

**AGENDA ITEM 3 - Annual Report 1999**

## Introduction

The beginning of 1999 saw Prof. S.W. Tam, President of OUHK assuming the office of AAOU President. Consequent to this, the AAOU Secretariat was relocated to OUHK with Prof. T.M. Wong as the Secretary-General. To assist the AAOU Secretariat, OUHK provided the services of an executive officer, Ms. Rita Chui on a part-time basis. Ms. Winnie Wong, secretary to Prof. T.M. Wong also provided invaluable secretarial assistance.

Membership as of 31 December 1998 stood at 33, comprising of 21 Full members and 11 Associate members.

## a) New members

The EB at its XII meeting held on 3 Nov. 1998 admitted seven new members (effective 1 Jan. 1999) as follows:

## i) Full members

- Karnataka State Open University, India
- Netaji Subhas Open University, India
- Jiangxi Radio & TV University, China

## ii) Associate members

- The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, New Zealand
- SNTD Women's University, India
- The Institute of Company Secretaries of India, India
- Anadolu University Open University Faculty, Turkey

In addition, the EB at its XIII meeting held on 22 June 1999 admitted five new members for the year 1999 as follows:

## iii) Full members

- Beijing Radio & TV University, China
- Jiangsu Radio & TV University, China
- Hanoi Open University, Vietnam

## iv) Associate members

- Technikon SA, South Africa
- Acadia University, Canada

With the addition of these 12 new members, the total membership of the Association as of 31 December 1999 was 45 (27 Full members and 18 Associate members). This represents an increase of 36% from the previous year. In order to speed up the processing of applications in between scheduled EB meetings, cases which are clear cut are presented to EB members for their approval by circulation.

b) **AAOU 99**

The Association's annual conference AAOU 99 was successfully organised by the China Central Radio & Television University at the Peace Hotel, Beijing from 15-17 October 1999 on the theme: "Open and Distance Education: Systems and Models Facing 21<sup>st</sup> Century's Information and Learning Societies". More than 200 delegates, including some 120 from outside China attended the conference.

The conference was opened by Prof. Wei Yu, Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Education while the closing ceremony was officiated by Mr Song Chengdong from the Office of Educational Technology, Ministry of Education, China.

The keynote address was delivered by Prof. Wei Yu while plenary addresses were delivered by Prof. Abdul W Khan, Dr Jon Baggaley, Dr Grenville Rumble, Dr Mick Campion, Dr Takashi Sakamoto, Dr Colin Latchem, Dr Tony Bates and Dr Hilary Perraton.

Besides these, more than 100 oral and poster presentations were also made. In addition, a number of preconference seminars and a meeting on "Asian Women Getting Access to Distance Education" (sponsored by COL) were also organised.

As in the previous AAOU conferences, there were numerous good quality presentations. The best paper was awarded to Dr Zhang Wei Yuan from the Open University of Hong Kong for his paper entitled "A Profile of Distance and Adult Education in Asia and their Research FOCI". However, there was also a noticeable number of 'no-shows' which disrupted programme scheduling and became a source of nuisance. The host country's banking system, coupled with communications breakdowns also gave rise to some minor problems but overall the conference was well received by the delegates. As in previous AAOU conferences, participants were treated to a variety of cultural and gastronomic experiences which were most interesting and delightful. It is hoped that this will be maintained at future conferences.

c) Sponsorship for **AAOU 99**

The Commonwealth of Learning and UNESCO-PROAP provided grants of CNS\$5000 and US\$5000 respectively. In the interest of providing support to as many delegates from developing countries as possible, the decision was taken to disburse the funds in the form of COL and UNESCO-PROAP awards, each valued at the cost of the Conference Registration Fee. It was hoped that armed with these awards, participants would be able to secure additional funding support from their own institutions. The participants who received awards and the titles of their papers are as follows:

i) **COL Awards** (9 awardees)

- Prof S.C. Garg (IGNOU): *Mainstream and Open Distance Education: Partnership, Collaboration and Convergence*
- Prof. M Aslam (IGNOU): *Education and Training of Elected Panchayat Functionaries through Distance Mode*
- Dr R Sreedher (IGNOU): *Interactive Radio Counselling: Air - IGNOU Experience*

- Dr P.N. Pandit (IGNOU): *Pedagogical Considerations in Designing a Course in Business English to be offered by Distance-Mode*
- Ms Daing Zaidah Ibrahim (UNITAR): *Learning Support and Instructional Management Systems for University on Air Program*
- Dr Saraswati Rao (BRAOU): *Potential and Limitations of Information Technology in Distance Education: A Case Study of Dr B.R. Ambedkar Open University*
- Dr D.B. Negi (IGNOU): *Impact of IGNOU on Disadvantaged Groups – A Critical Assessment*
- Prof. N.R. Arthenayake (SLOU): Participated in the project meeting “Asian Women Getting Access to Distance Education”, AAOU EB and GB Meetings as well as the main conference
- Prof. Azfal Mohamad (BRAOU): Participated in GB Meeting of AAOU and the main conference

The following were offered awards but were not able to take them up:

- Dr Dushanti Hoole (SLOU)
- Prof. Aminul Islam (BOU)
- Dr K Murugan (UWI)
- Dr Azmuddin Ibrahim (UiTM)
- Dr S K Gandhe (IIE, PUNE)

Consequently, the funds were not fully used and a balance of US\$940 resulted. Approval was given by COL for the balance to be kept in the AAOU account for use in staff development activities at a future date.

