



AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY HEADS OF ENGLISH

Minutes from the 2020 Annual General Meeting (Compiled by Ann Vickery)

#### **Vice-President Treasurer's Report (Robert Clarke)**

Finances of the AUHE are standing at \$9000.16 as of 2 December 2020, up from \$8324.92 at the same time in 2019.

Call-out for subscriptions for November 2020-November 2021.

Call-out for any activities or initiatives that required funding. Those identified were the AUHE-funded keynote for the Literary Convention 2021 and a proposed Universities/Schools Nexus symposium.

#### **Vice-President Outreach's Report (Anthony Uhlmann)**

Thank you to the work of Ros Prosser and Elaine Lindsay.

Met with US delegates at MLA in 2019 to discuss pressures surrounding journal rankings on the discipline. These were not found to be identical. Suggested focus for 2021 to be more on the local context.

Noted recent discussion between VCs about the state of the humanities. See

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/global-rankings-are-distorting-universities-decisions-says-anu-chief-202011110p56109.html>. <https://www.smh.com.au/national/like-the-atp-tennis-new-global-rankings-scoreboard-for-universities-20201201-p56jkr.html>.

Brian Schmidt, VC at ANU noted that global journal rankings have had a significant impact on research funding of the humanities. Helen Groth noted the relevance of the Leiden Manifesto (<http://www.leidenmanifesto.org>) which argues for discipline appropriate metrics to be recognised. It is an internationally recognised states of principles that set out best practice for qualitative research assessment. There could be a discussion of regionally relevant metrics.

It was proposed that the English section of the Academy of the Humanities lobby the MLA regarding citation methods and data. It was also proposed that the AUHE could facilitate a broader discussion, reaching out to members, literary studies organisations, the AustLit database, journal and university presses, in order to get a better sense of state of the discipline and its pressures.

It was also proposed that there could a closed door discussion with journals and presses that supported English/literary studies in Australia in order to discuss needs and possible support.

#### **Research Committee (Discussion led by Maggie Nolan)**

##### ***FOR codes/ERA***

Review of the codes: Codes set up with socioeconomic objectives but utilised institutionally quite differently. FOR codes are used for ARC evaluation exercises and for ERA planning.

Codes were set up via a principle of exhaustiveness, ie. that all research would be able to fit into the FOR codes.

Maggie thanked Guy Davidson for the work he gave on the AUHE submission.

Proliferation of 6 digit codes in Literary studies. No period code, however, eg. medieval period, Victorian period. Noted the new 2 digit code for indigenous research. Questioned the impact of this on those in literary studies working in Indigenous literatures.

There was some discussion around the pressure of ERA rankings as being viewed as pivotal to investment in universities and that critical decisions were made on the basis of ERA rankings.

Critical mass of 50 outputs in the period required for ERA which means low staffing in some universities, particularly some regional universities, is cause for concern. Ros Smith raised concern over disciplines from the humanities not being ranked by some universities. Chris Danta noted that FOR codes are not really

understood at the individual level. Helen Groth notes that you can double-code outputs for ERA. Juliane Roemhild notes that Field of Education codes are being used to determine the cut of disciplines at institutions like La Trobe. Melinda Harvey noted that at Monash there were 4 digit code coordinators working under a 2 digit code coordinator.

Helen Groth noted that there was a need for a discipline narrative re FOR code but these needed to be through a language that is recognisable by broader readers. Deirdre Coleman notes that disciplines with strong citations and peer-review generally do better than those that are lacking in these.

Anthony Uhlmann noted that the English section of the Australian Academy of the Humanities are currently writing a statement re SCOPUS.

Deirdre Coleman noted that the 2015 ERA ranking was very much around which journal or publisher work was being communicated through.

Roger Osborne: See <http://australianhumanitiesreview.org/2009/05/01/era-and-the-ranking-of-australian-humanities-journals>.

### ***Journal Selection:***

Nicole noted that one of the problems facing Australian Literary Studies and rankings is that it does its own indexing. Adelle Sefton-Rowston notes that if a journal isn't ranked high enough, then it will impact on its sustainability.

Maggie Nolan: Does AUHE have any role in advocating re impact of particular literary studies journals or is the role more to ameliorate the impact of structures delimiting to the field of literary studies? Are academics under pressure to publish in certain preferred outlets? Publication track records can impact on promotion.

Members noted an emphasis on Scimago or Scopus while one noted an approved list of publishers passed down by the Dean. Others were able to compile their own list of 'best outlets' within the Discipline. This enabled some institutions to include highly specific journals like Journal of Beckett Studies.

Elaine Lindsay: the AUHE needs to argue against the sole use of Scimago.

Nicole Moore suggested that there shouldn't be a directing of people to a specific list of journals.

Anthony Uhlmann suggested an alternative that AUHE could endorse university lists. He noted that every institution will have a list even though at least 4 institutions did not have known lists in literary studies.

Giselle Bastin also suggested a sharing of university lists.

Ros Smith proposed that an AUHE research assistant could compile the lists and put them up on a sharepoint.

Helen Groth suggested that the AUHE could also put together a kind of manifesto of 10 principles/criteria. She noted the Leiden manifesto.

Rob Clarke noted that Utas had compiled 2 pages of broad principles.

Giselle Bastin suggested that the collation of lists could then lead to a greater advocacy of the discipline as being capacious.

Chris Danta noted that Google Scholar has a list of top 20 journals by subfield.

ARC applications can move beyond Scimago and use Google Scholar.

### ***ARC funding***

It was noted that there was a lack of ARC funding in 2020 in literary studies. It was noted there were only 17 DP applications submitted so it was suggested that there was a lack of submissions that a % decline.

