

ANNUAL REPORT

2015

THE ASIAN ASSOCIATION OF OPEN UNIVERSITIES





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1 INTRODUCTION

This report offers an account of the activities of the AAOU conducted in 2015 as well as the decisions of the Executive Committee and General Body Meetings. It also incorporates the 29th AAOU Annual Conference 2015 event and some of the actions taken based on the Minutes of the Meetings.

2 MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

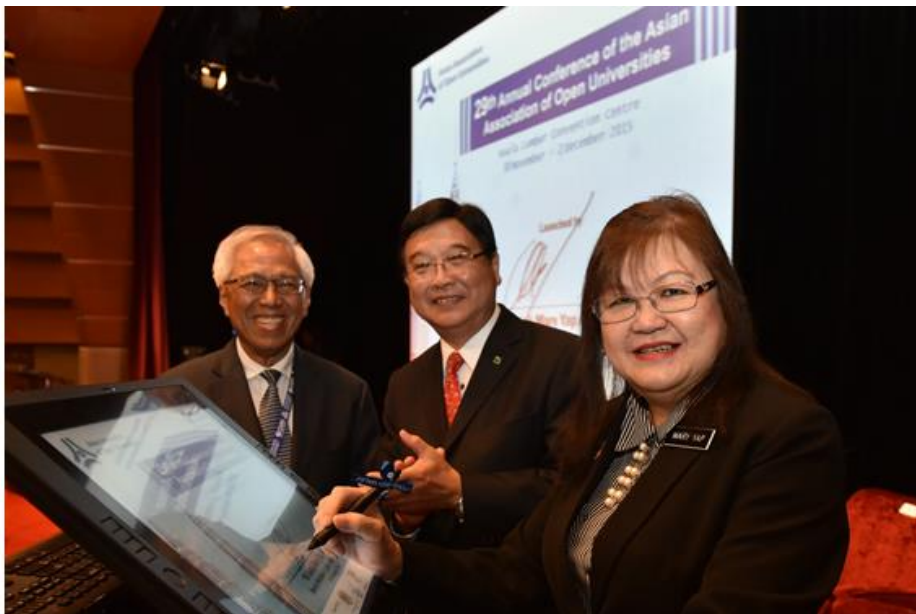
2.1 AAOU ANNUAL MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND GENERAL BODY 2015

The 30th AAOU Annual Meeting of the Executive Committee (EC) was held at the Traders Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 30 November 2015. The 29th Annual Meeting of the General Body (GB) was held at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 1 December 2015. Open University Malaysia (OUM) was the host for the 29th AAOU Annual Conference.

Minutes of the EC and GB meetings in 2014 were circulated via email to all members for their comments and feedback. There was no need to make any amendments or corrections to the minutes.

2.2 AAOU ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2015

The 29th AAOU Annual Conference was organised successfully by Open University Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 30 November to 2 December, 2015 on the theme 'New Frontiers in Open and Distance Learning (ODL)'.



The Deputy Minister of Higher Education of Malaysia, YB Datuk Mary Yap Kain Ching, officiated the AAOU 2015 with the AAOU President, Professor Yuk-Shan Wong, and OUM President, Ybhg Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Anuwar Ali.



The 29th AAOU Annual Conference brought together about 250 international and local delegates who came from over 15 different countries. Participants comprised Vice-Chancellors, Rectors, Presidents, scholars, senior administrators and policy-makers representing the open universities in the Asian region and other ODL institutes or organisations. On 30 November 2015, the conference was officiated by the Deputy Minister of Higher Education of Malaysia, YB Datuk Mary Yap Kain Ching.

This annual conference featured five keynote speeches, a Presidents' Forum, and five parallel sessions. The Conference aimed to be a catalyst for knowledge-sharing among participants, particularly in areas related to the following sub-themes:

- New Paradigm for Open Universities
- Technology as Drivers in ODL
- New Research and Practices in ODL
- Quality Assurance in ODL
- Open Knowledge Movement.

The details of the five keynote speeches are as follows:

Keynote Speeches	
Speaker	Topic
Dr Kam-cheong Li Secretary-General, the Asian Association of Open Universities	New Research and Practices in ODL
Prof. Dato' Dr. Halimah Badioze Zaman Head of ICT Cluster, National Professor Council, Malaysia	Technology as Drivers of ODL
Professor Asha Kanwar President and CEO, the Commonwealth of Learning	New Paradigm for Open Universities
Professor Nageshwar Rao Vice Chancellor, Indira Gandhi National Open University	The Open Knowledge Movement
Professor Tian Belawati Rector, Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia	Quality Assurance in ODL

The Presidents' Forum was held before the closing ceremony. Four Heads of open universities were invited to give short presentations and discuss the topic 'The Way Forward for Open and Distance Learning' for their countries, viz.

