

AGENDA ITEM 3 - Annual Report 2001

1.0 Introduction

At the beginning of January 2001, the Association's membership stood at 48 (28 Full members and 20 Associate members) while its funds had an opening balance of US\$78,831.78.

Towards the third quarter of the year, the following applications were received:

- Shaanxi RTVU, China (Full membership)
- Universiti Tun Abdul Razak, Malaysia (Full membership)
- Henan RTVU, China (Full membership)
- Universidad Nacional de Educacion a Distancia (UNED), Spain (Assoc. membership)
- Open University Program, SIM, Singapore (Assoc. membership)
- Directorate of Distance Education & Technology, UBC, Canada (Assoc. membership)

An application was also received for the category of Individual Supporting Membership (ISM).

All institutional applications were processed by circulation and approved to start on 1 Jan. 2002 thereby increasing the total membership to 54 (31 Full Members and 23 Associate Members). The case of the ISM application was considered and approved at the XVI Meeting of the Executive Board.

At the end of the financial year, the closing balance stood at a very healthy US\$107,928.39, the first time ever that the Association's fund have exceeded the one hundred thousand dollar mark.

2.0 Changes in Executive Committee Membership

During the year, the following changes occurred in the membership of the Executive Committee due to retirement/resignation at the member institutions.

The following members retired:

- i) Prof. V C Prasad (IGNOU)
- ii) Prof. Cristina Padolina (UPOU)
- iii) Prof. M Qaisuddin (BOU)

- iv) Prof Ranjith Arthenayake (SLOU)
- v) Prof. Thiab Ayyoush (Al-Quds OU)

The Secretariat wishes to record a vote of thanks to the above individuals for their contributions to the Association. Their place on the Executive Committee were taken up by:

- i) Prof. H. P Dikshit (IGNOU)
- ii) Prof. Felix Librero (UPOU)
- iii) Prof. M Ershadul Bari (BOU)
- iv) Prof. Uma Coomaraswamy (SLOU)
- v) Prof. Younis Amr (Al-Quds OU)

3.0 Postponement of the Annual Meeting of the General Board and extension of the term of office of the President and Executive Board

The VX Annual Meeting of the General Board was originally scheduled for 31 October 2001. Included in the meeting agenda was the election of a new President and Executive Board whose term of office will start on 1 January 2002. Unfortunately, due to the outbreak of armed conflict in neighbouring Afghanistan following the 11 September incident in New York, the scheduled meeting had to be postponed to 20 February 2002. To avoid an administrative vacuum during the period 1 Jan 2002 to 19 Feb. 2002, the Secretary-General, on behalf of the Executive Board, circulated a paper to the general membership to seek their feedback on various operational options. Feedback from voting members showed unanimous support for the proposal to extend the term of office of the incumbent President and Executive Committee to 28 February 2002 in order to ensure administrative continuity and facilitate the smooth handover of responsibilities to the in-coming President and Executive Committee to be elected at the postponed Annual Meeting of the General Board rescheduled for 20 February 2002.

4.0 AAOU 2001 Annual Conference

The Association's annual conference 'AAOU2001', originally scheduled for 1-3 Nov. 2001, was postponed due to the outbreak of armed conflict in Afghanistan. It was subsequently successfully hosted by IGNOU from 21-23 Feb. 2002. The conference was attended by about 250 participants from 22 countries. The Opening Ceremony was officiated by the Honorable Vice President of India, His Excellency Krishan Kant. IGNOU Vice-Chancellor, Prof H P Dikshit delivered the welcoming speech while AAOU President, Prof. S W Tam spoke on behalf of the Association. The AAOU Award of Meritorious Service for the year 2001 was awarded to Prof. Wichit Srisa-an, founding Rector of STOU and founding

President of AAOU, for his lifelong contributions to open and distance education in Thailand as well as the Asian region.

