

Minutes of the ASFS AGM held at The University of South Australia, SA, 5:15-6:15pm (at the 24<sup>th</sup> ASFS conference “Mobilities and Migrations/Les Flux migratoires” 7-9 December 2016) Thursday 8 December 2016

Present

Executive: Alistair Rolls (President, Chair), Véronique Duché (Vice-President), Natalie Edwards (Treasurer), Tess Do (Secretary), Amy Hubbell (Editor of Publication), Julie Robert (Postgraduate Officer)

Members:

Laté Lawson-Hellu (Western University, Canada), Jolene Vos-Camy (Calvin College, USA), Antonio Viselli (University of Canterbury), Gemma King (ANU), Kim Hajek, Valentina Gosetti (UNE), Anne Le Guinio (Education, Queensland), Kerry Mullan (RMIT), Alexis Borgantz, Mathilde Kangt (UTS), Clara Sitbon, Carolyn Stott, Sonia Wilson (University of Sydney), Ben McCann, Sarah Reed, John West-Sooby (University of Adelaide), Barbara Hanna, Joe Hardwick (UQ), Christopher Hogarth (University of South Australia)

Apologies

No apologies

Approval of 2015 minutes

Alistair moved that the minutes of the 10 December 2015 AGM meeting were approved. This was seconded by Véronique.

Thanks & Recognition

- Alistair Rolls thanked this year’s ASFS conference committee (Chris Hogarth, Ben McCann, Natalie Edwards) for their fantastic cross-institutional collaboration.

1) The President's report

- Alistair presented a quick overview of the development and achievements of the AFSF since he commenced the position of President in 2013 and the challenges he had to overcome to bring the Association back on its feet. He thanked the committee and all the colleagues who have helped him during these years. He announced that interest had been expressed in the position of President and that he would step down at the end of 2017.
- The ASFS moved away from FATFA last year and as the result, more money was coming to the Society.
- Alistair thanked those who have shown interest in hosting the ASFS conferences in the future (such as UNE, but not for 2017). There were excellent suggestions to take the conferences to New Zealand.
- The Baudin grants:
  - The Embassy had limited funds and could only offer a small number of grants (approximately six).
  - The Embassy was keen to have an annual theme for the Baudin grants, but Alistair was against this idea because it would advantage postgraduate or even recent postgraduate students who were (for instance) already in France doing their MBA and their

research projects as professionals. Their applications were extremely good and our undergraduate students whose mobility the Society wanted to promote were not able to compete. Alistair noted that it was necessary for the Society to maintain good relationships with the Embassy, however, and the future President would be perhaps more suitable than him to negotiate with the Embassy.

- Alistair was keen to discuss with the new Attaché culturel, Nicolas Duhaut (who has replaced Catherine Hodeir), to see if a few Baudins grants (without a theme) can be put aside for the undergraduates. The first few conversations with M. Duhaut showed positive signs, as the Attaché were willing to consider removing the annual themes.
- The AFSF Best Essay Prize:
  - There were not many candidates this year (Sarah Martin was the winner). We need to encourage our postgraduates to send in their papers. Even if their papers do not win the prize, they would greatly benefit from the feedback and we would help them to make their papers publishable. One publishing possibility is with the AJFS.
- Election of Office Bearers:
  - Alistair apologized for this year's last minute call for nomination. We need to have the description of the roles and the nomination forms online, so people can have time to consider whom they want to nominate well before the AGM.
  - Nominations can be made online but we would still take nominations from the floor.
  - Representatives for the French meeting: Ben McCann was the Chair this year. Alistair asked if Véronique would like to chair it next year and bring some ideas to run it earlier and in a more systematic way.
- Postgraduate Officer role: Julie's report to follow.

## 2) The Treasurer's Report (Natalie Edwards)

### 2.1. The ASFS Membership

The Society now has 84 members. Linking the ASFS conference registration with the membership and using PayPal so people can pay with their credit cards Non-members was a good initiative. The membership fee for postgraduates is \$10/year and they can attend the conference for free. There are 12 postgraduates attending the conference this year.

