

TIRF TODAY

March 2015

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Promoting research and best practices to improve the use of English in the emerging global knowledge economy of the 21st century

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TIRF Mourns the Loss of Trustee Emeritus Dr. James E. Alatis

With great sorrow in our hearts, we regret to share the news that TIRF Trustee Emeritus Dr. James E. Alatis passed away on Saturday, February 28th in Arlington, VA. Dr. Alatis, known as Jim to us, was one of TIRF's founding Trustees. His indomitable legacy will live on for decades to come, as his contributions to TIRF as an organization, and to our Board members and our supporters, personally, are absolutely irreplaceable. Dr. Alatis shared in the vision that our field needed an organization like TIRF in order to further the advancement of knowledge through remaining dedicated to research. We will forever be in debt to Dr. Alatis because without his efforts the establishment of TIRF might never have been possible.

According to a [website created in Dr. Alatis' memory](#), he passed away peacefully surrounded by his family and friends. He was a loving husband, father, grandfather, and brother. Dr. Alatis is survived by his wife of 63 years Penelope M. Alatis; his three sons William J. Alatis and wife Olya, Stephen J. Alatis, and Anthony J. Alatis; his grandchildren James A. Alatis, Alexa P. Alatis, and Natalia R. Alatis; and his sisters Despina Dandalides (and her husband George) and

Frances Vlahos. He was preceded in death by his brothers John, Charles, and Manuel, and his sister, Anna Lucas.

For many years, Dr. Alatis served as Dean Emeritus of the School of Languages and Linguistics at Georgetown University. He was also Distinguished Professor of Linguistics and Modern Greek and Senior Advisor to the Dean of Georgetown College for International Language Programs and Research. He taught for 46 years at Georgetown University. Dr. Alatis served as the first Executive Director of the TESOL International Association from 1966 to 1987. He was also employed by the U.S. Department of State as English Teaching and Testing Specialist, as well as by the US Office of Education, where he worked in language research and materials development. Dr. Alatis had also served on the Boards of Directors for the National Council for Languages and International Studies and the Joint National Committee for Languages.

We would like to convey our deepest condolences to Dr. Alatis' family and friends during these difficult times. His commitment to TIRF, devotion to the field of language education, and compassion for his friends will be sorely missed. If you would like to share your thoughts with Dr. Alatis' family online, you can do so at the link shared above or on the funeral home's website by [clicking here](#).

TIRF Trustees Convene for Spring 2015 Board Meeting

On Wednesday, March 25th, the TIRF Board of Trustees convened for their Spring 2015 meeting. With an action-packed agenda, Board members discussed a number of critical activities and issues pertinent to the future success of the Foundation and its mission.

One agenda item [Board members](#) discussed was future directions in the TIRF-Routledge co-publication series, entitled "Global Research on Teaching and Learning English." Two volumes have been released to date, and we are currently exploring future publication topics. We remain ever grateful for the opportunity to work with Routledge/Taylor & Francis in this way.

Regarding TIRF's fiscal situation, two important agenda items were addressed. First, the Foundation recently underwent an audit process, which involved hiring an independent auditor to review TIRF's accounting systems. It was revealed that TIRF has continued to manage its records effectively and is in full compliance with the laws that govern nonprofit organizations. Second, TIRF has made a decision to establish an hoc development committee that will dedicate its efforts to fundraising. The charges made to this committee include determining opportunities to forge new partnerships with corporate sponsors, improving upon relations with long-standing donors, and recommending other creative ways to generate revenue for TIRF to expand the reach of its mission.

Several other notable agenda items addressed at the meeting included a discussion on mentoring junior researchers, collaborating with the TESOL International Association, and possible changes to TIRF's

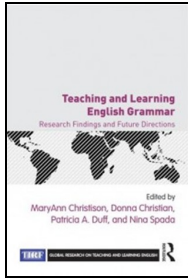
mission. First, with our dedication to research on language education, the Foundation's Trustees are continuing to explore ways to better serve the novice researchers of the wider language education community around the world. Second, as TESOL is one of TIRF's long-term partners, we are continuing to work with leaders at TESOL to establish activities that will benefit our organizations' various stakeholders. As shown in the photo below, Rosa Aronson, Executive Director of TESOL, and Sarah Sahr, Director of Education Programs, joined TIRF Trustees to discuss future collaborative efforts. Lastly, TIRF Trustees are considering an expansion of the Foundation's mission to allow for a focus on issues in language education beyond English. There are a range of concerns to consider when making such a decision, and we will continue to explore whether such a change would be in the best interest of our stakeholders and of the use of our resources.



