

Sixth EALTA Annual General Meeting
Saturday, 6 June 2009 – 15:45
University of Turku, Finland

Present: Conference participants who are Individual and Associate members of EALTA – European Association for Language Testing and Assessment.

Agenda

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Approval of minutes from the 2008 AGM
3. President's report on EALTA activities and progress in 2008
4. Membership Committee report
5. Presentation of EALTA accounts for 2008
6. Appointment of the auditor for 2009
7. Proposal to separate the functions of Secretary and Treasurer
8. Election of officers
 - (a) Election of EALTA Secretary
 - (b) Election of EALTA Treasurer
 - In case the above proposal is not approved*
 - (c) Election of EALTA Secretary/Treasurer
9. 2010 Conference venue and dates
10. Date of the next Annual General Meeting
11. Proposal from ILTA that EALTA should affiliate to ILTA
12. AOB

The meeting was called to order by Sauli Takala (President of EALTA)

1. Approval of the Agenda

The suggested agenda for the Meeting was approved.

2. Approval of minutes from the 2008 AGM

No changes or clarifications were requested. The minutes from the Annual General Meeting 2008 were approved.

3-5. President's and Executive Committee's report on EALTA activities and progress in 2008

- ST commented on the 2009 conference and thanked Heini-Marja Järvinen and her team at the University of Turku for excellent preparation and hosting of the event. He also expressed EALTA's gratitude to the sponsors for their support (Renet; University of Michigan, ELI; Pearson; Trinity College London). Moreover, ST acknowledged the generous contributions of the pre-conference workshop leaders (Norman Verhelst, Cito; Jayanti Banerjee and Spiros Papageorgiou, University of Michigan, ELI).
- The EALTA Pre-conference Research Colloquium in Athens 2008, in co-operation with the Council of Europe and Cito, has been documented in a report, *Linking to the CEFR levels: Research perspectives* (eds. Neus Figueras and José Noijons). The report is freely available on EALTA's website (www.ealta.eu.org/resources.htm).

- In accordance with previous information and the President's report at the 2008 AGM in Athens, EALTA has been granted Participatory Status with the Council of Europe as an International Non-Governmental Organisation.
- Gudrun Erickson (GE) reported on the continuing work on disseminating the *EALTA Guidelines for Good Practice in Language Testing and Assessment (GGP)*, adopted at the third AGM in Krakow in May 2006. At present, 34 language versions are available, with more underway. A leaflet version was produced during 2008 and launched on the EALTA website (currently in 31 languages). Furthermore, a report making use of the GGP has been published on the website (Alderson, J.C., *Final Report on Aviation English Testing*).

Dissemination of the GGP continues in various ways, nationally and internationally, in training programmes at different levels, at conferences etc. GE reported on a national dissemination day to be held in Sweden in September 2009 in collaboration with the national authorities. Examples of similar local and regional events were given from Italy (Claudia Beccheroni), Catalonia (Neus Figueras), and the Basque Country (Aintzane Ibarzabal). - The AGM participants were encouraged to continue dissemination of the Guidelines in various ways, to share their experiences with the membership and to submit reports for publication on the website.

- ST commented on EALTA's five Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and encouraged increased activity on the specific discussion lists, as well as on the general membership list. He also mentioned tentative plans on an electronic EALTA Newsletter.
- GE reported on plans for an EALTA summer school 2010, focussing on the Guidelines for Good Practice. Ideally, the participants are to represent the three target groups mentioned in the document, i.e. members engaged in teacher education, classroom teaching and external, large scale testing and research. The duration of the summer school is planned to be five active working days. EALTA is to cover the costs for the lectures, lecturers, and venue. The location and exact time of the event are still to be discussed and decided. More information will be given via the EALTA website and membership list during the autumn of 2009.
- The EALTA *membership numbers* at the time of the conference were the following:
 Individual members: 833 (41 countries)
 Associate members: 85 (27 countries)
 Expert members: 16 (7 countries)
 Institutional members: 52 (20 countries)
 As compared to last year's numbers, this means an increase of 215 Individual members and 33 Associate members.

Feliana Kaftandjieva (FK), Chair of the EALTA Membership Committee (comprising Charles Alderson, Alan Davies, John de Jong, and FK), reported that nine new Institutional Members, and five Expert Member joined EALTA

during 2008. FK invited further applications for Institutional and Expert membership.

- Gudrun Erickson (GE) reported on the *EALTA accounts for 2008* (balance sheet included in the AGM papers, verified by the 2008 EALTA Auditor, Dorte Velling Pedersen). GE commented briefly on incomes and expenditures and the balance in the EALTA bank account on 31 December 2008: 40,369.37 SEK and 14,302 Euros; in total, approximately 18,800 Euros. The accounts were approved by the AGM.

GE reported that all efforts are made to minimise expenses, both concerning work done in the committees, and communication and travelling. As previously, web hosting is offered by Lancaster University, at no cost for EALTA.

GE also reported that it is important that EALTA have sufficient economic resources, should unforeseen expenses arise, for example related to conferences or pre-conference workshops. The Executive Committee is working on clear strategies for good use of any resources exceeding this “security” amount. Examples given of the latter were certain costs for the layout and production of the GGP leaflets and envisaged summer schools, as well as for a possible Newsletter and other publications. Furthermore, resources may be needed to continue the tradition of offering conferences and pre-conference workshops at minimal costs.

