

## **IPA Secretary's report, August 2015**

The following is the Secretary's full report for 2011-2015. These four years have been very busy for the Association, with the result that only excerpts of this report could be presented at the IPA meeting in Glasgow on August 12. The items in the report are organized into five sections: IPA support of conferences and of members attending conferences; the IPA alphabet, chart, and fonts; website and social media; JIPA-related; other.

### **I. IPA support of conferences and of members attending conferences**

The Association reached an agreement with the organizers of ICPHS to provide €9000 in funding, in return for sponsorship recognition and registration fee reductions for IPA members. The Association later agreed to provide further funding in the form of a loan. The Council also endorsed a proposal by Wolfgang Hess to set up a cumulative, open archive of ICPHS papers. The IPA is very keen on its connection with the International Congresses, and believes that its financial support of them is money well-spent. The Association intends to pursue arrangements like the current one with future Congress organizers.

Following a suggestion made at the 2011 IPA meeting, the Council discussed funding conferences other than ICPHS. The Council voted against, but agreed to consider requests for co-sponsorship without funding. Since then, the Council has voted to co-sponsor Tonal Aspects of Languages in 2012, Speech Prosody in 2014, Workshop on Prosodic Variation and Workshop on Early Language – Lisbon in 2015, and Tone and Intonation in Europe in 2016. What exactly this kind of co-sponsorship without funding means is currently unclear – in effect, we publicize the conference/workshop on our social media, and the organizers may ask us to consider offering IPA Student Awards to student participants. This situation bears re-visiting, and our willingness to co-sponsor needs to be better publicized.

Following another suggestion made at the 2011 IPA meeting, in 2012 the Council established the new IPA Student Awards for student members participating in international conferences/workshops co-sponsored by the Association. Four awards were granted to students for the third International Symposium on Tonal Aspects of Languages in Nanjing, China. No awards were offered in 2013, and in 2014, with a similar dearth of co-sponsored conferences, we invited applications from all our student members presenting phonetic research at any conference/workshop open to all, and we gave 3 awards on that basis. Council also voted that in 2015, Student Awards would be granted exclusively for ICPHS, up to the amount of €10000. Twenty-two such awards were made, with the amount of each award set to the cost of early student registration plus student housing. The Council also awarded 20 Gösta Bruce Scholarships in varying amounts, totaling €5000 (funded mostly by the Gösta Bruce Memorial Fund, but in part by the Association), to support travel expenses. We still need to establish a regular annual budget for the IPA Student Awards, pending a better understanding of the Association's financial footing, and a regular method for soliciting and reviewing applications for them.

In the open discussion at the 2011 IPA meeting, it was also suggested that the Association could organize workshops in non-ICPHS years. We have not discussed this at all, again first requiring a better understanding of the Association's financial footing.

### **II. The IPA alphabet, chart, and fonts**

The 2007-2011 Council had considered a proposal to add (or possibly to redefine) an International Phonetic Alphabet symbol for a low central vowel. However, so few Council members voted on the proposal that the outcome was not conclusive. At the 2011 meeting it was agreed that the new Council should re-open this issue. After extensive discussion and rounds of voting, the Council rejected the proposal. No other proposals have been brought to Council during this period.

Since 2011, the procedures for considering revisions to the alphabet/chart set out in the Handbook have been more widely publicized: on our website and in the Wikipedia article on the IPA (in order to make clear that arbitrary new IPA charts posted there have no official status). We also now have a form about requests for revisions that the *JIPA* editor or the Secretary can distribute in response to inquiries.

As Secretary, I undertook to lobby the editor of the *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, a premier international journal in our field, to revise their requirement that phonetic symbols in mss be in a legacy, non-Unicode-compliant font from SIL. This effort was successful, with me providing a revision of the relevant portion of their Instructions for Contributors, and of their document listing phonetic symbols.

