

Minutes of WPA VA meeting on May 30, 2019  
Prepared by Elizabeth Losh

Twenty-one people were in attendance: Beth Bensen (Reynolds), Remica Bingham-Risher (ODU), Kristi Costello (ODU), Kevin DePew (ODU), Karen Doheney (NOVA), Megan Doney (New River CC), Lauren Foster (Germanna CC), Tom Geary (Tidewater), Elise Green (Longwood), Sarah Jacobson (NOVA), Melissa Johnson (VCU), Chris Kervina (NOVA), Elizabeth Losh (William and Mary), Christinia McDonald (VMI), Derek Mueller (VT), Louise Wetherbee Phelps (ODU), Meredith Privott (John Tyler), Dan Richards (ODU), Kurt Schick (JMU), Jenn Sloggie (ODU), Cheri Lemieux Spiegel (NOVA)

The session began with introductions.

CLS asked about space for a wish list. What do we hope to achieve? Logistics? Bylaws? She discussed borrowing a template from Michigan and the value of affiliate groups brought by KC and DM.

KC talked about the value of community, support, and advocacy

RBR imagined “a place where I can throw questions out”

Others discussed infrastructure as valuable to “bring things to SCHEV” and other state organization, as well as a place to define and support the role of WPAs – “new WPAs” who “don’t know that they are WPAs,” a network of mentors to help them and prepare them in a field with “no training, courses”

CLS discussed the value of the graduate organization, WPA-GO

MP talked about the role of community colleges in the organization and its value as a “great place to make sure Virginia is staying current with national trends, innovation”

CK brought up “sharing information” for “SCHEV and other state-level initiatives”

DM noted that such organizations can be “powerful for enrolling allies.” “I could say I was apprised of” information about “Metro Detroit campuses,” which added to my credibility” in ways that were useful with perspectives from “sometimes complementary and sometimes competing institutions.” DM also observed that “NCTE has policy analysts for higher ed and K-12,” and the value of having access to a policy analyst as “a liaison or affiliate with this group.” He also pointed out the usefulness of having a “white paper analyses of particular states.”

EL talked about the role of the writing program administrator as researcher and the professionalization of writing studies

CLS discussed the “steps we go through,” particularly the “proposal for the organization.” She explained the process for affiliate approval and the importance of starting the process of preparing to be ready for us to apply” by “having bylaws and officers.”

DM described the Michigan bylaws as a “simplified document” that was “about 15 years old.” He said that the group had had to work through “issues about officer rotation,” but he felt that the document was “adequate and useful to circulate.”

CLS reviewed “headings” and the need for specificity about “where the office sits, who are our officers.” She also noted “we don’t have a historian” and emphasized the role’s usefulness for tracking from the very beginning an organization’s development. She also raised the issue of an expectation that we would use Robert’s Rules of Order.

KD raised a question about membership and suggested writing program administration be broadly defined,

EL talked about the “apparatus” of writing program administration as both diverse and complex.

BB discussed cooperation between two years and four years and the value of her own working with MJ and MP. Such institutional relationships constitute “more than just sister colleges in the same committees.”

CLS talked about aspiring to the vibrancy of writing affiliates in the Carolinas.

KDP discussed the value of including those who support WPAs, and EL similarly mentioned “faculty boosters” as valuable allies.

DM talked about using the bylaws to express WPA roles expansively and inclusively, not “strict boundedness.” He argued for the inclusion of “writing center directors, people involved with WAC”

CLS talked about her initial choice of “Writing across Virginia,” to signal the importance of point people in community colleges and writing centers

LWP emphasized the value of not specifying “program,” given the trend toward “departments” and “people with multiple roles in the same department”

CLS mentioned the possibility of the “Virginia writing community” as a descriptor

Beth – community colleges don’t have writing programs, attached to other disciplines, attached to dual enrollment learning communities, advanced knowledge, English is impacted, full-time job doing on a part time basis, teaching on the weekend.

KC (new to Virginia), MP, and TG expressed enthusiasm for new organization.

CLS noted the importance of feminist scholars in history of rhetoric and composition as a model and how “energies get tapped.” She asked “what roles do we think we need?”

KDP observed that there might be a treasurer needed

KD mentioned the budget process as a “major sticking point” and the need for “getting funds running,”

LWP said the treasurer would also be important for “money for grants”

KC discussed the usefulness of Vice Chair

CLS talked about the role of past chair

MP mentioned a need for a designated person to reach out to legislators

EL talked about the value of a small “crisis team” in certain situations

CK asserted the value of “making sure to represent four year and two year” institutions

MJ suggested co-chairs with one two year and one four year

KDP volunteered, given background as election supervisor, will mentor KD

DM talked about how Michigan’s bylaws “allowed us to appoint officers in ad hoc defined roles” and in soliciting interest discovered that there was “interest only in handful of roles,” so no need to do ballots. He discussed how roles were filled by Amy Stolley, Megan Schoen and others so that responsibilities were staggered, which allowed both “going long” and getting a “reboot.”

LWP agreed that the two chairs should represent two kinds of institutions

RBR asked about the logic of have terms staggered

CLS talked about the value of more experience

LWP said staggered terms would be “just for the first round,” given that the organization was just getting off the ground.

DM said in the Michigan experience there was “not a lot of work for a treasurer,” instead the webmaster played a focal role by managing listserv membership and fostering open lines of communication

CLS agreed that it was important to not delay thinking about digital presence, including moderation of the listserv, given problems with the WPA-L discussions.

DM offered web space, a transition site that would be viable with Word Press. He also asked if the group wanted an independent domain down the line. He said that for now he could offer bare bones space to host bylaws. He also suggested that the group start with Google group.

KDP suggested a table in Google docs to easily go down column of email addresses

KD suggested “we all handle the budget” before appointing a treasurer.

CLS noted the problem of purchasing in Virginia and the restrictions of vendor rules

KD also mentioned May 1<sup>st</sup> deadlines

KC noted that budget planning should include possibility of institutional membership

CLS suggested that the agenda move on to the issue of Transfer VA

KD spoke from the NOVA and how surveys indicated that among incoming students 70-75% intended to transfer, although ultimately only about 30 percent do. She argued for the value of a set of transferable courses, which would transfer anywhere in commonwealth and 3-credit packages. She also expressed hope that better articulation between institutions would “improve the acceptability of associate’s degrees,” so that transfer students could enter as juniors, even if this might entail rewriting course descriptions. She discussed the experience of first meeting with university partners.

CLS continued with her own discussion of meetings between community colleges and university partners, and the problem that too often the point people are from the registrar’s office or admissions rather than faculty or administrators in core subjects, even for an “institution across the street.” In terms of structure, she argued for backwards engineering, beginning with compiling folders of syllabi.

EL praised the work of Jonathan Alexander in working with ccs in California

KD noted the common sense of having a folder with community college syllabi to align curricula

CLS noted the pressures on basic writing and the value of Paul Lee workshop on mini-grants. She suggested moving across the state, as well as between two-year and four year contexts.

TG, KD, and MD volunteered for grants committee, LF, MJ for minigrants

CLS talked about the utility of WPA start up funds

KDP noted the value of a central location for group meetings

LF pointed out that Staunton might be a preferred location, the New River area can be 7 hours to Richmond. BB agreed that Richmond was not ideal.

DM talked about regionalization in the state. He said once annually VATEch could host, and that he could also imagine one on the east side,

CLS noted that New Horizons is held in Roanoke

CLS adjourned the meeting