

CWCA/ACCR Board of Directors Meeting
Feb. 16, 2023, 11:30 - 1pm ET

Video conference

Detailed reports available upon request.

Present: Clare Bermingham, Mohsen Moghaddam, Stephanie Bell, Nadine Fladd, Sarah King, Sheila Batacharaya, Jenna Goddard, Lenore Latta, Mark Blaauw-Hara, Marci Prescott-Brown, Tessa Troughton, Brian Hotson

Regrets: Majid Nikouee

1. Call to order (Bermingham)

- The meeting is called to order at 11:35 pm ET
- Land Acknowledgement
- Meeting Engagement Facilitator: Mohsen (thanks, Mohsen!)
- Approval of agenda (Bermingham)
 - Approved.
- Approval of minutes from Jan. 19, 2023 (Bermingham)
 - Approved.

**We started with the New Business rather than reports (see item 9 on agenda), due to the fact several members had to leave early. Written reports are available.*

2. President's Report (Bermingham)

- Have begun meeting with individual board members to check in on how they're feeling and doing, and will aim to meet with remaining members in the next few weeks.
- Working on a blog post for CWCA on value of joining board and the Presidency journey/experience.

ACTION: AGM planning (with Goddard); AND continue being awesome!

3. Conference 2023 Update (Prescott-Brown)

- 45 submissions came in
- [Breakdown: 11 roundtable proposals, 20 presentation/research panels, 10 workshops, 1 poster, 1 other(collaborative/reflective session)]
- Have reached out to the 31 volunteer peer reviewers to get the process started
- Will soon have a conference committee meeting to move forward with planning (date TBA)
- Have reached out to two potential keynotes (Chantal Gibson and Vershawn Ashanti Young)
 - Dr. Vay =specific speaker's fee (I will discuss this in person at the meeting).

- Dr. Gibson= no required speaker's fee and seemed okay with the rate we suggested. Looks like a yes, but will confirm with us by Feb 17th.
- Interested in purchasing Zoom events (centralizes link creation for conference and does registration, can have up to 50,000 participants, etc.; also, the equivalent of ConnexMe)
- Happy to field more questions re: conference at the meeting
- Troughton: votes for 2 talks
- Batacharya: I would like to see both speakers the conference
- Bermingham: we should spend our money (there's no purpose to saving it); supports bringing Dr. VAY (1 talk) and Dr. Gibson
- Batacharya: suggests pairing one speaker (emerging) with an established speaker; an interesting way to think about how we organize conferences moving forward to support emerging scholars.
- Bermingham: we support the speakers/rates (\$3500 for each speaker), and we'll go ahead with Zoom.
- Blaauw-Hara: in terms of conference fees, recommends that reduction fees be targeted towards marginalized groups. Advocated not lowering the cost for those with institutional support (\$150); for those without institutional funding, it would be lower for those without institutional funding.

ACTION: Prescott-Brown to confirm speakers (and continue being awesome!)

4. Treasurer's Report (Blaauw-Hara)

- In the past month, we have gained one new member (\$35) and I have paid the filing fee for our yearly filings with Corporations Canada (-\$12). (I filed our required forms with Corporations Canada on February 8, 2023.) Otherwise, there has been no activity.
- I also looked at last year's conference expenses (generously provided by Stevie!) and reviewed the past several years of conference attendance and pricing on ePly. Based on these numbers, I recommended to the conference planning team that we keep the "regular" fees the same as last year (\$150) and consider lowering fees for targeted groups, such as students and/or those without institutional funding. As a reminder, the board has already recommended waiving all fees for BIPOC attendees, regardless of institutional funding.
- In sum, we are in good standing with all and sundry, and we are positioned well financially to deliver an excellent conference!

ACTION: continue being awesome!

5. CWCA/ACCR BIPOC Caucus (Prescott-Brown)

- Next BIPOC Caucus meeting on Feb 24th, 2023 @ 3PM
- Many folks from the caucus have volunteered to be peer reviewers for conference submissions

6. Report from Membership Chair (Fladd)

- I've been playing with settings on the CWCA listserv to see if there are options for adding a "header" or "footer" that explain that the listserv shares messages sent out from subscribers rather than representing a Board position. The first try didn't work. I *think* I found a different setting that works, but time will tell.

