

CWCA Board of Directors Meeting

March 20, 2020

Present: Clare Bermingham (Vice President); Nadine Fladd (Secretary); Jordana Garbati (Treasurer) Sarah King (President); Brian Hotson (Membership Chair); Heather Fitzgerald (Past-President); Andrea Williams (CASDW Representative); Liv Marken (Member-at-Large); Holly Salmon (Member-at-Large); Frédérique Offredi (Francophone Representative); Stephanie Bell (Digital Media Chair)

Regrets: Mandy Penney (Conference Chair)

1. Call to order:

The meeting is called to order at 12:32pm EDT.

2. Approval of agenda (Sarah):

Approved.

3. Approval of minutes (Sarah):

Approved.

4. How is everyone doing? Check-ins with Board members (Sarah):

Sarah had each Board member share the situation at their writing centre, their current working situation, and how they are coping generally with the COVID19 pandemic.

5. Recommendations from the Conference Committee re: CWCA 2020: (Clare)

Statement from the Conference Committee: At this time, we cannot predict how long the COVID-19 crisis will have an impact on University operations, travel, and event. Given that [CONGRESS has likely cancelled its in-person conference](#), the Conference Committee is recommending that we postpone the CWCA Conference to 2021.

By postponing, we recommend that the 2020 conference theme stands for next year and that acceptances of papers and presentations be deferred to 2021.

Ideally, the keynotes who were invited to speak would also be deferred, but if this won't work for their schedules, we would seek out new speakers.

An important question is whether CONGRESS will re-schedule at Western for 2021 or if they'll move to the University of Alberta as scheduled. If they move to U of A, we recognize that keynotes may have additional travel expenses, and that some presenters may not be able to travel to this location. As such, we should consider these elements when planning and budgeting for 2021.

At this time, we are not recommending that the conference proceed virtually.

BIRT, CWCA postpone its 2020 conference to 2021 and defer the theme, keynote speaker invitations, and proposal acceptances to next May. BIFRT, CWCA fully refund all conference registrations and payments from

sponsors received to date.

Discussion of Recommendation: Clare suggested that we keep our invitations to keynote speakers. Since we don't know where the 2021 Congress will take place, the location of the CWCA conference may impact whether presenters whose proposals have been accepted can attend the conference, and may also affect the travel costs of bringing in keynotes.

Holly asked if there is a way to integrate new proposals from 2020-2021 into the postponed conference in addition to proposals that have already been accepted. Clare agreed that this is a good idea since we won't know if currently accepted presenters will want to present in the future. One option is checking in with accepted presenters in November 2020 and then circulating a CFP if necessary. Holly suggested that it might be less labour-intensive to have presenters check in by opting in: (i.e. re-applying with the same (already accepted) proposal and simply checking a box indicated that their proposal was already accepted). Heather suggested that CWCA does not need to follow Congress if it moves to Edmonton for 2021, and that we could still hold CWCA in London at the sites that the theme originated from. Frédérique pointed out that many members are likely to have less travel funding available to them next year.

Brian pointed out that there are so many uncertainties right now that it might make sense to make plans for the conference but not announce anything yet. Let's defer the conference for the time being and announce in the coming months what is coming next.

Stephanie stated that she wishes we could celebrate the work people have done in thinking about this theme. She suggested facilitating some kind of knowledge-sharing in the summer, perhaps using the CWCR blog as a platform to publish abstracts, have the conference committee do an extended discussion of the theme, have the keynotes write something.

Sarah concluded the discussion by stating that we'll have to reflect over the next month about what's next. Right now, the decision to be made is whether to postpone/defer or not. Then in a month we can talk about how to proceed and who has the capacity to take something new on.

MOTION

BIRT, CWCA postpone its 2020 conference and defer the theme, keynote speaker invitations, and proposal acceptances to a date to be announced.

Moved by: Clare

Seconded: Jordana

APPROVED unanimously

MOTION

BIFRT, CWCA fully refund all conference registrations received to date.

Moved by: Clare

Seconded by: Heather

APPROVED unanimously

ACTION ITEMS:

Jordana: Issue refunds to the 10 people who have registered.

Michelle: Email sponsors to let them know what is happening. Ask for a month or to two to figure out a new plan. Perhaps sponsors would be willing to support a virtual keynote or other event instead. Jordana doesn't have the physical paperwork to return sponsorship funds with her but will figure out how to refund sponsors if necessary.

6. Logistical discussion following vote on conference committee recommendation: (Sarah)

Issuing refunds:

- Jordana will do this

What have we paid for or are we required to pay for?