### 2.2. The Baudin grants

Six grants were given this year and all applications were of high quality. The Society added two top-up grants (\$1,500) for the near-miss applications.

### 2.3. The ASFS account

- \$47,000 in the account

- Funding sources:
    - \$3,000 from the French Embassy
    - \$4,500 from The University of South Australia
    - \$3,000 from The University of Adelaide
    - \$10,000 from the registration fees
  - Conference costs: \$10,000
  - The conference made almost \$2,000 for the Society
- 2.4. Collaborations with other national and international organizations
- With ISFAR
  - With French Cultural Studies: Nick Hewitt (Nottingham University; Editor of FCS). We had two panels (comprising six papers) sponsored and a special volume to be published by FCS.
  - Alistair added that Natalie and Jackie Dutton's collaboration with the UK in the past have led to fruitful outcomes (e.g., Charles Forsdick's participation as keynote speaker for the 2016 Conference; Participation of an ASFS panel at the Society of French Studies UK Cardiff conference with Jackie, Natalie, Chris).

### 3) The Attaché culturel 's presentation and discussion

#### 3.1. Thanks and introduction:

Nicolas Duhaut thanked the Society for welcoming him to the meeting. He introduced himself as the replacement of Catherine Hodeir in the position of French Attaché culturel at the French Embassy for the next four years. He arrived three months ago and is currently in the first stages of discovering Australia and its universities.

#### 3.2. The Baudin grants:

Nicolas stated that he was open to ideas and discussions how to best develop the Baudin grants; that Baudin was a great name chosen for a grant whose aim was to attract Australian students to travel and discover France, its universities and research centers.

- The grants are opened to two categories of students: 1) exchange students; 2) students who enrol in a program in a French university with the view of obtaining a French degree.
- Students from all disciplines are eligible to apply for the grants.
- An annual and broad theme is chosen for the grants. Last year, the theme was "Innovation". This is a point of discussion whether it makes sense to have an annual theme.
- The Embassy has limited funds and tries to achieve the most of its objectives with these funds. Last year there were 50+ candidatures and six grants were offered (mainly for the programs at Sciences-Po, Lyceum Business School proposing a MBA based in France, HEC Paris, and only a few for the other universities). Almost half of the applications were for Sciences-Po, Ecoles de Commerces. Their popularity was not surprising given that these institutions were very active in developing their connections with Australia and they proposed English-taught courses.
- The Embassy wants know the impact of the grants, whether the way they have been used allows them to achieve their objective: to motivate Australian students to go to France. This achievement

seems to be doubtful because when we address exchange students or those who want to obtain a French degree to offer them a travel ticket to France, we are addressing students who will go to France even without being awarded these grants. For instance, would a student (actually one of the last year's laureates) who is ready to pay 60,000 euros for his MBA program in France really need a Baudin grant to pay for his flight ticket? If the Baudin grants aim to fund the best candidates to travel to France, then this objective was achieved. But if we aim to make a real impact on the students' process of *selecting* France as their study destination, then we can question whether we have achieved this objective with our current model.

### 3.3. The Attaché's proposals regarding the Baudin grants:

- To achieve the second aim and promote student mobility the Embassy is going to redistribute the Baudin budget differently
- The annual theme is perhaps not necessary (we can either propose a very general theme or a very specific theme that it will exclude a large number of students, either way, to have a theme may not make any impact at all on the student's choice to go to France).
- The first aim of the program is to fund research trips to France. As there are already a lot of Australian researchers in France in collaboration with other French researchers, the Embassy believes that student mobility is the best way to consolidate these existing individual connections between researchers and to build larger research communities from these connections. Therefore, the grants will aim to address students who want to travel to France to do their research with our French colleagues in France who are ready to accept them.
- The Embassy will reformulate the call for applications next year so it not only addresses students who will go to France anyway, but also those who can use this opportunity to consolidate the existing research links between the Australian and French universities.
- The Baudin grant applications will be done online.
- Suggestions, ideas, comments on these proposals are welcome

### 3.4. Questions and discussions from the floor:

- Julie: asked whether the Embassy could make two calls or change some constraints in the applications, as a good number of students from UTS who were sent every year to France in January would miss out on the grants.
  - Answer: yes, the calls for applications can be made earlier or later to maximize the number of candidates. However, as the Embassy annual budget is only known in January, it cannot guarantee that it has sufficient money to fund the successful candidates selected the previous year for travel to France in the following year. Candidates who travel for research, in this case, would have more flexibility with their dates of departure, than those who enrol in a semester study. Also, the time difference between the North and South hemispheres means that students

can go during their Australian break which corresponds to the active period in French universities.