ACTION: continue being awesome!

7. Report from Digital Media Chair and CWCR/RCCR (Latta)

- Updated website and CFP PDF, and posted on Twitter about extended deadline to Feb. 12 for submitting proposals for conference.
- Posted link to CFP/How-To Guide from Stevie/Nadine, plus tweeted about the guide.
- Posted November meeting minutes, approved at the January meeting (no December minutes as the meeting was cancelled).
- Advertised the proposal writing session on *Upcoming Events* page and then moved to Previous Events.
- Added information about the CWCA/ACCR Listserv under *Get involved* (<https://cwcaaccr.com/listserv/>). There is also a mention of it on the Membership page.

ACTION: continue being awesome!

8. Student Member-at-Large (Moghaddam)

- Nothing to report

ACTION: continue being awesome!

New Business:

9. CWCA/ACCR affiliation with IWCA Discussion (Hotson)

- Context: Hotson initiated separation from STHLE in 2012
 - 2013: first CWCA/ACCR conference
 - 2015: discussions with IWCA to join as a national affiliate
 - Feels that CWCA shouldn't be part of the IWCA due to issues with neo-colonial activity (using public funds of the US State Department to set up and run writing centres/activities around the world, including Columbia.) He believes the IWCA does not represent the interests of (all) their members.
 - Their CFP was highly problematic; when they were approached with this issue, they were not open to the changes, and only made them when pressure was put on them by CWCA/ACCR re: not supporting the conference.

- As for the conference itself, there were also issues: no keynote speaker, no land acknowledgements, no context for where the conference was located.
 - If we truly want an “international” association, we should approach things differently; a consortium of regional writing centres, for example
- Hotson still a member of the IWCA; **would like to propose at the AGM next year to propose IWCA is dissolved, and re-instated differently.**
- The Open Letter reflected the feelings of several of CWCA members at the conference
- Birmingham invites CWCA/ACCR members to weigh in on conversations we’ve had.
 - Bell: some of the discussions have been about the need for major decisions to be made *with* the BIPOC Caucus due to the fact BIPOC individuals are at a higher risk of retaliatory acts.
 - Considerations: IWCA occupies the space at the centre of our field; one of the consequences of separation from the IWCA will impact relationships, since leaving is contentious, and this will impact members differently.
 - Batacharya: BIPOC Caucus discussed the letter and there was no disagreement with the critical frameworks and critiques outlined in the letter; the main point they wanted to bring forward is the fact there are **different consequences for BIPOC people**. The choice to engage and have a voice (even if that voice is being discarded) is a way of recording/documenting objection, which can sometimes have benefits.
 - Batacharya thanks Brian for attending the meetings and for the letter.
 - Hotson: IWCA recently rewrote their constitution; nothing that has been brought to their association was addressed. Even when they had the opportunity to make a significant change to the constitution, they failed. Hotson asked to be a part of the committee and they said he could; he asked if other international members were being included, and they didn’t respond.
 - There are no minutes from IWCA meetings and no transparency re: how it functions. CWCA/ACCR has been at the forefront of supporting a decolonial approach, and he sees the IWCA as actively working against that.
 - Batacharya: point of clarification: *are we being asked to make a decision, or is Brian here to present a motion for consideration and decision at a later time?*
 - King: point of clarification from Brian: *you asked to contribute and you were not allowed to be on the IWCA Constitution revision committee?*
 - Hotson: he was not included in the process; the resulting constitution was very similar to what they had prior.
- Birmingham: suggests bringing forward to the AGM
- Batacharya: **(MOTION)** defer the decision-making process about the motion being brought forward at the AGM; she would like to **defer to the next board meeting after the Caucus has had a chance to consider and discuss.**

