

Chair's Report 2020-21

COVID AND BALEAP

The backdrop to all BALEAP activity this year has, of course, been COVID with some of the same challenges and opportunities that have been shared across the world. Professionally, the pandemic has hit the BALEAP community hard in one particular respect, with a substantial reduction in employment of teachers on short contracts (mainly in the summer) and the issue of precarity and the EAP practitioner has come strongly to the fore. On a more positive note, the enforced move to online working has had some very positive impacts on our interactions as a community, opening events to a wider, more genuinely global audience and driving innovations, from the 'pop-up' PIM held in Hong Kong in June to the 'slow' approach of the current BALEAP Biennial conference in Glasgow extending over five days with a mix of pre-recorded talks and discussion, live talks and, for the first time SIG events (and much more!).

SUPPORTING MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITY

An important focus for me as Chair over the last year has been to continue to support member involvement in EAP related activity and to help to create more opportunities for practitioners to raise their profiles for example by leading developments in areas of special interest or in scholarly and research activity. I led the initial work in setting up the SIGs and in producing guidelines and criteria for selection and this year has seen an enormous amount of energy and activity for many of the eight SIGs that were originally proposed.

I have also been working closely with Garnet Education, the publishers of the *Conference Proceedings*, to move towards digital publishing of the *Proceedings* with the ultimate aim that individual papers should be indexed and accessible online (rather than only in the paper copies). Discussions are well advanced and further updates will be shared with the membership as soon as possible.

A further opportunity for publication is the special issue of the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes (JEAP)* to mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of SELMOUS and the 20th anniversary of the establishment of *JEAP*. I have been working on this with Olwyn Alexander as joint editors. The title is 'Practitioner voices, scholarship and practice-led research in the evolution of EAP' and it focuses on tracing the interactions between practice, scholarship and research across the lifetime of BALEAP, reinforcing the key role of theory in EAP practice and pointing the way to future directions.

The impacts of Covid in 2020 prompted another initiative following a call from members writing to the BALEAP discussion list to capture the ways in which the BALEAP community had responded to the pandemic in institutions in the UK. Funding was agreed by the executive committee and there was a competitive process to select researchers to carry out this project 'The impact of Covid-19 on the UK EAP sector: An examination of how organisations delivering EAP were affected and responded in terms of academic delivery and operational procedures'. The research has been underway since December 2020 and the researchers are presenting at the conference with a report to be published on the website soon after.

CONFERENCES

I have continued to work with other members of the executive committee to support the organising of the Glasgow conference and with the Events Officer, Kerry Tavakoli, to liaise with colleagues in Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University in China for the joint CEAPA-BALEAP conference which will take place in May.



The global forum for
EAP professionals

MEMBERSHIP

The membership has continued to grow and individual membership now stands at 341 individual members (including concession members) and 98 institutional memberships. 27% of the individual members are based outside the UK.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The executive committee has seen some more changes since the last AGM. With the formation of the SIGs, the committee proposed a new role of SIGs Officer and an election was held for that position. Anneli Williams, an Ordinary Member, was nominated and elected to the new position. Two Ordinary Member roles became vacant with her election and that of Lisa Hanson to the Information and Publicity Officer role and a further call led to the election of Anna Murawska and Natasha Ingall. The election of these members will be ratified at the AGM. More recently, the Research and Publications Officer, Steven Herron, resigned from his role. A call for nominations went out and received a joint nomination for Susie Cowley-Haselden and Laetitia Monbec who were elected unopposed.

This 2021 AGM also marks the standing down of two other committee members, John Slaght, our Testing Officer for the last six years and Kerry Tavakoli, our Events Officer for the last three years. BALEAP has been extremely fortunate to benefit from their commitment and expertise and I would like to thank them for all that they have contributed over the years. John has been a significant force in the world of testing and has done a great deal of work on the BALEAP testing guidelines and on developing the testing roadshows. Kerry's expertise in events organisation and the support that she has given to events organisers has been instrumental in keeping up a flow of PIMs in particularly demanding circumstances. I would like to welcome Fiona Orel and Fiona Wallace who were elected to the positions of Testing Officer and Events Officer from April 2021.

The committee has been extremely active over the last year with the regular executive meetings held at the time of PIMs and additional meetings during the year to follow up with work on membership and the benefits to members; on developing a robust policy on diversity, equality and inclusion, based on our shared values as a community; and the varied areas of activity that each officer is responsible for.

JEAP (JOURNAL OF ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES)

I have continued to write the BALEAP News item for each issue of *JEAP*. There are currently six issues a year.

ANNUAL TRUSTEES REPORT

This has been written for the period August 2019 – 31 July 2020 and is presented here along with the accounts for this period.

Sarah Brewer
April 2021