

# History of the German Language Division

The formation of the German Language Division (GLD) within ATA dates back to a meeting of 29 German translators and interpreters at the 1996 ATA Conference in Colorado Springs. The initiative was taken by Claudia Kellersch who guided the Division (to be established) through its initial stages as the Acting Administrator.

At the suggestion of Peter Krawutschke, President of ATA at that time, a kick-off meeting, chaired by Claudia Kellersch, was held in April 1997 in conjunction with the Southwest Regional Conference in Austin, Texas. Two committees were formed at this meeting, one to develop a German Language Division homepage, and the other, the San Francisco Conference Organizing Committee, to arrange German presentations, a division meeting, and a social event at a German restaurant during the San Francisco ATA Conference in 1997. Preliminary bylaws were developed during that year with Edith Losa serving as the first Acting Assistant Administrator to be later succeeded by Ruth Zimmer Boggs. Several committees were established, among them the Literary Committee chaired by Ingo Stoehr, the Sci-Tech Committee chaired by Nicholas Hartmann, and the Website Committee chaired by Michael Metzger. All but the Website Committee were abandoned over time because their functions seemed to overlap with other ATA Committees. The duties of arranging presentations and other activities during the annual ATA conferences were later assigned to the Assistant Administrator who would then make the appropriate arrangements with the help of a supporting team.

The first newsletter of the Division was published as the *Mitteilungsblatt* in October 1997 with Marga Hannon as the editor and Frank Dietz and Ann MacFarlane as proofreaders.

The establishment of the Division was officially approved by the ATA Board of Directors in November 1997, and the division's tentative bylaws were modified and approved by the membership attending the Annual Meeting of the Division held during the ATA conference in San Francisco in 1997. Claudia Kellersch and Ruth Zimmer Boggs were elected for a one-year term as the Administrator and Assistant Administrator, respectively, of the now fully established division.

Between the ATA Conference in San Francisco (1997) and the ATA Conference at Hilton Head (1998), communication with the membership was maintained by two further editions of the *Mitteilungsblatt*. A call went out for a name of the newsletter. The suggestions which were submitted included: *A bis Z*, *Der Silbenstecher*, *Die Schlagzeile*, *Forum - The Newsletter of the ATA German Language Division*, *GLD-Exchange*, *Interaktiv*, *The Germata Newsletter*, and *Wort für Wort*. The name *Interaktiv*, suggested by Petra Bargmann, was chosen by the majority of the German Division members attending the Annual Meeting of the Division on Hilton Head and became the official name of the division's newsletter. The newsletter was initially sent out by mail through ATA headquarters as a black-and-white hard copy. After the March 2001 issue the delivery mode was changed by majority vote at the Annual Meeting to an electronic format (PDF) which, however, would still leave members the option to receive the newsletter as a hard copy by regular mail. This move significantly reduced the mailing costs, one of the major budget items at the time, and also allowed for printing the newsletter in color. The size of the quarterly newsletter increased over the years from an initial 8 pages to 24 pages per issue.

In 1999 communication between GLD members was further enhanced by the establishment of an e-mail listserv at Yahoo!Groups, open only to members of the German Language Division. From its

inception to April 2004, a total of 18,000 messages were posted on this list dealing with everything from translation queries, information about upcoming events, and other exchanges of potential interest. In October 2007, the total number of messages reached 48,348, and as of 2019 the total was approximately 107,000!

In November 2019 the GLD and other ATA groups changed the list host and switched from Yahoo Groups to Groups.io. Here a few more recent annual figures for the year between conferences (Oct. 1-Sept. 30): 2021: approx. 1,700 postings, 2020: 2,320 postings, 2019: 1,900 postings. 2018: approx. 2,500 postings, 2017: 3,600 postings, 2016: 4,107 postings, 2015: 5,233 postings.

