

## Report of the Early Career Researcher Development (ECARE) Committee 2019-2020

The purpose of the Early Career Researcher Development Committee (ECARE), founded at the ICLA Congress held in Vienna in 2016, addresses ways of supporting and developing early career researchers and doctoral students researching in the field of comparative literature in the changing environment of humanities research and scholarship, and the changing nature of higher education in various parts of the world, as well as asking how the innovative research of early-career researchers and doctoral students is changing the landscape of the discipline through new and innovative forms of comparative inquiry.

Since its inception, the Committee has been working on the following initiatives in order to support early career and doctoral researchers at ICLA. These include making the ICLA triennial conference more welcoming for early career and doctoral researchers, providing travel grants for them to attend our triennial congresses, providing prizes and recognition for doctoral and early career research within the Association, and enabling better forums for communication for early career researchers and doctoral students within ICLA.

- I. For future ICLA Congress Programmes, ECARE recommends the following initiatives in the planning and the preparation of the programme beginning with ICLA 2022 in Tbilisi:
  - a. **Next Gen:** A plenary session for early career and doctoral researchers in roundtable format to share their research on any aspect of comparative literature (initially) or on a dedicated theme in comparative studies (in future iterations). The ECARE Committee would propose the session and put it through the proposal process under its umbrella after evaluating proposals following a call for papers. It is recommended that ECARE have a dedicated session for this at each ICLA triennial conference specifically in order to draw on participation from new researchers.
  - b. **Meet and Greet Reception:** This should be held early in the programme of each triennial conference as a standing event as a special welcome to early career and doctoral researchers where they are especially welcomed to the conference and to the Association by ICLA officers and those on the Executive Council. In the past doctoral students and early career researchers report not feeling especially welcome at ICLA and/or find it difficult to navigate ICLA structures and our congress programme. It would be desirable if senior members of ICLA volunteered to mentor an early career researcher through continued correspondence after the congress.
  - c. **Career Orientation Workshop:** We recommend that a slot on the congress programme be dedicated to a workshop on the practicalities of applying for academic positions in comparative literature in higher education, with distinctions between the different conventions for applying for academic posts in various parts of the world. Senior colleagues of the ICLA could also provide advice and guidance on applying for post-doctoral fellowships and research grants for those who are nearly finished their doctoral work or in the early stages of their careers, as well as the various career options outside of academia open to young scholars working in comparative literary and cultural studies.

- II. Proposed funding and prizes for early career researchers and doctoral students; some suggestions are from the Travel Grants Committee but recommended to ECARE so that the innovative research of doctoral students and early career researchers is recognised at ICLA. For the prizes, there needs to be discussion at the Executive Council level regarding funding for the prizes, their frequency (e.g. every ICLA triennial cycle), possible publication of some of the awarded work in *Recherches Littéraires/Literary Research*, and the languages of the manuscripts submitted for consideration for a prize:
- a. **Travel Grants:** The Travel Grants Committee is working on travel grants for graduate students, for early career academics no more than 5 years past their PhD, and non-tenured faculty to assist with travel to our triennial congress to give a paper.
  - b. **Best Graduate Paper Prize:** This prize would be given to a graduate student who delivered an excellent paper at an ICLA Congress. Any ICLA member can nominate a paper to receive this prize if it was heard in an ICLA seminar session. ICLA Secretaries could receive the nominations and ask for the full papers of those nominated, and a prize committee, or ECARE, could read the papers and decide on the award. The prize could be paid travel and accommodation for the next ICLA Congress and a small cash award. The awarded paper could also be published in a future volume of *Recherches Littéraires/Literary Research*. The paper could be in English or French or in the language of the host country in which the Congress was held when the paper was delivered, and experts from the host country could read and evaluate papers written in the language of the host country. The prize could be modelled on the Horst Frenz Prize at ACLA.
  - c. **Best Graduate Student Essay:** There is also a proposal for an award for an unpublished graduate essay which could encourage graduate students to publish through this recognition and through its possible publication in *RL/LR*. This would encourage participation and recognition by a wider range of graduate students in ICLA. There were some doubts expressed about how this prize could be managed, and it was recommended that ICLA could coordinate this with the national associations. But the remit seems too large for ECARE without clear parameters as to who can submit unpublished graduate student papers for consideration.
  - d. **First Book Subvention:** This prize would provide funding for an author's subvention fees for a first book (a monograph or translation) which would help early career scholars to get their first book published by covering any required subventions. The amount of the prize would depend largely on the subvention amount required by the publisher; more publishers seem to be requesting subventions given the current economic uncertainties, and the high fees can be prohibitive for younger scholars.
  - e. **Best Translation Prize:** It was suggested that we begin with a translation prize for an article, chapter, or other short work, rather than a book given the length, and since books, including translations, are covered above. There was discussion on the languages, but most people on the Committee agreed that for translations, and for all the prizes above, we should be as inclusive and flexible as possible. We would need to work closely with the national associations for expertise in languages.

- III. **Academic Conference for Early Career Researchers:** 'Global Publishing and the Making of Literary Worlds: Translation, Media, and Mobility.' Princeton University, Summer 2021. The focus of the conference is on global publishing and provides an opportunity for early career researchers to bring a description to the conference of their proposed book project that they hope to publish, which will then receive support from publishers, editors, and senior academics. The ECARE Committee is eager to participate and contribute to this conference. Given the current Covid pandemic, this conference will take place online. <https://globalpublishing.princeton.edu/>
- IV. **Communication:** The ECARE Committee currently has its own website, a link to the ICLA website, and its own Facebook page. Emanuelle Rodrigues Dos Santos, who initially joined the ECARE Committee as a doctoral student at University of Warwick in the UK, and is now in her first academic post at the University of Birmingham, developed these sites in 2017 and has kindly agreed to update them. It is important to have an ongoing forum when doctoral students and early career researchers can speak to us about issues facing them in the profession, particularly around exploitative employment contracts and a dearth of tenure-track or permanent posts available, which causes many ECRs to leave the profession. It would be helpful if these various forums could be listed with links on the ICLA web pages so that they are more visible and can be navigated easily by doctoral students and early career researchers which would strengthen their ties to ICLA.

The ECARE Committee welcomes suggestions for further support of doctoral students and early career researchers, and, as they have a stake in shaping the future of our discipline, it is imperative that they have a visible presence at ICLA at our triennial Congresses, on our web pages, and on the ECARE Committee and the ICLA Executive Council.

Respectfully submitted,

William J Spurlin  
ECARE Committee Chair  
30 November 2020