

## Charter

Western Pennsylvania Writing Project  
Last Amended April, 2002

1

### Article I—Name

The name of this organization shall be the Western Pennsylvania Writing Project, a site of the National Writing Project (hereinafter referred to as “WPWP”).

### Article II—Principles

The WPWP is a collaborative university-school staff development program to improve the teaching and learning of writing in the region’s schools. The principles of the organization are:

The university and the schools must work together as partners. The “top-down” tradition past university-school relations is not conducive to teacher’s professional development.

The best teacher of teachers is another teacher. Classroom teachers have a credibility and authority no outside consultant can match.

Teachers of writing must write themselves and so experience what it is they are asking of their students. First-hand engagement in the processes of writing has a profound effect on teachers’ thinking and classroom practice.

Classroom-based research conducted by teachers is an important and valid source of understanding how students learn to write.

Real change in classroom practice happens over time. Effective professional development programs are ongoing and systematic, bringing teachers together regularly to share and evaluate their best practices and continuing developments in the field.

The expression of multi-racial, multi-ethnic, and multi-cultural diversity must be encouraged and respected in the teaching of writing.

### Article III—Goals

The goals of this organization are:

To enter into a collaborative partnership with the University of Pittsburgh

To identify and bring together successful teachers of writing during the Invitational Summer Institutes for Teachers and Summer Open Institutes for Teachers

To train teachers to teach other teachers

To facilitate effective staff development in the schools

To promote writing by teachers through the support of continuity programs

To involve teachers in writing across the curriculum

1

To conduct and support research about the teaching of writing

To interact with the National Writing Project and its individual project sites

To support programs that provide opportunities for young writers to develop their craft

To conduct assessments of the impact of the WPWP on improved student writing in the schools; and

To encourage and respect the expression of multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural diversity.

#### Article IV—Membership

Section 1: Membership shall be open to Fellows of the WPWP.

Section 2: Resident Fellows of other National Writing Project sites are eligible for membership.

Section 3: A Fellow is defined as a graduate of an Invitational Summer Institute for Teachers of a National Writing Project site.

#### Article V -- Meetings

Section 1: There shall be an annual meeting during the month of May. Notice of such meeting shall be given to each member at least thirty (30) days before the meeting.

Section 2: Special meetings shall be called by the Director(s) or the Fellows Council.

Section 3: A quorum for conducting business of a regular meeting shall be two thirds of the total membership of the Council. Quorum for a special meeting shall be those in attendance.

#### Article VI—Director(s)

Section 1: The WPWP Director(s): The Site Director and the Managing Director shall be appointed by the English Department of the University of Pittsburgh in consultation with the Fellows Council.

Section 2: The duties and responsibilities of the Director(s) shall be established collaboratively by the Fellows Council and the English Department of the University of Pittsburgh.

Section 3: Co-Director(s) and administrative staff of the WPWP shall be appointed by the Site Director in consultation with the Managing Director, the Administrator(s) and Fellows Council and shall serve at the direction of the Director(s).

Article VII—Fellows Council

The Fellows Council shall be the governing body of the WPWP with responsibility for guiding and shaping a variety of programs that pursue the goals of the Writing project.

The duties of the Fellows Council shall be to:

Conduct the regular business of the WPWP

Appoint chairpersons of working groups and other special committees in collaboration with the Director(s) and the Co-Director(s)

Approve an annual operating budget

Establish planning goals and benchmarks, in conjunction with the WPWP Advisory Board

Communicate with the membership through publications, and serve as liaison with respective Summer Institute Fellows

Serve as “ambassadors at large” for the Project, assist in recruitment of Fellows and help develop outreach programs

Represent the WPWP at conventions and conferences

Maintain an active relationship w/ the National Writing Project & its various sites

Make a state-of-the-project report to the WPWP at the annual meeting.

Section 1: A. Members of the Fellows Council shall be Fellows of a National Writing Project site.

B. Each elected member of the Fellows Council shall serve a term of four (4) years.

Section 2: A. The Invitational Summer Institute for Teachers shall receive nominations and elect two representatives (and an alternate) to serve as members of Fellows Council.

B. Fellows Council shall have at least one and no more than two members-at-large. During the spring that at-large member(s) will rotate off Council, nominations shall be solicited, and Council will elect one or two candidates from the membership “at large.”

The term of office for at-large members shall be two years beginning in the fall following their election.

Section 3: A. The following officers / chairperson shall be permanent, voting members of Council:

- Director(s) of the WPWP
- Co-Director(s) of the WPWP
- Administrator(s) of the WPWP
- All Chairs of Working Groups
- Chairs of Active Study Groups, if any

Fellows Council shall elect a vice-chairperson from their membership each spring to serve a one-year term as vice chairperson, followed by a one-year term as chairperson.

If no vice-chairperson is in place in spring of any year, Fellows Council shall elect both a chairperson and a vice-chair for the following year.

Fellows Council members who serve in dual roles shall be entitled to one (1) vote.

Section 4: The Fellows Council shall fill all vacancies of Council as they occur.

Section 5: The Fellows Council may adopt rules regulating attendance at Council meetings.

Section 6: A quorum for conducting business shall be comprised of  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the Council membership.

Section 7: Monthly meetings of Council shall be held at a place time established by Council:

A. The initial meeting of Council shall be held on the second Monday of September.

The initial meeting of the Council shall be at a site and time determined by the Council Chairperson, the Director(s) and the Co-Director(s).

Council shall publish a yearly calendar of meetings at the initial September meeting.

Section 8: The Site Director shall call special meetings of the Council as necessary.

Section 9: The Fellows Council Chairperson shall facilitate all meetings of the Fellows Council.

