ANNUAL REPORT

2016

THE ASIAN ASSOCIATION OF OPEN UNIVERSITIES

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FOREWORD

On behalf of the AAOU, I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to all members of the Executive Committee and General Body of the AAOU who have given the opportunity to the Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK) to lead the AAOU for the period 2014 to 2016.

As the immediate past President of the AAOU, I would also like to extend our great appreciation to all of you for the patience and trust in me and our Secretariat over the past three years. We have learned a lot from the Executive Committee which consisted of Allama Iqbal Open University, Hanoi Open University, Korea National Open University, Payame Noor University, The Open University of China, The Open University of Japn, Universitas Terbuka and Wawasan Open University, besides my institution, The Open University of Hong Kong.

During the period of my Presidency, the OUHK has tried its best to serve the AAOU members, and promote the reputation of the Association internationally. There have been several successful initiatives and developments:

- Introducing the Best Practice Award in the AAOU Annual Conference in 2014
- Joining the International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE) as a Member of Associations
- Initiating web-conferences delivered by renowned scholars, to let members know the latest ODL developments
- Facilitating our communication with members, through publishing electronic newsletters and e-bulletins
- Enhancing the *AAOU Journal*, with Emerald as the publisher, and expanding substantially its Editorial Board with nearly 20 internationally renowned experts
- Carrying out the *Asian MOOCs* project and developing the *Asian MOOCs* portal.

Being the only major association of open education institutions in Asia, the AAOU has strived to be an important regional platform for professional sharing and collaboration, and tried to help our member institutions to achieve new heights in teaching, scholarship and research. Without your enthusiastic support, contributions and cooperation, we would not have been able to achieve so much in the last three years.

I wish to congratulate Professor Melinda Bandalaria of the University of the Philippines Open University, who has been elected as the new AAOU President for the period 2017 to 2019. The Association will certainly continue to progress and reach greater heights under her leadership. Let me also congratulate the newly elected AAOU Executive comprising members from Allama Iqbal Open University, Indira Gandhi National Open University, The Open University of China, The Open University of Japan, Universitas Terbuka and Wawasan Open University.

With best wishes,

Professor Yuk-Shan Wong
Immediate Past President
1 January 2017

1   INTRODUCTION

The end of 2016 recorded another milestone in the history of the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU) as the beginning of 2017 will see Professor Melinda Bandalaria, the President of the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU) assuming the office of the AAOU President. The AAOU Secretariat will be relocated to the UPOU with Professor Grace Alfonso as the Secretary-General.

This report offers an account of the activities of the AAOU conducted in 2016, as well as the decisions of the Executive Committee and General Body Meetings. It also incorporates the 30th AAOU Annual Conference 2016 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 2016

The 31st AAOU Annual Meeting of the Executive Committee (EC) and the 30th Annual Meeting of the General Body (GB) were held on 26 October 2016 and 27 October 2016 respectively in Crowne Plaza Manila Galleria, Metro Manila, the Philippines. The University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU) was the host for the 30th AAOU Annual Conference.

Minutes of the EC and GB meetings in 2015 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 2016

The 30th AAOU Annual Conference was hosted successfully by the University of the Philippines Open University in Metro Manila, the Philippines from 26 to 29 October, 2016 on the theme 'Open Education in Asia: Changing Perspectives'.

The AAOU President, Professor Yuk-Shan Wong, delivers his welcoming speech at the Opening Ceremony of the 30th AAOU Annual Conference.

The 30th AAOU Annual Conference brought together about 500 delegates who came from over 15 different countries. The 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 26 October 2016, the conference was officiated by Dr Gisela Concepcion, Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of the Philippines; Professor Yuk-Shan Wong, President, Asian Association of the Open Universities; Dr Amelia A. Biglete, Director IV of the Office of Programs and Standards Development, the Commission on Higher Education of the Philippines; and Professor Melinda dP. Bandalaria, Chancellor, University of the Philippines Open University.

The AAOU 2016 featured two pre-conference seminars, four plenary sessions and five parallel sessions. The Conference aimed to bring together Asian ODL advocates, academics, administrators, policy-makers, practitioners, scholars and students to share experiences in open education and critical reflections on the region's contribution to the achievement of "a world of open, flexible and effective education for all", with focused discussions on the following sub-themes:

- Academic leadership in open and distance e-learning (ODeL)
- Open educational practices, open pedagogies
- Open educational resources (OER) and open online courses (including MOOCs)
- Digital and new media literacies
- Assessment of learning in ODeL
- Learning spaces and technologies in ODeL
- Learning analytics and learner support in ODeL
- Quality assurance in ODeL.

