

**Minutes of the ASFS AGM
held at the University of Melbourne 15 July 2008
XVIth ASFS Conference “ The minor genres: kinds of document, kinds of documentary discourse”**

Present:

Greg Hainge (President), Béatrice Chassaing, Chantal Crozet, Tess Do, Jean Fornasiero, Anne Freadman, Barbara E Hanna, Joe Hardwick, Julian de Nooy, Margaret Sankey, John West-Sooby, Sonia Wilson.

Apologies:

There are no apologies.

President’s welcome and announcements:

- The President of ASFS welcomes Béatrice Chassaing, the new attaché, University High Education Cooperation.
- The Society will now have a new position: Research & Postgraduate Associate Officer
- Regarding the Secretary position: it could be a Treasurer as well. He/she will be responsible for website and archiving online; Maintain (society) history on the web; Have generic email, linked to own email.
- Possibility for the ASFS website to be hosted in France (cheaper, faster).
- Following the President’s announcement everyone voted in favour of the amendment of the new constitution.

Baudin Grants:

Béatrice states her concern with the drop in application for the Baudin Grant and welcomes feedback and initiatives from the ASFS to address the situation, if possible by the end of August 2008. Her budget will not increase in 2009.

- The Baudin Grant is the greater issue/concern: Not very efficient or attractive; last year fifteen applicants for thirteen grants.
- But have other tools for improving co-operation, e.g. *Co-tutelle* and *Freycinet* grants with three Australian Universities.
- The problem with *Freycinet* grants: only reserved for G08 Universities: Adelaide University, Western Australia, and Melbourne University.

Feedback and comments from members of ASFS:

- No longer open to undergraduate students, creating drop in demand.
- Only ANU allows Honours students to leave for a whole semester.
- Therefore only postgraduate and doctorate students apply for grant, mainly MA students in Business or Science Areas, domains taught entirely in English with no intercultural exchange which criteria make entirely permissible.
- French studies is important, but cannot ignore fields such as Medicine and Engineering; Need to develop a way they can work together.
- The system of “lecteur/lectrice” in French needs to be re-instated again.

a) Marginalization of French studies in Australian Universities:

- Australia is a monolingual society.
- Misperception of French Embassy that French culture is alive and well in Australia.
- French studies cover a range of activities which are not recognized.

- Most interaction in technical domains is in English, and general consensus that French is unnecessary.
- French-speaking students go to France to maximize their French: the French Embassy was unaware as they happened through exchanges.
- University has set deadline to ensure 25% of undergraduates spend at least one semester in exchange overseas. But, merely a push to internationalize students' degrees with no linguistic recognition. Danger that the 25% will study in US or UK (therefore, loss for market for Embassy, and students' potential).

b) Lack of French courses in postgraduate programs:

- Currently Linguistics and Applied Linguistics programs, but no language complementation.
- Should be renamed 'Linguistics with Language, and Linguistics and Culture' to attract students to take a linguistics course with French.
- Need to maintain privileged relationship with Embassy for political support.
- Need to revisit undergraduate use of Baudin scholarships. If not possible, then look at ANU model sending Honours' students overseas.
- Look into a nationwide model for Honours' students, sending them overseas but still having strong sense of ownership over what they are doing.
- Two models for Honours: (1) the current one, and (2) with Baudin scholarships (students spend their first semester overseas).
- Problem: (1) University moving towards a generic Honours system across the School and Faculty; (2) Cannot have a model in French that does not apply to the other languages.
- Need to assess situation, as not enough applicants for grants (only 15 in 2007). Perhaps more if rules of Baudin scholarship hadn't been changed?
- With reduction of staffing levels, 3rdyear students do not feel as though they have specialized in any way and so do not feel the need to continue with Honours. Getting them overseas in 3rdyear could change that.
- Availability of Baudin scholarships to 3rdyear students would entice them to study Honours (and they would improve their language skills and be more capable to conduct research and write a French thesis)
- (Q)What makes the Baudin grant so special, if many students would go to France any way?
- (A) Many students have their parents' financial help, but many also obtain a HECS loan, and so go into debt. It is symbolic support from the Embassy, not just financial help.
- Need online database concerning language courses in all Universities for comparisons.
- Need to reinvest in specialized tertiary courses rather than continuing with standard 1styear teaching.
- Baudin scholarship has increased from \$2000 to \$2300. Previously had allocated 13 but only gave 10 in 2007, and now have 11.
- More scholarships would possibly decrease the amount of each grant.

President's notes:

- Confirmation of last year's minutes
- Discuss possible benefits of CHASS membership a lobbying group for the humanities.
- Only participants allowed to participate in the AGM and the 'Humanities on the Hill' events as well as other CHASS events.
- Membership would help CHASS improve funding and representation for the humanities, arts, and social sciences.
- Annual cost of membership, only \$220 (level 5)
- Proposal that society becomes a member of CHASS, enabling direct access to a lobbying body.
- Resignation of Treasurer John McCormack, effective as of this AGM.
- Departure of Murray Pratt.

Website updates:

- Website almost finished, but still a member's only area presently; need feedback on what should be there.
- Due to copyright issues, buying of subscription to an online database of dictionaries is not possible.
- Need to determine figure for institutional membership and privileges it will entail.
- Continuation of hosting discussions on *Facebook* site, as with the ASFS group.
- Two nominations for the 20-20 summit on language-based categories not filled: Lead to contact with John Byron (Australian Academy of Humanities); now more active links between the Academy and the Society.
- Sent John Byron results of ERA journal ranking, but disappointed in lack of consultation from the Academy regarding ERA journal ranking.
- Academy is sponsoring the National Conference of University Language Teachers (2009). Most likely in February and in Melbourne, lead by the languages committee of the Academy.
- Possibility of UQ signing for introduction of bonuses for year 12 students participating in a LOTE: Will hopefully raise rate of participation in year 12 from 5% to the national average of 12%.
- Still outstanding payments for memberships to the society.
- Joining made easier with direct bank transfers.
- Proposal to include as part of the conference registration, the fee for membership to ASFS as more than half of memberships have lapsed.
- Presently, ASFS is a registered charity, therefore without an ABN.
- Need to be incorporated, meaning the ability to write invoices (making refund membership dues easier) and having limited liability for the debts of the association. Incorporation also demands application of membership fees and obliges the association to maintain proper financial and membership records and registers.
- Currently, subscriptions with only 43 paid-up members is a major issue. Website may be good advertising: should consider putting *Wikipedia* on it.

ASAF Conference planning:

- Brisbane, jointly hosted by QUT, UQ and possibly UAE. Topic and call for papers will be sent out.
- Presently no venue for 2010 (Provisionally ANU awaiting confirmation).

Biannual conference of the Australian Association of European Studies

- Adelaide, 6-9 July 2009.
- Traditionally German-focused, organizers happy for stronger French focus, asked for an explorers project. Therefore Brisbane should avoid 6-9 July dates. Theme: 'Contracting-expanding economies'

Nominations:

- Sonia Wilson as Treasurer.
- Tess Do as Secretary.
- Peter Cowley as Research and Postgraduate Officer (new position).
- Barbara Hanna as Editor.
- Hélène Jacomard coopted as Vice-President.
- Greg Hainge as President.

The meeting closed at 6:30pm.