- Professor Yoichi Okabe, President, The Open University of Japan, Japan
- Professor Dongkook Lee, Acting President, Korea National Open University, Korea
- Professor Ho Sinn Chye, Vice-Chancellor, Wawasan Open University, Malaysia
- Professor Grace Javier Alfonso, President, University of Philippines Open University, the Philippines.



Four guests expressed their views on the Presidents' Forum, with Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Anuwar Ali (middle) facilitating the discussion.

The Conference closing ceremony was officiated by Ybhg Professor Dato' Dr Mansor Fadzil, the Senior Vice President and Conference Chairman. The AAOU Paper Awards were presented by YABhg Tun Jeanne Abdullah, the OUM Chancellor, and the Meritorious Service Award by Professor Yuk-Shan Wong, the AAOU President.

2.3 AAOU AWARDS AND THE WINNERS

(I) 2015 AAOU MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD

The AAOU Secretariat received a total of three nominations for the 2015 AAOU Meritorious Service Award (MSA), as follows:

No.	Nominee
1.	Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Anuwar Ali President/Vice-Chancellor, Open University Malaysia (OUM)
2.	Professor Younis Amr President, Al-Quds Open University (QOU)
3.	Professor Javaid Iqbal Syed former Vice Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU).

The nominations were assessed and evaluated by an Adjudication Committee chaired by Tan Sri Professor Emeritus Dato' Gajaraj Dhanarajan, Chairman of the Board of Governors, Wawasan Open University, assisted by Dr Grace Javier Alfonso, Chancellor of the University of the Philippines Open University, and Assoc. Professor Chailerd Pichitpornchai, President, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University.

The Adjudication Committee unanimously recommended Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Anuwar Ali as the recipient of the 2015 AAOU Meritorious Service Award, and the recommendation was accepted by the President and then approved by the Executive Committee by circulation.



Professor Wong presenting the Meritorious Service Award to the recipient, Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Anuwar Ali.

(II) AAOU BEST PAPER AWARD

The Adjudication Committee for the 2015 Best Paper Award consisted of the following persons:

Chair: **Professor Yoichi Okabe**, President, the Open University of Japan,
 Members: **Dr Mishra Sanjaya**, Education Specialist, Commonwealth of Learning
Dr Kin Sun Yuen, Director, Educational Technology and Publishing Unit, The Open University of Hong Kong.

The Academic Sub-Committee of the Conference Organising Committee selected 14 papers from about 150 submitted full papers for further evaluation by the Adjudication Committee. The Adjudication Committee assessed the 14 papers and shortlisted six papers as the 2015 Best Paper Award finalists. The details of the six finalists are as follows:

Paper ID	Title	Author(s)	Institution(s)
34	Cultural Considerations for Online Learning: Transnational Faculty Perspectives	Buddhini Gayathri Jayatilleke, and Charlotte Nirmalani Gunawardena	The Open University of Sri Lanka University of New Mexico
63	Profiling Information-Seeking Behaviour of Distance Learning Students in Wawasan Open University	S. Vighnarajah P. K. Selvarajah, Farzanah Ali Hassan, Norhasni Abd Aziz, and Ooi, Siew Lee	Wawasan Open University



80	The Design, Development and Learning Support of a Learning Management System for ODL	Intan Shuhada Mohd Alwi, Tick Meng Lim, and Safiah Md Yusof	Open University Malaysia
109	Prioritizing Services and Facilities in a Higher Education Institution: Importance-Satisfaction Quadrant and Gap Analyses	Latifah Abdol Latif, Ramli Bahroom, and Mohamad Afzhan Khan Mohamad Khalil	Open University Malaysia
133	OER Impact Study Perceived by Faculty within an ODL Framework	Maximus Gorky Sembiring	Universitas Terbuka
175	Exploring the Barriers and Remedies for the Prolonged Time Taken to Complete the Bachelor's Degree Programmes Offered by The Faculty of Engineering Technology – the Open University of Sri Lanka	Shriyangi Aluwihare, Wasana Sirisena, Nadeesha Abeysekera , and Shammi de Silva	The Open University of Sri Lanka