As the result of an email from a confused student, I became aware that the Wikipedia entry on the International Phonetic Alphabet featured an IPA chart that was not only not ours, but had been freely improvised by a WP editor. I made myself a WP editor and learned that our chart could not easily be posted because it was not available under the Creative Commons license that WP insists on. Council therefore approved putting the chart under that CC license. A wonderful volunteer, Malgorzata Deron, produced versions of the chart in various resolutions/formats as encouraged by WP. Council also approved my constituting an ad-hoc committee of volunteers familiar with WP editing, and as a group we made and enforced various improvements to the different articles directly concerned with the Association. (Thanks to Andy Butcher (current member of Council), Peter Roach (former member of Council), Bruce Hayes, and Sameer Khan.)

Currently, an ad-hoc committee of volunteers from Council (Asher Laufer, Mike MacMahon, Adrian Simpson, John Wells) is working to have charts in different fonts on the website. Since the 2005 chart uses a legacy font that is not Unicode-compliant (Linguist's Software's IPA Kiel with IPAAditions), it seems a good idea to show the chart in fonts that people can actually use, along with comments on the differences among symbols across fonts. The committee will be recommending two new versions of the chart, one serif font (DoulosSIL) and one sans-serif font (DejaVu). Optimization of the charts by Malgorzata Deron is in progress, after which they will be brought to Council for approval. The committee (or its successor from the new Council) may also recommend small changes in wording within the chart, but the committee's charge does not include considering any substantive changes.

Our use of the Linguist's Software font in the pdf image of our 2005 chart is under an embedding license. In 2014 Linguists Software was being sold, and possibly would go out of business, so at that time the Association purchased several licenses-in-perpetuity for all of the firm's fonts.

### **III. Website and social media**

From 2009 through 2014, the Association's website was generously hosted by University College London (and before that, U. of Glasgow), at no expense to us. However, because this arrangement could not be guaranteed, because we wanted our own domain name that would clearly identify our site as the official home of the Association, and because we wanted a site that could handle online membership

management functions, Council agreed that a commercially-hosted site with our own domain name was worth the necessary costs. There was initially some discussion within the Executive of contracting with CUP to provide this service, but in part because of the availability of our wonderful webmaster Kayoko Yanagisawa (to whom many thanks), who was willing to build a new database and website, we decided to do it ourselves. After voting for a new domain name ([internationalphoneticassociation.org](http://internationalphoneticassociation.org)), we bought not only that, but two very similar ones, to keep them out of circulation. The new website went live in January 2015, and included a new feature that President Esling had lobbied Cambridge University Press for: member access to online *JIPA*, including the entire archive of past issues, via CUP's site. The Treasurer's report has more information about website operation and cost.

Because the new site allows the Secretary to post News items directly, there are now many more of these than previously. The Secretary is responsible for content more generally, and some initial upgrades have been made, e.g. members' blogs are linked from the website. However, there is much more to be done. We are very interested in adding content that will benefit both our members and the general public.

When the new website went live, we added Facebook and Twitter accounts. These were set up and are updated by our Social Media Czar, Joanna Przedlacka, to whom many thanks. We currently (just before ICPHS) have 778 "likes" on FB (many more than the number of IPA members) and 303 followers on Twitter (and both numbers steadily growing). While to some extent these sites are mirrors of News Items on our website, they clearly can speak to a broader audience, and we need to think of ways to do that.

The Association continues to benefit from having foNETiks as its electronic newsletter, with about 2100 subscribers internationally. Many thanks to Linda Shockey, Gerry Docherty, Lisa Lim, and Rachel Smith for this service.

#### **IV. *JIPA*-related**

The Secretary represents the Association in its regular agreements with CUP about subscription prices. Members' new access to *JIPA* online comes at the cost of increased payments by the Association to CUP. For 2015 we decided to absorb these costs without a dues increase. For the future, however, the dues structure will have to change, offering members different forms of access at different prices.

An advantage of the new membership database is supposed to be a streamlining of the process of getting a current mailing list to CUP for the mailing of each issue of *JIPA* to our members. The first instance of this, however, was a disaster – despite our timely delivery of a current mailing list to CUP, the April 2015 issue was mailed only to the 2014 mailing list, omitting more than 300 new members and ignoring address updates. This error was compounded by a further delay of more than a month in mailing out the omitted issues, which in turn delayed slightly the mailing of the August issue. We can only hope that all members have received the April issue by the time of the Congress, and that the August mailing is correct.