During the three-day conference, plenary speeches were delivered by Prof. Otto Peters, Prof Fred Lockwood and Prof. Cookson. The four sub-themes viz ODL System: Imperatives and Responses; Curriculum, Pedagogy and Programs; Research, Training and Quality Assurance and Appropriate Technology attracted 60, 50, 25 and 45 paper presentations respectively.

In keeping with the improving standard of AAOU conferences, there were numerous good quality presentations. The best paper prize was awarded to Dr. Zhang Wei-Yuan and Ms Susan Ha of the Open University of Hong Kong for their paper entitled: *An investigation into the Learning-attitude, Motivation and Preference of the Older Adults in Hong Kong.*

Two pre-conference workshops were also held:

- **Outreach Library Services for Distance Learners** attended by more than 35 participants. The workshop was organized by an IGNOU committee headed by Dr Neela Jagannathan.
- AAOU workshop on **Quality Assurance for Senior Management** attended by more than 25 Vice-Chancellors, Presidents as well as Senior Administrative and Academic Leaders. This UNESCO sponsored workshop was organized by the AAOU Secretariat and IGNOU with Prof. T M Wong, Ms Andrea Hope, Prof. Asha Kanwar and Dr Somchin Suntavaruk serving as facilitators.

As in previous AAOU conferences, participants were treated to a variety of local cuisines and cultural entertainment that were both stimulating and enriching. It was also encouraging to see an increasing number of younger participants at the conference. It is hoped that these trends will continue to be maintained at future conferences.

Overall, the host, IGNOU, led by Prof. H P Dikshit and his deputy Prof. S C Garg deserves our congratulations and heartfelt thanks for the excellent job they did in organizing the conference. The rather modest conference facilities at the Jamia Hamdard, not much changed since it last hosted the VII AAOU Conference in early 1995, was more than compensated by the enthusiasm and warmth with which the participants were received by the host and other colleagues from India. Many lasting friendships were formed during the conference. Undoubtedly they will be carried forward to future conferences.

We wish to record our thanks to the following persons who served on various

adjudication and selection committees:

- AAOU Award of Meritorious Services:

Prof. Hassan Zohoor (PNU, Chair)

Prof. Atwi Suparman (UT)

Prof. Shona Butterfield (NZOP)

Prof. Afzal Mohammed (BRAOU)

- Best Paper Award

Prof. Uma Coomaraswamy (OUSL, Chair)

Prof. Ann Floyd (UKOU)

Prof. S C Garg (IGNOU)

Ms Andrea Hope (COL)

5.0 Sponsorship for AAOU 2001

As in previous years, the Commonwealth of Learning generously provided a grant of CN\$5000 while UNESCO-PROAP provided a grant of US\$8233.19 to sponsor conference participants as well as the organization of a pre-conference workshop on *Quality Assurance for Senior Management*.

In the interest of providing support to as many delegates from developing countries as possible, these funds were disbursed in the form of COL and UNESCO-PROAP awards, each valued at the cost of the Conference Registration Fee. It was anticipated that armed with these awards, the recipients 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:

5.1 COL Awards

- Dr Muhammad Saadat Ali (BOU, Bangladesh)

Information Resource Centre: Mainstream for the Flow of Information For Lifelong Learning

- Ms Linda Austin (USP, Fiji)

Open and Flexible Learning through Telecommunication and Information Technology: The Case of the University of the South Pacific

- Ms Jayati Roy (UiTM, Malaysia)

The Learning Divide in Distance Education: Myth or Reality in the Malaysian Context

