

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

HELD 1<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2007  
AT THE INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDY  
SENATE HOUSE, LONDON

The Chair, Professor Greg Walker, welcomed members to the business meeting.

**1. Minutes of the 2007 Annual General Meeting, April 2007**

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 Greg Walker, CCUE Chair, reported that the year had yet again been a busy one. Since the AGM in April, the CCUE Executive had conducted a number of electronic discussions throughout the summer and autumn and had responded on behalf of the community to a number of documents and consultations.

(a) *AHRC and RAE Nominations.* CCUE had been asked by the **AHRC** to nominate potential members for their Research and Postgraduate Panels and the Peer Review College, which it duly did after seeking nominations from executive members. CCUE had also been asked by **HEFCE** and the **RAE** administration to suggest potential candidates for two additional places on the English sub-panel. GW, as CCUE Chair, had done so, after consultation with the Executive and having looked again at the list of nominations produced by the national consultation undertaken in 2006. GW had also liaised with the Higher Education Committee of the English Association, via the good offices of Professor Peter Kitson, with a view to ensuring that CCUE and the EA could speak for the subject community as a whole. When HEFCE and the RAE team came back to CCUE with two specific nominees, GW had been able to confirm that the names suggested were suitable ones.

(b) *AHRC Visit.* A group of CCUE and EA colleagues had visited the AHRC in Bristol in June 2007 at the invitation of Professor Tony McEnery, the Head of Research for the AHRC. One issue which had been discussed was how the AHRC's strategic themes might better reflect the emphases of the core constituencies of English and History. Among the possible topics suggested were culture and the written record, the development and spread of world English, performance and performativity. It was also argued that a better way of encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration might be to develop a database of research interests of scholars in the UK, from which colleagues might find like-minded potential collaborators, rather than trying to second-guess productive issues via the announcement of strategic research themes. CCUE had also

lobbied for the preservation of research leave as a major focus of AHRC funding, and raised a number of concerns about the Block Grant Partnership postgraduate funding scheme. It had also urged greater transparency in the processes by which people were appointed to represent English on various panels and especially on the ad hoc working groups and expert groups, where it often seemed that no consultation with subject associations had occurred before a person was appointed.

(c) *The ERIH Journal Ranking Exercise.* GW noted that one of the more pressing matters facing the subject community was the publication and utilisation of the ERIH journal ranking exercise. Thus far about a dozen subject lists had been published by the European Science Foundation and had provoked a (perhaps predictable) furore among the subject associations concerned. The English lists have still to appear, but it will be important to examine them closely when they emerge to see how far they reflect the comments and criticisms that CCUE submitted after the circulation of the draft lists. CCUE was also invited by the European Science Foundation, via the AHRC, to nominate an individual who could act as a point of contact and specialist advisor for the UK English community in discussions with the ESF over the lists. After some discussion about how best to respond to this request, and after clarifying some of the details of the nature of the role, CCUE had decided that it would indeed nominate someone, and – again, after discussion with the EA – nominated Professor Elisabeth Jay, who has considerable experience of dealing with the European English communities through her role on the Board of ESSE. Thus far nothing further had been heard from either the ESF or AHRC.

(d) *The AHRC's Block Grant Partnership model for postgraduate funding.* GW noted that CCUE would also want to monitor closely the implementation of the AHRC's Block Grant Partnerships model for postgraduate funding. After consulting HoDs across the UK, CCUE had offered a number of criticisms, caveats and words of caution regarding the scheme to the AHRC earlier this year, and these had been raised again at a number of the consultation events held by the AHRC around the country. GW remained anxious about the implications of the scheme for the health of postgraduate research culture across the UK, and invited thoughts on whether it would be useful to have a formal review of its implications, both during the first year of its operation and in the longer term. He drew particular attention to the need to keep a close eye on the implications for research culture in departments outside the BGP scheme, as funding for the 'open competition' is gradually reduced. However, the experience of bidding for and administering a BGP is also likely to have broader consequences for the discipline, and should be closely monitored.

(e) *Reorganisation of the AHRC Panel Structure*

GW reported that he had attended a consultation meeting at the University of Edinburgh at which Alicea Greated and Professor Tony McEnery had outlined current thinking regarding the planned strategic reorganisation of the AHRC's panel structure. Delegates had been asked to comment on a number of possible models, but the one which seemed to be favoured by the AHRC involved the establishment of a new relationship between the panels and the peer reviewers, in which the current panels were replaced by a more fluid, non-discipline specific 'prioritisation' panel that would make funding decisions based upon expert reports from specialist College Reviewers. In keeping with the proposed future developments in the RAE process this would

involve the uncoupling of subject specialism from funding decisions - in that decisions over English funding would now be made by a panel the majority of whose members were not English specialists, the subject specific element in the judgement being made only at the report/review level. Again, the consequences of this for the discipline warrant close monitoring.

**(ii) CCUE News**

GW thanked Ruth Robbins for all her work on the revamped *CCUE News*, the latest issue of which had been published in the autumn, and urged colleagues with articles or ideas that were potential *CCUE News* material to get in touch with her.

**(iii) ESSE and *The European Messenger*.** GW also reminded colleagues of the new arrangements for subscriptions to ESSE and to *The European Messenger*. The subscription (of 9 euros) will now be arranged on an individual rather than departmental basis. Heads of Department were reminded of the need to provide a list of named individuals subscribing to ESSE when communicating with the CCUE Treasurer. They were also encouraged to facilitate subscription for postgraduates and retired colleagues with an interest in ESSE matters.

**(iv) The CCUE AGM 2007.** The CCUE AGM 2007 will be held in the new conference facilities at The University of Leicester on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

**4 Treasurer's Report**

GW reported on SZ's behalf that the balance on the CCUE account was standing at a healthy £7,497 and that subscriptions were continuing to trickle in. Delegates were reminded that they should check that their institution had paid the subscription.

**5. AOB**

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 4.30.

*Clare Hanson, CCUE Secretary, 07/12/07*