University Council For Languages
Executive Committee
10 November 2023 at 10am
Microsoft Teams

Present (20):
Liam Lewis
Olga Gomez-Cash
Emma Cayley
Gigliola Sulis
Fransiska Louwagie
Vicky Wright
Emmanuelle Labeau
Chi Zhang
Wendy Bennett
Edward James Welch
Sarah Bowden
Adam Fergus
Arlene Holmes
Alvise Sforza Tarabochia
Anna Lise Gordon
Liz Wren-Owens
Luis Gomes
Becky Muradás-Taylor
Arlene Holmes-Henderson
Marcela Cazzoli
Carlos Sanz Mingo

Apologies (5):
Nicola Bermingham
Christine Schallmoser
Karen Ottewell
David Cowling
Sandra Salin
Ashley Harris
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Emma Cayley</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>EC</td>
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<td>Marcela Cazzoli</td>
<td>Hon. Secretary</td>
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<td>Olga Gomez-Cash</td>
<td>Hon. Treasurer</td>
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<td>Liz Wren-Owens</td>
<td>Vice Chair Research</td>
<td>LWO</td>
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<td>Vicky Wright</td>
<td>Vice Chair Languages and intercultural Education</td>
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<td>Fransiska Louwagie</td>
<td>Vice Chair External Engagement and Communications</td>
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<td>Sandra Salin</td>
<td>Membership Secretary</td>
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<td>Liam Lewis</td>
<td>UCML Project Coordinator</td>
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<td>Sky Herrington</td>
<td>UK Project Coordinator</td>
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<td>Nicola Bermingham</td>
<td>Hispanic Studies</td>
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<td>Sarah Bowden</td>
<td>Germanic &amp; Low Countries Studies</td>
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<td>Karen Ottewell</td>
<td>English Language Teaching</td>
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<td>Adam Fergus</td>
<td>Slavonic &amp; Eastern European Studies</td>
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<td>Luis Gomes</td>
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<td>Ed Welch</td>
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<td>Carlos Sanz Mingo</td>
<td>Wales</td>
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<td>Sharon Jones</td>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
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<td>Anna Lise Gordon</td>
<td>Schools Liaison</td>
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<td>Emmanuelle Labeau</td>
<td>French Studies</td>
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<td>Ruba Khaman</td>
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<td>Robert McCluskey</td>
<td>British Sign Language</td>
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<td>Alvise Sforza Tarabochia</td>
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<td>Binhua Wang</td>
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<td>Ursula Lanvers</td>
<td>Linguistics</td>
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<td>Chi Zhang</td>
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<td>Arlene Holmes-Henderson</td>
<td>Classical Studies</td>
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<td>Marina Rabadán Gómez</td>
<td>Institution-Wide Language Teaching</td>
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<td>Begoña Rodríguez de Céspedes</td>
<td>Translation &amp; Interpretation</td>
<td>BRC</td>
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<td>Ashley Harris</td>
<td>Early Career Academics</td>
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1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence
   a. Meeting recorded but will be deleted after the minutes have been written and approved.
   b. Welcome to new members of SIGS, executive committee, honorary members, and steering group as stipulated in report. Incoming and outgoing Italian Reps noted.
   c. Note on transitional stage between UCML to UCFL, so some ‘UCML’ acronyms still appear in reports.

2. Summer Plenary Meeting of 14th July 2023
   a. Accuracy and approval of Minutes: Approved.
   b. Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.
      i. OGC drew attention to sharing of documentation from a BA Strategic Forum.
         **ACTION:** EC to follow up and share the above information.
      ii. LWO: PG Bursary was made. LWO asked for strategic thinking on engagement with Languages Gateway. UCFL and ILCs have responded to the FRAP report. EC responded to note that UCFL has been asked to coordinate materials on Languages at HE level, and called for contributors from the Executive Committee.
      iii. EC raised action point on Funding SIGS.
         **ACTION:** OGC confirmed that Steering Group would confirm funding situation for SIGS.
      iv. EC confirmed that subscription to Twitter Blue is not being explored currently.

Discussion of Officers’ Reports (40 mins)