- Dr Rozhan Mohammed Idrus (USM, Malaysia)
Distance Learning Technologies: In Search of Networking
- Dr Andrew Chola Nyondo (UPNG, Papua, New Guinea)
Designing an Effective Learner-Support System
- Dr Inge P. Sonnekus (UNISA, South Africa)
Experiential Learning in Distance Education: Breaking the Isolation
- Dr Upali Vidanapathirana (OUSL, Sri Lanka)
Equality of Access to Social Science Education at Foundation Levels: The OUSL Experience
- Dr Hemamala Ratwatte (OUSL, Sri Lanka)
Providing Access to English in Sri Lanka: Can Equity be Achieved?
- Dr (Mrs) Saraswati Rao (BRAOU, India)
Women in Science Education: Enhancing Access through Distance Mode
- Mr Dinesh K. Gupta (Kota OU, India)
Marketing in Distance Education: Towards Developing a Conceptual Framework
- Ms Sunanda More (YCMOU, India)
E-learning: A New Tool of Education in YCMOU
- Mr Mahesh Kumar Muchhal (D.J. College, India)
Effectiveness of Video Instruction Strategies in General Science and Social Science at Secondary Stage of National Open School
- Dr M.K. Ghadoliya (Kota Open University, India)
Staff Development in Kota Open University: A Case Study
- Dr Balvinder Ghotra (Govt P.G. College, India)
Improving Quality of Open and Distance Education

- Dr J. Ramu Naidu (Andhra University, India)
Reaching the Unreached Using Modern Technology through Distance Education in India: Challenges and Opportunities
 - Dr Yaqub Ali Khan (Kota Open University, India)
A Study of Learner's Reaction on Interactive Radio Counselling
 - Dr Swapan Kumar Banerjee (Netaji Subhas Open University, India)
Distance Education: An Open Challenge in Learning
 - Dr P.K. Sahoo (U of Allahabad, India)
Attitude of Distance Learners towards Different ICT based Instruction
 - Ms Mpine Qakisa (UNISA, South Africa)
Learner Support in a Health Campaign Course to be Taught at a Distance
- Prof. Uma Coomaraswami (OUSL, Sri Lanka)
Participant of EB and GB meeting, Chair of Best Paper selection panel

5.2 UNESCO-PROAP Awards

- Dr. Bai Chongqi (Jiangsu RTVU, China)
Open and Distance Education – The First Selection of the Construction of Life-Long Education System for all the People
- Prof. Ge Xiaochun (Harbin RTVU, China)
The Construction of Network Learning Environment and Information Resources in Distance Education
- Prof. Zhang Cunku (Jiangsu RTVU, China)
Distance Open Education Practice in the Countryside in Jiangsu Province of China
- Mr. Gorky Sembiring (UT, Indonesia)
Factors affecting Student Performance: The Case of the Indonesian Open Learning University
- Prof. Atwi Suparman (UT, Indonesia)

Managing Quality and Accessibility in Open and Distance Learning: The Experience of Indonesia's Universitas Terbuka

- Ms. Farshideh Kazemi (PNU, Iran)
The Role of Distance Learning System for Education of Women in Developing Countries: The Case of Iran
- Prof. Abu Daud Silong (UPM, Malaysia)
Comparisons of Students' Perceptions between Three Models of Online Learning
- Ms. Daing Zaidah Ibrahim (UNITAR, Malaysia)
Readiness and Attitude Towards Online Learning among Virtual Students
- Ms. Maria Ana T. Quimbo (UPOU, Philippines)
A Model for Evaluating Distance Education Program
- Ms. Doreen Musson (UNISA, South Africa)
Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The Struggle for Equity for Women in the South African Market University
- Prof. Nthabiseng Audrey Ogude (Technikon SA, South Africa)
Quality in Academic Research: Challenges for Distance and Open Learning Institutions.
- Dr. Kolita S Weerasekera (OUSL, Sri Lanka)
Benchmarking a 'Performance Indicator' for Open and Distance Learning Institutions
- Prof. Phan Van Que (Hanoi OU, Vietnam)
Open Learning and Distance Education
- Dr. Ashok Sharma (Kota OU, India)
Sharing Courses through Institutional Collaboration: A Case Study
- Ms. Koushalya Barka (National Open School, India)
Role of Distance Education in Imparting Vocational Education at School Level
- Dr. B.K. Singh (Kota OU, India)

Quality Assurance in Open and Distance Education: A Case Study of Kota Open University