A matter that was raised at the 2011 meeting which is still unresolved with CUP is speaker community – and indeed more general – access to the texts and audio recordings of the "Illustrations of the IPA" published in *JIPA*.

## V. Other Secretarial activities

The primary duty of the Secretary as specified by the Statutes and By-laws is to conduct the elections of the Council and the Executive in the 12 months preceding ICPHS. This proceeds in the 3 stages: election of part of the Council by the full membership, co-opting of the rest of the Council by the already-elected members, and election of an Executive by the full Council. (The Secretary also conducts the election by the IPA membership of its representatives on the Permanent Council for the Organization of ICPHS in conjunction with the Council election.) For 2014, the Council voted to move to an online ballot on [electionbuddy.com](http://electionbuddy.com) for the first of these stages. This was very successful, with a 70% participation rate, compared to 38% with paper ballots in 2010. It was also much less expensive. The two later stages of the election were conducted by email. (Thanks to the UCLA Department of Linguistics for staffing this process, so that all voting would be anonymous.)

Another duty of the Secretary is to grant permissions to reproduce the Association's copyright materials. With the IPA chart under a Creative Commons license, these requests are now very rare, involving only reprinting of material from *JIPA*, e.g. in historical compilations.

The Secretary also answers emails from members and from the public, from around the world, on a wide variety of matters phonetic. With the new website's automatic direction of inquiries, these have increased; they can be a very interesting part of the job.

The Secretary works with the Treasurer (and now also with the webmaster) to manage our membership records. Historically the Association has not done a good job reminding members to renew each year, but with the new membership database this should no longer be a problem. A continuing challenge for the Association is that our life membership model is not ideal – life membership continues until a life member informs us of his/her own death, and throughout the life membership the Association pays CUP for the member's journal subscription. I therefore undertook to contact every life member to verify that they wished to continue to receive *JIPA*. The Association needs to find a way to use the new membership database, linked to the website, to keep in better contact with its life members.

In years when ICPHS offers a reduced registration fee to IPA members, membership generally increases greatly though temporarily. In Nov. 2014, the Association had 370 members; in Feb. 2015, 645 members. We are very interested in making the Association relevant to our new members in non-ICPHS years.

In connection with the granting of permissions for reproduction of copyright materials, the Secretary occasionally negotiates payments from publishers. It had become increasingly difficult to receive these, as publishers expect copyright holders to be legal entities with e.g. UK tax ID numbers. The Association had no firm legal standing in the UK or any other country. For that reason, it was also the case that individual members of the Executive were potentially legally liable on behalf of the Association. I therefore asked the Council to approve pursuing incorporation in the UK and found out how to proceed. Michael Ashby, as the only UK member of the Executive, then completely took over the matter and doggedly followed through to successful incorporation this year. The Association is especially grateful to Michael for his work on this matter since it coincided with the time of his extensive work on the new website. The members of the Executive now serve as the legal Directors of our corporation.

The IPA administers the Gösta Bruce Scholarships for students participating in ICPHS. In 2014 we realized that the Gösta Bruce Memorial Fund had seen no new donations since 2011, so that our balance

approaching ICPHS-2015 was less than the amount that had been awarded in 2011. A fund-raising campaign was therefore needed, and consisted of notices in *JIPA*, on our website and our social media sites, and especially via a checkbox for donations on the ICPHS registration webpage (for which we thank the Congress organizers). This low-key campaign was reasonably successful (new donations of €3100, essentially doubling the Fund) but more advance planning is needed before the next ICPHS.

Following up on a comment at the 2011 IPA meeting, the Council offered to become of co-sponsor of ISCA's Special Interest Group on Speech Prosody. SIGPro accepted this offer, with Yi Xu the liaison from ISCA. We also then did the same for the new ISCA SIG on the History of Speech Communication Sciences. However, there have so far been no practical consequences of these arrangements.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Keating  
Secretary