

AGM Chair's Report

May 26, 2017

I know we've all had a lot to take in today, so I will try to keep this brief. But it has been a busy year for the Association, so there is a fair bit to report. This report, along with our financial statement, will be published to our website, so don't feel that you need to take notes.

Before I begin, I just want to express my tremendous gratitude to the members of this year's Board/Executive who have accomplished all of this work while juggling actual paying jobs; for some, school; families; and the usual ups and downs of life. As a small but growing organization, we rely so heavily on the contributions of time from our members: I would like to thank this team for shouldering the load so equitably this year!

Bylaws and Term Limits

Our most significant work this year was in drafting bylaws for the Association, the bylaws we will be reviewing and voting on in this meeting. This required a lot of work from many people, but in particular I want to thank Brian Hotson and Clare Bermingham who worked closely with me to midwife these bylaws into existence. One of the key changes we have identified is the need for longer terms for our three Chair positions: with only one year in each of the Vice Chair, Chair and Past Chair roles, we find that our Association is losing continuity and expertise, which in turns makes it difficult to execute many of the longer-term projects that we need to undertake if we are to continue professionalizing our Association.

Document Archive

Another major piece of work was in creating a more stable home for our Association's document records: over the years of our Association's brief history, many of our documents have been housed on the local computers of each of the members of previous Executive committees. Two years ago, the Executive at the time began the work of collecting these documents into a single location—in this case, a Google Drive folder housed in then Chair Lucie Moussu's institutional account. So we now had many past materials—including email records and important documents from our incorporation with Industry Canada—in a central accessible location. But our account was tied to Lucie's institutional affiliation, meaning that if she were to leave her institution for any reason, we would lose our access to our archive. So we made the Herculean effort to move all of our Association's materials into our own CWCA Google account, taking the time to sort through and organize much of that material at the same time. I am happy to report that this work is now finished. We do see a Google Drive account as a short-term solution to our online document storage—in the long term, we will likely want a more robust and secure storage solution. But for now, this at least gives us the online access we need for our geographically scattered Executive.

Conference Planning

A third area of work this year was in streamlining and documenting the organization process for our annual conference. We had an excellent conference planning team this year, and an excellent precedent in our Calgary conference last year. So this year, our goal was not just to organize a single conference, but to lay the foundations for a conference planning handbook by documenting the processes and practices required for planning a successful event. Some of this work had already started in previous years under the direction of Past Chairs Lucie Moussu and Robin Sutherland, and we used this past work to develop materials that should simplify and clarify conference planning for future committees!

Proposal review process: Nancy Johnson Squair:

- ePly proposal submission process
- Volunteer proposals reviewers collected from a general call to the list serve
- Online proposal review form that streamlined the review process

Travel grant process: Linnet Humble

Catering: Clare Bermingham

Publicity and Website: Kathy Block and Jordana Garbati

Conference Schedule: Linnet Humble

Conference program layout: me

Local hosts: Carrienne Leung and Stephanie Dayes

Sponsorships and Volunteers: me and Jordana

Logo

A fourth major area of work—which is still ongoing—was in considering how to update our Association's logo. Under the leadership of Chair Kathy Block, the Communications committee undertook to identify and articulate the key components of our Association's "brand" which were distilled into a 2-page design brief. They then drafted a call for proposals from designers. I am pleased to report that, after a long search, we have finally found a designer—one with Writing Centre experience, no less—who is willing to do this work on our limited budget. It is our hope that we will have a new logo to present to the membership by early next Fall.

Conference Proceedings

As most of you will now, I hope, be aware, we have also negotiated an agreement with the Canadian Journal of Studies in Discourse and Writing, the publishing arm of the Canadian Association of Studies in Discourse and Writing, to publish a special section the journal drawn from the CWCA conference. Three members of the executive—Kathy Block, Jordana Garbati and Clare Bermingham—will be acting as guest editors for this publication. We see this as another major leap forward for our organization, one we hope will give all of you an avenue to further disseminate your work.

Travel Grants

Soliciting sponsorships and frugal stewardship of our funds has meant that we were again able to offer travel grants this year. Last year, travel grants were offered through a SSHRC Connections grant that our Past Chair, Lucie Moussu, received. So those grants were not funded by CWCA. This year, we recognized how important these travel grants were and are in encouraging participation in our conference from those without other sources of travel funding, particularly given the vast distances people have to travel across our country. So we prioritized spending some of our surplus carried over from last year on travel grants, and we were able to fund 5 presenters' travel costs, for a total of \$2000 this year. We aim to maintain this practice for future conferences.

Looking to the future

For the coming year, we expect to focus our attention on the following projects:

Publishing a conference proceedings through CJSBW will be a major project this year that will require a great deal of time from volunteers.

New visual identity: once we have a new logo, we would like to review our on and offline visual presence and look at ways to update these.

Research into Member Management systems to automate membership payments and reminders; to create a members-only section of our website; to synchronize conference registration and proposal submission

Diversity working group: we would like to more actively work to encourage and support diversity in our Association as we do in our various centres. This working group will help us identify initiatives, practices and policies that will help us work toward that goal.

Expansion of our conference to a full 2-day event: we had to turn down a record number of proposals this year because we really only have 4.5 hours of conference presentation time. We would like to encourage participation from more presenters and make different and innovative presentation formats available.

Closer connection with IWCA: in 2015, we became the first national affiliate of IWCA, and since that time our Chair/Past Chair Lucie Moussu has also been the Canadian representative for IWCA. This has created an unparalleled connection between our two associations. Over this next year, we can expect to work more closely with IWCA in the planning for their first ever Canadian conference in 2020, details of which have yet to be announced. This year, IWCA is also holding its Summer Institute in Canada for the

first time ever.