



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

June 9, 2025, 15:30-17:20

Trent University, Peterborough, Bagnani Hall + Zoom

Minutes prepared by Shlomo Gleibman

Attendance (25)

online: Maab Al-Rashdan, Chris Corker, Luigi De Angelis Soriano, Doris Hambuch, Ivan Jimenez Williams, Kaby Kung, Jessica Tsui-yan Li, Sorhab Mosahebi, Irene Sywenky

in person: Zaynab Ali, Lee Campbell, Alicia Edwards-Boon, Isabelle Fournier, Shlomo Gleibman, Susan Ingram, Louis Thomas Leguerrier, Jack Leong, Elisa Leonzio, Jeanne Mathieu-Lessard, Markus Reisenleitner, Laurence Sylvain, Joshua Synenko, Monique Tschofen, Jerry White, Rachel Wong

Reports from the Executive

President's Report– Jack Hang-tat Leong

Revision and approval of the Constitution – changes:

- Role descriptions
- Expanding the number of members at large to 6
- Deleting the requirement of attending meetings in person

Jack reported on his external activities on behalf of the association:

- in Nov 2024 with the Federation (FHSS) he voiced the CCLA's concerns about Congress planning for 2025 and gave feedback on FHSS's efforts to address the issues that we raised.
- in Jan 2025 he voiced our opposition to the proposed discontinuation of the Studies in Comparative Literatures and the Arts Program at Brock University that had been brought to our attention by Jonathan Allen. It was an innovative program that braided together comparative literature with the performing and visual arts, making the program unique in Canada. Jack conveyed our message, asking Brock to review the decision and think

creatively and innovatively about the future of studies in Comparative Literature and the Arts.

- in Feb/March 2025 he protested the enrolment suspension of a large number of humanities programs at YorkU.

This year's conference at Trent U, the first ever to be organized independently of Congress (which was held at George Brown College, Toronto from May 30 to June 6), was a resounding success. Jack expressed his gratitude for all the excellent efforts and leadership by Jeanne Mathieu-Lessard as the program chair and Josh Synenko as the local coordinator. Josh suggested discussing whether CCLA would leave Congress. Jeanne noted she would include that in her report.

VP and Program Chair's Report – Jeanne Mathieu-Lessard

Jeanne offered takeaways of her two years in the position. She reported that this year had required 10% of the time of last year's with Congress and strongly recommended staying separate from Congress. This year's conference costs had been covered by the fees and \$1000 funds from Trent University, including \$500 secured by Josh from his department. The only expense was the food.

There were 70 proposals, with some panels of 6 people, as well as multiple papers from some participants. With 13 rejections of individual papers, there were 47 presentations in total, with almost no parallel panels. 58 participated (with some team presentations). There was a special Arts Night organized by Lee, which included a book launch.

In terms of future formats, Jeanne proposed maintaining the hybrid format in the future and encouraging in-person participation. Josh suggested having conferences entirely in person with online options as exceptions and including non-presenters to have more people in the room for discussions and conversation. Virtual attendance can be reserved for non-presenters, people with disabilities, or those who cannot attend in person due to illness.

Objections were raised to a strictly in-person format: Markus – because it's exclusionary, there is no funding for travel, grad students struggle with travel expenses, and there are environmental reasons to limit travel; Susan reading Sorhab in the Zoom chat – because it would result in a loss of participants; Laurence encouraged presenters on Zoom to attend other sessions, not only their panel. Jeanne suggested collaborating with other associations to bring in more people.

Jerry objected to the hybrid format because screen directionality and technical problems dominate discussions. Jerry suggested alternating between online and in-person formats.

Jeanne's recommendations: community building and teamwork, no keynotes to counter hierarchies; consider the place of the Tribune and coordinating with the CCLA conferences; involve the translator more to increase the bilingual aspect, e.g., more presentations in French, and also updated webpages. She praised Trent as a hosting institution, esp. the Cultural Studies and French Studies programs.

Treasurer's Report - Joshua Synenko

Josh reported that it was a very average year. Currently, the CCLA has 59 members, new and continuing, with 10 expired memberships.

Total revenues (to date): \$5,795.00

Memberships: \$2,955

Conference fees: \$840

(not yet received)

Donation, Cultural Studies Graduate Program, Trent University: \$500

Donation, School for the Study of Canada, Trent University: \$500

Donation, Canadian Review in Comparative Literature: \$1,000

Total expenses (to date): \$4,589.72

Paid

Equipment: \$181 (Coffee maker)

Day 1 and 2 lunches: \$1,292

FHSS membership: \$703.84

Sadleir House rental: \$339

Website (for 2024-25 and 2025-26): \$705.12 + Hover domain name \$41.80

Bank service charges: \$54.50

Paypal service charges: \$68.80 (last 90 days)

Not yet paid

ICLA membership: \$470

Arts Night food: \$734.50

Food: \$TBD (breakfast, coffee, day 3 lunch)

Equipment: \$15 (USB mic cord)

Current accounts:

Scotiabank account: \$5,184.66

Paypal account: \$3,376

Total: \$8,560

Things to consider:

- bank charges are expensive, esp Paypal but also Scotiabank. Josh will do research. Sohrab recommended in the Chat looking into online options with low fees.
- need to revise the system of identifying underemployed members and grad students and suggested a new category for precarious. Jessica suggested creating a membership form with basic information.