On 30 November, the Adjudication Committee further evaluated the six finalists based on the quality of the oral presentations given by the authors. Three papers were selected as winners of the Best Paper Award competition. The results were approved by the President and announced during the closing ceremony. The Best Paper Award medal winners were:

Best Paper Award	Author(s) and Institution(s)	Paper ID and Title
<i>Gold Medal</i>	Maximus Gorky Sembiring Universitas Terbuka	<u>Paper 133</u> OER Impact Study Perceived by Faculty within an ODL Framework
<i>Silver Medal</i>	S. Vighnarajah P. K. Selvarajah, Farzanah Ali Hassan, Norhasni Abd Aziz, and Ooi, Siew Lee Wawasan Open University	<u>Paper 63</u> Profiling Information-Seeking Behaviour of Distance Learning Students in Wawasan Open University
<i>Silver Medal</i>	Latifah Abdol Latif, Ramli Bahroom, and Mohamad Afzhan Khan Mohamad Khalil Open University Malaysia	<u>Paper 109</u> Prioritizing Services and Facilities in a Higher Education Institution: Importance-Satisfaction Quadrant and Gap Analyses

(III) AAOU BEST PRACTICE AWARD

The Best Practice Award was implemented for the second year to promote the sharing of



good practices in ODL. The Adjudication Committee (AC) for the 2015 Best Practice Award consisted of the following:

Chair: **Professor Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye**, President, Wawasan Open University
 Members: **Professor Tian Belawati**, Rector, Universitas Terbuka
Dr Patricia Arinto, Dean & Professor (Distance Education & e-Learning), University of the Philippines Open University
Professor Tsuneo Yamada, Professor, Center for ICT and Distance Education, the Open University of Japan

The Academic Sub-Committee of the Conference Organising Committee selected 13 papers from submitted full papers for further evaluation by the Adjudication Committee. One of the shortlisted papers was written by the Secretary-General, who withdrew from the competition for the award as he administered the adjudication process. The Adjudication Committee then assessed the 12 papers and shortlisted six papers as the 2015 Best Practice Award finalists. The details of the six finalists are as follows:

Paper ID	Title	Author(s)	Institution(s)
39	Open Access Repositories on Open Educational Resources: Feasibility of Adopting the Japanese Model for Academic Libraries	Chew Bee Leng, Kamsiah Mohd Ali, and Ch'ng Eng Hoo	Wawasan Open University
205	Transforming Future Public Health Professionals through Open and Distance Learning (ODL): Case Study of UPOU's International Health Programme in the Philippines	Satwinder Rehal	The University of the Philippines Open University
211	Peer-facilitated Discussions to Enhance OER-based E-Learning	S. P. Karunanayaka, J.C.N. Rajendra, H.U.W. Ratnayake, and S. Naidu	The Open University of Sri Lanka Monash University
242	The Growth of iRadio OUM as a Quality Audio Learning Material Provider	Umi Hanim Mohd Ibrahim, Fathinirna Mohd Arshad, Mazlan Zulkifly, and Janet Woo Tai Kwan	Open University Malaysia
244	Integrated Laboratory Experiment Setup to Empower Engineering Education in the Distance Mode	W. A. Rasika Nandana, and W.R. de Mel	The Open University of Sri Lanka



259	Blended Learning for Building Student-Teachers' Capacity to Learn and Teach Science-related Interdisciplinary Subjects: The Case of Hong Kong	Yeung Chung Lee, Hong Kong Institute of Education Kwok Chi Lau, and Valarie Yip, The University of Hong Kong, China	Hong Kong Institute of Education
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On 1 December, the Adjudication Committee further evaluated the six finalists based on the quality of the oral presentations given by the authors. Three papers were selected as winners of the Best Practice Award competition. The results were approved by the President and announced during the closing ceremony. The medal winners of the Best Practice Award were:

Best Practice Award	Author(s) and Institution(s)	Paper ID and Title
<i>Gold Medal</i>	Umi Hanim Mohd Ibrahim, Fathinirna Mohd Arshad, Mazlan Zulkifly, and Janet Woo Tai Kwan Open University Malaysia	<u>Paper 242</u> The Growth of iRadio OUM as a Quality Audio Learning Material Provider
<i>Silver Medal</i>	Chew Bee Leng, Kamsiah Mohd Ali, and Ch'ng Eng Hoo Wawasan Open University	<u>Paper 39</u> Open Access Repositories on Open Educational Resources: Feasibility of Adopting the Japanese Model for Academic Libraries
<i>Silver Medal</i>	Yeung Chung Lee, Kwok Chi Lau, and Valarie Yip, Hong Kong Institute of Education The University of Hong Kong, China	<u>Paper 259</u> Blended Learning for Building Student-Teachers' Capacity to Learn and Teach Science-related Interdisciplinary Subjects: The Case of Hong Kong

(IV) AAOU YOUNG INNOVATOR AWARD (YIA)

The Young Innovator Awards Adjudication Committee for 2015 comprised the following members:

- Chair: **Professor Naveed A. Malik**
President, Virtual University of Pakistan
- Members: **Dr Andy Liew, Director**
Directorate of Quality Assurance and External Relations, Wawasan Open University
- Professor Robert Fox**
Deputy Director Learning and Teaching Unit, University of New South Wales

Out of the six papers chosen by the Conference Organising Committee, the YIA Adjudication Committee selected the following three papers as the winners of the YIA category:



Young Innovator Award	Author(s) and Institution(s)	Paper ID and Title
Gold Medal	Billy Tak-ming Wong The Open University of Hong Kong, China	<u>Paper 28</u> Factors Leading to Effective Teaching of MOOCs
Silver Medal	Hazalina Hashim Open University Malaysia, Malaysia	<u>Paper 72</u> Ontological Structure Representation in Reusing ODL Learning Resources
Silver Medal	Reinald Adrian Pugoy The University of the Philippines Open University, the Philippines	<u>Paper 156</u> Mobile Solutions for Synchronized and Offline Versions of Open Educational Resources

3 MEMBERSHIP

3.1 TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

The following members who were in arrears for more than three years are listed below:

Full members

- Netaji Subhas Open University, India
- Universiti Tun Abdul Razak, Malaysia

Associate members

- Xaviers Institute of Business Management Studies, India

As there was no response despite numerous reminders through the various modes of communications adopted by the AAOU Secretariat, these members were removed from the AAOU membership list at the end of 2015.

3.2 NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

The Executive Committee approved two out of the six applications submitted in 2015. The details and status of the approval are shown in the following table:

No.	Institution	Type of Membership	Decision
1.	Islamic Online University, The Gambia	Associate Member	Approved for Associate Membership (It is a recognized ODL institution located in a non-Asian region.)
2.	Polytechnic University of the Philippines Open University System	Full Member	Approved for Full Member (It is a recognized ODL institution located in an Asian region.)

These institutions had remitted their membership fees and hence their membership commenced from January 2015.



3.3 WITHDRAWAL OF MEMBERSHIP

The following three institutions withdrew from their membership in 2015:

1. Simon Fraser University, Canada
2. Korea Soongsil Cyber University, Korea
3. International Culture University, Bangladesh

4 AAOU STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT REPORT FOR YEAR 2015

According to the audited statement of accounts, there was an opening balance of USD340,508 at the beginning of the year 2015. The closing balance as of 31st December 2015 was USD355,553 which reflects a net increase of USD15,045 in the Association's funds. AAOU granted a subsidy of USD3,000 to meet a portion of the cost for conducting the 29th AAOU Annual Conference.

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) provided a grant of USD3,620 to cover the registration fees and accommodation subsidy of selected participants attending the 29th AAOU Annual Conference.

5 THE AAOU INTER-UNIVERSITY STAFF EXCHANGE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

The AAOU Inter-University Staff Exchange Fellowship Programme aims to provide a platform for capacity-building and the establishment of sustainable partnerships, as well as fostering the exchange of knowledge and promotion of mutual understanding among staff of Asian open universities.

In 2015, the following four institutions offered fellowships to deserving candidates in the AAOU Inter-University Exchange Fellowship Programme:

1. Shanghai Open University, China
2. Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia.
3. Institute of Distance and Open Learning, Gauhati University
4. Korea National Open University, South Korea.

