



Master's Degree Consortium

of Writing Studies Specialists

2012 Annual Meeting - Minutes

Wednesday, March 21, 2012
6:30-8:30 p.m., St. Louis, Mo.

Welcome and Update on Past Year's Activity

Derek Mueller welcomed the approximately 25 attendees and discussed the Consortium's activities over the past year. In the spring of 2011, Mueller coordinated the transition of the web site with recent-past chair, Peter Vandenberg. The site was successfully migrated to an icdsoft.com hosting account. The mwriting-L listserv was also moved to the new host. Mueller also installed Wordpress to support the new site.

In the summer of 2011, co-chairs Mueller and Dunn and a team of volunteers created a roster of programs likely to be affiliated with the Consortium by checking a comprehensive list of Carnegie I and IIA institutions in the U.S. for MAs in rhetoric and composition, writing studies, and technical and professional communication. The team arrived at a list of 196 programs, but the precise number continues to shift slightly as new programs surface.

In the fall of 2011, Mueller created simple map projection of the Consortium member institutions using Google Maps and an easy-to-update KML file.

Discussion of 2012 Survey of Programs

John Dunn discussed the development of the 2012 Survey of Programs, which was circulated to the 196 member programs on March 5, 2012. A full PDF of the 28-question survey is available at the Consortium web site. We developed the survey in SurveyMonkey. At the time of the 2012 meeting, approximately 20 program representatives had completed the survey. We intend to close the survey on April 27, 2012, but will consider extending it if the completion rate is not satisfactory at that time.

Introduction of new executive board members

Derek Mueller explained the transition of founding executive board members Heidi Estrem, Peter Vandenberg, Jennifer Beech, and Seth Kahn to Executive Board Alumni status. The Consortium welcomed seven new board members who will serve at least three years with the possibility of remaining on the board for up to five years. New board members are David Beard, University of Minnesota-Duluth; André Buchenot, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis; Lanette Cadle, Missouri State University; Rebecca Jackson, Texas State University-San Marcos; Lisa Meloncon, University of Cincinnati; I. Moriah McCracken, University of Texas-Pan American; and Tricia Serviss, Auburn University.

Discussion of new business for 2012-2013

- We welcome the addition of a graduate student representative on the Executive Board. To be considered, send a brief statement of interest to Derek Mueller (derek.mueller@emich.edu) and John Dunn (jdunnjr@emich.edu).
- The web site is currently hosted with icdsoft.com, which costs approximately \$53 annually. We discussed the possibility of changing to an institutional host, which would likely mean a nomadic URL for the Consortium over time.
- The mwriting-L listserv is inactive, seeing fewer than a half dozen messages each year. Kaye Adkins (Missouri Western) suggested reframing the listserv as a space for MA students to reach out for guidance, advice, and mentorship. Others in attendance found this idea promising.
- Soon after the completion of the 2012 Survey of Programs, the Consortium will provide a report, which will be publicly available on the web site.

Possible initiatives

- The Consortium seeks to more formally facilitate program development consultation and provide an external review service.
- The Consortium might devise an annual award (e.g., for innovative MA-level course design).
- The Consortium operates without any sources of ongoing funding. We plan to establish a PayPal donation option on the web site. Due to limited infrastructure to support such efforts, fundraising will be limited to informal, pay-as-you-can contributions.
- We have discussed a program profile series that could be coordinated with an online journal. There appears to be widespread interest in this, but it will require active sponsorship (i.e., volunteers to articulate its shape and arrange it with a journal).
- We discussed ways the Consortium might provide an advisory checklist for program web sites. This would provide programs with a handlist to revise by and a document to share with administrators and institutional web developers to improve the quality of program sites.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m. CDT.