The details of the seminars and sessions in the conference were as follows:

	Topic	Speaker(s)
Pre-conference Seminar 1	**Learning Analytics**	**Dr Qiong Wang** Professor, Educational Technology and Director, X-Learning Centre, Peking University **Dr Bodong Chen** Assistant Professor, College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota
Pre-conference Seminar 2	**Open Publishing for Academics**	**Dr Laura Czerniewicz** Director, Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching, University of Cape Town
Plenary Session 1	**Open Education in Asia: Changing Perspectives**	**Professor Asha Kanwar** President and CEO, the Commonwealth of Learning
Plenary Session 2	**Include Them All!: Directions for Adoption of Learning Analytics in the Global South**	**Dr Dragan Gasevic** Professor and Chair in Learning Analytics, University of Edinburgh
	Using Data to Improve the Design of MOOCs	**Dr Qiong Wang** Professor, Educational Technology and Director, X-Learning Centre, Peking University
Plenary Session 3	**Trends in Digital Learning in Higher Education**	**Dr Cher Ping Lim** Professor, Curriculum and Innovations, the Education University of Hong Kong
	Challenging Open Education	**Dr Laura Czerniewicz** Director, Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching, University of Cape Town
Plenary Session 4	**Panel Discussion: ODL in Asia in the 21st Century**	**Professor Melinda dP. Bandalaria** Chancellor; University of the Philippines Open University **Professor Yoichi Okabe** President, Open University of Japan **Professor Samuel Anbahan Ariadurai** Vice-Chancellor, Open University of Sri Lanka

Plenary speakers at the Panel Discussion: Professor Melinda Bandalaria, Professor Yoichi Okabe, Professor Samuel Anbahan Ariadurai, and the moderator, Professor Tian Belawati

In the closing ceremony of the Conference, the AAOU Paper Awards and the Meritorious Service Award were presented by Professor Yuk-Shan Wong, the AAOU President. Then, Professor Wong, being the retiring AAOU President, expressed his gratitude for the contributions and support from the AAOU Executive Committee and General Body members in the past three years during his term as the AAOU President, and the effort and participation from the AAOU member institutions. A handover ceremony for the AAOU Presidency followed. After that, Professor Melinda Bandalaria, Chancellor of the University of the Philippines Open University, as the President-elect for the next term, thanked the AAOU members for putting their trust in her as the AAOU President for 2017–2019. She said that her wish was for a prospering AAOU, with the help and cooperation of the AAOU Executive Committee and the efforts of the future AAOU Secretariat.

Symbolic handover of the AAOU Presidency from Professor Yuk-Shan Wong to Professor Melinda Bandalaria

2.3 AAOU Awards and the Winners

(I) 2016 AAOU Meritorious Service Award

The AAOU Secretariat received two nominations for the 2016 AAOU Meritorious Service Award (MSA).

The nominations were assessed and evaluated by an Adjudication Committee chaired by Professor Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye, Vice Chancellor/CEO, Wawasan Open University, assisted by Professor Tian Belawati, Rector, Universitas Terbuka, and Professor Asha Kanwar, President, the Commonwealth of Learning.

The Adjudication Committee recommended Professor Grace Javier Alfonso, former Chancellor of the University of Philippines Open University, as the recipient of the 2016 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 Grace Javier Alfonso.

(II) AAOU Best Paper Award

The Adjudication Committee for the 2016 Best Paper Award consisted of the following members:

Chair: **Professor Yoichi Okabe**, President, the Open University of Japan,
Members: **Professor Kandarpa Das**, Former Director, Institute of Distance and Open Learning (Gauhati University)
Professor Naveed Malik, President, Virtual University of Pakistan.

