

# TIRF TODAY

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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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### Updates from Portland: TIRF Trustees Hold Spring Meeting

The TIRF Board of Trustees had their biannual meeting last week in Portland, Oregon, USA, just before the TESOL Convention held its opening ceremony. Trustees covered a range of topics during the spring meeting.

The recently forged partnership with the British Council was discussed, in which TIRF and the Council are working together to expand the Foundation's Doctoral Dissertation Grants (DDG) program. Trustees considered how TIRF can best promote the TIRF-British Council DDG initiative, so that program information quickly reaches doctoral students focusing on ELT research in [under-resourced countries](#).

Another topic Board members covered during their meeting was TIRF's mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) project. TIRF is currently in the process of determining the MALL initiative's future direction.

As reported in [last month's newsletter](#), we have released [the first volume](#) in the TIRF-Routledge series

on "Global Research on Teaching and Learning of English." TIRF is planning two more volumes in the series, one to be published in 2015 and the other in 2016. These volumes will showcase the work of TIRF's grantees. As was the case with the first volume, TIRF will continue to work with its grant recipients by seeking chapter contributions from them to compose these future publications.

One final area of interest to share related to topics covered by the Board is that of fundraising. The Foundation relies completely on gifts from the public to fund its programmatic areas, as well as its administrative costs. TIRF continues to seek sponsorship from corporate partners, but is also interested in increasing its individual donor base.

We are looking forward to working on these issues in the months ahead, and are eager to capitalize on the energy and direction resulting from the spring meeting of Trustees. The TIRF Board will next meet in September in Washington, DC.

### TIRF Elects Three New Trustees

During the TIRF Board of Trustees meeting last week, three new Trustees were elected. We are pleased to announce the election of Dr. Gary Ockey, Mr. Mahesh Ram, and Dr. Nick Saville. Brief biographical information about each of our new Trustees is detailed in the following text. More information can be found by clicking on the links below.

[Dr. Gary Ockey](#) (left) is a research scientist at the Educational Testing Service (ETS). He serves as Research Coordinator for the ETS Committee of Examiners and is Series Editor for the *TOEFL Research Report Series*. He received his PhD from the University of California, Los Angeles in Applied Linguistics and his MA in Linguistics from the University of Utah. Gary has been involved in English language education for nearly three decades.



in both start-up and large multinational companies. Over the last decade, Mr. Ram has been focused on harnessing the power of digital technology to deliver transformative, effective solutions for millions of English language learners of all ages in over 120 countries, with an emphasis on cloud/SaaS delivery.

[Dr. Nick Saville](#) (right) has been involved in English language education for over 30 years. He is currently the Director of Research and Validation (R&V) for Cambridge English Language Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge. In that role, he is a member of the Cambridge English senior management team and is responsible for directing the work of nearly 50 specialist staff members in the R&V Division.



Our new Trustees' collective expertise and experience will benefit the Foundation and our mission immensely. We look forward to working with each of them in the years ahead. Please join us in welcoming our new Trustees to the Foundation's Board!

[Mr. Mahesh Ram](#) (right) is currently the outgoing CEO of GlobalEnglish Corporation. He is an entrepreneur with broad general management experience



### TOEFL® COE 2015 Research Program

The TOEFL® Committee of Examiners (COE) research grants are intended to (1) support research on topics related to the TOEFL® test, both the TOEFL iBT® test and the TOEFL® ITP Assessment Series, and (2) to promote high-quality language assessment research as judged by the COE and Educational Testing Service (ETS). Studies involving the collection of new empirical data can normally be funded up to US \$125,000. This amount includes institutional overhead.

Applications are invited from faculty or staff affili-

ated with nonprofit organizations and institutions (e.g., universities) with expertise in English language learning and assessment research. Proposals from members of the TOEFL COE and for-profit organizations are not eligible. These studies are not intended to serve as the basis for student theses or dissertations.

Each awardee will be required to submit interim and final reports, and to appropriately acknowledge the support of the TOEFL Program when disseminating the results of the funded work.

For more information about this opportunity, please [click here](#). All applications are due on April 14, 2014.

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## TIRF's MALL Panel Presentation at TESOL 2014

On Thursday, March 27, 2014 at the TESOL Convention in Portland, Oregon, USA, several TIRF Trustees and Dr. Phil Hubbard held a panel presentation on one of TIRF's newest initiatives. Dr. Hubbard, Trustees Richard Boyum, Michael Carrier, and Lorraine de Matos, along with Marti Estell, the US State Department's Observer to the Board, presented on the Foundation's [mobile-assisted language learning \(MALL\) initiative](#). There were more than 115 attendees at the presentation, which was entitled "Mobile Learning: A Paradigm Shift in Democratizing Learning Access."

access to quality ELT materials available via mobile devices, the potential benefits of MALL must be explored.