- Blaauw-Hara: would this separation impact CWCA/ACCR members in any way?
 - Bermingham: thinks it wouldn't; we are an affiliate.
 - Hotson: The majority are members from the US; very few members from outside of Canada (96-97% are from the US).
- Batacharya: wants to bring Mark's question to the BIPOC Caucus for further consideration.
- Blaauw-Hara: referenced discussion about how, at the last meeting, we discussed how some employees might be encouraged to be part of the IWCA, and this might impact them.
- Troughton: point of clarification: *has the letter been mailed?*
 - Bermingham: no, just circulated to the CWCA listserv (there is potential that the IWCA has read it).
- King: supports Sheila's meeting to defer. Wants to discuss the options (aside from withdrawing); for example, encouraging IWCA to re-think its status as an international organization. (**SECONDS Sheila's motion**)
- Batacharya: point of clarification: *The listserv is not private because the letter could be forwarded by any member of CWCA/ACCR. However, the letter has not been sent to IWCA from CWCA/ACCR. Is this correct?*
 - Bermingham: confirmed.
 - Hotson: There has been no discussion at IWCA board meetings this year in regards to CWCA or Canada or anything outside of the US. So if they've seen it, it's not been on the board's agenda.
- Hotson: hopes the IWCA has seen it, and nothing has been said/done. This sends a message that they are not interested in engaging.
- Bermingham: would like Hotson to return to the next meeting for further discussion after the BIPOC Caucus has had the opportunity to reflect and discuss.
- Batacharya: happy to have Hotson back, but also feels like the clarification he provided today is helpful, and feels that discussion of the motion he has brought forward might be helpful to have as just the board.
- Bermingham: as author of the letter, it might be helpful to have him back to hear the perspective of the BIPOC Caucus.
- Hotson: expresses importance of transparency
- Batacharya: clarifies "transparency": there's something to be said for having a conversation with the board; minutes taken to ensure transparency.
- Bermingham: we will document discussions and final vote.
 - **MOTION passes: we will defer discussion to next meeting after the BIPOC Caucus has discussed.**
- Prescott-Brown: might be helpful for Hotson to attend the BIPOC meeting
 - Batacharya: Brian would you be willing?
 - Hotson: yes, absolutely

ACTION: Batacharya will send email to BIPOC Caucus re: inviting Hotson to attend the next BIPOC Caucus

Amendment: *following the meeting, Batacharya and Prescott-Brown discussed the agenda for the next BIPOC Caucus meeting. There was concern raised about how many items they currently have slated for a meeting that's only one hour long. As a result, they will pass on what Hotson shared at the board meeting briefly (rather than having Hotson attend) at the caucus meeting so they can move through the agenda effectively.*

10. ChatGPT Discussion (Hotson)

- **☰ Crowdsourcing Responses to Generative AI from Canadian Writing Experts**
- Bell: we need to come together to share information/expertise (since we don't have time!); crowdsourcing document has resulted in a fulsome draft of a policy statement. People are welcome to use/share the material as they wish. This could be a starting point for drafting a policy statement.
- Hotson: good idea for us to create a policy statement, due to the increased use of and problems with ChatGPT.
- Bermingham: enthusiastic about having a statement from CWCA/ACCR about ChatGPT; feeling now that she would like more expertise on use of ChatGPT in writing centres to inform the statement.
- *Discussion had about ChatGPT by board members.*
- Bell: needs more discussion: what are the things we need to respond to? How can we support members? How do we counter some of the potential detriments for students? Do we need to do some training/pro-d on this front? A knee-jerk reaction isn't great; no one is ready to do anything; let's just create a space to think and consider this topic.
- Batacharya: importance of taking time for the process. It's hard to have a conceptual framework about something changing so quickly, like AI. Would like to learn more. Maybe we need to have a publication or presentation at a conference to discuss ongoing strategies.
- Bermingham: we could host a special meeting about ChatGPT; we could organize a panel and have it a bit more structured; we could do a call-out on the blog and ask for submissions.
- Fladd: Stevie did a cool thing where she built a Google site that is a repository for all the resources shared during the last workshop re: giving a presentation; now this lives on the CWCA/ACCR website; suggests doing a similar thing (creating something visible and shareable) for future discussions/training.
- Bermingham: will take on organizing a discussion (2-3 weeks from now)