3. Chair’s Report (EC)
   a. Executive Member Roles: Vicky’s role of VC Education will be advertised imminently. VW will be staying until the January Plenary and will be staying on as Routes Chair. Call for suggestions of potential VCs in this position and encouragement of colleagues to apply. SH to continue in Routes Coordinator role for the foreseeable future.
   b. NI Representative role will also be advertised shortly.
      **ACTION:** Advertise VC Education and NI Rep.
   c. Mention of upcoming event on Special Forum on Making the Case for German with Nick Gibb MP.
   d. Consultation on home and community languages: Ongoing campaign. Campaign for Translation Studies is ongoing and report on that was given at the House of Lords. See report for details.
   e. News on health of disciplinary field: UCFL involved in a number of campaigns to offer support to colleagues at institutions, including University of Aberdeen. EW confirmed that unofficial communications propose that languages degrees at Aberdeen will be withdrawn, with some retention of language teaching (see further details below). AST cautiously optimistic about situation in Kent as a positive development. EC stressed that UCFL is a community of likeminded individuals eager to help in such situations to rethink structures and programmes. BMT noted that some language provision at certain institutions will continue, but asked for information on institutions that may lose languages completely, including UEA.
   f. Constructions and Closures: UCFL asked to prepare a briefing for APPG on contractions and closures in languages. This should include data, and connections with SIGS. Call for those interested in putting together this report to contact EC and UCFL Contact email.
   g. SIGS: Confirmation of 7 Special Interest Groups at UCFL. We are still looking for chairs of the Year Abroad SIG. Nathalie Edwards has agreed to co-chair the Heads of Languages (HoL) Special Interest Group.
      **ACTION:** Fill roles of chairs for YA SIG.
OGC raised issue of student mobility and Year Abroad raised in multiple reports, and called for anyone involved in initiatives or conversations to come forward. VW urged us to be careful about discourse around Year Abroad and safeguarding funding still in place. EC reinforced VW’s point after and feedback from wider field about finetuning messaging around YA. LL invited members of UCFL interested in being part of the Year Abroad discussions to email him at the UCFL Contact email address.

Emma invited those interested in contributing to research on IWLPs to contact the UCFL-AULC SIG co-chairs, Christine Schallmoser and Marina Rabadán.

Comms: UCFL continues on social media and has begun a BlueSky account. LL invited all Exec Members to sign up to the UCFL JISCMAIL account, and to circulate pertinent items to the Contact address.

4. Report of Vice Chair Education (VW)
   a. VW pointed out a link to a report on GCSE and A-level results with data on the UCFL website. The link is at the bottom of the report.
   b. Grade distributions: Return to pre-covid figures for grade distributions, with a lack of parity between nations. A Datalab report looked into this and found a differential return to different rates, which, will have made a difference to candidates incoming Higher Education this year. Positive news is that entry levels for non-standard languages have increased in secondary education. Report details trends in languages. More effort needed to move students onto languages at higher levels.
   c. Routes Into Languages: Working on developing materials for University ambassadors and mentors. September meeting was well attended by universities. A good way of exchanging information on how to work with schools. Online resources are being developed on these schemes—thanks extended to those who have passed on tried and tested materials.
   d. National Consortium for Languages: VW has written a short paper with suggestions for working with schools and offering a mentoring and ambassador schemes. Several universities are interested in continuing professional development at Hub schools. Discussion of Routes’ offering still under discussion, but will include data collection.
   e. Gender Action Initiative: Continued work in this area
   g. EW mentioned trend data from Languages meeting and will send them to VW. VW noted that data on EFL shows large numbers in Scotland, but not measured in other nations.

5. Report of Vice Chair Research (LWO)
   a. Horizon: Noted that report does not discuss Horizon and UK’s role in rejoining the scheme. There is more funding for Arts and Humanities from Horizon than from AHRC.
   b. FRAP: Report includes link to FRAP report and response in consultation with AMLUK.
   c. UKRI New Deal for postgraduate researchers: looking for more cross-council working and between disciplines.
   d. Changes to AHRC funding: latest announcement in November 2023, including replacing DTPs with Landscape funding. See report for details. Concerns about this have been expressed on behalf of UCFL.
   e. Thinking Strategically Events: Organised with ILCS. LWO co-chaired two sessions on impact. Important discussion about impact case studies and dissemination.
   f. Idea for UCFL Winter Plenary: How to enable small scale research with big impact for stakeholders. Details of funding pots and future event are in the report.

6. Hon. Secretary’s Report
   a. Report to be taken as read, apart from clarity on dates of future meetings. Dates for future meetings are all now on UCFL website under ‘Events’.

7. Treasurer’s Report
   a. UCFL Treasury in a better position than in the summer. Membership Secretary has been doing good work with member Subject Associations. EC extended thanks to OGC, SS and LL for help in this area.

8. National reports
a. Scotland (EW):
   i. Positive news on the mentoring programme as UCFL with SCILT. Pilot ran with Aberdeen last year and 2024 version is an expanded pilot, with now 7/8 institutions. Expressions of interest received from 28 schools from across Scotland (cold spot in NW Highlands area). This has included online sessions and development of materials for training and mentoring. EW noted that scale of operation is very small compared to Wales programme, partly due to SCILT budget cut.
   ii. Aberdeen: Thanks extended to Charles Forsdick, Charles Burdett, and EC for work identifying significance of threat and offers of support for review of languages provision at University of Aberdeen. Support has been acknowledged and will be considered by the internal steering group. Implications for degree awards and research contracts need to be considered. Outcome of negotiations likely to be at the end of February. Broader context for this is financial. FL added thanks for support and expressed the urgency of this situation because of its speed. A strong show of report will be welcome from everyone at UCFL. EC raised the issue of Gaelic and how changes might affect this. EW noted that fate of Gaelic at Aberdeen is uncertain, although there is a statutory requirement to deliver Gaelic programmes. EC noted that colleagues at UCFL might have practical advice having been through similar restructuring.

b. Wales-Cymru (LWO; report by CSM):
   i. Routes into languages Cymru: Programme is doing very well, including freely-available toolkit.
   ii. Mentoring project is going well. This has been funded by the Welsh government, and is promoted on the government website.
   iii. Taith: See report for details on this student mobility programme.
   iv. Day of Languages: See report for details.

