

The History of the German Language Division

The founding of the GLD

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 soon to be established Division through its initial stages as 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 ATA Annual Conference in San Francisco 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 Boggs. Several committees* were established, including the Literary Committee chaired by Ingo Stoehr, the Sci-Tech Committee chaired by Nicholas Hartmann, and the Website Committee chaired by Michael Metzger.

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 Annual Conference in San Francisco in 1997. Claudia Kellersch and Ruth Boggs were elected to a one-year term as Administrator and Assistant Administrator of the now fully established Division.

**These committees were abandoned over time due to overlap with other ATA Committees. The Assistant Administrator later became responsible for organizing the ATA conference activities with a team; these activities are now handled by the Administrator and Assistant Administrator.*

Newsletter

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. Between the ATA Annual Conference in San Francisco (1997) and the ATA Annual Conference on Hilton Head (1998), communication with the membership was maintained by two further editions of the *Mitteilungsblatt*. A call went out for ideas on a name for the newsletter. The suggestions 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 Language 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 regular mail through ATA headquarters as a black-and-white hard copy. Following the March 2001 issue, the delivery mode was changed by majority vote at the Annual Meeting to an electronic format (PDF) which, however, still left members with the option to receive the newsletter as a hard copy by regular mail. This move significantly reduced the mailing costs, a major budget item at the time, and allowed for printing the newsletter in color. The size of the newsletter increased over the years from an initial 8 pages to 30+ pages at present. The quarterly newsletter was switched to a twice-yearly publication in 2007. 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. In 2019, Matt Baird passed the baton to Marion Rhodes, who has continued producing high-quality issues since then. In preparation to take over the reins from Marion, Sabine Seiler began shadowing her in 2023. Daniela Radivo-Harder gave *interaktiv* a fresh new look in 2020 with a new layout. Today, the newsletter boasts a volunteer staff of around 12, including the editor-in-chief, copy editors, proofreaders, a calendar coordinator, a dictionary review coordinator, and a design & layout coordinator. Previous newsletters going back as far as March 1999 are available for download on the GLD website.

Listserv

In 1999 communication between GLD members was further enhanced by the establishment of an email 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 listserv on 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 switched from Yahoo!Groups to Groups.io to host the list. Here are a few annual figures for the year between conferences (Oct. 1-Sept. 30): 2022: 1,750 postings, 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. Rainer Klett took over on January 1, 2023, taking on the daunting task of cleaning up the list by deleting invalid emails and non-members, reducing the number of actual subscribers from 438 to 298. At the Division Meeting in September 2023, Rainer reported the list had exactly 300 subscribers. GLD Listmaster reports from Annual Meetings are available on the GLD website.

Membership

Membership in the Division doubled from 368 members in May 1997 to 764 in November 2003, making the German Language Division the fourth largest of the thirteen ATA Divisions (September 2003), exceeded only by the Spanish Language Division and the Interpreters Division, and (by a small margin) 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. 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:

Membership as of year-end

| | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 2023: | 887 | 2013: | 1,551 |
| 2022: | 966 | 2012: | 1,541 |
| 2021: | 1,088 | 2011: | 1,540 |
| 2020: | 1,174 | 2010: | 1,510 |
| 2019: | 1,305 | 2009: | 1,447 |
| 2018: | 1,406 | 2008: | 1,329 |
| 2017: | 1,466 | 2007: | 1,285 |

| | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| 2016: | 1,490 | 2006: | 1,061* |
| 2015: | 1,544 | 2005: | 672 |
| 2014: | 1,550 | | |

**(the year dues and budgets were eliminated)*

Divisions are not informed when new members join their Division. New members, however, do receive an automatic email with contact information for the Division, so with this in mind, a new position – the New Member Coordinator – was created in 2022 under the GLD administration of Karen Leube and Robin Limmeroth. The New Member Coordinator’s contact information is now included in the ATA email to new members and when contacted, the Coordinator provides new members with information on the many benefits of membership, answers any questions they may have, and follows up with them. Kristina Cosumano is the first to hold this position and has already been contacted by numerous new GLD members as well as by prospective members with questions about the Division.

Leadership Council

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 2010/2011. A retreat to discuss necessary changes held at ATA Headquarters in Alexandria under Ruth A. Gentes Krawczyk as Division Administrator led to the creation of the Leadership Council, which replaced the *Ratsrunde*. Under the leadership of Division Administrator Eva Stabenow, each member of the LC was given a specific role with defined tasks. A support group was set up by Karen Leube for GLD members residing in Europe, with future GLD Administrator Karen assuming the new role of European Coordinator. Additional positions were created under the GLD leadership of Karen Leube, the 2023 recipient of ATA’s Dynamo Award, including the New Member Coordinator, Student Consultants, and Digital Event Coordinators. As of 2024, the GLD Leadership Council includes the Administrator, the Assistant Administrator, two Digital Events Coordinators, a Web Manager, a Newsletter Editor-in Chief, a Listmaster, a Social Media Coordinator, a European Coordinator, a New Member Coordinator, and three Consultants (including two student members). Short bios of current Leadership Council members can be viewed on the GLD website.

