# 

The Australasian Society for Classical Studies

Executive Committee Meeting 2020

#### MINUTES

The Executive Committee Meeting of The Australasian Society for Classical Studies was held at the University of Otago, Dunedin, on 29 January 2020, commencing at 12.30pm.

**Present:** Tom Stevenson (presiding), Gina Salapata (Honorary Secretary), K.O. Chong-Gossard, Kit Morrell, Kathryn Welch (Vice President), Ray Laurence, Tristan Taylor, Jeremy Armstrong, Lea Beness (Vice President), Alison Griffith filling in for Gary Morrison, Arlene Allan, Emily Chambers, Robert Cowan, Han Baltussen, Phoebe Garrett, Peter Londey.

1. **Apologies**

Bronwen Neil (Honorary Treasurer), Gary Morrison, Janette McWilliam, Katherine Torres-Monro.

1. **Minutes of the Meeting of 5 February 2019**

The draft Minutes of the meeting in Armidale have been circulated.

Proposed: Arlene Allan; seconded: Lea Beness. Minutes accepted.

1. **Business arising from the Minutes** 
   1. Conference finances and website production and managing; reassessing subsidies for 2020 ASCS and beyond

It has been decided, from next year, to centralize the conference organization and especially the website and finances, for reasons of efficiency and economy.

1. **Correspondence and Business arising from the Correspondence**

Submissions have been made:

* 1. In support of the Classics Dept of the Univ. of Vermont, which was facing a 40% cut
  2. To the ANZ FoR (Fields of Research) Codes Review
  3. To the AHA (Australian Historical Association) Journal Rankings Scheme, in which we refused to rank journals in our field
  4. In support of Latin at North Sydney Boys High School
  5. To the AAH (Australian Academy of the Humanities) in favour of their Future Humanities Workforce Project

1. **President’s comments**

The President indicated his intention to highlight in his report that our Society is doing very well with respect to membership, money and activities members are involved in. It is satisfying that we are being taken seriously and consulted by several prestigious organizations on Classical Studies issues.

1. **Secretary’s Report 2019**

Reserved for the AGM.

1. **Financial Matters**
   1. Treasurer’s Report for 2019

The Honorary Treasurer, Bronwen Neil, who could not be present, pre-circulated her report for 2019, in which she said that we have had a good year financially, resulting in a healthy and growing surplus. Bronwen is keen to use this surplus and recommended instituting (a) an extra annual fellowship of $3000 for an early career researcher; and (b) an annual $500 grant for attendance at a conference whether in Australia, New Zealand or overseas. She suggested that every 4 years $500 would go to assist someone attending FIEC on our behalf. She is also keen to support the “precariat”.

* 1. The pre-circulated budget for 2020 is similar to that of 2019 except for the suggested additions.
  2. Membership Dues remain the same for 2020.
  3. The auditor for 2020 will be selected by the new Treasurer.

e. Discussion

* Kit Morrell suggested to use some of the surplus to pay someone, as a one-off, to help with centralizing the conference website.
* Kathryn Welch suggested we increase the level of subsidies for students who present papers and do not have access to other financial support.
* Alison Griffiths asked for all these good suggestions to be presented as a package so that the membership can see the impact on the budget.
* Arlene Allan asked if there is an ideal surplus to maintain—the answer is that we don’t have an ideal surplus because this has been growing over the years because of excellent administration.
* Emily Chambers reported that postgrad students have concerns about the rising costs of travelling to the conference, esp. to more regional places like this year, and that the subsidies are not received before the conference.
* Lea Beness suggested to file some of the surplus separately and let it grow. The President commented that we should watch membership income because this year we took a hit (probably associated with the 5-year cycle).
* Kathryn Welch suggested to consider payment for administrative service provided by some committee members.
* Peter Londey said that in the Humanities we need to be realistic about the amount of money people are willing to pay to attend conferences and should consider keeping costs down.

There was general agreement to go ahead with the new initiatives.