The details of the recipients and their research proposal titles are indicated in the following tables:

Fellowships offered by Shanghai Open University			
First round (period: 1–12 June)			
Name	Post	University	Research proposal title
Dulmaa Dagvadaash	Vice director	E-Open Institute, Mongolian University of Science and Technology, Mongolia	Organizational and pedagogic model for open and distance learning: Comparison study between Shanghai Open University and Mongolian Open Institute



Hla Tint	Rector	Yangon University of Distance Education, Myanmar	Comparative study on quality assurance in open and distance learning between Shanghai Open University, China and Distance Universities of Myanmar
Ku Azam Tuan Lonik	Senior Lecturer & Deputy Dean	University Sains Malaysia, Malaysia	Engaging student-learners in distance education: Exploring opportunities

Second round (period: 2–13 November)

Name	Post	University	Research proposal title
Ginta Ginting	Lecturer	Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia	Model for enhancing MOOCs quality through analysing the acceptance level of participants: Comparative study between Universitas Terbuka and Shanghai Open University
Wai Wai Nyunt	Head of IT and International Relation Division	Yangon University of Distance Education, Myanmar	How the use of technology affects the motivation of distance learners of universities of distance education in Myanmar
Kamran Mir	Asst. System Programmer	Allama Iqbal Open University, Pakistan	A comparative study of student support services at AIOU and SOU

Fellowships offered by Universitas Terbuka Indonesia

Name	Post	University	Research proposal title
Dr Muhammad Tanveer Afzal	Assistant Professor	Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad, Pakistan	Role of social capital towards paradigm shift of teaching as design science for the Faculty of Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia
Prof. Dr Thazin Lwin	Professor	Yangon University of Distance Education (YUDE), Myanmar	A comparative study of online-learning materials for Environmental Chemistry in YUDE, Myanmar and those of UT, Indonesia

Fellowships offered by the Institute of Distance and Open Learning, Gauhati University

Name	Post	University	Research proposal title
Dr Nay Mar Soe	Associate Professor	Yangon University of Distance Education (YUDE), Myanmar	An online learning approach to organic chemistry for YUDE students: A comparative study with Indian learners



Gurjah Urtnasan	Senior Lecturer	Mongolian University of Science and Technology, Mongolia	E-learning for university students: A comparative study of Mongolian and Indian university students with special reference to Gauhati University
Dr Mohammad Habibur Rahman	Professor	Bangladesh Open University, Bangladesh	Instructional materials development process in open and distance learning: A comparative study of Bangladesh Open University and Gauhati University.

Fellowships offered by Korea National Open University (KNOU)

Name	Post	University	Research proposal title
Tin May Htun	Professor, Head of Department of Law	Yangon University of Distance Education, Myanmar	A comparative study on quality assurance in open and distance learning between Korea National Open University and Distance Universities of Myanmar
Lilian Kek Siew Yick	Senior Instructor, Head, Centre for Assessment of Prior Learning	Open University Malaysia	A comparative analysis of recognition of prior learning between Korea National Open University and Open University Malaysia: Practices, challenges and future directions

6 AAOU JOURNAL

In 2015, two issues of the *AAOU Journal* were published on the AAOU website (http://aaou.ouhk.edu.hk/journal_all.htm). The first issue included five papers which won awards and two finalists in the 2014 AAOU Annual Conference. The details of the seven papers published in this issue were as follows:

AAOU Journal [Volume 10 (No. 1), June 2015]

Title	Author(s)	Institution
1. Student Satisfaction and Persistence: Imperative Features to Retention in Open and Distance Learning [Best Paper Award – Gold Medal]	Maximus Gorky Sembiring	Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia
2. Mobile Applications at a Mega University: Anadolu University Campus App [Best Practice Award – Silver Medal]	Ozgur Yilmazel, Erk Ekin	Anadolu University, Turkey



3.	Learner Autonomy through the Adoption of Open Educational Resources Using Social Network Services and Multi-media E-textbooks [Best Paper Award – Silver Medal]	Masumi Hori, Seishi Ono, Shinzo Kobayashi, Kazutsuna Yamaji, Toshihiro Kita, and Tsuneo Yamada	NPO CCC-TIES, Japan NPO CCC-TIES, Japan SmileNC & co., Japan National Institute of Informatics, Japan Kumamoto University, Japan and Open University Japan
4.	The potential of Mobile Phones to Transform Teacher Professional Development to Build Sustainable Educational Futures in Bangladesh [Best Practice Award – Gold Medal]	Christopher Walsh, Clare Woodward, Mike Solly, and Prithvi Shrestha	Torrens University Australia, The Open University, United Kingdom The Open University, United Kingdom The Open University, United Kingdom
5.	An Empirical Study on the Flipped Classroom in Open University Teaching Based on Ecological Perspective: A Case Study on Translation Theory and Practice Course [Young Innovator Award – Silver Medal]	Xiaoyang Shu	Zhejiang Radio & Television University, China
6.	Expanding the Frontiers of Engineering Education in Open Distance Learning by an Online Laboratory Platform [Best Practice Award – Finalist]	W.A. Rasika Nandana, W.R. de Mel, and H.D.N.S. Priyankara	The Open University of Sri Lanka
7.	Reflections on Blended Learning: A Case Study at the Open University of Hong Kong [Best Practice Award – Finalist]	Wing Bo Tso	The Open University of Hong Kong, China

