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**President’s report (September 2021)**

1. **Committee membership**. Our committee membership has changed/ is changing: three excellent colleagues are standing down, but, luckily, being replaced with three excellent  with **Sascha Stollhans** (Lancaster, but moving to an exciting new post in France) being replaced in his role as Conference secretary by **Rachel MagShamhrain** (Cork); **Stefan Manz** (Aston) is standing down from his role as German School networks representative, with the reins being taken up by **Alex(andra) Lloyd** (Oxford); and **Seán Williams** (Sheffield) is standing down as Publicity officer, handing over the **Paul Leworthy** (Edinburgh).

All these roles were advertised for Expressions of interest to all on the German Studies list – we hope colleagues found this approach inclusive, but we’d welcome feedback and suggestions on how to do that better/ differently.

1. **EDI matters**. As a national /these-islands association representing German Studies, we have been slow on this important front. After some information gathering – including discussions with Expanding German Studies, looking at good practice that we see in WIGS and elsewhere, as well as ideas shared at the British Academy’s subject association meeting that I attended, a working group has been established to propose short- medium and long-term actions: **Rachel MagShamhrain**, **Paul Leworthy** (committee members) and **Claire Ross** (from Expanding German Studies). They will report separately to the business meeting. Suggestions and feedback to that group is very welcome.
2. **Website**: we are looking at refreshing our website design – and want to ensure it feels inclusive. As above, feedback and suggestions very welcome.
3. **Grants and applications**: We remain very un-snowed under by applications for our various funding schemes (PGR/ECR support; publication subsidies; workshop funds). This is understandable given how little scope there has been to go anywhere and do anything that costs money, but we see our role as supporting German Studies in any productive way – so please do contact us if you have a good idea that you think doesn’t fit under existing schemes but that would benefit from some modest funding. We will continue to review the funding schemes that we have available.
4. **Advocacy and other (UK) national activity**: we responded to the consultation on GCSE content and assessment, like many others. I also wrote to Aston University about the changes mooted there, and we are have been watching the situation in languages at Sheffield. The decision at Hull to close the languages department was noted at AMLUK (the Alliance of Modern Languages, Area Studies and Linguistics Subject Associations UK, chaired by Charles Burdett as Director of the IMLR), but recognized to be a fait accompli - this leaves something of a “languages desert” in that region of England. On the bright side, it’s worth noting that recruitment to German in Ireland remains buoyant.

As an outcome of the *Towards a National Languages Strategy*, a new committee has been formed, Strategic Committee for Languages in Higher Education which I am a member of – we met for the first time in July.

1. **Other national activity, esp. after Brexit**: I and many others have been making strenuous efforts to find a way of sustaining OeAD and DAAD lectors and DAAD assistantships post-Brexit, all of which fall foul of new visa regulations about minimum salary thresholds for visas, in part because the OeAD and DAAD top-ups to the salary can’t be counted. All efforts without success thus far, except in Oxford where the colleges agreed to underwrite a higher basic salary.  The DAAD and OeAD have been very patient, positive, and supportive, but the regulatory frameworks that they work within mean their hands are tied. Assistantships were therefore not appointed this year, and at least one lectorship went unreplaced. The British Academy, with the leadership of Neil Kenny, and input from me and others, are now trying to prepare a case to government for a solution for the future. However, this seems to be an exceedingly slow process.

Nicola McLelland (Nicola.mclelland@nottingham.ac.uk)