9. Reports from other Executive members (oral reports).
   a. ELT:
      KO suggests in report that this role be changed to ‘English for Academic Purposes Representative’. Executive Committee confirmed this change. EL suggested limiting this role to Higher Education.
      **ACTION:** Confirm this change in Standing Orders at the General Council (Summer 2024).
   b. Slavonic & Eastern European Studies:
      No formal report submitted. AF noted that continued support and conversation needed to think strategically about the place of Russian Studies in a time of war. Long-term planning needed (4-5 year timescale and longer). Decolonisation of curricula have accelerated in response to current war. Current developments may be supported by a meeting at the end of this academic year in Sheffield. Increase in undergraduate numbers taking Russian.
   c. Classical Studies:
      No report submitted. AHH noted big increases in candidates taking GCSE and A-Level Classical Civilisation and Ancient history. Numbers in Latin and Ancient Greek are steady. Latin is growing at KS3 thanks for DfE investment. Classical Greek disappeared in Scotland in 2014 and nervousness in England as numbers are fewer than 200 candidates in last year. New initiative called Intermediate Certificate in Classical Greek is having an impact in comprehensive, non-selective state schools. AHH requested anyone interested in this field and updates should contact her. EC asked whether we should call the field Classical or Ancient Greek. No clear solution available so further discussion would be useful.
   d. Translation and Interpreting:
      (FL in absence of BRC due to technical issue). BRC reported on panel at UCFL Summer Plenary in July 2023, including employer perspectives. Policy report in preparation with other members of UCFL and exterior colleagues. EC extended thanks to FL and BRC.
   e. Lusophone Studies:
      Report taken as read, but of particular interest is the Portuguese government is sponsoring a chair at Lancaster University, and Brazilian government have created a cultural institute of their own.
They have funds and are keen to hear from colleagues.

f. **French:**
   No report submitted. EL noted that Society for French Studies has also written to Aberdeen, and are planning their conference for next summer. AFLS has a new president and re-organising an annual conference in Louisiana. AUPHF+ are holding their general meeting this afternoon.

g. **Germanic:** Taken as read.
h. **Italian:** Taken as read.
i. **WPLN:** Taken as read.
j. **Schools Liaison:** Taken as read.
k. **Linguistics (CLIE):** Taken as read.
l. **Hispanic Studies:** Taken as read.

**Oral reports SIGS and other members:**

10. **AULC-UCFL**
   BMT noted that AULC-UCFL is a positive initiative in a time of doom and gloom, meeting twice a year. 20 universities offering languages at degree level below-average tariffs are involved. 3 universities that do not have language degrees but do have some language provision are also involved. Knowledge-sharing is important for promoting university programmes. Members of the network are very experienced in reviews and restructuring and have responded with interesting curriculum design and assessment within limited resource. If a university in the network is in such a situation, others in the network can support. Nevertheless, things are tricky in this part of the sector. OGC noted generosity in admissions and UCAS events at open days to reference each other’s provision. BMT stressed that language departments have a tendency to be all things to all students, whereas confidence in specificity at institutional level is important (while demonstrating diversity at national level).

11. **Oral report from Honorary Policy Advisor:**
   EC welcomed WAB as Policy Advisor. WAB noted that she has been working since 2015 to promote collaboration across government and raise languages as an issue in government policies. The task now is to consolidate this work, share contacts, and integrate work into UCFL’s activities. Working with cross-government languages group, where there is a desire to have greater collaboration with devolved nations. ‘Academic Engagement Sub-group’ has been created for more research-informed evidence. WAB organized a successful Policy event with ILCS, which we should capitalize on if possible. This included input from 5 government departments. AHRC are also keen to be involved in the sub-group. Slavonic & Eastern European Studies WAB to write a report to bring together information such as government ‘Areas of Research Interest Framework’. 4 things that could be done quickly: For government: Create first point of contact for academics, and influence the development of areas of research interest to explicitly mention languages rather than implied. For academics: greater understanding of constraints under which civil servants work, and publicize what is available. WAB asked for ideas of anything she may not be aware of to be sent to her.

12. **Advance Planning of Winter Plenary of 12 January 2023**
   a. Plenary event to include panel on ‘Languages research for stakeholders: challenges and opportunities’, and a panel on what curriculum for languages in secondary education.

13. **Any other business**
   a. LL requested thinking of ways for the Exec to speak to each other in more effective ways. OGC noted that last response was financial support for plenaries (for in-person meetings). Perhaps a less report-driven meeting could be useful.
ACTION: LL to set up Microsoft Teams group for Exec informal discussion.

b. VW noted that for EAL community cohesion is important and that a Rep for this area might be useful.

ACTION: Take discussion of EAL Rep to Steering Group.

Future Meeting Dates:
Winter Plenary: 12th January, 2024
Executive Committee: 24th May, 2024
Summer Plenary: 5th July, 2024

Future dates are also listed on the UCFL website