The second issue of the *AAOU Journal* included two papers which won awards and one finalist in the 2014 AAOU Annual Conference, and three open submissions. The details of the six papers are as follows:

AAOU Journal [Volume 10 (No. 2), December 2015]

	Title	Author(s)	Institution
1.	Virtual Collaborative Learning Using Wiki for Adult ODL Learners: The Case of Wawasan Open University [Young Innovator Award – Gold Medal]	Ean-Teng Khor	Wawasan Open University, Malaysia
2.	Integration of Micro Lectures into the Blended Learning Discourse in Tertiary Education [Best Practice Award – Silver Medal]	Jie Xu, and Xiangyang Zhang	Jiangsu Open University, China
3.	Analysis of Online Learning Behaviour from a Tutor’s Perspectives: Reflections on Interactive Teaching and Learning in the Big Data Era [Best Paper Award – Finalist]	Yanhui Han, Shunping Wei, and Shaogang Zhang	The Open University of China, China



4.	Pedagogic Orientations of MOOC Platforms: The influence on Course Delivery	Billy Tak-ming Wong	The Open University of Hong Kong, China
5.	Accomplishment of Education in Open Universities through the Agency of Digital Media	Jean A. Saludadez	University of the Philippines Open University, The Philippines
6.	Examining Student Experience of Blended Learning from the Perspective of the Community of Inquiry Framework	Jeanne Lam	School of Professional and Continuing Education, The University of Hong Kong, China

7 THE 30TH AAOU ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN 2016

In December 2014 and June 2015, the AAOU Secretariat invited the Full Members to consider hosting the 30th AAOU Annual Conference in 2016. By September 2015, only one proposal was received, submitted by University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU).

The Proposal was circulated to Executive Committee members via email on 11 September for comments and approval. UPOU was approved as the host for the 2016 AAOU Annual Conference. Subsequently, a Memorandum of Agreement was signed between the AAOU and UPOU.

8 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE AAOU CONSTITUTION

In the 29th AAOU General Body meeting, the following change was approved to be made to the AAOU Constitution in Article VIII, Section 1 (amended version 2015):

- (iii) All candidates for the Executive Committee must have been a full member for the last three consecutive years, with membership payment fully settled.

9 PUBLISHING ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS

The President and Secretariat are keen to enhance communication among AAOU members and update them on the latest events and developments at member institutions in order to bring the most recent information directly to scholars and professionals. The AAOU continued to publish *AAOU News* and the *eBulletin* which were first published in 2014. In 2015, one issue of *AAOU News* and five issues of the *eBulletin* were published. In these e-communications, important events, such as international conferences on open and distance education, the offering of the Inter-University Staff Exchange Fellowship Programme by our member institutions, and the publication of the *AAOU Journal* were announced, and calls for paper submission and updated news from member institutions were delivered.



10 THE AAOU WEB-CONFERENCES

To share the latest knowledge, ideas and insights in the field of open and distance learning with scholars and professionals, the AAOU organised two web-conferences in 2015, as follows:

Date	Topic	Speakers
14 September 2015	Jumpstarting Mobile Learning through DIY Android Apps	Dr Ishan Abeywardena Director of International Academic Relations Division, The Open University of Sri Lanka
27 October 2015	OERu: Towards Sustainable Education Futures	Dr Wayne Mackintosh Director of OER Foundation and OERu facilitator

11 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Overall, the year 2015 was successful and eventful. The Association wishes to record its gratitude to all members of the AAOU Executive Committee and General Body for their support and cooperation. The AAOU is also grateful to COL for continuing its sponsorship to support the participation of deserving individuals in the AAOU Annual Conference.