#### English DP funding

2011: 22 out of 66 successful: 33.3%

2012: 14 out of 52 successful: 26.9%

2018: 2 out of 30 successful: 6.7%

2019: 4 out of 19 successful: 21.1%

2020: 3 out of 17 successful: 17.6%

History as a discipline puts in 4 times the amount of applications as English. Jumana Bayeh (who was the only successful DP this year) noted her DP had been submitted twice before and had received strong assessor reports for them whereas her 2020 applicant had received more critical reports but been successful.

There had been a 6% success rate of SRIs with 600 applications.

Ros Smith noted that larger teams are being supported by ARC.

## Research Active Pressures

Clare Archer-Lean noted increasing requirements around 'Research Active.' This included at SCU at least 6 articles in Scopus every 3 years, a book by a reputable publisher, and/or \$100K funding.

## Current Staffing

Monash: 7 permanent staff, 2 x Level Es, 1 x Level D, 1 x Level C

La Trobe: 7 permanent staff, including creative writing. No Level Es, 1 x Level D.

Wollongong: 2 permanent staff with a 3<sup>rd</sup> person

Flinders: 6 permanent staff in Literature; 3 in creative writing

Western Sydney U: 12.5 permanent staff in English and creative writing

University of Melbourne: 17 permanent staff. 9 x Level E, 3 x Level D, 3 x Level C, 2 x Level B. 1 postdoc and 1 ARC senior research association

Uni of Queensland: 2.5 permanent staff

ANU: 13 permanent staff

Deakin: 22 permanent staff, including creative writing, with one of these working partly in Literary Studies.

## Teaching Committee (led by Clare Archer-Lean)

Ethics passed for survey of past students of English (within the last 30 years) and survey is ready to go. The study would then link responses to graduate outcomes. Was being circulated via English Teachers Association, Australian College of Teachers, and alumni bodies.

COVID impact: See UQ survey of arts grads. See <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/articles/new-teqsa-report-details-student-experiences-switch-online-learning>. approx. 50% students never wanted to do it again.

See also Clare's [https://uniofsunshinecoast.syd1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_8rjG4zM9M1lRf93](https://uniofsunshinecoast.syd1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8rjG4zM9M1lRf93).

There was a discussion of the AUHE 2020 Survey.

See article in Crikey (27 August 2020) that Tehan will go through unit by unit to see if it will make a student job-ready. Tehan is viewing 'English' with only Education in mind.

Tehan reforms will see the university get \$13,250 per student

Question re English being offered through Education.

Did the AUHE want to propose a minimal set of units within an English major that might be required to be an English teacher? Should this be a future discussion paper? Note institutions like University of Canberra and UTS where English teachers were graduating with no English major at all.

Should the AUHE be advancing the job ready skills around English re writing, argumentation, reporting, etc. Putting together guidelines for English teachers.

Coaldrake Review

See: <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/writing-wrongs-our-society-is-about-to-hit-a-literacy-crisis-20200917-p55w17.html>.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/half-of-nsw-teachers-say-they-were-poorly-trained-to-teach-writing-20200915-p55vt0.html>.

AUHE TLOs are:

Students graduating in English will have:

Knowledge

1. Distinct varieties of literary texts in their contexts from a range of periods and places.
2. A range of literary forms and practices.
3. Changing theories, methods, and concepts in literary studies.

Skills

4. Read, understand and interpret complex literary texts.
5. Communicate coherently in a range of critical and/or critical forms.
6. Locate, assess and use appropriate critical resources.

Application of Knowledge and skills

7. Recognise and reflect on the significance of literary texts in imagining and interpreting the (social) world(s)
8. Construct coherent evidence-based arguments.

These TLOs were ratified.

### **Further Business**

AUHE should be liaising with and encouraging literary organisations in Australia to be working with each other. These include:

ASAL  
 AALS  
 AUMLA  
 Australasia Association for Pacific Studies  
 RSAA: Romantic Studies Association of Australasia  
 FNAWN  
 AVSA  
 Australasian Association of Writing Programs  
 Australian and New Zealand American Studies Association  
 IABA Asia-Pacific  
 Early Modern Women Research Network  
 ANZSA  
 Bibliographic Society of Australia and New Zealand  
 Shakespeare Association  
 Australasian Modernist Studies Network

### **Prizes**

The 2020 Voss Literary Prize was one by Tara June Winch for *The Yield*. Tara was present at the AGM for the presentation.

The 2021 AUHE Prize in Literary Scholarship shortlist was announced. These included:

Ken Gelder and Rachael Weaver, *The Colonial Kangaroo Hunt* (Miegunyah Press)

Brigid Magner, *Locating Australian Literary Memory* (Anthem Press)

Fiona Morrison, *Christina Stead and the Matter of America* (Sydney University Press)

Emily Potter, *Writing Belonging at the Millennium* (Intellect)

Paul Sharrad, *Thomas Keneally's Career and the Literary Machine* (Anthem Press)

Anthony Uhlmann, *J.M. Coetzee: Truth, Meaning, Fiction* (Bloomsbury)

**Commended:** Joseph Cummins, *The 'Imagined Sound' of Australian Literature and Music* (Anthem Press)

### **2021:**

The **2021 AUHE Prize for Literary Scholarship judging panel** are:

Juliane Roemhild, Heather Neilson, Paul Sharrad

The **2021 Voss Prize judging panel** are:

Elaine Lindsay (chair), Ros Smith, Ann Vickery, Anthony Uhlmann, and Christian Bök.

### **State reps are:**

Adelle Sefton-Rowston: NT

Giselle Bastin: SA

Marg Henderson: Qld

Robert Clarke: Tas

Ann Vickery: Vic

Paul Magee: ACT

Michael Griffiths: NSW  
Tanya Dalziel: WA