GLD in Europe

The GLD in Europe began with a meeting at Wiesbaden train station organized by Karen Leube in 2011. What began as an informal get-together of ATA members in the region developed into a professional weekend workshop through the years, with venues including Berlin, Mainz, Karlsruhe, Erfurt, and Tübingen, and attendees coming from other European countries and even as far as the US. The group in Europe has its own listserv and holds its popular annual workshop every winter with peer sessions and an invited speaker. After putting in many years of hard work establishing and growing the group, in 2018 Karen handed over the reins to Ellen Yutzy Glebe, the new European Coordinator. The GLD in Europe also has an organizing committee with various volunteers who have helped with the agenda, registration, and other tasks throughout the group’s existence, including Birgit Vosseler-Brehmer, Elke Mailand, Matt Baird, and Robin Limmeroth, as well as a local GLD member to scout venue and restaurant locations each year.

Website

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 both German and English, and it is linked to ATA’s homepage. 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” in 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 replaced in 2016 with a completely new design by Webmaster Jessica Lucio, just in time for the annual conference. Earlier that year, the Division had held a photo contest among its members to collect images for the new website, with the idea being that the contest could be repeated at regular intervals to generate fresh images for the website. In January 2023, Administrator Karen Leube and Assistant Administrator/Webmaster Robin Limmeroth revamped and relaunched the website with a new structure and new sections. The new look and content of the website was positively received among the members. In late March 2023, the position of Webmaster was changed to Web Manager, as Randal Gernaat took over the position.

Social media

The GLD got its first social media presence when Sarah Allen (now Jokar-Deris) and Sandy Jones launched its Facebook page. 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 January 2024, the GLD’s Facebook page has 660 followers, while its Twitter account has 1,088 followers, up from 262 and 213 in 2017. The GLD’s LinkedIn page was launched on January 30, 2023, and began to steadily gain followers. The GLD’s new Social Media Coordinator, Noah William Alter, took over posting on the account in May 2023 and followers flocked to the GLD’s LinkedIn page, numbering 1,352 as of January 2024.

Logo

In 2023 during the website relaunch, the decision was made to create our own official logo for the GLD. Katrin Rippel Galati designed our current logo, which is used on all social media, official zoom backgrounds, the website, and more.

Digital Events

To better serve the membership during the pandemic and beyond, the Leadership Council position of Digital Events Coordinator was created in 2020 under the Division leadership of Carlie Sitzman and Karen Leube, with Elani Koogle Wales being the first to serve in the position, assisted by Jill Sommer. The very first Division webinar was *‘Did the agreed-upon chicken cross the road?’ Terminology conundrums and insights in legal translations*, held by Jacqueline Jugenheimer. Along with webinars exclusively and free for GLD members, online socials were organized as well, giving members a chance to connect. The GLD’s digital event offerings grew rapidly starting in 2022 when the position was taken on and shared by two people, Katrin Rippel Galati and Erin Riddle. As of 2023, activities include coordinating and scheduling a good number of educational and social events, followed by feedback surveys sent to the attendees. There is also an easy-to-use sign-up page in place for event sign-up to support the membership verification process and automate email outreach. The duo also introduced online co-working sessions and created an online form for members to suggest ideas for future events.

Distinguished Speakers

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. 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. The GLD Distinguished Speaker in 2021, 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. Due to changes in ATA's policy on Distinguished Speakers, the GLD did not have a Distinguished Speaker in 2023 but is scheduled to in 2024.

Volunteers

Space will not allow the listing of everybody who deserves recognition, but 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 |
| 2020-2022 | Carlie Sitzman |
| 2022-present | Karen Leube |

Assistant Administrators

| | |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| 1996-1997 | Edith Losa (acting) |
| 1997-2000 | Ruth 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 |
| 2020-2022 | Karen Leube |
| 2022-present | Robin Limmeroth (acting) |

Newsletter Editors-in-Chief

| | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| 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 |

Web Manager (previously Webmaster)

| | |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1997-2003 | Michael Metzger |
| 2003-2011 | Michael Wahlster |
| 2012-2015 | Susanne Aldridge |
| 2015 | Ekaterina Howard |
| 2016-2019 | Jessica Lucio |
| 2019-2023 | Robin Limmeroth |
| 2023-present | Randal Gernaat |

Social Media Coordinator

| | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| 2013-2016 | Sarah Allen |
| 2016-2021 | Sandy Jones |
| 2021-2023 | Ilona Friedman |
| 2023-present | Noah William Alter |

Listmaster

| | |
|--------------|----------------------|
| 1997-2003 | Michael Metzger |
| 2003-2004 | Jost Zetzsche |
| 2004-2009 | Christoph Niedermair |
| 2009-2022 | Gerhard Preisser |
| 2023-present | Rainer Klett |

European Coordinator

| | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| 2012-2018 | Karen Leube |
| 2018-present | Ellen Yutzky-Glebe |

Digital Events Coordinator

| | |
|--------------|------------------------------------|
| 2020-2022 | Elani Koogle Wales |
| 2022-present | Katrin Rippel Galati & Erin Riddle |

Consultants

| | |
|--------------|------------|
| 2020-present | Ruth Boggs |
|--------------|------------|

New Member Coordinator (new position in 2022)

| | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 2022-present | Kristina Cosumano |
|--------------|-------------------|

2023 Gerhard Preisser
2022-2023 Carlie Sitzman
2023-present Megan Falk
2023-present Andrew Belisle

Conference Coordinator
2016-2020 Michael Engley

Additional Volunteers, Past and Present

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
2023 Sabine Seiler

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

Book Review Coordinator

2021-present Rosalie Henke

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
2023 Randal Gernaat

Calendar

2018-present Stella Waltemade

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