- Dr. Subhakanta Mohapatra (National Open School, India)
Personality Profile: Key o Access, Equality and Sustainability
- Dr. Shakeela Khanum (BRAOU, India)
Marketing and Services: A Case Study of Distance Education Institutions of Andhra Pradesh
- Prof. Satish Rastogi (YCMOU, India)
Development and Standardisation of an Attitude Scale for Counsellors of Undergraduate Programme Offered by Open Universities in India
- Dr. Romesh Verma (U of Jammu, India)
Technologia Ameliorating Quality Open Learning/Distance Education
- Dr. Dhananjai Yadav (U of Allahabad, India)
Attitude of Distance Learners towards Difference ICT based Instruction
- Mr. Sanjay Bhimashankar Ratnaparakhi (U of Mumbai, India)
Challenges of Policies and Planning to Provide Distance Education for the Mainstream of Education of University of Mumbai
- Dr. Sudhakar C Agarkar (Homi Bhabha, India)
Spreading Scientific Literacy among the Masses Through Distance Mode
- Dr. K. Parameswara Rao (Andhra U, India)
Changing Scenario of Distance Education in Andhra Pradesh
- Mr. Sanjay Gupta (U of Delhi, India)
Networking and Partnership in Open Distance Education

6.0 Inter-University Staff Exchange Scheme

Although IGNOU and OUHK continued to be the main contributors to this scheme, the year saw a welcomed contribution from STOU (4 fellowships) and

PNU. Each fellowship was for a month-long visit to the host institution for research and/or training purposes. The host institution 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.

As all visiting fellows have found the experience to be very positive for their own development as well as the sharing of work practices, it is hoped that the AAOU Secretariat will continue to encourage more member institutions to be contributors.

7.0 AAOU Net – A new address and a new look Web page

Beginning 2001 the AAOU Website was registered under its own domain name and its address was changed to www.aaou.net

Along with this change, the Website has been redesigned with more user-friendly features. As bandwidth is still a serious problem for the staff of many AAOU member institutions, the Website featured two versions: a text only version for those with bandwidth problems and a more fancy version for those with broadband connections links to the website of member institutions were updated and a 'hit' counter was installed.

8.0 International Promotion and Collaboration

i) The AAOU co-organized the International Conference on Learning and Teaching On-line: Practices Challenges and Prospects with UNESCO-PROAP and the South China Normal University. The conference, attended by more than 300 international and PRC delegates was held in the White Swan Hotel, Guangzhou from 10-12 January 2001.

ii) The Association collaborated with the COL on a project to develop a 'Quality Assurance Framework for Distance Education Institutions. The project team consisted of Dr Mike Robertshaw (OUHK), Prof. Asha Kanwar (IGNOU) and Dr Somchin Suntavaruk (STOU).

iii) The Association collaborated with the ICDE in the organization of the ICDE 21st World Conference scheduled to be held in Hong Kong from 1-5 June 2003.

iv) The President, Prof. S.W. Tam, represented the AAOU in a number of conferences organized by member institutions in China and Sri Lanka. In most of these he delivered keynote addresses.

v) The Secretary-General, Prof. T.M. Wong served as a member of COL's Evaluation Committee to decide on the bids for the hosting of the Commonwealth Forum in 2002.

9.0 Conclusion and acknowledgement

Overall, the Year 2001 was another rather successful year despite some disruptions caused by global events beyond our control. The Secretary-General wishes to record his sincere thanks to the President for his support and guidance and to all EB and GB members for their co-operation and support. It is a pleasure to record a big 'thank you' to Dato' Prof G Dhanarajan (and COL) as well as Prof. Wang YiBing (and UNESCO-PROAP) for their strong and sustained support of the Association's activities throughout the years. Last, but not least, I thank Ms Rita Chui (up to August 2001), Ms Doris Mao (from September 2001) and Ms Winnie Wong, for their hard work and contributions.

The Board is requested to consider and adopt this report.