- Véronique: asked whether the targeted candidates for the grants would be undergraduates or postgraduates.
  - The answer is it could be both: the program can aim to fund undergraduates going for an exchange, and postgraduates going to do research in France. As some universities want to develop research at the end of the undergraduate program, undergrads could be also considered for research projects in France.
- Alistair: suggested that in order to support a priori the mobility of the undergraduate students, we could put aside a number of grants for them. Otherwise, they could not compete against the young PhD applicants with excellent research projects.
  - Answer: yes, while the Embassy's aim is to promote research in France, we can see how we can distribute the grants according to the candidates we have.
- Véronique asked whether in the applications for research, the candidate would have to add specific details pertaining to the existing collaboration between the researchers in Australia and in France.
  - Answer: yes, the idea is the researcher in Australia sends his/her student to work with a colleague in France whose research is in the same field as the student's research project. He/she will help the student to develop the project and apply for the Baudin grant.
- Véronique: asked whether there was a program to invite French speakers to Australia and whether we would be notified about these visits.
  - The answer: yes, there are programs to support travel for researchers/speakers to and from France and Australia. For example: 1) "Le débat d'idées" is a program to invite French experts to Australia to speak on different topics. 2) The Embassy is setting up a conference site in partnership with the site "Conversations" where experts from French and Australian universities can discuss various current topics. This conference site is to be launched in March 2017 with a conference-debate topic on climate change.
  - The Society will be notified about these conferences. Invited French experts and guest speakers from France will tour Australian universities.

### 3.5. Thanks and acknowledgement:

Alistair thanked the Attaché for his presentation and acknowledged that we have taken steps to achieving our objectives.

### 4) The Editor of Publication's Report (Amy Hubbell)

- The website [AustralianSocietyforFrenchStudies.com](http://AustralianSocietyforFrenchStudies.com), have had 32 posts since Wed 1pm, and 21,000 views since going online.

- Relevant information about the Society is online. If there are news items or stories related to the Society we want to put online, or if we want to share conference photos, just send them to Amy.
- We do not have Facebook or Twitter accounts.
- Membership can easily be managed online. The ASFS T-Shirts can be put online for sale.
- Confirmation that 2017 will be the 25<sup>th</sup> conference of the Society (1993 was the year of the first ASFS conference).
- Top viewers of our site: Australia, USA, France, UK, Canada, Brazil (who used to be the first).
- It costs \$399/year to rent the site.
- Natalie thanked Amy for her work and the maintenance for the site.

#### 5) The Postgraduate Officer's Report (Julie Robert)

- Julie stated that it was rather disappointing that only three postgraduates attended the Postgraduate Day (PD). She wondered whether it was because the ISFAR Colloquium was on at the same time and postgraduates wanted to network with ISFAR.
- She raised these questions: 1) is it worth organizing a PD or having it every year? 2) do our students need it? 3) do we have to schedule it in the year when ISFAR is not on? Kerry Mullan (member of ISFAR) responded that there was only one postgraduate at ISFAR that morning.
- Julie explained that we kept the PD going this year because there was a concern among the PhD postgraduates about the lack of training, career building and mentorship to help them enter the professional market. The PD was a way to buttress some of the postgraduates' needed skills (CV writing, portfolio building...)
- Julie wished to step down from this position after 2016.

