

Staying in the Loop with Language Groups: Updates from the COTSEAL 37th Conference

Part of the core mission of the [Southeast Asian Language Council](#) (SEALC) is to prioritize the professional development and support of Southeast Asian language instructors in North America. Clear communication with language specific organizations is critical to this mission to ensure SEALC is up-to-date with the specific pedagogical, professional, and other needs of each group, in addition to their vision for future collaborative projects and the overall advancement of instruction of their language in North America. Likewise, communication between SEA language group organizations makes space for a creative exchange of ideas ranging from outreach methods to areas of overlapping pedagogical interests that lead to cross-language collaboration. In the small field of SEA language teaching, it is this open, creative communication that sustains and enriches the national network of instructors and their efforts to develop curricular materials for each SEA language.

The perfect opportunity to strengthen these lines of communication among the language groups and with SEALC was at the [COTSEAL](#) 37th Virtual Conference on July 23-24, 2021. At the conference, representatives from the SEALC Steering Committee had the opportunity to meet with six language specific groups: Burmese (ATOM), Filipino/Tagalog (CAF), Indonesian (COTI), Khmer (TKLA), Thai (CATI), and Vietnamese (GUAVA). Read below for brief updates on each language group including their goals for the future and how to contact them!

Burmese (*Association for Teachers of Myanmar language, ATOM*)

ATOM was formed in 2017 at the COTSEAL conference hosted by Cornell University. ATOM's goals include website development and building a strong, network of communication and support for Burmese instructors in the United States and SEA. You can check out [their new website](#), which will serve as a resource to Burmese instructors and learners as it is developed. If you are interested in joining or have questions, please contact the organization at burmeseteachers@gmail.com.

Filipino (*Consortium for the Advancement of Filipino, CAF*)

CAF has a few exciting collaborative projects, including the integration of data from the 2012 Filipino Oral Proficiency Guidelines (OPG) with the recently completed 2020 Filipino OPG, and a campaign to gather feedback from members of CAF, instructors of Filipino at American tertiary institutions, and volunteers at other programs. CAF will also use the Filipino OPG as a primary reference in a collaborative curriculum design project for 1st and 2nd year Filipino based on the early work of Professor Teresita Ramos. Other project ideas include development of Project-Based Language Learning lessons for Filipino. The current membership of CAF includes about 20 instructors of Filipino/Tagalog at many different institutions. Maria Theresa Savella (Cornell University), Imelda Gasmien (University of Hawai'i - Manoa), Karen Llagas (UC-Berkeley), and Vic

Romero are the instructors currently in leadership for CAF; an election for new leadership is planned for December 2021. CAF is also in the midst of finalizing their by-laws, setting up a new website, and recruiting members. Email CAF at caffilipino@gmail.com for more information on membership and activities!

Indonesian (*Consortium for the Teaching of Indonesian, COTI*)

COTI has been exploring virtual opportunities to strengthen partnerships with Indonesian institutions. Recently, these opportunities have come in the form of many virtual events. This has included a national Indonesian language competition co-hosted by COTI and the Indonesian Embassy in Washington, D.C. in December of 2020, in addition to a virtual webinar series on the teaching of Indonesian as a foreign language in collaboration with, among others, The Indonesian State University Rectors Council and The Indonesian Scientific Diaspora in the U.S. and Canada. Members of COTI were also invited to share their experiences and impressions related to teaching Indonesian in the United States at a recent event hosted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of Indonesia entitled “The Minister Chats with BIPA (*Indonesian as a Foreign Language*) Instructors.” COTI aims to continue this strong collaboration with independent and governmental bodies in Indonesia, to assist in the further development of Indonesian teaching programs via knowledge sharing and networking.

Additionally, COTI is looking to provide opportunities to its members to interact with the COTI community and share their knowledge. This may include a presentation series, where members can present on a pedagogy topic of interest every other month. The current membership of COTI includes about 35 instructors of Indonesian at many different institutions. Jolanda M. Pandin - President (Cornell University), Indriyo Sukmono - Vice President & Treasurer (Yale University), and Rahmi H. Aoyama - Secretary & Communication Manager (Northern Illinois University) are currently in leadership for COTI. Want to get in touch with COTI? [Email Rahmi](#) with questions about COTI membership and activities! You can also learn more at the [COTI website](#).

Khmer (*Teachers of Khmer Language Association, TKLA*)

TKLA is getting off the ground with discussions on finalizing their association by-laws and developing a web page to host more information on the group and its goals for the future. TKLA hopes to develop Khmer Oral Proficiency Guidelines and expand the number of instructors certified for ACTFL OPI testing in the future. Members of TKLA hope to join future SEALC activities, such as the upcoming Reading Proficiency Assessment workshop at NIU (March 3-6, 2022). Interested in getting involved in TKLA? Email current member [Nielson Hul](#) for more information!

Thai (*Council on the Advancement of Thai Language Instruction, CATI*)

Newly established CATI had their inaugural business meeting, hosted virtually, on February 13, 2021. CATI is finalizing its by-laws and planning future projects, including an online expert

roundtable and discussion for members on Saturday 8/21/21 (08.00 US CDT / 20.00 Bangkok) to discuss various proficiency standards, including CEFR, ACTFL, ILR, and those from the Sirindhorn Thai Language Institute. CATI began its membership drive in January 2021 and now has 86 registered members. Current leadership of CATI includes Janpanit Surasin - President (UW-Madison), Pittaya Paladroi-Shane - Vice President (Ohio University), and Kanjana Thepboriruk - Secretary and Treasurer (Northern Illinois University). Prawet Jantararat also serves as an ex-officio member of the executive committee as a consultant on past activities by Thai language instructors in the US. Interested in learning more about CATI? Check out their [Facebook page](#) and [register for membership here!](#)

Vietnamese (*Group of Universities for the Advancement of Vietnamese in America, GUAVA*)
GUAVA has been active in many different pedagogical and professional activities. Members of GUAVA recently presented on the completed Vietnamese Oral Proficiency Guidelines and assessment practices in teaching and learning Vietnamese at Columbia University in May of 2021. Two teams of GUAVA members are recipients of SEALC Materials Development awards for the projects entitled, *Developing Task-Based Materials for Mixed-Level Vietnamese Language Classrooms* and *Vietnamese Oral Proficiency Lesson Development* with an expected completion date for both in Spring of 2022. Additionally, GUAVA has launched [a new website](#) that will serve as a central hub and as a repository of online materials for Vietnamese instructors. GUAVA also plans to develop a newsletter for its members in the near future. Long-term goals for the group include expanding the number of ACTFL OPI certified instructors for Vietnamese, developing a standardized placement test for use at institutions across the U.S., and building on current projects to develop an advanced Vietnamese textbook. GUAVA members are also interested in further training in assessment.

Thuy Tranviet - President (Cornell University), Chung Nguyen - Executive Secretary (Columbia University), and Huy Phung - Newsletter Editor/Webmaster (University of Hawai'i – Manoa) are the current leadership for GUAVA. You can get in touch with GUAVA with questions on membership and activities via email, at guavamerica@gmail.com.

Interested in learning more about SEALC? [Join our mailing list here!](#) Email sealc@intl.wisc.edu with all inquiries.