The Academic Sub-Committee of the Conference Organising Committee selected 14 papers from the full papers submitted. One of the selected papers was written by the Secretary-General, Dr KC Li. For fairness, he withdrew from the competition for the award as he did in the previous year, since he administered the adjudication process. The 13 selected papers were then forwarded to the Best Paper Award Adjudication Committee which shortlisted six papers as the Best Paper Award finalists. The details of the six finalists are as follows:

Paper ID	Title	Author(s)	Institution(s)
78	Exploratory Study of Academic Excellence Associated with Persistence, Loyalty and Future Career Perceived by ODeL Students	Maximus Gorky Sembiring	Universitas Terbuka , Indonesia
116	A Soft Computing Model in Educational Data Mining: A Distance Learning Case Study	Choo Jun Tan, Chin Wei Bong, Ting Yee Lim and Andy Liew	Wawasan Open University , Malaysia
130	eLearning for Introductory Computer Science Concept on Recursion Applying Two Types of Feedback Methods in Learning Assessment	Lynnard Mondigo and Demelo Lao	University of the Philippines Cebu, the Philippines
133	Advancing Open and Distance Education through Learning Analytics: A Meta-Analysis of Case Studies	Billy Tak-Ming Wong	The Open University of Hong Kong, China
191	Face-to-face Sessions in Teaching and Learning Listening and Speaking Skills through the Distance Learning Method in the English for General Academic Purposes Classroom: Issues and Concerns	Nirosha Kushlani Abeysekera	Open University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka
238	Analyzing Students Online Learning Behaviour in Blended Courses using the Moodle Platform	Rodolfo Raga Jr. and Rosalina Estacio	Jose Rizal University, the Philippines

It was resolved in the Executive Committee meeting in 2016 that for reasons of fairness, the Secretary-General would not in future be a candidate for awards as she/he would administer the process of selecting winners.

On 26 October, 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 announced during the closing ceremony. The Best Paper Award medal winners were:

Best Paper Award	Author(s) and Institution(s)	Paper ID and Title
Gold Medal	**Maximus Gorky Sembiring** Universitas Terbuka	**Paper 78** Exploratory Study of Academic Excellence Associated with Persistence, Loyalty, and Future Career Perceived by ODel Students
Silver Medal	**Choo Jun Tan, Chin Wei Bong, Ting Yee Lim** and **Andy Liew** Wawasan Open University, Malaysia	**Paper 116** A Soft Computing Model in Educational Data Mining: A Distance Learning Case Study
Silver Medal	**Lynnard Mondigo** and **Demelo Lao** University of the Philippines Cebu, the Philippines	**Paper 130** eLearning for Introductory Computer Science Concept on Recursion Applying Two Types of Feedback Methods in Learning Assessment

(III) AAOU Best Practice Award

The Best Practice Award was implemented to promote the sharing of good practices in ODL. The Adjudication Committee (AC) for the 2016 Best Practice Award consisted of the following members:

Chair: **Professor Grace Alfonso**, Former Chancellor, The University of the Philippines Open University
Members: **Professor Kandarpa Das**, Former Director, Institute of Distance and Open Learning (Gauhati University)
           Dr Kin Sun Yuen, Former Director, Educational Technology and Publishing Unit, The Open University of Hong Kong.

The Academic Sub-Committee of the Conference Organising Committee selected 12 papers from submitted full papers for further evaluation by the Adjudication Committee. The Adjudication Committee then assessed the 12 papers and shortlisted six papers as the 2016 Best Practice Award finalists. The details of the six finalists are as follows:

Paper ID	Title	Author(s)	Institution(s)
31	A Design-Based Approach to Support and Nurture Open Educational Practices	Shironica Karunanayaka and Som Naidu	The Open University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka and Monash University, Australia
60	Quality Assurance in Learning Material Development : From Print to "E"	Nazrai Ahmad Zabidi, Syarifah Hidayatul Syed Husain, P. Rajesh Kumar, Woo Tai Kwan and Mansor Fadzil	Open University Malaysia, Malaysia
64	Integration of EBSCO Discovery Service Widget into the Learning Spaces of LMS: A Case Study of Wawasan Open University	Chew Bee Leng, Marnisya Abdul Rahim and Vighnarajah S.	Wawasan Open University, Malaysia

70	Development and Evaluation of Learners' Viewing Response Systems for Video Content as an Instruction and Learning Support Tool in Blended Learning	Junji Shibasaki	The Open University of Japan, Japan
82	How Non-Professionals Can Create a Broadcast-Quality e-Learning Course	Tomotsugu Kondo	The Open University of Japan, Japan
153	The Online Examinations in the Bengkulu Regional Office of Universitas Terbuka: An Innovation Diffusion Viewpoint	Sugilar Sugilar	Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia

