

## UCML Exec Committee

4th December 2020 14:00–16:00 by Zoom



### Item 10a: Area Studies

UKCASA, the umbrella association for Area Studies work in the UK, continues to operate with an interim President, Alan Hallsworth, but despite this and the on-going pandemic, some work has been continuing this year and the AGM was held as usual (albeit via Zoom) in November. Much of the detail below is based on the draft minutes of this AGM, kindly provided at very short notice by Jon Oldfield.

Nominations are being sought for new key role-holders in UKCASA, with a view to the post-REF period, when “galvanising and defending Area Studies at a national level” will be crucial. A particular priority will be encouraging more submissions in future REFs to UoA 25. Individual subject associations have been contacted to help identify suitable candidates.

In response to the proposals to close both the Institute of Latin American Studies and the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, the President had written a letter on behalf of UKCASA to Vice-Chancellor and Acting Dean of the University of London in defence of the two institutions.

There was a proposal from *Anglophone Studies in France* for a seminar series (2021-2024) with the United Kingdom Council for Area Studies (UKCASA) and affiliate associations, provisionally entitled: “Anglistique” and area studies : cross-cultural perspectives from across the Channel. If any associations would like to be involved please contact Mélanie Torrent ([melanietorrentupjy@gmail.com](mailto:melanietorrentupjy@gmail.com)) for more info.

Individual subject associations reported on a range of issues but inevitably everything was dominated by pandemic-related concerns. All annual conferences had moved online. Japanese Studies and Contemporary European Studies are both concerned about possible effects on income as a result of their journals moving to Open Access format. Chinese Studies noted the impact of the Chinese National Security Law particularly with regard to online teaching. Spanish and Latin American Studies were concerned about UKRI funding for PGRs post-COVID, and in general issues for PGRs given restrictions on fieldwork.

As noted in previous reports, and perhaps something for my successor in this role to take forward once the more pressing emergencies we are all dealing with die down (!), is the intersection/overlap in terms of the UCML Exec between the remits of Area Studies and the other Exec members. We discussed this briefly in the past with regard to Lusophone Studies but didn’t really come to any conclusions. I would welcome any comments or suggestions if colleagues feel that remits need to be more clearly defined (and if so ideas of how to do so might be particularly welcome!).

Frances Weightman, 2/12/20