(ii) UNESCO-PROAP Awards (14 Awards)

- Prof. Asha S. Kanwar (IGNOU): *Women Technology and Distance Education*. She also participated in the “Asian Women Getting Access to Distance Education” meeting
- Dr Manjulika Srivastava (IGNOU): *Integrating New Information Technologies in Distance Education: Experience of IGNOU*
- Dr Kamlesh Sharma (Kota OU): *Student Support Services and Satisfaction Level of Distance Learners – A Case Study*
- Ms Liza Carascal (UPOU): *Students Success Programs towards Improving Student Retention*
- Prof. Myrna S. Rodriguez (UPOU): *The Benefit of a Student Support System*
- Dr Siowck-Lee Gan (UPM): *Faculty Perspective about Distance Education and Perceived needs for Professional Development*
- Prof. Monira Hossain (BOU): *Impact of Multi-media as an Information Technology in Distance Education*. She also attended the “Asian Women Getting Access to Distance Education” meeting
- Ms Shi Hongzhi (Guizhou RTVU): *Research and Practice on the Open & Distance Learning for Army Soldiers*
- Ms Fan Yueyuan (GanSu RTVU): *Using the advantages of RTVUs to Positively Develop the Vocational Training for Rural Areas*

- Ms Fu Fengying (NingXia RTVU): *The Reasonable Use of Educational Resources and the Sustainable Development*
- Ms Zhang Yunxia (Qing Hau RTVU): *The Designing Programme of Learning Models in Open and Distance Education*
- Ms Mao Donghui (Ning Bo RTVU): *A Case Study of Real-time In-service Distance Trainin*
- Ms Bin Yi (Shanghai TVU): *Modern Educational Technology and RTVUs' Teaching*
- Ms Fuping Wu (Fujian RTVU): *An Attempt to On-line Teaching at Perfecture and City Level*

d) Inter-University Staff Exchange Scheme

This scheme was reactivated in 1999 through the generosity of IGNOU and OUHK who offered 4 and 2 fellowships respectively. Each fellowship was for a month long visit to the host institution for research and/or training. The host provides office space, support for accommodation as well as a living allowance while the recipient institution has to bear the travel costs as well as the salary of their staff.

Recipients of IGNOU fellowships were: (4)

- Dr G. Kulathunga, Open University of Sri Lanka
- Dr Margaret Taplin, Open University of Hong Kong
- Dr Arsalan Sabet Seidi, Payame Noor University
- Dr Mahbubul Alam, Bangladesh

while ~~(OUHK)~~ (2)

- Dr G. Mohanram, Madurai Kamaraj University
  - Prof. V. Venkaiah, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University
- received OUHK fellowships.

All visiting fellows found the experience very positive for their own development and useful networking took place.

Although the lead provided by IGNOU and OUHK in this activity was most encouraging, this was, however, not emulated by other members despite regular appeals by the Secretariat. There is a need for other AAOU members to contribute to this staff exchange scheme in order to ensure its sustainability *How about other EB members?*

e) AAOU Net

The AAOU Net was enhanced with the establishment of numerous useful links including linkage to websites of member institutions. A number of applications were also received via forms posted on the website.

*Asian only.*

f) International Collaboration and Promotion

In an attempt to further promote the Association, the President and Secretary-General participated in a number of international events as representatives of AAOU. For all these activities, only the Secretary-General's expenses were borne by the Association.

i) Commonwealth Forum: 1 - 5 March 1999 in Brunel

On the invitation of COL, the President and the Secretary-General participated in a meeting of 19 National and Regional Associations of Open and Distance Learning in the Commonwealth. Amongst the issues discussed were the formation of a Federation of Commonwealth Associations of ODL and the holding of a triennial Commonwealth Forum. Subsequent to the event, the Secretary-General also served as a member of the panel for the evaluation of bids and the selection of the next host for the 2002 Commonwealth Forum.

At the Commonwealth Forum, the Secretary-General mounted a poster to introduce the AAOU and promote its activities besides serving as the Chair of two technical sessions.

ii) ICDE's 19<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Open Learning and Distance Education: 20 - 24 June 1999 in Vienna

The AAOU collaborated with the ICDE in this conference as a co-operating regional organisation. As part of this co-operation and taking advantage of the fact that many EB members were participating in the ICDE World Forum anyway, the Association held its XIII EB meeting in Vienna. The President and Secretary-General also participated in an International Roundtable hosted by ICDE and attended by leaders from other regional open and distance learning organisations from Europe, North America, South America, Australia and the Russian Federation. The Secretary-General also mounted a poster to promote the AAOU during the conference.

g) AAOU Development Plan (2000 - 2002)

Under the guidance of the President, a draft development plan, aimed at defining the areas of growth and activities of the Association on a three year cycle was produced by the Secretary-General. The draft was presented to the EB at its XIII meeting. Useful comments and suggestions were received. These were incorporated into the final version of the Development Plan which was subsequently endorsed by the XIV EB meeting and adopted by the XIII meeting of the General Board in Beijing. Consequent to this, amendments to the association's Constitution to enable the introduction of new categories of memberships viz Donor Supporting Member, Corporate Supporting Member and Individual Supporting Member were also passed by the General Board at the same meeting.

*New promotional Brochure*

h) Conclusion

Overall, the Association has had an active, eventful and successful year. The Secretary-General wishes to record his sincere thanks to the President for his support and guidance, Ms Rita Chui and Ms Winnie Wong for their hard work and all EB and GB members for their co-operation and support.

*Padoluna*

*Secretary-General*  
*A R R Ardu*