

ALUS annual general meeting

11 January 2022, 17.30-19.00 (EET), held online in Zoom

Meeting minutes

Present in the online meeting: Lieven Ameel, Anni Lappela, Juho Rajaniemi, Michael G. Kelly, Patricia Garcia, Anubhav Pradhan, Giada Peterle, Minna Chudoba, Chen Bar-Itzhak, Riikka Pulkkinen, Davy Knittle, Hairong Chen, Lena Mattheis, Mozac Idrus, Meeria Vesala, Silja Laine, Elle-Mari Talivee, Markku Salmela, Maria Sulimma, Kai Tan, Chris Katzenberg, Jens Gurr, Marija Spirkovska

Acting president Lieven Ameel opened the meeting at 17.36. Anni Lappela is selected as a meeting secretary and she takes notes. The agenda of the meeting is accepted as proposed, no changes suggested.

1. Overview of ALUS activities in 2021

Lieven Ameel makes a brief overview of the ALUS activities in 2021.

ALUS participated in organizing two events in 2021. Local universities had the main responsibility, but ALUS acted as partner. Naturally, Covid-19 pandemic affected the activities and both conferences were organized in online format.

FRINGE/ALUS Symposium “Urban (Im)mobilities and Borderland Narratives” was held at Universidad de Alcalá, Alcalá de Henares (Madrid), Spain, online, 14-15 October 2021.

Patricia Garcia presents the symposium briefly. It was moved to online because of Covid-19. Two-day online symposium discussed intersectional perspectives on issues of mobility. Patricia Garcia tells, that they are planning a publication based on the symposium, possibly in the Literary Urban Studies series (Palgrave). There will be a separate call for proposals for the publication later.

ALUS collaborated also in the conference “Narrating the South Asian City: Critical Perspectives”, on 15 November 2021. The one-day conference was held in collaboration with IIT Bhilai, Department of Liberal Arts. Conference organizer Anubhav Pradhan presents the conference briefly. There are plans for publishing a special issue on conference topic later and discussions about papers for the issue are already going on.

Lieven Ameel presents three books, published by members of ALUS during 2021. All books are published in Literary Urban Studies series by Palgrave Macmillan, which aims to make urban literary studies more well-known and develop the field.

Literatures of Urban Possibilities (Palgrave, edited by Jason Finch, Markku Salmela and Lieven Ameel), based on ALUS conference 2017, came out in June 2021.

Lena Mattheis’ book *Translocality in Contemporary City Novels* and Patricia Garcia’s *The Urban Fantastic in Nineteenth Century Literature* were published in the series in 2021.

Also ALUS member Jens Gurr’s book *Charting Literary Urban Studies: Texts as Models of and for the City* (Routledge, 2021) came out last year.

2. ALUS Statutes draft

Lieven Ameel outlines the biggest changes in ALUS statutes draft before voting if members accept the changes.

The biggest changes are that we set up the position of a contact person in case of ethical misconduct or inappropriate behaviour (the name of the position can be change later). Besides that, there will 2022 onwards be only 4 members of the board without responsibilities (earlier: 5).

Minor changes in the status include for example mentions about possible travel grants for junior scholars, to enable their participation in the ALUS conferences. There is also added mention that ALUS is committed to follow TENK's ethical guidelines and reminds its members about their local ethical guidelines at their affiliations.

The status draft has been available on the ALUS website and everyone has had possibility to read it beforehand. The previous statutes are decided to put in the archive, so we can have it there and the new one visible on the website.

Kai Tan asks questions about the number of board members, how it has been decided. Lieven Ameel responses that sometimes we need to vote for decisions and a large number of board members could make that difficult, and this is why the number of the board members is decided to keep rather limited.

Silja Laine asks, if we need to mention the possible travel grants in the statutes since ALUS does not have any funds (or bank account). Lieven Ameel responses, that every conference can apply money for these grants when funding a conference. After a short discussion it is decided to keep the mention about travel grants in the statues, to remind conference organizers about the reality of the junior scholars and others, who has not a permanent position in the academia.

Vote for the new statues is organized in the chat. Statutes are accepted.

3. Discussing and voting for the new board

Patricia Garcia is the candidate for the position of vice president. Lieven Ameel brings forward his candidature as president. Lieven Ameel will be on paternity leave until June 2022, and Patricia Garcia has agreed to function as an acting president until June 2022. Lieven Ameel's aim is to act as transitional president for one year, after which a new president can be voted. The candidatures are confirmed by vote.

Normally board members can stay in their positions in 2 years, or maximum up to 4 years. Also one year is possible, but preferably two or more years.

Technical problems with the websites are briefly discussed, since only people with University of Helsinki login can now use the website. We can think this year (2022) what we should do with website in the future and explore new technical solutions.

Lieven Ameel suggests Riikka Pulkkinen as a new secretary. He asks, if other candidates for the position of secretary are available for the other positions, and they agree. Riikka Pulkkinen is voted as a secretary.

Chen Bar-Itzhak volunteers to continue as a newsletter editor, but also offers the position of someone is interested in it.

Kai Tan is selected as a contact person in the case of ethical misconduct. Anubhav Pradhan is selected in the position without responsibility.

Anubhav Pradhan, Liam Lanigan, Giada Peterle and Lena Mattheis are selected as board members without specific responsibilities. Anna-Leena Toivanen, Michael G. Kelly, Juho Rajaniemi and Silja Laine are selected as vice-members.

Lieven Ameal ends the meeting at 17.11 (EET).