Yet another avenue for announcing the activities of the German Language Division became available with the development of the Division's website. Information on the site is available in German as well as English and is linked to ATA's homepage. Membership in the Division doubled from the 368 members in May 1997 to 764 in November 2003. The German Language Division thus was the fourth largest of the thirteen ATA Divisions (September 2003), exceeded only by the Spanish Language and the Interpreters Divisions, and by a small margin by the French Language Division. As of October 2007, the membership in the GLD increased to 1,264 members. The accomplishments of the division can be attributed to the many volunteers devoting countless hours in support of the division's activities.

The ATA did away with divisional budgets and dues in 2006, which led to a dramatic increase in German Language Division membership from 672 in 2005 to 1,061 in 2006. In the following years, division membership increased incrementally, gradually reaching a peak of 1,550 in 2014. Two years later it had decreased slightly to 1,490. 2017-2022 saw steadily decreasing numbers, with 2022 membership (966) dipping under 1,000 for the first time since 2005.

Under the leadership of Dorothee Racette, the GLD set up a council with 8-10 members known as the *Ratsrunde* with a dedicated listserv that became a model for all other divisions when the governing structure was changed around 2010/11. A retreat to discuss needed changes held at ATA Headquarters in Alexandria when Ruth A. Gentes Krawczyk was the Division's Administrator led to the creation of the Leadership Council, which replaced the *Ratsrunde*. When Matt Baird took over as Editor in 2011, the GLD once again became a model for other divisions, with Headquarters pointing to the semi-annual publication *interaktiv* as an example of how to put together a great newsletter.

The GLD's website has evolved significantly over the years. The first version was static and maintained by Michael Metzger. Michael Wahlster took over as Webmaster in 2003 and eventually redesigned the website with some of the tools newly available at the time. It was still static, but began to take on the form of an "institutional memory" as a result of an effort to archive as much material as possible. A new version of the website in 2007 retained the existing design, but introduced the first dynamic element with an area called "Das steht woanders" based on links to off-site content. Michael Wahlster completely revamped the website for the 2008 conference, making it totally dynamic for the first time. That website continued to exist with minor changes until it was finally replaced with a completely new design by the Webmaster at the time, Jessica Lucio, just in time for the 2016 conference.

The GLD got its first social media presence when its Facebook page was launched by Sarah Allen (now Jokar-Deris) and Sandy Jones. The GLD's Twitter account went live in late 2016, at which time the Facebook page was given a facelift to ensure the division's Facebook and Twitter both had a uniform

look and the same wordcloud as a profile picture. As of early October 2022, the GLD's Facebook page has 590 followers, while its Twitter account has 1,043 followers, up from 262 and 213 in 2017.

Under the leadership of Eva Stabenow, each of the members of the LC were given specific roles with defined tasks and a support group was set up by Karen Leube for GLD members residing in Europe. The group has its own listserv and meanwhile holds an annual workshop every winter. After putting in years of hard work establishing and growing the group, Karen passed the baton to Ellen Yutzy Glebe in 2018, the new European Coordinator. Additional members of the organizing committee include Matt Baird and Robin Limmeroth.

The GLD began filming interviews of its Distinguished Speakers in 2015 for the benefit of its members who were unable to attend the annual conference. The division's own Eva Stabenow interviewed the German orthography expert Lisa Walgenbach in 2015 and Lois Feuerle interviewed the award-winning playwright/director/translator Philip Boehm in 2016. Also in 2016, the division organized a photo contest among its members to collect images for the new website launched in the same year, with the idea being that the contest may be repeated at regular intervals in order to generate fresh images for the website. In 2017 Ruth Boggs interviewed the author and translator Karin Königs in Washington, D.C. Ruth also interviewed the legal expert and author Franz J. Heidinger in 2018 and the literary translator Dr. Ruth Martin in 2019. 2021's Distinguished Speaker, Lisa RÜth, was prevented from coming to Minneapolis by covid travel restrictions, and thus became 2022's Speaker, interviewed by Petra Rieker. The interviews can be viewed on the GLD's YouTube channel, ATA German Language Division, with the exception of Petra Rieker's interview of Lisa RÜth, which you can read on the blog on our website.

