

## Council for College and University English

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
HELD ON 23-24 APRIL 2004 AT ST. ANNE'S COLLEGE, OXFORD

The Chair, Philip Martin (De Montfort), welcomed members to the meeting.

1. **Apologies:**

Robert Clark (East Anglia), Urszula Clark (Wolverhampton), **Viv Jones (Leeds)**, Lyn Pykett (Aberystwyth), Chris Ringrose (Northampton).

2. **Minutes of the OGM of 29 November 2003:**

The Minutes were accepted as a correct record.

3. **Matters Arising:**

Minute 4. Regarding the dangers to Humanities subjects implicit in the top-up fees debate, it was agreed that CCUE would keep a watching brief and liaise with CUDAH to represent the general Humanities plight as seemed appropriate.

4. **Chair's Report:**

The Chair reported a relatively quiet year for CCUE. The Executive had responded on behalf of the membership to the Roberts Report and to the DTI/OST Consultation Document: *Sustainability of University Research*. The first item of business for the Executive elected at this meeting would be CCUE's response to the HEFCE Consultation: *RAE 2008: Panel Configuration and Recruitment*. The coming year would see a wide-reaching change in the composition of the CCUE Executive as more than half of the places available were now vacant: The Chair himself had decided to stand down after one year of office given the workload of his new role as Dean at De Montfort. Reminding the membership of CCUE's responsibilities for the English Subject Centre, he proposed a formal vote of thanks to the CCUE representatives who served on the Centre's Advisory Board (Rick Rylance (Exeter), Elisabeth Jay (Oxford Brookes), Susan Manning (Edinburgh) and Viv Jones (Leeds). The newly-constituted Executive would be proposing an independent evaluator to produce this year's annual report. He finished by thanking Lis Jay, Greg Walker and Rick Rylance for their work in supporting him during his year's office, and concluded by offering his thanks to Vincent Gillespie for so generously hosting the AGM at St. Anne's again.

5. **Report from ESSE**

CCUE's ESSE representative, Vincent Gillespie (Oxford), paid eloquent tribute to the diplomatic skills and tireless work of ESSE's current Chair, Adolphe Haberer, who had spoken, as guest of CCUE, earlier in the day. The rapprochement between CCUE and ESSE had been firmly cemented in September 2003 when the CCUE Executive had met with the members of the ESSE Board then meeting at St. Anne's. Many CCUE members had already had papers accepted for the Zaragoza conference in September 2004.

VG spoke movingly of the importance to ESSE of CCUE's continued active affiliation, reminding members of the support and affirmation members of the less privileged English associations, particularly those from eastern Europe, felt when they were able to appear on conference panels alongside their peers from CCUE.

Although he was well aware of the irritation experienced by some UK English departments who, despite having paid their ESSE subscription, had still not received their copies of the *Messenger*, he reiterated the promise that the Executive would be examining ways of updating information to obviate the problems still caused by the continuing differences in methods of subscription payment (only CCUE enjoys membership by department; all other ESSE members subscribe individually).

Finally he urged all departments throughout the UK to consider how small, even in a climate of declining funding, the ESSE subscription was, compared with the good that their support would lend to European colleagues.

Martin Coyle (Cardiff) suggested that further practical help might be afforded by colleagues willing to ship books and journals to ESSE colleagues in less privileged teaching and research centres. The Chair of ESSE reported that such a venture had been tried before but had petered out: a reliable funneling route needed to be established. The Manager of the English Subject Centre, Jane Gawthrop, promised to research Book Aid International as an organization that might provide a reliable mechanism for book redistribution.

6. **Treasurer's Report**

At the end of the 2003-2004 financial year the balance stood at £10,243.77: a figure not including the £710.44 reimbursement from the Institute of English Studies, relating to the November AGM, due to arrive in the CCUE account this month. Once again the Treasurer saw no reason to recommend an increase in the fees, and went on to thank all colleagues who had ensured, or tried to ensure, that their departmental subscriptions were promptly paid. The current subscriptions constituted 57 Departments, though some further 10 were chasing up payments: 45 of these also paid an ESSE subscription. ESSE required individual names of subscribers and there had been a marked tendency this year for departments not to nominate the full complement of their membership to receive the *Messenger*. Cases

of non-receipt of the *Messenger* had been passed onto ESSE immediately, although the Treasurer reminded members that late subscription could sometimes result in missing an issue. The ESSE subscriptions so far collected this year (£4,261.20), were the highest yet recorded. In summary CCUE's main income, derived from subscriptions, stands at about £4,500, though ten further institutions are being pursued, which should bring the amount nearer to the usual figure of £5,000. The Treasurer invited subscriptions to be paid this weekend and expressed himself willing to help members check their institution's financial standing with CCUE. Both CCUE's major events, the AGM and the OGM, had made a slight loss this year (£1,000 on the AGM; and £80 on the OGM), but it had been standard practice to subsidise these events and the current balance suggested there as no cause for concern. CCUE's other main cost remained the design, printing and mailing of *CCUE News* (£2967.14) and, despite the preference many felt for a printed edition, and CCUE's current ability to afford this, members might wish to discuss again the feasibility of electronic circulation.

**7. English Subject Centre:**

Ben Knights, the Centre's Director, tabled his report, which outlined the Publications, events and projects in which the Centre had been involved this year. He highlighted three issues: the Centre's reliance upon the subject community communicating a sense of the events and projects they would value; the importance of the work on the employability of English graduates, which was of particular significance as the introduction of top-up fees approached; and the incorporation of the Subject Centre within the Higher Education Academy, which should facilitate closer working relations with cognate Arts and Humanities subject centres. An Academy review of Subject Centres is planned for June-July 2004, and the Advisory Board will be supporting the ESC's preparation for this event.

**8. Election of members to the Executive:**

The Secretary (Elisabeth Jay, Oxford Brookes) reported that there would be no need for an election since the numbers of those proposed did not exceed the number of vacancies on the Executive. She was also glad to report that a good spread had been achieved in terms both of age and type of institution and geographical spread. The new members of the Executive were: Linda Anderson (Newcastle), David Duff (Aberdeen), Heidi Macpherson (Central Lancashire), Brian Maidment (Salford), Elspeth Graham (Liverpool John Moores), Clare Hanson (Loughborough), Andrew Thacker (Northampton), Greg Walker (Leicester), and Marcus Walsh (Birmingham).

**9. AOB:**

i) Martin Coyle (Cardiff) expressed the view that his department was unlikely to have felt uniquely afflicted by the current AHRB student application round. The documentation required by AHRB was cumbersome, and, more importantly, had a depressing effect on student applicants. It was generally agreed that the changes made this year had placed an unduly onerous burden on departments, but that this was a burden falling on all Arts and Humanities departments: CCUE would ask CUDAH to discuss the matter and pass on the concerns of this wider academic community to the AHRB.

ii) The Assistant Secretary of CCUE (Greg Walker, Leicester) proposed that the Editor of the *CCUE News*, currently Chris Ringrose (Northampton), should in future be 'in attendance' at the CCUE Exec. rather than needing to be elected. The AGM agreed to pass this change to the Constitution, waiving the need for 6 weeks advance notice.

Elisabeth Jay

26<sup>th</sup> April 2004