

Report of the Task Force on Finance and Membership

Members: Kathleen Komar (chair), Lucia Boldrini, Liedeke Plate (with input from each of the three ICLA treasurers)

The ICLA treasury

Principles:

1. The ICLA has a **single treasury** the funds for which are collected by three treasurers. Expenditures are determined by the ICLA executive board and the President. The funds for those expenditures can be drawn from any of the three individual treasurer's accounts at the president's request. The specific account is often determined by funds available in that account as well as administrative costs connected to transferring funds. These requests would be initiated by a written request from the president to the treasurer in question—with cc:s to the other two treasurers. The treasurer providing the funds would write a response verifying that they will be providing funds, how much and when (also cc:ing the other 2 treasurers). This would provide all 3 treasurers with ongoing information and the ability to provide additional funds if needed.
2. The ICLA is a non-profit association, so we are not out to accumulate a large surplus of funds, but we do want to have enough funds on hand to meet our needs and desired goals. We can meet our needs for the next few years, but the ICLA should develop a budget model so that standing commitments can be stated. Our income will drop considerably as the American Comparative Literature Association goes to an associated model where they pay \$1000 to be associated with the ICLA, but do not pay \$10/member dues. This will mean that the American treasury could drop from \$10,000/year to \$1000/ year plus whatever individual members join from the United States.
3. The ICLA has some standing financial commitments:
Publications: *recherche littéraire/literary research*, the newsletter, funds for publications resulting from the research committees (if they can't be funded in other ways). We should ask those in charge of the journal and the newsletter to estimate costs per year. And we should set a range of possible requests for the research committees. (For example, research committees may request \$1000 to \$5000 in support of publications in any three-year period. The group reviewing research committee has made a similar suggestion in their report.)

Triennial Conference: set aside \$10k to help those mounting the conference as seed money. This expense occurs once every 3 years, but is necessary to support the conference.

Website maintenance: we will need to collect funds on the website and have the webmaster maintain the membership lists as well as ongoingly updating the website itself. This will require a dedicated staff person whose salary the

ICLA needs to pay. It is simply too much work for a faculty member to do on a voluntary basis. We should set aside this salary as a yearly expense.

Beyond these standing commitments, we could consider having travel grants for those from economically challenged areas or younger colleagues.

Other spending suggestions are welcome from the executive board.

4. The ICLA needs a clearer record of the dues payments of each member or affiliated association. To that end, we suggest keeping a running record of that status that can be passed from treasurer to treasurer and accessed by the President and membership list keeper. Lucia is checking to make sure that whatever we do here is within the requirements for privacy and security. (See attachment 1 [list of National Association, payment of fees and membership lists] for such a list developed by our generous colleague Lucia Boldrini.)
5. Each of the treasurers collects funds using a slightly different letter and timing. We suggest the following, but we realize that we need to accommodate the needs of those paying dues. (Often dues cannot be paid until the national association holds its annual conference. If this takes place later than our triennial conference, we will have to use the most recent membership we have for voting purposes.)

General procedures for treasurers: (note: we should discuss the dates I have here since we may want to make our request earlier.)

June 1: ICLA treasurers write to the treasurers of the national associations (with a cc to the presidents of those associations in case the treasurer has changed) requesting dues payments and membership lists (including emails for communication). This should be done on electronic letterhead. A record of the invoice for this transaction should be saved.

We would request payment by July 1 if at all possible and request that the membership list and emails be sent both to the keeper of the list and to the treasurer making the request. This would ensure that we have a dependable list before our conference. If the national association wants to send dues after July 1, we would need to use the previous year's membership from that group.

If at all possible, we should take payments in whatever form possible (credit cards, bank transfer, check). At the moment, the American treasury can take credit card payments, bank transfers and checks. Since we will have an increasing number of individual members, we will have a link on the main ICLA website for membership. This will link to the American treasury since at the moment that is the only one that can take credit card payments. Lucia Boldrini and the treasurers are investigating possible paypal options for the main website.