The GLD's membership statistics are not updated by HQ during the year. The list below shows the official membership applicable for the current year as of the end of the preceding year, i.e., the figure stated for 2016 is generated as of December 31, 2016, and applies throughout the year 2017:

<b>As of year-end</b>	<b>Membership</b>
2022:	966
2021:	1,088
2020:	1,174
2019:	1,305
2018:	1,406
2017:	1,466
2016:	1,490
2015:	1,544
2014:	1,550
2013:	1,551
2012:	1,541
2011:	1,540
2010:	1,510
2009:	1,447
2008:	1,329
2007:	1,285
2006:	1,061 (the year dues and budgets were eliminated)
2005:	672

Space will not allow a listing of everybody who deserves recognition, but the major contributors are listed below.

### **Leadership Council, Past and Present**

#### Administrators

1996-1997	Claudia Kellersch (acting)
1997-1998	Claudia Kellersch
1998-2000	Helge Gunther
2000-2004	Dorothee Racette
2004-2008	Frieda Ruppenner-Lind
2008-2012	Ruth A. Gentes Krawczyk
2012-2014	Eva Stabenow
2014-2016	Michael Engley
2016-2020	Ruth Boggs
2020-present	Carlie Sitzman

#### Assistant Administrators

1996-1997	Edith Losa (acting)
1997-2000	Ruth Zimmer-Boggs
2000-2002	Mike Magee
2002-2006	Jutta Diel-Dominique
2006-2008	Ruth A. Gentes Krawczyk
2008-2012	Eva Stabenow
2012-2014	Michael Engley
2014-2018	Melissa Field
2018-2020	Sandy Jones
2020-present	Karen Leube

#### Newsletter Editors

1997-2001	Marga Hannon
2001-2002	Christiane Bohnert
2004-2006	Rainer Klett
2006-2009	Abigail Dahlberg
2009-2010	Astra Van Heest
2011-2019	Matt Baird
2019-present	Marion Rhodes

#### Newsletter Co-Editors

1999-2002	Manfred Winter
2004-2007	Roland Grefer
2006-2007	Astrid Kaeser
2016-2017	Lea Rennert
2017-2018	Jeanette Brickner
2019	Ellen Yutzy Glebe
2020	Hilary Higgins
2022	Melissa Kostelecky

#### Editorial support and proofreading

1997-1998	Petra Bargmann
1998	Thomas Hannon
1999-2012	Janice Becker
2002-2012	Susanne van Eyl
2012-present	Kimberly Scherer
2012-present	Ute Kegel
2019	Ellen Yutzy-Glebe
2019-present	Annett Kuester
2019-present	Ivonne Reichard-Novak
2019-present	Melissa Kostelecky
2019-present	Sabine Seiler
2012-present	Kimberly Scherer
2012-present	Ute Kegel
2019-present	Jill Sommer
2020-present	Erin Riddle

#### Newsletter Layout

1998-2000	Karin Wuertz-Schaefer
2001-2003	Karen Lawliss
2003-2008	Rainer Klett
2008-2020	Katrin Rippel Galati
2020-present	Daniela Radivo-Harder

#### Webmaster

1997-2003	Michael Metzger
2003-2011	Michael Wahlster
2012-2015	Susanne Aldridge
2015	Ekaterina Howard
2016-2019	Jessica Lucio
2019-present	Robin Limmeroth

#### Listmaster

1997-2003	Michael Metzger
2003-2004	Jost Zetzsche
2004-2009	Christoph Niedermair
2009-2022	Gerhard Preisser

#### European Coordinator

#### Social Media Coordinator

2012-2018 Karen Leube  
2018-present Ellen Yutzy-Glebe

2013-2016 Sarah Allen  
2016-2021 Sandy Jones  
2021-present Ilona Friedman

New Member & Proofreading Pool Coordinator

2015-2020 Carlie Sitzman  
2022-present Heike Holthaus

Digital Events Coordinator

2020-2022 Elani Koogle Wales

Conference Coordinator

2016-2020 Michael Engley

***Thank you to everyone who contributed to putting this history into words!***