- So far, we have not incurred any costs

Communicating the decision to CWCA members:

- Let's put a thank you to the King's/Huron team on the website. Stephanie will draft and post the message online
- Sarah stated for the record: we are really sad about this and it was going to be a great conference. It's really unfortunate that this is happening. A big thank you to the organizers for all of their work and effort.
- Brian will put something together and send through MailChimp, the listserv, and social media

Communicating the decision to conference presenters:

- Clare will do this and include APA citation format <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/canceled-conferences> so presenters can still include this acceptance on their CV

Cancellations: room bookings; accommodations; catering; a/v equipment interpreters, volunteers and other staff:

- Sarah asked what the Board can do to help with cancellation logistics
- Clare stated that King's/Huron were coordinating with one person re: bookings, and that volunteers came from those writing centres, so these things shouldn't be too laborious to cancel

Travel grants:

- have not been awarded or issued

Speakers and honoraria:

- Michelle has reached out with them tentatively already. She will follow up and check in about a potential online keynote as a possibility, but we don't know what our plans will be.

Other considerations?

- IWCA and CWCA sponsorships: let Lucie know we're cancelling but we will still be supportive of their conference if it goes forward
- Heather suggested writing a letter to each conference organizer's dean about how much work they did: Sarah will reach out about who to send to and Sarah and Heather will write it

ACTION ITEMS:

Stephanie: Draft a cancellation message/thank you to the conference chairs to post to the website

Brian: Send a cancellation message through MailChimp, the listserv, and on social media

Clare: Share cancellation message with conference presenters

Michelle: Contact keynotes and ask about a potential online keynote in the future

Sarah: Contact Lucie Moussu re: cancellation and the fact that we are still supportive of the IWCA conference if it goes forward

Sarah and Heather: Find out who to send letters acknowledging the conference committee's work to and draft letters

Conference Committee: Cancel room bookings, accommodations, A/V equipment, volunteers, etc.

7. Report on the CWCR Blog and Pilcrow Studio (Stephanie):

The blog has had great success over the past few months and Stephanie is thankful to have a platform to post narratives as the writing centre community goes through this transitional time. The blog is hosting a series of posts about how universities and writing centres have responded to the COVID19 pandemic and how universities are responding to those writing centres' responses. The editors will continue to share these over the next few weeks.

The editors did have plans to publish something from the conference committee on the blog in early May. That offer still stands. Perhaps it could take the shape of a reflection on the value of conferences in our field? The nature of these gatherings? Clare will check with conference organizers about this option.

Heather offered to help with blog posts. Stephanie stated that the editors were about to put out a call for guest-editors so that they have a roster of volunteers. Holly has already started doing some of this work.

The conference committee and blog editors should talk to see if Stephanie can build something on the website that is specific to a virtual conference/knowledge sharing platform so that it doesn't get confused with the blog. Nadine will put this on the agenda for the April meeting.

The Pilcrow Studio retreat will be cancelled. CWCA is not responsible for any costs. Stephanie will connect with Airbnb, which is updating its cancellation policies, to see if it is possible to obtain a refund. If not, Stephanie may still use the reserved space to write. The blog editors may try to develop a more inclusive, online retreat. Brian suggested coordinating with Guelph and Waterloo, who are planning online dissertation boot camps, to set some groundwork and build a community around this project.

ACTION ITEMS:

Clare: Check in with conference committee re: writing something for the blog in May

Nadine: Put collaboration between conference committee and blog editors re: publications from conference or virtual conference on agenda for April

8. CWCA AGM: (Nadine)

We still need to hold an Annual General Meeting, which will now take place online. If Board members want to suggest amendments to the bylaws, let Nadine and Sarah know now, because we need to give members 30 days' notice about proposed changes. Heather suggested that, since IWCA hosts their AGMs online we should consult them about their process.

ACTION ITEMS:

Sarah: Contact IWCA for information about how they conduct their online AGM

All: Let Nadine and Sarah know if you think any bylaw amendments are necessary

9. Report from CASDW Representative (Andrea):

CASDW will not participate in Congress's virtual conference platform, in part because members of the executive have expressed concerns about their existing workload etc. The executive will figure out how to host an AGM, too. They were going to serve food to lure attendees. Liv suggested that prize draws – one at the middle of the meeting and one at the end – could incentivize members to participate an online AGM.

10. Other business:

Heather announced that the BC Writing Centre's Association met on March 6. Theresa Bell at Royal Roads has been working with local Elders to create the *Four Feathers Writing Guide*. Heather is working on writing something about

this day to post on the BC Writing Centres Association web page. The process of creating the guide was really exciting. Liv explained that the blog editors have also approached Theresa Bell to write a blog post, too.

11. Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 1:46pm EDT

Next meetings:

April 24, 12:30 to 2:00pm

May 15, 12:30 to 2:00pm

Distribution: Nadine Fladd, Mandy Penney, Heather Fitzgerald, Jordana Garbati, Brian Hotson, Stephanie Bell, Clare Bermingham, Sarah King, Liv Marken, Holly Salmon, Andrea Williams, Michelle Hartley, Vidya Natarajan, Frédérique Offredi