 'initial lists' in Literature and Linguistics were published in the summer and after consulting with colleagues on the Executive, with Prof Peter Kitson as Chair of the English Association and Prof Susan Hunston, Chair of the British Association for Applied Linguistics, CH sent a joint response to ERIH representing concerns expressed across the subject community about this exercise. There was widespread dismay that the ERIH panel members had been appointed without any consultation with subject associations or other representative bodies, with the result that, by their own admission, the panels did not have the breadth of expertise required for an exercise of this nature (see 'Procedures' on the ERIH website). It was also felt that in assessing the impact and quality of journals, far greater use should have been made of existing evidence about, for example, peer-review processes, acceptance rates, the activeness of the advisory board and the extent to which their readership is international. The failure to do this had resulted in many manifest inaccuracies and injustices in the rankings. Other concerns were that the lists did not accurately reflect the current state of research in literature and linguistics and that mainstream and traditional journals were privileged over those in contemporary and/or developing fields. In addition, the lists were very far from comprehensive and failed to take account of the extraordinarily wide range of journals in which relevant and significant research is published, including journals in gender and cultural studies, book history, theatre studies, etc. It was pointed out that a survey of all journals was carried out

annually by *The Year's Work in English Studies* and the lengthy list for 2007 was attached as an appendix to the response, which was also sent to the AHRC. They responded with the welcome assurance that 'peer review will remain at the heart of AHRC's own procedures for the assessment and allocation of research funding. The outcomes of the ERIH project do not and will not feature in this process.' However, the ERIH problem has not gone away. In working towards the REF, Hefce has been in discussions with the Web of Science and with Scopus over the development of a citation index for the Humanities. It is the intention of Scopus to enlarge its coverage of the Humanities for 2009, and to do this it plans to use ERIH as a starting point, including only those journals rated A and B. The Higher Education Committee of the EA has written to Scopus summarising the concerns about ERIH raised in the CCUE/EA response and by AHUG, and urging them to consult directly with the representatives of the UK academic subject associations so as to improve the quality and acceptability of the data they record. Scopus is also urged to include in their citational database *all* the journals listed in ERIH in order to mitigate the damage which those lists may otherwise cause to Humanities research; to use the consultation with subject associations to add those journals which ERIH has left off and to formulate a policy for the addition of new journals.

(c) The Executive was also invited to respond to the proposed changes to GCSE English, whereby students will now opt either to take GCSE English OR English Language and English Literature. After consulting the Executive electronically, CH responded expressing the following concerns: (i) the danger of a two tier system emerging whereby not all schools would routinely offer the choice of English Language and English Literature, these being viewed as more specialist subjects or, as the QCA puts it, as providing 'for students who might wish to progress to higher level studies in language and/or literature' (ii) disquiet over the fact that the literature component of GCSE English would be reduced from the current 35% to 20% (iii) concern that it was the literature components of GCSE English which would be assessed overwhelmingly by coursework. The consultation has now closed and we await further developments.

(ii) **ESSE and The European Messenger.** CH reminded colleagues of the need for HoDs to provide a list of named individuals subscribing to ESSE when communicating with CCUE Treasurer. Too few individual subscriptions were being declared at present.

(iii) **CCUE and PG students.** CH suggested that Departments should encourage PG students to come to CCUE meetings. They were already eligible under the constitution.

(iv) **The CCUE AGM 2009.** The CCUE AGM 2009 will be held at The Foresight Centre, University of Liverpool on Friday 17th and Saturday 18th March, 2009.

4. Treasurer's Report. Sue Zlosnik reported that the CCUE account was standing at a reasonably healthy £9,453. However only 36 institutions were enrolled. SZ confirmed her willingness to remain in the Treasurer's role until the AGM but would then stand down.

5. AOB

There was no other business.

Linda Anderson, CCUE Secretary, 6th December, 2008

