

# Masters Degree Consortium of Writing Studies Specialists

## 2015 Annual Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 18, 2015  
Marriott Meeting Room 5/6, Level 2  
Tampa, FL  
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

### ***Welcome and update on last year's activities***

Co-chairs Rebecca Jackson and Eric Leake welcomed the dozen attendees to the annual meeting. They addressed the Consortium's progress over the past year, including the election of the new co-chairs and board members: Nicole Caswell (East Carolina University), Susan Wolf Murphy (Texas A&M Corpus Christi), Stephanie Vie (University of Central Florida).

One of the year's initiatives was to sponsor a panel at CCCC. Becky Jackson talked about her development of the panel, which is intended to foreground issues relevant to MA programs. She highlighted in the program this year's panel, "Masters of Risk: MA Writing Studies Programs as Sites of Innovation."

### ***Consideration of possible initiatives***

Becky Jackson and Eric Leake detailed possible projects for the Consortium in order to gauge attendees' interests and potential contributions. Among the initiatives considered were:

-Building upon the current *survey of MA programs* to establish a Wiki or related site that would allow programs to add and update more detailed information. Becky Jackson suggested that this could be useful for students looking to apply to programs as well as to directors of programs who want to know what other programs are offering and how they are structured.

-Proposing a *special issue* of a journal to focus upon MA programs. *Composition Forum* was mentioned as a possible venue. Some of the topics for the special issue might include programmatic issues (recruitment and development) as well graduate student pedagogy.

-Recruiting a new *technology chair* to oversee the Consortium's web offerings. Eric Leake then showcased the Consortium's current web site and the program directory there. Members agreed that it was important to maintain the site as a resource and web presence although there was not an expressed interest in focusing upon additional site or listserv development.

-Developing next year's *sponsored session*. Members agreed that the sponsored session was worthy pursuing. Possible topics for next year's session included graduate student pedagogy and how it corresponds or doesn't correspond with what the field espouses as best pedagogical practices. Graduate student recruitment and awareness of rhetoric and composition as a field was also discussed.

***Proposal and timelines for future initiatives***

Discussion of a programmatic survey and sponsored session then turned toward the purpose of the Consortium and how its time and resources might best be put to use. Attendees brought together considerations of a programmatic survey, sponsored session, and special journal issue so that each initiative might build upon the other.

They agreed to start with a survey of the most pressing concerns for MA programs. Those include the curricular, administrative, program marketing and development, recruitment, and job-related. That survey would serve as the basis for a sponsored roundtable session of tacking action on the issues important to MA programs. Members decided to pursue a CWPA grant to fund that survey. The roundtable would function much like a focus group. The survey and roundtable then would serve as a foundation for the special issue proposal. All of that would culminate in writing a Consortium statement on best practices for MA programs.

An email list was circulated for member names and interests in pursuing these initiatives. The basic timeline settled upon was:

-CCCC 2016 SIG sponsored panel / roundtable / focus & discussion group proposal due May 5.

[-CWPA grants](#) due May 29.

-Further development and advertisement of the survey will be conducted Fall 2015.

-The special issue proposal will follow the Cs session in Spring 2016.

-That all may culminate in consortium position statements.

The list of members and their interests were:

Rebecca Jackson and Eric Leake: Survey

Julia Romberger: CWPA grant / survey

Shelley Rodrigo: Cs sponsored session

Susan Murphy

Nikki Caswell: CWPA grant

Shannon Howard: help w/ media and visibility

Mark Sutton: survey

Stephanie Vie: Special issue, survey / grant

Suellynn Duffey: Cs session, survey questions

Lauren Obermark: panel, survey, special issue

Lauren Ingraham: Cs proposal

***Program snapshots***

Members of two MA programs were invited to highlight their programs as part of the meeting. The presenters were Shannon Howard from Auburn University at Montgomery and Lauren Ingraham from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. They talked about the history of their programs, their offered courses, and their relationships with other programs in their university as well as community partners.

With a plan to coordinate and pursue projects via email, the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.