Attendees at TIRF's MALL Session

Dr. Hubbard, Senior Lecturer and Director of English for Foreign Students, Stanford University Language Center, is co-author of [one of the six papers TIRF commissioned](#) in the MALL series. Ms. Nicky Hockly, [another commissioned author](#), was also in attendance at the panel presentation.

In the weeks ahead, there will be a slidecast available on TIRF's website and on our [SlideShare channel](#). This slidecast will include the PowerPoint slides used during the presentation and the audio captured from the session. We will announce the completion of the slidecast in our newsletter, on Facebook, and in next month's newsletter.

Stay tuned for more information!

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TIRF's Panel Presenters Discuss MALL-related Issues with Attendees

During the TIRF panel session, presenters argued that a paradigm shift is well underway, regarding the educational landscape of English language teaching and learning. Presenters acknowledged that while there are still many challenges to democratizing

## TIRF Trustees and TESOL Awards

At the 2014 TESOL Convention in Portland, Oregon, Neil Anderson, a former TIRF Trustee who served as President of the Foundation, received the prestigious [James E. Alatis Award for Service to TESOL](#). The purpose of this award is to acknowledge outstanding and extended service by TESOL members at international, regional, and local levels. This award was established in 1987 to honor James E. Alatis, a TIRF Trustee Emeritus, for his 21 years of devoted service as TESOL's first Executive Director. The recipient is selected according to evidence of a genuine and long-lasting vision of what TESOL is and can be; the ability to combine professional and administrative roles in TESOL organizations; the ability and desire to represent and promote TESOL; and efficiency, personal dynamism, and good cheer.

with which TESOL is concerned – language learners and educators. Previous recipients include Paulo Freire, Hillary Clinton, UNICEF, the Peace Corps, and the American Civil Liberties Union. In his comments, John noted that about 3,000 English language professionals, teachers, and teacher educators work with the British Council around the world, serving more than ten million English language teachers, and well over a billion English learners. John said, "I am immensely proud to receive this award on behalf of the British Council and grateful to TESOL President Deena Boraie and the Association. It is fitting that the recognition should come from an Egyptian president, since one of our first offices and teaching centres was founded in Egypt nearly 80 years ago, and the British Council remains very active there."

In addition, John Knagg, the British Council representative on the TIRF Board of Trustees, accepted the [TESOL President's Award](#) on behalf of the British Council. The President's Award is given annually to individuals or organizations who work for the betterment of those groups

Congratulations to Neil Anderson and to the British Council on receiving these prestigious awards. If you would like to see videos of their acceptance speeches, please click on the awardees' names: [Neil Anderson](#) and [John Knagg](#).

## 2014 AILA World Congress



The 17th World Congress of the [International Association of Applied Linguistics \(AILA\)](#) will be held in Brisbane, Australia, from August 10 –

15, 2014. This year marks 50 years since the first AILA conference was held in Nancy, France in 1964.

research strands and areas in the past 50 years. These topics include automatic translation, language teaching, and research cooperation in Europe.

There are many reasons to attend the conference, but there are especially five which AILA Congress organizers recommend you consider. First, AILA is the biggest global event in applied linguistics and showcases high level presentations and discussions on key issues in the field. Second, this Congress serves as the opportunity for you to communicate your ideas to the broad applied linguistics field. Third, this event occurs only once every three years. Fourth, AILA brings together professionals with researchers and students from around the world. Fifth, AILA will be held in Australia, which has many wonderful sites for taking a holiday to visit natural wonders (e.g., Great Barrier Reef, Uluru, Kakadu, etc.) or some of the country's many exciting cities.

This event is an opportunity for attendees to gain insight into international trends in applied linguistics. The AILA Congress is an excellent opportunity for applied linguistics professionals from around the world to meet, debate, discuss, and collaborate on a range of topics. These include second language learning and teaching; language and society; language and diversity; language and policy; multilingualism; discourse analysis; professional communication; and forensic linguistics.

For more information about the 2014 AILA Congress, please [click here](#). You can also write to [info@aila2014.com](mailto:info@aila2014.com) directly.

Two of the invited symposia will also revisit themes of AILA 1964 to explore the development and diversity of

## Chair's Report — Busy TIRF Days

What an exciting week! I've just come back from Oregon, where I attended the annual AAAL Conference, the TESOL Convention, and the TIRF Board meeting. My head is full of new ideas I want to implement in my teaching and my writing. Unfortunately, both my email inbox and my paper mail are also full – but they are

full of requests from students, colleagues, and administrators here at my "day job" – a reminder that some of us are very fortunate indeed to have support in pursuing professional development opportunities.

This is such an exciting time to be a volunteer in our field. As you can see from all the stories in this newslet-

ter, there is a great deal of activity centered on research at this time. My hope is that the Foundation will continue to grow and to serve the needs of students, teachers, and researchers in applied linguistics around the world.

*Kathleen Bailey*

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Chair of TIRF