Section 10: A. Council shall determine who from its membership will act as recording secretary. It may be a rotating position.

Western Pennsylvania Writing Project

Last Amended April, 2002

B. The recorder shall prepare copies of the minutes for members of Council and send them to the WPWP office for dissemination to Council members.

Article VIII—Working Groups

Working Groups shall be extensions of the Fellows Council. They shall be established to provide supporting services to the Council, the Director(s) and Co-Director(s).

Section 1: Members of Working Groups shall be volunteer Fellows who serve for a two-year period with the option to renew. They shall perform duties described in the strategic plan.

Section 2: Chairpersons of Working Groups shall be appointed by Fellows Council, in conjunction with the Director(s) and the Co-Director(s). They shall serve an initial three (3) year term, with the option to serve a fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) year, and may serve additional terms.

Section 3: Working Groups shall report directly to Fellows Council at least once a year. A written report shall be submitted to the WPWP office prior to the Annual Meeting.

Article IX—Advisory Board

The Advisory Board is an advisory body composed of citizens of the community interested in advancing and promoting the principles and goals of the WPWP and the National Writing Project.

The responsibilities of the Advisory Board shall be:

Advise the WPWP in its efforts to fulfill its mission as described in its Charter.

Liaison with Fellows Council as special expertise resources relative to the functions of WPWP.

Respond to specific needs of the WPWP as requested by Fellows Council.

Participate in long-range planning for the growth and development of the WPWP.

Act as an agent of change through specific recommendations to the WPWP.

Section 1: A. Members of the Advisory Board shall be citizens of the community served by the WPWP.

B. Members of the Advisory Board shall be representative of a variety of community occupational and professional interests.

C. Members of the Advisory Board shall be representative of the multi-racial, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural diversity of the community served by the WPWP.

D. Advisory Board members shall serve a term of two years and are eligible for reappointment.

Section 2: A. The Advisory Board shall be composed of a minimum of fifteen (15) members, not to exceed a maximum of twenty-four (24) members in any year.

B. Members of the Advisory Board shall be nominated by the Director(s) and the Co-Director(s) for the approval of Fellows Council.

C. Vacancies on the Advisory Board shall be filled by Fellows Council as they occur.

D. The Co-Director(s) shall serve as (a) member(s) of the Advisory Board.

Section 3: A. (A) chairperson(s) of the Advisory Board shall be selected by and from the board membership.

B. The term of office for the chairperson(s) shall be at the discretion of the Advisory Board.

Section 4: A member of the Advisory Board shall prepare copies of the minutes for members of the Board prior to the next scheduled meeting.

Section 5: A. Two annual meetings, in the fall and spring, shall be held at a place and time established by the Advisory Board.

B. Annual meetings of the Advisory Board shall require thirty (30) days notice to the members.

Section 6: A. All members of the Advisory Board serve voluntarily and without compensation.

B. All financial expenditures incurred by the Advisory Board shall be assumed by the WPWP after approval by Fellows Council.

C. No member of the Advisory Board shall be personally liable for any financial obligation incurred by the Board or by the WPWP on behalf of the Board.

#### Article X—Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall:

act as an oversight authority in relation to the WPWP budget and fundraising.

## Charter

Western Pennsylvania Writing Project  
Last Amended April, 2002

7

develop a working partnership among Fellows Council, the Advisory Board and the University of Pittsburgh.

### Section 1: Committee Structure:

The Finance Committee shall be limited to eight (8) members, exclusive of the WPWP administrator(s). The committee will be constituted as follows: The Director(s) and/or Co-Director(s) of the WPWP, at least two current representatives from Fellows Council, one or two current members of the Advisory Board, and one or two non-WPWP representatives from the University of Pittsburgh. When the Director(s) and Co-Director(s) do not serve simultaneously, or when a position remains unfilled for lack of a volunteer, new or replacement members will be nominated by the Director(s) and approved by Fellows Council;

Term limits will be established by a recommendation from the Finance Committee for approval by Fellows Council;

The Finance Committee shall approve a chair (or co-chairs) from its membership;

The Finance Committee will develop *ad hoc* subcommittees as necessary to complete its work. Each of these committees may include members from outside the Finance Committee, for advisory or support purposes, recruited on the basis of opportunity or need;

The Finance Committee will meet at least twice a year, on a schedule that best serves the financial rather than the academic calendar.

### Section 2: Committee Duties:

To advise and consult with the Director(s) and the Project Administrator during preparation of the annual budget.

To review, evaluate and recommend the annual budget to the Fellows Council for approval.

To study and make recommendations for changes in the financial operations of specific programs as necessary or requested;

To review all grant applications of more than \$50,000 / year;

To develop a long-range strategy for fundraising that strives toward perennial consistency, with built-in support for program administration.

### Section 3: Committee Authority:

To present the budget to the Advisory Board for discussion & review.

7

**Charter**

Western Pennsylvania Writing Project  
Last Amended April, 2002

8

To review the annual budget before sending it on to Fellows Council for approval.

If major revisions are suggested by Fellows Council for the annual budget, the budget will be returned to the Finance Committee for consideration; review and return to Fellows Council for final approval.

To establish long-term funding strategies and review large-grant seeking activity

Article XI—Affiliations

Section 1: The organization shall be an affiliate of the National Writing Project.

Section 2: The organization shall be a collaborative partner with the University of Pittsburgh.

Section 3: The organization shall enter into other affiliations that are consistent with its principles and purposes.

Article XII—Amendments

The Charter may be amended or revised by an affirmative vote of a majority of all members present at a meeting designed for that purpose. Copies of the proposed amendments shall be given members in writing at least one month prior to the meeting.