6. Appointment of the auditor for 2009

The meeting approved the appointment of Dorte Velling Pedersen as the auditor for 2009. ST thanked DVP for accepting the task for another year.

7. Proposal to separate the functions of Secretary and Treasurer

In the papers distributed to the membership prior to the AGM, the Executive Committee made a proposal of separating the functions of EALTA Secretary and Treasurer. The participants at the meeting unanimously approved the proposal, and an adjustment will consequently be made to the EALTA constitution.

8. Election of officers

Prior to the elections, ST informed about plans to appoint a Nomination Group to prepare for future elections. The suggestion was given positive response by the AGM participants.

Election of EALTA Secretary

Two proposals for Secretary had been submitted, one by Györgyi Együd, seconded by Ildikó Csépes, the other by Elisabeth Guerin, seconded by Carol Spoettl. Both suggestions were for re-election of the 2006-2009 Secretary/Treasurer Gudrun Erickson as EALTA Secretary for the period of 2009-2012. The proposal was unanimously approved by the AGM participants. Thanking for the renewed confidence, GE accepted the appointment.

Election of EALTA Treasurer

Two proposals for Treasurer had been made; one for Nigel Downey, Hellenic American Union, Greece (submitted by Györgyi Együd, seconded by Dina

Tsagari), one for Anthony Green, University of Bedfordshire, UK (submitted by Carol Thomas, seconded by Ari Huhta). The two candidates were briefly introduced by their nominators and by themselves. Individual voting, using a ballot box, was performed. The counting of the votes was supervised by J. Charles Alderson and John de Jong, both members of the EALTA Membership Committee. All in all 71 votes were cast; 2 were found to be blank, 29 were for Anthony Green and 40 for Nigel Downey. In line with this, Nigel Downey (ND) was appointed Treasurer of EALTA for the period of 2009-2012. ND thanked for the confidence and accepted the appointment.

Between the 2009 and 2010 AGMs, the EALTA Executive Committee will have the following members:

Sauli Takala – *President*

Gudrun Erickson – *Secretary*

Nigel Downey – *Treasurer*

Heini-Marja Järvinen – *2009 Conference organiser*

José Noijons – *2010 Conference organiser*

Feliana Kaftandjieva – *Chair of the Membership Committee*

Upcoming elections

Referring to the EALTA constitution, ST pointed out that two elections are to be held at the next AGM: for President and for Chair of the Membership Committee.

9. 2010 Conference venue and dates

The 2010 EALTA Conference will take place on 28-30 May in the Hague (NH Hotel Atlantic), the Netherlands, with pre-conference activities scheduled for 25-27 May and a welcome reception for the evening of Thursday 27 May. The head of the organising committee, José Noijons, gave a short welcome address. Further information about the conference will be given in due course, via the EALTA website and electronic membership list.

ST encouraged proposals to the Executive Committee for future conference venues and organisation.

10. Date of the next Annual General Meeting

The next AGM will be held at the 2010 EALTA conference in the Hague, the Netherlands.

11. Proposal from ILTA that EALTA should affiliate to ILTA

The proposal that EALTA should affiliate to ILTA (the *International Language Testing Association*) was discussed. The suggestion was originally made to the EALTA Expert Members but brought forward by the Executive Committee to the membership and the participants at the AGM in Athens 2008, where a short discussion took place. It was decided that the issue be further analysed and discussed and a decision taken at the 2009 AGM. Following this, ST initiated a discussion on the membership list a month before the Turku conference. During the AGM, ST summarised the opinions that had been brought forward on the EALTA list. He also referred to communication by e-mail with the current President of ILTA, Caroline Turner, off list. The essence of this was that all

efforts should be made to promote and further increase collegial cooperation between EALTA and ILTA; however, formal affiliation between the two organisations is not considered a prerequisite for this. After a short round of comments, this was also the decision taken by the participants at the AGM: EALTA will not seek affiliation with ILTA, but different forms of increased collaboration will be further developed and explored, the ambition of this possibly also established in a memorandum signed by the Presidents of the two associations.

12. Any Other Business

A question was raised about procedures to handle cases of “no show” at EALTA events with a limited number of places. More specifically, the question concerned cases of members having signed up for the 2009 pre-conference workshops but – without, or with very late, notice – did not participate, thereby preventing others from benefiting from this service offered by EALTA. A number of suggestions were given, of preventive as well as penalizing character (e.g., procedures of reminders, cancellation fees and limitations to future participation). It was generally felt that more time was needed for a formal decision on this, but that information in connection with registration for future workshops will emphasize the absolute need to inform the organizers in good time about possible changes. Moreover, a last date of cancellation, followed by a cancellation fee, will most probably be introduced.

13. Closing of the AGM and warmest thanks

Before the closing of the AGM, the Executive Committee and the participants at the meeting expressed their sincere gratitude to Christine Irvine Niacharis, 2008 Conference organiser, for valuable contributions to the membership during her two years on the EALTA Executive Committee.