

Consortium of Doctoral Programs in Rhetoric and Composition Minutes from the Annual Caucus, March 21, 2013, at CCCC, Las Vegas, NV

The meeting of the Consortium of Doctoral Programs in Rhetoric and Composition was called to order by the Chair, Joyce Neff, Old Dominion University, at 1:30 p.m. She introduced the Executive Committee, guest speakers, and the topic for discussion: Doctoral Program Assessment. The two presenters were Ken McAllister, Professor and Director of the Graduate Program in Rhetoric and Composition, University of Arizona, and Wendy Sharer, Associate Professor, Department of English, East Carolina University.

Highlights of Professor McAllister's presentation included the need to identify program outcomes, distinguish between direct (artifacts, performance) and indirect assessment (student success, placement, etc.) measures, and analyze findings. Professor McAllister stressed the need to make program assessment a collaborative, community-building process and to understand that the data we privilege is not necessarily the data institutional administrators privilege. Assessment is about establishing a sense of core values and determining what the world needs in terms of teachers of writing.

Professor Sharer's presentation included an overview of data collected from the annual Doctoral Consortium Assessment Survey. In contrast to Professor McAllister's presentation, data suggested that a large number of respondents did not have specific learning outcomes, with a smaller number reporting that they were not sure if they had. Thus, Professor Sharer also outlined where the major forms of assessment did occur in programs, including an emerging emphasis in some programs on portfolios, as well as the types of resources participants indicated would be most useful to establish a more consistent emphasis on outcomes in doctoral education nationally but still allow programs to have varied missions.

Prior to the start of the business meeting, Sondra Perl and Amanda Licastro provided a brief demonstration of the Writing Studies Tree, an interactive genealogy of participants in the discipline. Benefits of the site include the ability to connect people in the field but also to project an image of both the home institution and the larger discipline. The graduate student developers of the site are looking for individuals to take over the work of maintaining the project, and there was some discussion of what role the doctoral consortium could play in sustainability, given that the initial dataset came from Consortium program membership. The link can be found at: Writingstudiesree.org

Business Meeting

Joyce Neff welcomed consortium members and guests to the business portion of the meeting, and overviewed upcoming priorities, including the need for the Consortium to apply for CCCC Standing Group status in order to maintain its visibility through its annual meeting at the convention as well as the ability to secure

a presentation session on the program. She invited Executive Committee Officers to share reports:

Treasurer - Helen Foster, University of Texas, El Paso. Helen Foster was not in attendance. Joyce Neff reported that there had been approximately \$400 in the budget (from past dues) that was used to partially fund the Consortium's 20th Anniversary Reception.

Visibility Project Liaison - Louise Phelps, Syracuse University/Old Dominion University. Louise Phelps provided a history of the visibility project, with a current emphasis on maintaining connections with other consortia, including the Master's Consortium, the Stand Alone Program group, and the Undergraduate Consortium. Phelps reported that such groups were encouraged to form because of a lack of data, reminding the group of the importance to keep in contact with the CCCCs Committee on Visibility and Databases. Phelps also overviewed the process of applying for Standing Group status, including the 30-day post-conference deadline, and Joyce Locke Carter, Texas Tech University, shared updates from the CCCC Executive Committee.

Related discussions included the need to encourage doctoral students to complete the survey of earned doctorates, ensuring accurate data about numbers of degrees completed in the field. Various members provided information about how they communicate this information to doctoral candidates on their campuses, along with suggestions for the Consortium and the Visibility Committee to distribute this information via the CCCCS program, the Consortium website and listserv, as well as social media, and through program venues such as the Research Network Forum and the Qualitative Research Network.

Consortium Assessment Survey - Wendy Sharer, East Carolina University. Because Professor Sharer presented her findings earlier in the session, her report was deemed to be submitted.

Web Site and Listserv - Andrea Olinger, University of Illinois. Andrea Olinger was not present at the meeting; however, a discussion ensued about ways to maintain the online presence, including a call for volunteers/institutions to assume responsibility for the site. Related discussions included migrating the content to a blog-based environment so that it would be easier to update and administrative ownership could be shared among consortium leaders.

Other discussions included the possible archiving of the large volume of print Consortium documents maintained by Janice Lauer, Purdue University and the need to secure volunteers among programs/faculty with historical/archival research interests.

Nominations for the Position of Assistant Chair

Joyce Neff invited nominations for the position of Assistant Chair from the group; names suggested included the following:

- Ken McAllister, declined
- Patrick Berry, Syracuse University
- Scott DeWitt, Ohio State University
- Carrie Leverenz, Texas Christian University
- Mary Sheridan, University of Louisville
- Scott Wible, University of Maryland
- Melanie Yergeau, University of Michigan

Theme for 2014 Meeting and Panel

Throughout the meeting several themes were proposed for the 2014 Convention:

Consortium Meeting Presentations/Panel: An emphasis on shifting forms of digital research and scholarship, including data collection and representation, digital dissertations, online journals. Possible presenters could include Derek Mueller (Eastern Michigan), Melanie Yergeau (Univ. of Michigan), Casey Boyle (University of Utah), and Keith Dorwick (Univ. of Louisiana, Lafayette). It was also suggested that a tenured faculty member speak about these issues from the perspective of tenure and promotion.

Additional topics included an emphasis on telling our story as writing educators to internal and external stakeholders, establishing a framework for communicating “what our graduates contribute to society.” A related topic involved a discussion of how the consortium can help to generate visibility for programs, i.e., “what can the consortium do for you?” Finally, another type of presentation/panel could address the future of graduate education in rhetoric and writing. Decisions about which topic would serve as the Consortium meeting presentation and which would serve as a possible program panel are pending.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:40, with a brief break before the 5 p.m. Consortium Anniversary/Recognition Reception.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristine Blair, Associate Chair
Bowling Green State University

