

学会の解散に寄せて

Remembering the Chukyo University English Society

It has been my great pleasure to be a part of the Chukyo University English Society. I have served as head of the Society since 2017, during my tenure as director of the British and American Cultural Studies Program (BACS).

I am grateful for the help of my colleagues Professor Mori and Professor Sugiura who did so much to run the Society during those years by holding regular meetings, administering applications for funding, and organizing activities for the students and for Society alumnae. I am also grateful to other staff of BACS, who have generously supported the activities and arranged guest speakers for the Spring and Fall semester lectures. And I must, of course, include a warm thank-you to Society alumnae who attendad the Spring and Fall lectures.

As you may know, the English Society was founded in 1966 by members of the Department of Literature in the Faculty of Letters as forum for presenting research. From 1987, it became an official Society in support of students and faculty in the Department. The Society continued its work when the new School of World Englishes was opened in 2002.

That's where my involvement with the Society began.

Over the years, I have been gratified by the Society's generous funding of special events and activities for students and alumnae as well as the support it has given to the department and its full- and part-time staff. The Society has greatly enriched the learning experience of our students, giving them a voice and a sense of belonging in BACS, and helping to build bridges between students, staff, and Society alumnae.

In this brief memoir, I would like to highlight the many ways, large and small, that the Society has benefitted all of us in the Department of British and American Cultural Studies (2002-2013) and the British and American Cultural Studies Program (2014-2024).

Where to begin? There is so much to tell, and my memory might be a bit faulty on some of the details.

A starting place is the regular meetings of the Society, usually held a lunchtime, where planning for the year's upcoming events, budget, and other matters were presented and discussed with student representatives from third- and fourth-year seminars. The Society always provided a delicious lunch box and a drink for all who attended. A small thing, perhaps. But over the years, students have expressed their gratitude not only for the nice lunches but for being included in the running of BACS.

BACS has always had a policy of recognizing the efforts of our students in their academic achievements as well as enlisting their help in promotion of the program. The Society played a key role in realizing these goals.

One of the most important Society-sponsored events, from my point of view, is the Pop Culture Workshop conferences that were held between 2004 and 2022. As you can read in Maureen Boulanger's memoir of the Workshops, the Society funded these events by providing refreshments - pizza, pastries, drinks and snacks and more - for student presenters and guests. The Society also sponsored the talks and workshops that often (but not every year) concluded the conferences. These events brought together our BACS undergraduate students, World Englishes graduate students, international students and occasionally Japanese and international students from outside Chukyo. Many of our part-time and full-time staff were regular attendees at these all-English events, asking questions and showing their support for the students. The Society also funded invited lecturers to the Workshops, who shared their academic research with BACS students. The Pop Culture Workshops helped build students' confidence for presenting - academically, professionally - in English and open up the exciting world of research on literature and culture.

The end of the academic year would normally be capped off with a Curriculum Review of the English-language and academic program and a reception for all staff, full-time and part-time. The Society budget allowed us to offer coffee and tea, and an assortment of snacks to the teachers in attendance at the various sessions, which normally started mid-morning and ran all afternoon. On a few occasions, the Society funded a professional development workshop at the end of the day. The coffee- and

snacked-fueled sessions gave our part-time staff a voice in the program curriculum - an important bridge-builder for everyone and an important part of our curriculum innovations over the years.

The Society also funded awards to students in recognition of their achievements. In 2009, we added a Writing Portfolio to the first- and second-year English language curriculum. In order to motivate students for the tough job of writing by recognizing their efforts, we implemented the BACS Writing Portfolio Awards, which offered 3000 yen book cards to students for Best Essay, Best Portfolio and Most Improved Writer. Usually, a brief awards ceremony was held - in the L.S. Wing after 2014 - and the names and best essays were printed in the *English Society Journal*. The best graduation essays in English and in Japanese by fourth-year students also received awards funded by the Society, and the full essays were also printed in the annual *English Society Journal*. I thank the editors for opening the pages of the *Journal* to showcase our students' best work.

BACS also enlisted students in many of our promotional activities and events. The Society provided thank-you funds in the form of book cards. Some of these events included presentations and consultations with high school students during Open Campus, assistance at English placement test interviews, and presentations at the guidance for first-year entrants in April. After 2014, we held special orientations sessions for first-year students called "Learn and Share" in the L.S. Wing with workshops and presentations led by seniors. The sessions offered

prizes in the form of school supplies to the students who participated and book cards to the presenters and workshop leaders. BACS students could also make applications to the Society to fund their own activities. Students in the Senpai Project, organized by Professor Uchikawa, made a number of applications for their events. The Society sponsored the English Lunch Discussion events organized by students in 2016-17. Society funds also supported transportation and accommodation for BACS students who participated in the All-Japan Student English Presentation Contest held at Kanda University in Tokyo.

I am also grateful to the Society for providing funds to guests speakers who came to seminars and lecture classes to read, share and discuss their work. Some of the international guests included famous Canadian writers and film-makers: Vancouver-based novelist Lydia Kwa, Newfoundland poet and novelist Michael Crummey, acclaimed Nova Scotia writer Alexander MacLeod and television journalist Crystal Garrett, award-winning film-maker Linda Ohama and graphic novelist Dawn Boyd. The list is not complete. Through these Society-sponsored visits, students had the once-in-a-life-time chance to meet and talk with some of the most creative people working in Canada today. Most recently, the English Society has provided funds for academic conferences: In March 2023, BACS organized a one-day symposium on eco-fiction entitled "Writing Climate / Changing Fictions and in the final year of the Society, this March 2024, BACS is planning a two-day symposium called "Creativity and

Change in Anglo-American Literature and Culture" with funding support from the English Society.

I cannot help feeling a pang of sadness at the closing of the Society this year. The Chukyo University English Society has done much to provide a rich learning environment for students and teachers, and create a sense of community in BACS. Through the generous funding of the Society, we were able also recognize and reward student leaders. These leaders in turn empowered their peers to do their best. The Society has also encouraged academic excellence and sponsored numerous gatherings of scholars, educators, business professionals, writers and other creative people for the benefit of students and Society alumnae. We have all been greatly enriched by the support of the Society. It is one of the many things that makes me proud to have been a member of British and American Cultural Studies during the World Englishes years alongside my dedicated colleagues, who have graciously and generously directed and supported the Society's work.

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