

8th General Meeting of the Central European Association for Canadian Studies
Minutes
Budapest, Saturday 29 October 2022, 13.00-14.30

1. Opening

The meeting was opened at 13.12 and was conducted in English and French.
There were 33 members present.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was unanimously adopted.

3. President's Report on CEACS activities 2018-2022 (forwarded to members by e-mail in advance) – Katalin Kürtösi

KK thanked all and sundry; especially Denisa Krasna. KK also emphasized her ethos of “full transparency” in carrying out her work.

Despite the challenges of COVID, CEACS has managed to work smoothly; for example, we have organized celebrations of Margaret Atwood and Alice Munro, and events were offered online.

KK underlined the fact that no CEACS money was spent on these events.

KK reminded us that we offer various grants to our members, and create the opportunity for cooperation through personal and institutional connections.

KK thanked us: we keep the ICCS and CEACS alive

4. Treasurer's report – Don Sparling

DS referred to the detailed overview from last year's general meeting online and stated that we are in good shape financially.

Though membership is down 5%, we remain among the larger Canadian Studies associations internationally, and have weathered the rough times following the cancellation of “Understanding Canada” better than most.

During COVID, membership fees were reduced.

We have renewed conference grants and Brno research stays now that travel is more feasible; student grants have been introduced to help them attend relevant summer schools.

DS stated that we have some seed money for CEACS projects.

He pointed out that we should be looking for new members and that we should “pester” old members who are slow to renew – since this slowness is not necessarily an indication of a lack of interest in CEACS or Canadian Studies.

5. Report about the journal – Jason Blake

JB provided an overview of the next journal issue, which will in part focus on Mavis Gallant and her 100th birthday (highlights: an interview with Marta Dvorak, three authors from various generations have written short personal pieces on Gallant, and many leading authors have written blurbs on their favourite Gallant story).

JB emphasised that we would like more articles in French.

JB apologized for the publishing delay.

6. Discussion

6.1 Current situation of the CEACS

KK reminded us that DS had already given us an overview of our membership status, while pointing out that some other Canadian Studies organizations have “fallen by the wayside” in this respect.

KK emphasized the need for annual meetings of national chapters.

KK brought up the matter of where the next triennial conference will be held; she also suggested that it be held in two years, to bring us back into the regular rhythm after the COVID cancellation.

6.2 Possible new projects – Michelle Gadpaille

MG mentioned projects that might be possible, including:

- a) literary paratexts (art and so on, expertise, stayed in the literary arena);
- b) a comparative study of the most popular Canadian literary works across the region
- b) diversity;
- c) climate awareness;
- d) Canadian news (“mountaintop events”) and reverberations in Central European media (e.g. such events as the Czech Roma exodus to Canada in 1997; residential schools; the “Freedom Convoy”); problems: how far back? which countries? What if the degree of interest in specific events varied radically from country to country? MG suggested making a list of a few events and forwarding it to see which ones individual countries/individuals would like to do)

See below for a summary of the discussion

KK suggested that we have a brainstorming session among all present. Suggestions that emerged:

- a) cooperation with local theatres – i.e. getting Canada on the Central European stage
- b) focussing on the tradition of representation of Indigenous people in individual countries (only we could do this – “this work will be done by nobody else, if we don’t do it”)
- c) focussing on teaching

DS suggested that we have at least a digital kick-off for the project(s) we involve ourselves in.

7. Any other business

MG mentioned the *ELOPE* journal issues dedicated to Margaret Atwood and Alice Munro (available online)

MG let us know that Tjaša Mohar had Slovene translators’ focus on CanLit in their latest conference.

One member asked about the possibility of publishing proceedings from the Budapest 2022 conference. Judit Nagy said they hoped to do so – preliminary discussions had taken place with her university's authorities. Don Sparling suggested the CEACS could make some financial contribution, and this could be joint publication of the university and the CEACS.

Members pointed out that there is a Canadian summer school in Austria, as well as an online Comprehending Canada school run out of Masaryk University, Brno.

8. Closing

The meeting was closed at 14 :27.

Summary by MG of the discussion on possible projects at the CEACS General Meeting.

Two prior suggestions were rejected as not being practicable.

- The suggestion about a Paratext project was deemed to have insufficient generalizability and to involve probable issues with copyright.
- The second suggestion of doing a “Canadian Classics” investigation was also discarded as having too much overlap with our previous projects.

The most original new project suggestion was to move away from literature and its reception and towards Canadian newsworthy events and their reception. This found general favour with the membership, although there was discussion of which events would be chosen and how far back we could go for events. Eventually, there was general agreement that the recent tragic issue surrounding Residential Schools was the leader in the category of events likely to have received comment in Europe. The meeting then moved towards a selection of events similarly focused on Canadian indigeneity. We settled on the Residential Schools Revelations (2021), the Oka Crisis (1990) and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2016). The Truth and Reconciliation Enquiry was also a possibility.

Following this loose agreement, the meeting’s attention turned to Judit Nagy (JN) and Matyas Banhegyi’s project to create instructional materials for secondary schools aimed at raising awareness of Canadian diversity and values. After JN had described their initiative, there was general enthusiasm for grafting this to the first suggestion.

Our current project suggestion would thus comprise a two-part endeavour:

Research into reporting about and reaction to three major events concerning Canadian Indigenous peoples, conducted in a manner similar to our previous project, and involving newspapers, television reporting, editorial content and even literature. This stage would culminate, presumably, in a database of local reaction to these events, and each member country would sum up their findings in a short essay.

Use of the findings from the first phase to create instructional material, in the form of brochures, worksheets, glossaries and lesson plans. The meeting was also enthusiastic about outreach activities, taking some members into schools and communities with these materials.

The suggested project needs a title that aptly covers its two-part nature, something like *Canadian Indigenous Reality: Beyond Issues to Understanding*.