#### Comments from the floor in response to Julie's report:

- Natalie: thanked Julie for organizing the PD this year. She commented that 1) a whole postgraduate day was too much; 2) we could have an informal meeting over morning tea when we could talk about cohort building, CV development... 3) it was up to us as supervisors to encourage our students to attend the event. She then asked the postgraduates for comments.
- Kim Hajek: found the PD she has attended extremely useful and valuable for her in terms of career developments; she appreciated that they were specific for French Studies and stated that she had learned a lot from the keynote speakers; she would like to see the PD continue, perhaps as a workshop, but not for the whole day.
- Alexis Bergantz: suggested a structured half-day event where academics come to talk about their experiences, specific aspects of academic work, career development, publications, etc. adding that postgrads were told what and where to publish but they did not know how the system worked.
- Alistair: thought that it was a little tricky at the moment to give advice to students as things change all the time, and he was afraid that sharing his

old way of running his career may not lead to a good outcome for students nowadays. Julie believed that it was still useful having the conversation about changes.

- Clara Sitbon: it is very useful to have networks and prepare future academics for kinds of challenges they may face, and how to deal with them, so that they would not have to work out everything by themselves. Alexis added that the department could carry out this preparation for the students.
- Barbara Hanna: added that in her university, past PhD students who had their careers outside the academia were brought in to speak to the students. Statistics showed that only 2% of PhD students got an academic job and 95% would go out of the academia to find work. Kim stated that it was precisely why the PD was particularly useful in this aspect since the universities were pushing the PhD graduates to find work outside the academia and advice on how to get an academic job was lacking.
- Alistair: commented on how to make the undergraduate program inspiring for students who will advance their study to become university lecturers; those postgrads who came to attend the PD and the ASFS conference were career hungry and we needed to continue to support them.
- Joe Hardwick: assumed that most of our postgrad students came from language programs but nowadays in UQ many students did not come from French or Francophone studies; so he wondered whether we should look to recruit postgrad students from other research centers.
- Alistair: noted that there were some PhD students from Food Studies, Music and History who attended the PD and the ASFS conference last year.
- Alexis: commented that postgraduates who were not in French Studies would not come to the ASFS conference because they did not see it as a stepping stone in their career.
- Kim: commented that there were twelve postgrads registered but only three attended the PD this year. She suggested 1) a shorter Postgraduate session and the postgrads can present their papers on the same day; 2) an evening reception for postgrads in a pub as a networking event.
- Julie: added that the interview style for academic job is changing. Gemma agreed and suggested that future academics need to look at the job market in the UK or America. Julie commented that one of the third participating postgraduates this year was from the UK.
- John West-Sooby: noted that there were more postgraduates in the previous ASFS (seven came for the ASFS held in Brisbane and Newcastle, 20 in Melbourne) and wondered whether the locations played a role in the number of participating postgraduates, suggesting that some locations, such as Melbourne, were perhaps closer to more postgraduates. He suggested that the next Postgraduate Officer would need to pick up this point.
- Alistair commented that we could continue these important discussions on the ASFS website.

- Gemma announced that the 2017 ASFS would be held in ANU, the theme and the date would be confirmed. (\*Theme: *Truth and Representation/Vérité et Représentation*; Date: 12-15 December 2017)
- Clara suggested to keep the dates around 6-7 December, to avoid coinciding with the intensive teaching period in Sydney. Kerry added that the organizers should look to avoid clashes with other conferences, such as the Linguistics conference. John mentioned that the LCNAU conference would be held in November in Adelaide. Julie added that it would be good to have cross representations in these conferences, and Alistair commented that we would need to explain to the Attaché about LCNAU.

#### Election of Office Bearers for 2017

Chair passed to Véronique Duché, Vice President, who declared all positions vacant and called for nominations.

Result of the election:

- President: Alistair Rolls (proposed by Tess Do, seconded by Véronique Duché)
- Vice-President: Véronique Duché (proposed by Alistair Rolls, seconded by Tess Do).
- Secretary: Tess Do (proposed by Véronique Duché, seconded by Alistair Rolls)
- Treasurer: Natalie Edwards (proposed by Julie Robert, seconded by Amy Hubbell)
- Editor of Publication: Amy Hubbell (proposed by Barbara Hanna, seconded by Peter Cowley)
- Postgraduate Officer: Gemma King (proposed by Alistair Rolls, seconded by Chris Hogarth).

#### Conclusion

- Thanks from Alistair to the ASFS committee, members and audience.
- As there was no other business the meeting was closed at 6:30pm.