- possible investments, e.g. GIC

Media and Communications Officer's Report – Shlomo Gleibman

Our website has a slight growth over the past year (June 1, 2024 – June 1, 2025): 6.7k views (vs. 4k last year) & 3.4k visitors (vs. 2k last year).

The CCLA Facebook group has the same membership as last year (1.6k members) but a decrease in views: 5,652 views in June 2024-25 (vs. June 2023-24: 7,353).

The CCLA X (former Twitter) account has a slightly decreasing number of followers: 391 followers as of June 1, 2025 (vs. 417 in June 2024).

Susan reported on the admin@complit.ca email troubles. Accepting a special offer on a second email account led to a problem between Hover, which hosts our domain name, and WordPress, which manages our website. The issue has been fixed.

***Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée* – Irene Sywenky, Editor**

Because of increasing overwork, Irene would like to hand on the editorship and suggested forming a team of 3-5 associate editors. She reported that the journal's financial situation is healthy:

- *CRCL/RCLC* funds (June 9, 2025)
SSHRC funds (after commitments): \$95,846.80
Operating account funds (after commitments): \$107,817.93 (with an additional \$60k from Project Muse in the next 4-6 weeks).

The journal will contribute \$1000 to the CCLA this year and \$1000 next year, but payment will be very slow because it has to go through the U of A. The journal is facing important decisions about open access soon. The next round of SSHRC funding will be this summer.

Jerry asked for clarification about upcoming issues and delays in their being published.

Josh noted a lot of enthusiasm for revitalizing the journal and shared his experience of working for a journal that ran on \$3000 and was able to hire two people. Irene explained that she was limited by HR and recounted that it had taken over a year of endless meetings to change the contract for her one support staff. Also she believes some tasks, such as overseeing peer review, have to be done by academics, whom she does not see as people for hire.

Jerry underscored the importance of the journal to the field in this country and the need to get it under control. In interests of time, Josh suggested setting up an online meeting.

Early Career Scholar Representative's Report – Lee Dylan Campbell

Lee reported on the CCLA support of \$500 for last year's Tribune conference in November in Montreal with 12 speakers and its usual bilingual approach.

Election for the 2025-2027 Executive

- **President: Laurence Sylvain** (Jeanne nominated, Markus seconded, approved unanimously)
- **Vice-President/Programme Chair: Markus Reisenleitner**
Jeanne suggested 2 VPs.
Jerry self-nominated on the condition of organizing a conference in Saskatchewan in a new format (fully in-person with full papers circulated in advance to replace presentations, leaving the entire time for discussion).
Markus self-nominated on the condition of organizing a hybrid conference.
Much discussion was followed by a nearly unanimous vote with two against and one abstention.
- **Treasurer: Joshua Synenko** continues his term.
- **Media and Communications Officer: Lee Campbell** self-nominated; approved unanimously.
- **Early Career Scholar/Graduate Student Representatives:**
Susan suggested a bilingual model --> change to the Constitution: up to 2 Early Career Scholar Representatives. Approved unanimously.
Zichuan Gan and Christopher Corker self-nominated. Approved unanimously.
- **Members at large: Zaynab Ali, Alicia Edwards-Boon, Kaby Kung, Jessica Tsui-yan Li, Agata Mergler, and Jill Planche.** Approved unanimously.

Ex-officio:

- **Editor, *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée***
Jeanne nominated **Jerry White**, who accepted. Approved with only one vote against.
Jerry: need to form a revised Editorial Board, with associated editors, francophone and anglophone, and regional representation.
Irene: There should be an overlapping transition period.
Jerry: Agreed, next year will be a transition year as he is on sabbatical.

- **web system admin**
Susan: a team to be created, which would include **Susan Ingram, Mark Terry, and Shlomo Gleibman**. Approved unanimously.
- **Translator: Flora Roussel**. Approved unanimously.

Esther Cheung Award Announcement

On the 10th anniversary of the Esther Cheung Award, Lee reported it would also be the last year of using the established eligibility criteria. Because of the increasing numbers of eligible participants and excellent presentations, and a perceived need to refocus to better align with the association's values, next year two key changes will be introduced: the award will be for grad students only, and it will not be for “the best paper” but rather for criteria that reflect a communal spirit rather than competitiveness.

This year's winner is Laurence Sylvain for "Weil et le 'je': D'un cri impersonnel/ an impersonal scream," with two honourable mentions: Zichuan Gan and Kathryn Last.

Other Business

Jeanne: update for 2026 Congress – online with maybe a small online part.

Josh: Trent Cultural Studies swag giveaway.

Meeting adjourned at 17:20.