Left to Right: Nick Saville, Donna Christian, David Nunan, Ana Sylvia Ramirez, Jun Liu (back), Lorraine de Matos, MaryAnn Christison (back), Rosa Aronson, Sarah Sahr (back), Kathi Bailey, Michael Carrier (back), Jodi Crandall, John Knagg (back), Dick Tucker, Richard Boyum, Mitch Legutke, and Kerri Hannan

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**Kathleen Bailey,
Chair of TIRF**

The James E. Alatis Prize for Research in Language Planning and Policy

With the recent passing of Trustee Emeritus Dr. James “Jim” Alatis, TIRF Trustees desired to find a way to honor the impact Jim had on our field. To this end, during their Board meeting last week, TIRF Trustees unanimously approved a motion to establish the James E. Alatis Prize for Research in Language Planning and Policy in Educational Contexts. Though some of the details are still being determined, the following points share the rationale behind establishing the prize in Jim’s name.

The fourth point of [TIRF’s mission statement](#) says that the Foundation will “influence the formation and implementation of appropriate language education policies, recognizing the importance of indigenous languages and cultures worldwide, and of English as

TIRF Trustees Welcome Dr. Spiros Papageorgiou as New Board Member



At TIRF’s Board meeting last week, we welcomed a new Board member to our team. It is with great pleasure we announce the addition of Dr. Spiros Papageorgiou (pictured left), Managing Research Scientist in the Center for English Language Learning and Assessment at Educational Testing Service (ETS) in Princeton, NJ. Spiros received his doctoral degree in linguistics specializing in language testing from Lancaster University, UK.

TIRF’s Doctoral Dissertation Grants Competition Deadline Coming Soon!



The due date for TIRF’s 2015 Doctoral Dissertation Grants (DDG) competition is quickly approaching, with an application deadline set for April 22, 2015. DDG funding is intended to support worthy applicants who have advanced to candidacy (that is, they are in the dissertation phase in their doctoral programs) and whose dissertation research plans address topics that TIRF has prioritized.

These topics are [Bilingualism/Plurilingualism in Business, Industry, and the Professions](#); [Language Assessment](#); [Optimal Uses of Technology in the Delivery of English Language Instruction](#); [Language Teacher Education](#); [Students’ Age and Effective English Language Education in Schools](#); and [Language Policy and Planning](#). Click any of the links above to read a detailed explanation of these research priorities.

For the second consecutive year, TIRF is offering two types of DDGs. The first is the Foundation’s long-standing TIRF DDG, which is supported by Cambridge English Language Assessment and many of our individual donors. The other type of grant is the

Chair’s Report — Connecting Our Profession

One of the greatest joys of working with TIRF is making connections with our grant recipients. This month at the conference of the American Association for Applied Linguistics, TIRF Trustee Jodi Crandall and I were present when three of our grantees led a roundtable discussion on English as a medium of instruction (EMI). Joyce Kling (Denmark), Jaehan Park (Korea), and Melanie van den Hoven (United Arab Emirates) had never met before last week,

but because they have each investigated the trend toward EMI in their respective countries, they collaborated on an excellent presentation. As I listened to them share ideas and comment on one another’s work, I thought to myself, “This is what TIRF and our profession are all about – making connections for our mutual benefit.”

Kathi Bailey

an international language.” Given the particular interest Jim had in language planning and policy, and remembering Jim’s many contributions to the Foundation since its inception, it is fitting that TIRF establishes the James E. Alatis Prize for Research in Language Planning and Policy in Educational Contexts.

The prize would be awarded annually to an outstanding article or chapter written about language planning and/or policy. Along with the recognition, it would bestow a prize of US \$500 to the winner, beginning in 2016. The initial commitment would be for five years of funding dedicated to awarding this prize.

As further decisions are made, we will announce the competition broadly across our network, including in *TIRF Today* and on our website.

In his current position at ETS, Spiros conducts research on the assessment of English as a Second Language, primarily supporting the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) family of assessments. His background in assessment is a great asset to the Foundation, as TIRF continues to be interested in language assessment issues in language education.

To read Spiros’ full bio on TIRF’s website, please [click here](#). We would be delighted for you to join us in welcoming Spiros to the Foundation’s Board of Trustees!

TIRF-British Council DDG. To read more about these two types of DDGs, including eligibility requirements, [click here](#) to read the call for proposals.

Applications must comply with the required proposal format. In order to help potential applicants, TIRF has developed three new resources. The first is a simple [application form](#). There is also a series of [six brief instructional videos](#) about how to complete the application. These resources are posted on TIRF’s website, as are a set of [frequently asked questions](#) (FAQs) and accompanying answers. The FAQs cover the topics of eligibility, budget and grant payments, the application process, and supervisors’ letters of support.

DDGs are awarded for up to US \$5,000 per proposal. The project summaries of successful proposals and photographs of grant recipients will be posted on TIRF’s website by October 31, 2015. For further information, please visit our website or write to info@tirfonline.org.

Editor’s note: *TIRF’s DDG program started in 2002, and since that date, we have made awards to 62 grantees from 17 countries. ([Click here](#) to see where our grantees come from, and to learn about their doctoral studies.)*



Back Row: Kathi Bailey (left) and Jodi Crandall (right); Front, Left to Right: Joyce Kling, Jaehan Park, and Melanie van den Hoven