

# Esperantic Studies Foundation President's Report 2005

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The past year marked the first full year of operations by ESF under a new mission and operating plan. The Foundation was able to initiate a variety of projects and provide funding support to others that were deemed to meet the Foundation's strategic priorities. Established in 2004, these priorities focus on (1) improving the visibility and prestige of Esperanto as a research topic and teaching subject, (2) focusing attention and academic resources on the study of interlingual communication, (3) establishing an intellectual community of teachers and researchers in higher education committed to the above goals, and (4) improving and expanding the operational capacity of the foundation itself.

Operating within this framework, ESF was able to achieve tangible progress towards many of its goals during the year. The Foundation provided support to a number of innovative teaching and language learning initiatives, both web-based and face-to-face. A \$10,000 research grant was awarded to a post-doctoral researcher at Columbia University. An electronic community of teachers and researchers in Europe and North America was established, and the Foundation supported the development of a significant new language policy initiative in the European Union.

Priorities for 2006 include the further expansion of ESF's research activities, including at least one conference where Advisory Board members, Interlingual Research Grant holders, and other interested parties can meet to review the state of interlingual research and identify potential new initiatives and collaborations. The Nitobe Centre for Language Democracy will enter into full operation, providing a base for innovative language policy research collaboration in the European Union and elsewhere. ESF will continue to support the development of its major web-based educational projects, and will also begin a redesign of its own website to better communicate its goals, achievements, and current activities. The North American Summer Esperanto Institute (NASK) will be given new direction and focus, possibly linked to a change in venue. Institutional partners will be sought for many of these activities. The Foundation will also be developing a long-term fundraising and investment plan to enable the future expansion of its work.

The Esperantic Studies Foundation has set an ambitious agenda for itself in 2006 and looks forward to maintaining the focus and momentum established in 2005.

## **PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES IN 2005**

### **EDUCATION**

**lernu!** ([www.lernu.net](http://www.lernu.net))

The free, web-based, language-learning environment "lernu!" continued to receive support in 2005. ESF funds were used to develop new multimedia learning content as well as upgrade the website architecture to accommodate consistent year-to-year

increases in website traffic. Site traffic has been growing at such a pace that the site's bandwidth limitations were exceeded at several points throughout the year.

**edukado.net** ([www.edukado.net](http://www.edukado.net))

The teaching support site "edukado" received support in 2005 to help with the continued expansion of its teaching materials as well as the development of a web-based interface that now enables subject matter experts to easily edit and upload content from anywhere in the world.

**NASK** ([www.esperanto.org/nask](http://www.esperanto.org/nask))

The 36<sup>th</sup> annual North American Summer Esperanto Institute was held in July at the School for International Training (SIT) in Brattleboro, Vermont. ESF has been supporting this unique 3-week immersion program since 1998. NASK is a core educational priority for the foundation and we look forward to its continued success in the years to come.

**Esperanto Teaching Standards**

A small group of experts was convened by Board member Dr. Timothy Reagan in June, 2005, to develop standards for the teaching of Esperanto in accordance with the framework established by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The resulting document represents the most complete framework and rationale for teaching Esperanto developed in North America. It has been submitted for ratification by the standards committee of ACTFL.

**Berkeley Student Program**

Last year marked ESF's seventh year of support for the Berkeley Student Esperanto Program. Each semester, beginner, intermediate and/or advanced Esperanto language courses are offered to students at the UC Berkeley campus. Classes in 2005 were led by Berkeley student Joshua Brandt-Young. ESF support provides funds for teaching materials as well as a modest scholarship for the teachers.

**Pasporto & Katedro Teaching Projects**

Pasporto al la Tuta Mondo was originally a 16 lesson Esperanto video course in VHS format. Last year, ESF provided funds to help with the creation of an updated DVD version of the course. Pasporto can now be purchased from the Esperanto-USA website ([www.esperanto-usa.org](http://www.esperanto-usa.org)) as a 4-DVD set. The Katedro project was developed to provide Esperanto teachers with videotaped examples of leading-edge teaching techniques and materials. Actual Esperanto language classes in North America and Europe provide much of the source material. The Katedro teacher training program is due to be completed in 2007.

## **INTERLINGUAL RESEARCH**

### **Nitobe Symposium**

ESF sponsored the 4<sup>th</sup> Nitobe Symposium in Vilnius, Lithuania in July 2005. This Symposium, profiled in Issue 17 of *Esperantic Studies*, explores the linguistic dimensions of European integration and globalization.

### **Nitobe Centre For Language Democracy**

The Nitobe Centre was established by ESF following last year's Nitobe Symposium. The Centre is profiled on page one of ES18 and is due to commence operations in early April 2006.

### **Interlingual Research Grant Awards**

In 2005, ESF awarded a \$10,000 research grant to Dr. Thomas Cooper for an investigation of the role of translation in the (re)creation of a transnational literary consciousness in the linguistically diverse region of Central Europe. Dr. Cooper's research, to be carried out at Columbia University, will commence in the spring 2006 and will be featured in a future issue of *Esperantic Studies*.

ESF Advisory Board member **Dr. Nancy Schweda Nicholson** continued her research, under a previous grant, into the functioning of the multilingual interpretation services at the International Tribunal for War Crimes in the Hague. Two other proposals were under consideration at year's end.

### **Interlinguistics Certificate Program**

ESF continued to provide scholarship support in 2005 for students enrolled in the Interlinguistics certificate program at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland. Awardees come from Russia, Germany, Lithuania, France and Iran.

### **Interlingual Research Network**

In order to provide a forum for researchers on interlingual communication, Esperanto studies, and related topics, ESF has established an electronic mailing list, [esf-researchcommunity@sfu.ca](mailto:esf-researchcommunity@sfu.ca), hosted by Simon Fraser University (Burnaby, BC, Canada). To join the list, write to [admin@esperantic.org](mailto:admin@esperantic.org).

## **OPERATIONS**

### **Expansion of the ESF Board**

The past year was also marked by the departure of one director and the addition of two new board members. Dr. Timothy Reagan resigned as an active director following his appointment as Dean of Humanities at the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa. However, he continues to remain an active member of ESF's Advisory Board. Later in the year, ESF directors elected Dr. Bonnie Fonseca-Greber and Mr. Wallace Du Temple to the Board. Dr. Fonseca-Greber is a professor of foreign language education at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio. Mr. Du Temple is a long-time

Esperantist, educator and former municipal councilor near Victoria, British Columbia, who brings considerable experience in fundraising and non-profit management to the ESF Board. ESF also elected Dr. Probal Dasgupta, a well-known linguist, translator, and cultural critic at the University of Hyderabad, India, to the Advisory Board.