1. ***Antichthon***
   1. Editors’ Report (pre-circulated)

Han Baltussen and Bob Cowan reported that there was a steady supply of submissions through the year, but it was very difficult to find reviewers, which resulted in delays on decision-making. Reviewer fatigue seems to be part of the problem. The editors were forced to decline a request for an edited volume intended to be published as a special issue in 2020, as it proved impossible to find a reviewer for a set of papers; they offered an official apology for the delay in decision-making. Han suggested to CUP to institute an online submission process with automated reminders to reviewers. It is a bit disappointing to see that submissions have not increased much even though the journal is being advertised. Open access is the next stage being discussed with CUP.

* 1. Copy-editing

There has been a blow-out on costs this year associated with copy-editing because some papers needed to be reviewed a second time and thus looked at by the copy editor twice. The editors are now in the process of fine-tuning the copy editor’s task.

* 1. *Antichthon* Board

Han and Bob are working on renewing the board and are seeking the participation of international scholars.

* 1. AHA Journal Rankings

The AHA (Australian Historical Association) has been trying to involve us in their journal ranking exercise. We have so far declined, given the numerous difficulties involved and the dubious value of the exercise. One of the journal ranking mechanisms favoured by the AHA, for instance, is Scimago, which places *Antichthon* on a lowly rung (in company with other excellent journals) that is surely unjustified. This ranking is evidently based on subjective judgement and a short sample of years.

In response to a question about the FoR Codes Review, viz. the Fields of Research Codes Review (codes used to classify research by the Australian Federal Government), Han said this is a managerial bureaucratic system. A proposal was submitted to get a separate code for Classical Studies, but this was unsuccessful. We need to persist on this to get recognition for research in our fields.

* 1. Discussion

Alison Griffith asked if the pool of reviewers is the ASCS membership; the editors replied that it is much wider and based on scholarly expertise. Incentives and rewards for reviewers are being considered by CUP.

1. **Conference program review committee report** (pre-circulated)
   1. Discussion

Kathryn Welch reported that the review went well but asked for her role as co-ordinator to be supported because it is very time-consuming and thus unsustainable; she stressed, however, that it is a highly sensitive role. We need to find an assistant for this role. Discussion followed on ways to make abstract submission more efficient; this needs to be investigated further.

1. **FIEC report** (pre-circulated)
   1. ASCS candidate for FIEC Executive

Bob Cowan suggested we put someone forward as a representative on the Board. Since the next meeting is not until 2022, this can be discussed next year.

* 1. Discussion

None.

1. **Thesaurus Linguae Latinae (TLL) report** (pre-circulated)

Tom Stevenson pointed out that the TLL is very keen for us to send postgrad students to Germany; it would be good to take advantage of this opportunity.

* 1. Discussion

None.

1. **Early Career Award Rules and Procedures** (Alison Griffith)

Alison Griffith stressed the regulation that applicants need to be ASCS members by the time they apply for this award. Some applicants were disqualified this year because they were not.

* 1. Discussion

None.

1. **Douglas Kelly Australian Essay Competition Guidelines and Rules** (Lea Beness)

Lea Beness reported that there were 33 submissions, but 16 were from a single university. The co-ordinator, Peter Davis, suggested that we have a limit of ca. 10 per university.

* 1. Discussion

Discussion followed on how these limits should be applied and the best essays selected. Email consultation will follow.

1. **Additional scholarships and subsidies**
   1. ECR/HDR
   2. FIEC attendance
   3. ASCS Conference attendance

These issues were covered earlier under the Budget and under item 10 (FIEC report).

* 1. Discussion

None.

1. **Matters for discussion** 
   1. Procedure for refereeing conference abstracts (Kathryn Welch)

Kathryn Welch suggested that it is time to review the process. She pointed out that the committee changes every year.

* 1. Timing of the annual ASCS conference

We have been asked to reconsider the week the conference is held in, so that it does not conflict with the start of the school year; several members are parents and find it difficult to attend.

* Emily Chambers said that several postgrad students mentioned that the traditional timing conflicts with Chinese New Year.
* Alison Griffiths pointed out that, when in NZ, the conference should not conflict with major events (e.g. concerts) because of limited accommodation. She added that there are many issues associated with the timing of the conference and there needs to be careful deliberation.
* Gina Salapata said that the suggested time for future conferences is the second week in February, unless it conflicts with something else. Including a weekend as part of the conference is encouraged. We will try to fit in with this timing for the time being.

The meeting closed at 1:25 pm.

March 2020 Gina Salapata

ASCS Honorary Secretary