ACTION: Bermingham to organize roundtable open to all attendees

11. Planning for AGM

- **By-Law Changes:**

- BIPOC Caucus Representatives (2?) - Describe how they are appointed/elected and length of term
- Should we formalize the description of the BIPOC Caucus and the relationship between the board and the Caucus?
- Bermingham: seeking more direction from the Caucus about the structure. Should we look at a different structure of board? Reps from different regional groups? Different Caucus/Affinity groups (BIPOC, Students, 2SLGBTQIA+)? BIPOC Caucus has been instrumental in allowing us to re-think structure.
- Batacharya: would be helpful to think about the contribution of the BIPOC Caucus. Have the contributions been helpful? If so, why? What was the process? Gaps? What is the role of the Caucus within the CWCA? A mapping activity would be helpful as a starting place. What should the responsibilities/accountability system look like feels abstract. We should identify specific concrete things such as the process/steps for creating the Statement. Articulate benefits, needs, gaps, what has/hasn't worked well, in order to anticipate what this relationship might look like going forward.
- Bermingham: could this happen in a smaller working group?
- Batacharya: this could work well, and will bring this to the BIPOC Caucus meeting next week. They'll articulate the concrete contributions, and tease out how we have done things so far, as a starting point.
- Bermingham: point of clarification: *is this happening in the BIPOC Caucus?*
- Batacharya: not necessarily, but a good place to start (since there is a meeting next week).
- Fladd: I have questions! The groups we have right now are the regional affiliates and the BIPOC Caucus. Are these identity-based groups? Portfolios of responsibility? Does CWCA/ACCR form these groups? Or, do they form organically, and then come forward to the board?
- Bermingham: thinks they should be identity-based groups. Could there be something in between where we initially define groups and invite people as members, but then the elected members would come from those groups? Then there is the opportunity for additional groups to come together. Feels like we're at a bit of a crossroads. How do we structure our board?
- Batacharya: We can have both portfolio roles and caucus roles. I think it would be important to present opportunities at the conference for lived experience caucus meetings. This would then offer the opportunity for the group to decide if they want to affiliate with CWCA. The BIPOC Caucus has made the decision to affiliate and work closely with CWCA, but it didn't start with that goal.

- Offering Caucus spaces at the conference, and then seeing what comes out of it, is a great idea.
- Bermingham: that's a place to start! We do need to nail down the the structure of the BIPOC Caucus (non-voting doesn't seem right); Latta and Fladd can have a discussion about their two roles, and if they could be combined.
- Bermingham: happy to connect after the BIPOC Caucus meets to chat.
- **Position continuations and vacancies**
 - President: Clare Bermingham (University of Waterloo) - **moving to Past President; VP moves into President role**
 - Vice President: Stevie Bell (York University) - **moving to President; election**
 - Past President: Sarah King (University of Toronto, Scarborough) - **departing board :(**
 - Treasurer: Mark Blaauw-Hara (University of Toronto Mississauga) - **continuing - Yr 2 of 3-year term**
 - Secretary: Jenna Goddard (Thompson River University) - **election**
 - Francophone representative: Tessa Troughton (Ontario Tech University) - **election**
 - Membership Chair: Nadine Fladd (University of Waterloo) - **election**
 - Digital Media Chair: Lenore Latta (University of Guelph) - **election**
 - Members-at-large: Sheila Batacharya (University of Toronto Mississauga); Majid Nikouee (University of Alberta) - **election**
 - Student Member-at-large: Mohsen Hosseinpour Moghaddam (Simon Fraser University) - **renew for 1 year?**
 - BIPOC Caucus Rep (ex-officio): Marci Prescott-Brown (University of Toronto)
 - Conference Co-Chairs: Julia Lane (Simon Fraser University), Marci Prescott-Brown (University of Toronto)

ACTION: Bell has requested members write about their experience in the position for the blog (by March 15).

Meeting end at 1:05pm ET

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 16, 2023

Distribution: Sheila Batacharaya, Stephanie Bell, Clare Bermingham, Nadine Fladd,, Jenna Goddard, Sarah King, Lenore Latta, Tessa Troughton, Majid Nikouee, Mark Blaauw-Hara, Mohsen Moghaddam, Marci Prescott-Brown, Brian Hotson