On 27 October, 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 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
Gold Medal	**Shironica Karunanayaka** The Open University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka **Som Naidu** Monash University, Australia	**Paper 31** A Design-Based Approach to Support and Nurture Open Educational Practices
Silver Medal	**Chew Bee Leng, Marnisya Abdul Rahim** and **Vighnarajah S.** Wawasan Open University, Malaysia	**Paper 64** Integration of EBSCO Discovery Service Widget into the Learning Spaces of LMS: A Case Study of Wawasan Open University
Silver Medal	**Tomotsugu Kondo** The Open University of Japan, Japan	**Paper 82** How Non-Professionals Can Create a Broadcast-Quality e-Learning Course

(IV) AAOU Young Innovator Award (YIA)

The Young Innovator Awards Adjudication Committee for 2016 comprised the following members:

Chair: **Professor Tsuneo Yamada, Professor**, Center for ICT and Distance Education, The Open University of Japan

Members: **Dr Andy Liew, Director**, Directorate of Quality Assurance and External Relations, Wawasan Open University
Dr Maximus Gorky Sembiring, Associate Professor in Educational Management and Distance Education, Universitas Terbuka

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

Young Innovator Award	Author(s) and Institution(s)	Paper ID and Title
Gold Medal	**Mohamad Afzhan Khan Mohamad Khalil** Open University Malaysia, Malaysia	**Paper 2** Approaches to Student Support: Building a Structural Model to Confirm the Significant Effect of Open University Practices on Reducing Examination Anxiety

3   MEMBERSHIP

3.1   TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

The following member which was in arrears for more than three years is noted below:

Associate members
— Mahatma Gandhi University, India,

As there was no response despite numerous reminders through the various modes of communications adopted by the AAOU Secretariat, this member was removed from the AAOU membership register at the end of 2016.

3.2   NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

The Executive Committee approved four out of the five applications submitted in 2016. The details and status of the approval are shown in the following table:

No.	Institution	Type of Membership	Decision
1.	Inner Mongolia Radio & TV University, China	Full Member	Approved for **Full Membership**
2.	School of Open Learning, University of Delhi, India	Full Member	Approved for **Full Membership**
3.	St Paul University Philippines, the Philippines	Associate Member	Approved for **Associate Membership**
4.	Uttarakhand Open University, India	Full Member	Approved for **Full Membership**

These institutions had remitted their membership fees and hence their membership commenced from January 2017.

4   AAOU STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT REPORT FOR YEAR 2016

According to the audited statement of accounts, the cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year 2016 was USD355,553 and the cash and cash equivalents as of 31 December 2016 was USD363,730. AAOU granted a subsidy of USD3,000 to meet a portion of the cost for conducting the 30th AAOU Annual Conference.

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) provided a grant of USD3,859 to cover the registration fees and accommodation subsidy of selected participants attending the 30th 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 2016, the following four institutions offered fellowships to deserving candidates in the AAOU Inter-University Exchange Fellowship Programme:

1.   Shanghai Open University, China
2.   Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, Thailand
3.   Korea National Open University, South Korea
4.   Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia.

It was reported that only two successful applications were identified for each round of the Shanghai Open University fellowships. For the Universitas Terbuka fellowship, only one applicant had a research topic in line with the interest of the donor institution, and was offered the fellowship. As for the Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University fellowship, no successful application was identified. 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: 16–27 May)			
Name	**Post**	**University**	**Research proposal title**
Dr Sharker Md Numan	Associate Professor	Bangladesh Open University, Bangladesh	The Role of Instructional Designer to Develop E-learning and Blended Learning courses: A Comparative Study between Bangladesh Open University and Shanghai Open University
Hakan Altinpulluk	Research Assistant	Anadolu University, Turkey	Use of Augmented Reality Based e-Learning Applications in the Construction of Lifelong Learning

Fellowships offered by Shanghai Open University First round (period: 31 October–11 November)			
Name	**Post**	**University**	**Research proposal title**
Kwang Sik Chung	Professor	Korea National Open University, Korea	Design and Establishment of Digital Textbook for Programming Practice of Engineering Major Students in Shanghai Open University

Dina Mustafa	Lecturer	Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia	Comparative Analysis of Student Support Services for New Sophomore and Freshman Students at Universitas Terbuka and Shanghai Open University

Fellowships offered by Korea National Open University			
Name	**Post**	**University**	**Research proposal title**
Narantsetseg Yadmaa	Director	E-Open School, Mongolian University of Science and Technology, Mongolia	Cloud University and MOOCs
Muhammad Husni Arifin	Lecturer	Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia	Enhancing Student Persistence in the Open University: A Comparative Study between Universitas Terbuka and Korea National Open University

