

MINUTES

Australasian Speech Science and Technology Association Annual General Meeting

Monday 7th December 2020 at 1pm AEDT. Via Zoom.

Meeting was recorded, for minuting purposes only.

Overview

This meeting was held via Zoom, documents were made available to members in advance here:

<https://assta.org/assta-news/assta-agm/>

These included:

- 2019 ASSTA AGM minutes (which was a mail meeting)
- 2020 AGM agenda
- 2020 President's report
- 2020 Treasurer's report

Financial members voted on the Treasurer's and President's report, and those who voted are listed further below.

1. Acknowledgement of country

Felicity acknowledged the lands on which she was sitting at Macquarie University and acknowledged other lands on which members live and work.

2. Attendance (taken from Zoom participant information)

ASSTA exec members – Felicity Cox, Debbie Loakes, Janet Fletcher, Michael Tyler, Trent Lewis

Members – Catherine Watson, Laurence Bruggeman, Rosey Billington, Erich Round, Hywel Stoakes, Helen Fraser, Anne Cutler, Bruce Millar, Justine Hui, Mike Proctor, Sasha Calhoun.

(Quorum of financial members reached).

In attendance: Chris Davis

Apologies: Bronwen Innes, David Grayden, Karen Croot

3. Minutes from 2019 AGM

The minutes of the previous AGM were accepted by the meeting (moved by Marija Tabain and seconded by Rosey Billington)

4. President's report – Felicity Cox

Available via: <https://assta.org/assta-news/assta-agm/>

There was a poll for voting on the President's report, with 12 members voting and accepting the President's report. This was accepted in the meeting and moved by Marija Tabain and seconded by Rosey Billington.

Main points

Felicity congratulated everyone on resilience and determination across 2020 in the face of the CoVID-19 pandemic. She acknowledged innovations in getting research done.

Felicity acknowledged the unfortunate fact that we had to cancel SST 2020, and that research data could not be collected in the typical fashion. Cancellations occurred because of school closures and workplace shutdowns, home schooling, unemployment potential for families, and general uncertainty. ASSTA could also have incurred a financial loss. In hindsight, we could have had a virtual meeting but ASSTA still stand by the decision to cancel SST 2020.

Felicity reported we are now looking forward to SST 2022. Felicity called on members to think about hosting SST2022, potentially across institutions.

ASSTA had a new grant for 2020 called the "ASSTA CoVID-19 Special Conference Award Support", aimed at student and ECR members attending and presenting at virtual conferences. Two were awarded, one to Jenny Yu for Speech Prosody, and another to Josh Penney for Interspeech.

Two ASSTA Research Event Awards were given (\$5000 each), to Gerry Dochery, Janet Fletcher and Olga Maxwell for SocioPhonAus3 (Postponed) and to Jesin James, Catherine Watson and Peter Keegan for the "Speech Technology Research Hui at Auckland University" which is to go ahead in 2021 in person in NZ.

International meetings: ICPHS returned a small profit to ASSTA, Michael Proctor is engaged in discussions about Interspeech being held in Australia in 2026, The Australian Acoustical Society and The Acoustical Society of America were planning a joint meeting in 2021 but this is now postponed until 2023. ASSTA has expressed interest in being involved.

ASSTA was a signatory on the HASS letter opposing changes to the HASS degree fees. Members received communications about this.

Trent Lewis is stepping down from his role on the executive which he has held for 6 years. He has been instrumental in getting the new website up and running, and took responsibility for the grants programme. Felicity thanked Trent for his valuable service, and also thanked the other committee members.

Felicity reported that Trent's absence now leaves open a position on the committee which is subject to a vote between Sasha Calhoun and Michael Proctor. The voting remained open throughout the meeting.

Questions / discussion

- Marija Tabain commented that ICPHS organisation was a pleasure, with memories to last a lifetime. Marija's questions to Felicity were about conferences. She asked whether there was any reason why we cannot put SST 2022 forward to 2021 given we skipped a year. Relatedly, ASA is pinned for 2023 in Sydney which would give a nice two year timeframe. The question of hosting INTERSPEECH was also raised.