6. Given that individual memberships will involve administrative costs (credit cards charge around 2.5%-3% fee), we should consider raising the individual memberships at our next triennial conference (so that members can vote on this issue). I would suggest that individual memberships be raised to \$20 after the next triennial conference (except for those national associations who need financial exemptions). Since we haven't raised our dues since T.S. Eliot was the treasurer, this seems reasonable. We could also consider providing a perk for those national associations which would continue to pay \$10/member to the ICLA directly, while individual members would pay a higher fee. (This would need a deeper discussion of the plusses and minuses of such a move.) The names of those colleagues who join as individual members would need to be kept by the web master and the treasurers.
7. The ICLA should establish a prize fund separate from the membership fees. We could have a "contribution" button in addition to membership fees so that those of us who would like to contribute to some special issue—like prizes—could do so directly without taxing our fee revenues.
8. We should also put a link on our website under individual memberships that let's grad students know they are welcome to join without any fee. This is under development by Lucia and Adelaide.

Membership/voting issue

1. If we can establish stable membership lists with emails, could we do an email vote for our board members? It has always been the case that the serendipity of ability to attend the triennial conference has determined who gets to vote. It would be good to make it possible for all of our members to vote whether they can attend the conference or not.
2. Make membership a requirement to present at the conference. If we have stable lists, we could check to see if the person who wants to present at the conference is really a member. They could check their membership status, then we would require them to join before they can register for the conference. This is under development for the Georgia Conference.
3. The ICLA should list "**Member Associations**" with this in parentheses: Member associations pay dues for all of their members directly to the ICLA And "**Supporting Associations**" with this in parenthesis: Affiliated Associations pay an affiliation fee but do not pay individual member's dues. Individuals must pay their dues directly to the ICLA to be members and have the ability to run for office, vote in elections, present papers at the triennial conference and suggest research groups. This needs discussion since it would change our current usage of "Affiliated" which could cause confusion.
4. The ICLA should try to recruit new national associations and new individual members. Lucia Boldrini and her administrator Katharina are hiring a student researcher to ferret out all the national associations they can find. (Lucia Boldrini

has made a great start on this list—see attachment 2. It is in the process of being updated and expanded.) We could then mount an effort to recruit. This effort could go through our current board members who could help the president and treasurers make contact—a letter from the President as an opener and a request for dues if they decide to join.

Create a forum (perhaps at the Triennial conference) for those wishing to begin new national associations?

Promote participation among younger colleagues—and in areas of the world that are underrepresented.

Continue to have president's panel at each ICLA triennial conference composed of presidents of national associations to discuss the state of comparative literature in their areas. We should be organizing this now for the Georgia Conference.

Try to have board members inquire about having an ICLA panel in their own national association's conference

Try to place an ICLA presidential message (recruitment) in various national publications.

Continue to invite all presidents of national associations to ICLA executive board meetings as ex officio participants.

A rough estimate of our financial position:

Current balances in the treasury: \$223,000 (these are rounded estimates):

Europe & Africa: 25,000 Euros (approx. \$30,000)

+ 22,800 Euros (approx. \$27,000) in a "savings" account—does this include the Balakian Prize? Or is that separate?

The Americas: \$60,000

Asia: \$106,000

Recurring expenses: roughly \$38,000/year

Journal expenses approximately 15,000 Euros/year

Newsletter, web maintenance, administrative assistant, mailing, 15,000 Euros/ year

Triennial conference \$10,000 every 3 years, so \$3300/year

Bank charges 500 Euros/year

Grants to research committees: \$4,000 (estimate)

Conclusion:

If we can take in approximately \$38,000/year across the three treasurers, we would maintain our current balance of over \$200,000. We do not need this big a balance as a non-profit organization, but we need to increase our income by outreach to new members or raising dues—probably both.

Last year, the Europe/Africa treasurer took in about \$3900, Asia took in about \$5800, and I'm not sure what the Americas took in. I believe that additional revenues have come in since the last report, but I don't have the numbers. Because of COVID and cancelled conferences as well as difficulty communicating, this was a particularly bad year for collecting dues. We do need to do outreach to associations and individuals to ensure the health of the organization, but we are not in immediate danger. We must, however, draw on all three treasurers' accounts to maintain balance and carry out the work we desire to do.