Fellowships offered by Universitas Terbuka			
Name	**Post**	**University**	**Research proposal title**
Tahira Bibi, PhD	Lecturer	Allama Iqbal Open University, Pakistan	A Comparative Study of Quality Assurance Practice in ODL at Allama Iqbal Open University Pakistan and University Terbuka

6 AAOU JOURNAL

In 2016, the *AAOU Journal* started to be published on the Emerald platform. Two issues were published on the Emerald website (http://www.emeraldinsight.com/loi/aaouj). The first issue included six papers which received awards and three finalists in the 2015 AAOU Annual Conference. The details of the nine papers published in this issue are as follows:

AAOU Journal **[Volume 11 (No. 1)]**

	Title	Author(s)	Institution
1.	Ontological Structure Representation in Reusing ODL Learning Resources **[Young Innovator Award – Silver Medal]**	Hazalina Hashim	Open University Malaysia, Malaysia
2.	Integrated Laboratory Experiment Setup to Empower Engineering Education in the Distance Mode **[Best Practice Award – Finalist]**	W.A. Rasika Nandana W.R. de Mel	The Open University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka
3.	The Growth of iRadio OUM as a Quality Audio Learning Material Provider **[Best Practice Award – Gold Medal]**	Umi Hanim Mohd Ibrahim Fathinirna Mohd Arshad Mazlan Zulkifly Janet Woo Tai Kwan	Open University Malaysia, Malaysia

	Title	Author(s)	Institution
4.	Open Access Repositories on Open Educational Resources: Feasibility of Adopting the Japanese Model for Academic Libraries **[Best Practice Award – Silver Medal]**	Chew Bee Leng Kamsiah Mohd Ali Ch'ng Eng Hoo	Wawasan Open University, Malaysia
5.	Cultural Perceptions of Online Learning: Transnational Faculty Perspectives **[Best Paper Award – Finalist]**	Buddhini Gayathri Jayatilleke	The Open University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka
		Charlotte Nirmalani Gunawardena	University of New Mexico, USA
6.	Prioritizing Services and Facilities in a Higher Education Institution: Importance-Satisfaction Quadrant and Gap Analyses **[Best Paper Award – Silver Medal]**	Latifah Abdol Latif Ramli Bahroom Mohamad Afzhan Khan Mohamad Khalil	Open University Malaysia, Malaysia
7.	OER Impact Study Perceived by Faculty Within ODL Framework **[Best Paper Award – Gold Medal]**	Maximus Gorky Sembiring	Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia
8.	Peer-Facilitated Discussions to Enhance OER-Based E-Learning **[Best Practice Award – Finalist]**	Shironica. P. Karunanayaka J.C.N. Rajendra H.U.W. Ratnayake	The Open University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka
		S. Naidu	Monash University, Australia
9.	Factors Leading to Effective Teaching of MOOCs **[Young Innovator Award – Gold Medal]**	Billy Tak-ming Wong	The Open University of Hong Kong, China

The second issue of the *AAOU Journal* will be published in December, including three papers with awards and two finalists in the 2015 AAOU Annual Conference, and two open submissions. The details of the seven papers are as follows:

AAOU Journal [Volume 11 (No. 2)]

	Title	Author(s)	Institution
1.	Profiling Information Seeking Behaviour of Distance Learning Students in Wawasan Open University **[Best Paper Award – Silver Medal]**	Vighnarajah Farzanah Ali Hassan Norhasni Abd Aziz Ooi, Siew Lee	Wawasan Open University, Malaysia

