

Annual SEALC Stakeholders Report

Submitted by Ellen Rafferty, 1/20/2025

The annual Stakeholder meeting is a virtual meeting on January 23, 2025 at 8:00 pm EST.

Current SEALC steering Committee members:

Agustini, U. Michigan, representative from COTSEAL
Precious Arao, U. Hawaii Manoa, liaison member
Erin Barnard, UW Madison, Pedagogy specialist
Abby Cohn, Cornell U. Convening chair, GETSEA liaison
Siddharth Chandra, Michigan State U, Director Asian Studies Center.
Mike McGovern, U. Michigan
Ellen Rafferty, UW Madison, PI of Luce grant
Yanisa Vararaksa, student assistant, Cornell U.
Juliana Wijaya, UCLA, founding member of SEALC
Mary Jo Wilson, UW Madison, fiscal specialist

SEALC initiatives 3-2024 to 1-2025

Leadership transition

SEALC, in its final year of the Luce Foundation award, is transitioning its leadership from UW Madison where Ellen Rafferty managed the grant activities to Cornell U. where Abby Cohn will chair the SEALC Steering committee and coordinate with the national Pedagogy Committee, co-chaired by Erin Barnard of UW Madison and Chan Lwin of Arizona State U. The Pedagogy committee is tasked with proposing professional development projects that meet the national needs of SE Asian language instructors. As SEALC transitions, the goals remain the same, that is, to support the professional development activities of the field of SE Asian language instructors in the US and abroad and to improve the quality and accessibility of SE Asian language instruction.

This report outlines the SEALC activities of the past year (spring 2024 -spring 2025) which include professional development workshops for instructors, tuition awards for SEASSI, and the SEALC-GETSEA tuition awards for the AY 2024-25 along with the maintenance of the *Virtual Language Institute*, and sponsoring a conference to assess accomplishments and needs moving forward. See the SEALC website for a full description of activities and deliverables developed over the past five years. (<https://sealc.wisc.edu/>)

Professional development activity

The primary initiative this past year was a series of in-person and virtual sessions entitled, *Listening Assessment Design and Development workshops* with the goal of designing listening assessment tests for 6 SE Asian languages at the intermediate and advanced proficiency levels. See <https://sealc.wisc.edu/listening-assessment-workshops-and-symposium/> for a description of the workshops and the deliverables produced. The trainers for this series of workshops were Cathy Baumann and Ahmet Dursun of the U. Chicago with whom SEALC has worked closely over the past few years to develop assessment tests for both the reading and listening skills. Through a combination of virtual training sessions and in-person workshops at Arizona State U. and the Big Ten conference Center in Chicago, SEALC trained 64 SE Asian language instructors who created 50 Listening Assessment tests at the intermediate and advanced levels for the following 6 SE Asian languages: Burmese, Filipino, Indonesian, Lao, Thai, and Vietnamese. These tests allow instructors to assess the ability of students to comprehend authentic spoken language texts such as AV productions from radio, television, or the internet, as well as voice mails, and public announcements. These assessment tests are available to the instructors who participated in the training workshops and are currently being used in the US and in SE Asia to assess listening comprehension and determine what additions to the curriculum are needed to improve listening comprehension skills. To support the development of curricular materials, SEALC and COTSEAL co-sponsored a two-hour webinar on November 8, 2024 entitled, *Teaching Listening Comprehension: Developing Listening Proficiency through Classroom Activities*, presented by Catherine Baumann. SEALC hopes to offer additional workshops to encourage the development of listening comprehension materials.

Student tuition support

In the summer of 2024, SEALC increased its **SEASSI tuition awards** from 5 to 10 due to the decline in funding opportunities for students. SEALC made 10 tuition awards of \$2,500 to students studying the following languages: Lao 1, Khmer 1, Indonesian 5, Thai 1, and Vietnamese 2. SEALC has budgeted for another 10 SEASSI tuition awards for the summer of 2025.

SEALC promoted accessibility of SE Asian language courses through the **SEALC-GETSEA AY tuition scholarships** which allow students to study a SE Asian language at an institution other than their home institution. In order to make placements for these applicants, SEALC annually updates the *Virtual Language Institute* database that tracks which university programs offer virtual language courses that accept distance students. (See <https://sealc.wisc.edu/sealc-getsea-virtual-language-institute/>) In August of 2024, five AY SEALC-GETSEA tuition awards were made to graduate students, and the cost of these awards was split between the two organizations. Awards were given to: An Sakach (Arizona State) to

study Lao at UW-Madison, Zhiting Sophia Chen (Vanderbilt) to study Indonesian at UW-Madison, Anneliese Hardman (University of Illinois-Chicago) to studying Khmer at NIU, Emily Scolaro (UNC-Chapel Hill) to study Khmer at NIU, and Parit Chiwarak (UW-Madison) to study Burmese at NIU. Over the past four years approximately 25 students have benefited from this program.

Conference

SEALC held the conference, ***Southeast Asian Language Instruction: Sustainability through Collaboration*** at Cornell U. on September 19-22, 2024 to assess achievements of the last 5 years and to consider directions for the post-Luce Foundation award period. The conference program is available at <https://sealc.wisc.edu/cornell-2024/> The conference opened on Thursday afternoon (9-19-24) with a stimulating talk by Oya Topcuoglu Judd (Northwestern U) on *Student Centered Multimodal Approaches using Authentic Media*, followed by a reception. The Friday sessions began with an overview of the mission and accomplishments of the SEALC projects over the past five years. Representatives of all the language groups reported on what projects were most impactful for their language group. The afternoon sessions began with descriptions of initiatives that have emerged organically from the SEALC professional development projects and closed with comments from Catherine Baumann on ideas for building a future for SE Asian language instruction in this climate of declining enrollments in language courses. The Saturday (9-21-24) morning sessions offered comments on accomplishments and challenges for the field of SE Asian language education from the external evaluator, Nelleke Van Deusen-Scholl (Yale U), and comments on funding options from the Luce Foundation (Yuting Li and Helena Kolenda) and funding opportunities at the International & Foreign Language Education (IFLE) office, U.S. Department of Education by Brian Cwiek. On the final afternoon, leadership from language groups and from institutions offered comments on the need for future projects and the importance of collaboration in order to maintain the community of practice that has developed within the field of SE Asian language instruction. (See attachment with *High-level take-aways from the conference.*)

As PI of the Luce Foundation award, I'd like to thank the many colleagues and institutions that have worked closely with SEALC and enabled this initiative to succeed. First, our thanks go to the Henry Luce Foundation for their trust in SEALC to wisely and effectively use the funds to advance the field of SE Asian language instruction. SEALC's success is truly a direct result of the dedication of the members of the *SEALC steering committee* who have attended monthly meetings over the last five years, guiding and supporting SEALC initiatives; the steering committee has been the backbone of this organization. We owe a debt of gratitude to all the NRCs that have graciously supported the travel of instructors to the SEALC workshops. Perhaps most crucially, our sincere thanks go to the many dedicated language instructors who have devoted countless hours attending workshops and then collaboratively developing

teaching materials. The hard work of the SEALC participants has vastly improved the field of SE Asian language instruction. The field has new, up-to-date materials, and a cadre of well-trained and innovative instructors who actively interact in a community of practice. Finally, SEALC greatly appreciates the willingness of institutions across the country to host our workshops (NIU, Cornell, UCLA, ASU, and UW Madison); this collaboration has contributed to our efforts to make the mission of SEALC a national endeavor.