Felicity reported that INTERSPEECH may be hosted in Sydney but it is early days. Michael Proctor is trying to bring together engineering and speech science, that closer relationship occurred in the early days of ASSTA / SST. 2026 is more manageable for this conference. Felicity is aware that discussions are ongoing.

There was some discussion between Marija Tabain, Michael Proctor and Anne Cutler about where the year's conferences are traditionally held and what that will mean for upcoming events.

Felicity talked about two-year planning for SST needing a two-year window. Marija suggested combining ASA and SST but Felicity expressed concern that ASSTA would not have enough presence at such an event. Felicity said we could not mount a good plan for SST 2021, SST 2022 is much more viable.

5. Treasurer's report – Michael Tyler

Michael Tyler spoke to his report, also made available here:
<https://assta.org/assta-news/assta-agm/>

There was a poll for voting on the Treasurer's report, with 12 members voting and accepting the Treasurer's report. This was accepted in the meeting and moved by Marija Tabain and seconded by Rosey Billington.

The balance sheet was the main focus. As at ASSTA started the year at \$106,186.65. Total income was \$14,324.49 from membership fees, ICPHS proceeds, GST refund, IPA contribution for gifts to ICPHS organisers, small amount of interest from interest rates.

Michael reported interest rates are very low now, so this is not positive news for investments.

Expenditure were grants / awards and website costs (which will be lower in future years). ASSTA spent around \$10,000 total across 2020.

Michael reported that our main costs are grants and awards so we will monitor this into the future.

Online payment processor Stripe is now being used to manage online payments.

6. Social media – Debbie Loakes

Debbie provided an update; we now have a Twitter handle @real_ASSTA. Debbie encouraged members to send updates, and noted that social media often generates interest for new publications. Debbie also reported that all communications will of course be emailed to members as well. Finally, it was noted that the Twitter feed is also linked to our website.

7. Forensic committee – Debbie Loakes

Debbie reported that the ASSTA Forensic committee will be re-invigorated. Phil Rose has said he could remain as chair but would be willing to let someone else take the chair role, while he remains on the committee. Discussions are in place with Helen Fraser and Yuko Kinoshita also. Debbie reported that the Research Hub for Language in Forensic Evidence has started at The University of Melbourne, led by Helen Fraser and with Debbie as a Research Fellow; Helen and Debbie are keen to link back in with the ASSTA forensic committee and ASSTA community more generally.

8. Election of officers

Felicity reported that the positions of President, Secretary, Treasurer and one of the executive positions were unopposed. Current executive members will continue in these roles.

There was an online poll for the second executive member (Sasha Calhoun and Michael Proctor). Debbie Loakes had access to the voting poll and counted votes by named financial members. Debbie reported that she abstained from voting – it was a secret vote, visible only to Debbie because the votes needed verification.

Debbie told Felicity the winner and Felicity announced that Sasha Calhoun had won the most votes and welcomed her to the committee from 2021.

9. Spectrogram reading competition winners announced

A spectrogram reading competition was held online. There were winners within ASSTA who all won an IPA face mask from Lingthusiasm. Debbie ran this for the international community on Twitter which generated a lot of interest.

Team Macquarie: Anita Szakay, Josh Penney, Hannah White, Andy Gibson

Individual winners:

Karen Croot

Michael Scordilis

Marija Tabain

Chris Davis

10. Any other business

Sasha Calhoun asked if the organisation / Michael wanted to think about diversifying sources of income given rates so low. Michael said he is happy to consider this if people have information to share.

Anne Cutler said we could think about targeting investments (invest in shares) – other companies such as Appen have done well with this strategy. Anne and Sasha agreed rules would need to be checked.

Felicity said we need to work toward other sources of income such as commercialisation of corpora. Anne Cutler said this has happened with AusTalk, but Felicity is unable to comment on this currently.

Felicity closed the meeting at 1.40pm, thanking Trent again, and welcoming Sasha.

Debbie Loakes
ASSTA Secretary

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