2.	Prolonged Time Taken to Complete the Degree Programmes at the Faculty of Engineering Technology of the Open University of Sri Lanka: Barriers and Remedies **[Best Paper Award – Finalist]**	Shriyangi Aluwihare Shammi De Silva	The Open University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka
3.	Transforming Future Public Health Professionals through Open and Distance Learning (ODeL): Case Study of UPOU's International Health Program in the Philippines **[Best Practice Award – Finalist]**	Satwinder Rehal	University of the Philippines Open University, the Philippines
4.	Blended Learning for Building Student-Teachers' Capacity to Learn and Teach Science-related Interdisciplinary Subjects: The Case of Hong Kong **[Best Practice Award – Silver Medal]**	Lee Yeung Chung Victor Lau Kwok Chi Valerie Yip Wing Yan	The Education University of Hong Kong, China The Chinese University of Hong Kong, China The University of Hong Kong, China
5.	Hybrid Online/Offline Mobile Solutions for Accessing Open Educational Resources in Areas with Poor Internet Connectivity **[Young Innovator Award – Silver Medal]**	Reinald Adrian DL. Pugoy Consuelo DL. Habito Roberto B. Figueroa, Jr	University of the Philippines Open University, The Philippines
6.	Clustering of Online Learning Resources via Minimum Spanning Tree **[Open Submission]**	Fu Lee Wang Qingyuan Wu Changchen Zhan Siyang Wang Zeping Tang	Caritas Institute of Higher Education, China Beijing Normal University, China Sun Yat-sen University, China Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd, China
7.	Trends in Open and Distance Learning Research: 2005 vs. 2015 **[Open Submission]**	Yuen Yee Wong Jing Zeng Chun Kit Ho	The Open University of Hong Kong, China

7 THE 31ST AAOU ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN 2017

In the Executive Committee meeting in 2015, it was resolved that the host for the AAOU 2017 would be Universitas Terbuka. A Memorandum of Agreement was signed between the AAOU and UPOU on 20 January 2016.

8 AAOU PRESIDENCY 2017–2019: NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

By the deadline of nomination, there was only one Presidency nominee. Two institutions put forward the same nominee, the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU), to be the next President of the Association. Also, the following institutions were nominated by two institutions to be Executive Committee members for the term 2017–2019:

Name of Institution	Representing Region
1. Allama Iqbal Open University, Pakistan	South-central Asia and West Asia
2. Indira Gandhi National Open University, India	South-central Asia and West Asia
3. The Open University of China, China	Eastern Asia
4. The Open University of Japan, Japan	Eastern Asia
5. Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia	Southeast Asia
6. Wawasan Open University, Malaysia	Southeast Asia

The General Body unanimously approved the nominations and the next term of the AAOU Presidency and Executive Committee was formed accordingly. Professor Melinda Bandalaria from the UPOU will serve as the new President of the AAOU for the term 2017 to 2019. With this succession, the AAOU Secretariat that was previously resided in the OUHK will be relocated to the UPOU in January 2017. As in previous practice, the immediate past president, the Open University of Hong Kong, would also serve as a member of the Executive Committee.

9 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE AAOU CONSTITUTION

In the 30th AAOU General Body meeting, an amendment to the AAOU Constitution was approved. Individual Membership will be granted by invitation or recommendation to distinguished individuals in the ODL field, rather than by application. The Individual Membership is an Honorary Membership. The relevant amendment has been made in the Constitution after the meeting, as follows.

Item	Approved Amendment
ARTICLE IV – Membership b) **Supporting Membership** for non-educational organisations that wish to support the aims and objectives of the Association and to participate in its activities in a meaningful way:	c) **Honorary Membership** for distinguished individuals who have made significant contributions to open and distance education and/or to the Association. An Honorary Member must be a senior academic or administrator (either serving or retired) of a member institution. He or she shall be nominated by the President/Vice-Chancellor/ Rector from at least two member institutions. Honorary Membership is officially approved by the Executive Committee at its annual meeting.

10   E-COMMUNICATION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The President and Secretariat are keen to enhance communication among AAOU members and update them on the latest events and developments at member institutions, as well as provide updated news about the AAOU and ODL field, in order to bring the most recent information directly to scholars and professionals. In 2016, five issues of the *eBulletin* and one issue of *AAOU News* were published, and four email announcements were delivered. 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. Also, calls for paper submission, award nomination, Presidency nomination, conference hosting proposals and updated news from member institutions were delivered.

11   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 2016, as follows:

Date	Topic	Speaker
11 October 2016	Machine Learning for Human Learning: LMS Data Matters!	Dr Pete Smith Chief Analytics Officer and Senior Associate Vice President, University of Texas at Arlington (UTA)
4 November 2016	Leadership in the 2020 Asian Context: Leading Change for Online Teaching and Learning	Professor Don Olcott, Jr Head of Campus – Virtual; Co-Director of the uImagine Digital Innovation Laboratory at Charles Sturt University, Australia

12   CONCLUDING REMARKS

Overall, the year 2016 was successful and eventful. The end of 2016 also marks a significant milestone in the history of the AAOU when the UPOU succeeds the OUHK to the AAOU Presidency for the next three-year term (2017–2019). 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.