

## **Minutes of the 2023 business meeting of the Association for Written Language and Literacy**

AWLL board: President - Terry Joyce; vice-presidents - Lynne Cahill and Dorit Ravid

Temple University Rome, Rome, Italy, 11/11/2023

AWLL business meetings are held during our workshops as an informal forum for discussing matters pertaining to AWLL and its workshops.

This one was chaired by Terry and Lynne; these minutes are based on both the meeting agenda and notes kindly taken by David Roberts, as confirmed by AWLL board; approximately 25 onsite and a similar number of online participants attended the business meeting.

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### **Agenda**

1. AWLL board expressed sincere thanks to Chris Barnett (donor) and to both Temple University's Japan (TUJ) and Rome (TUR) campuses.
2. Reminder of AWLL12's (2019) membership proposal
3. AWLL membership + core community
4. AWLL14 special issue
5. Presentation files + recordings
6. AWLL15
7. Other matters

### **1. AWLL board expressed sincere thanks to Chris Barnett (donor) and to both Temple University's Japan (TUJ) and Rome (TUR) campuses.**

As explained by Matthew Wilson (TUJ Dean) during the conference's opening remarks, the AWLL board was able to organize and convene AWLL14 due to a personal donation from Chris Barnett (CEO of ICBD Holdings LLC) to Terry Joyce in recognition of his teaching at Temple University Japan.

Accordingly, on behalf of all AWLL14 participants, the AWLL board acknowledged our heartfelt gratitude for Chris Barnett's incredible generosity as well as our deep appreciation for the tremendous support received from both TUJ and TUR. In addition to Dean Wilson at TUJ, Lydia Hon (TUJ's Director of Creative Media and Special Events) provided patient support with all key organizational preparations and was a constant welcoming and calming presence at the venue. The AWLL board also thanked TUR, especially Dean Emilia Zankina, Natasha Vlady, Luke Shelley, and Antonio Curioso, for all their support in providing a wonderful venue for AWLL14 and helping to ensure that the conference went smoothly.

## **2. Reminder of AWLL12's (2019) membership proposal**

As background information for this agenda item, Lynne pointed out that for previous AWLL conferences the local organizer(s) has always been faced with the rather onerous tasks of applying for financial support from the hosting institution and/or of determining appropriate registration fees with a view to (hopefully) cover all conference costs.

Against those background circumstances, the participants of the AWLL12 (2019) conference supported the board's proposal to work more closely with subsequent local organizer(s) to set future conference registration fees that would include a small levy, at a low percentage of the costs, as an AWLL community membership fee.

[AWLL newsletter 6 (20190515) includes a report about this and concomitant launch of core community profiles; <http://faculty-sgs.tama.ac.jp/terry/awll/NL/AWLL-NL006.pdf>]

Leaping over the covid-period when AWLL13 (2021) was convened online and no registration fees were collected, as revealed above, quite amazingly, it has been possible for the AWLL board to organize and convene AWLL14 free from the usual funding uncertainties and worries. Indeed, on the contrary, the donation for AWLL14 has represented a unique opportunity to seed the association with a small amount of funds as a little buffer for the next AWLL conference.

However, the board also acknowledges that the opportunity also brings with it additional responsibilities for the association; in a metaphorical sense, AWLL now needs to *grow up a little and get itself a bank account* to have a place to keep the money until the next conference. Thus, more specifically, AWLL needs to change its legal status—currently a *social network*—to a form of non-profit organization (i.e., with an annual turnover of less than £50,000, which will not be a concern for AWLL!) entitled to operate a bank account. Lynne is currently looking into the necessary procedures with a view to opening an account at a UK bank, which are favorable for making international transactions in English, the *lingua franca* of AWLL.

In response to Amalia's question about whether the time-consuming burdens of completing annual tax declarations would be justifiable, with no feasible alternatives available, Lynne acknowledged the need for AWLL to occasionally retain an accountant. However, Lynne continued to remark that the costs involved should not be too much given the low level of involvement and that, overall, the unusual circumstances of AWLL14 afford the possibilities of setting the process in motion. The board will keep the community informed of this *growth spurt* as it happens.

## **3. AWLL membership + core community**

Directly pertinent to AWLL's present status of *social network*, this third agenda item sought to tender clarifications about the notions of AWLL membership and its core community. Most succinctly, all AWLL14 participants were invited to consider themselves as members of the

AWLL social network and were informed that they would be added to the AWLL mailing list. It was, however, also stressed that because the mailing list is now managed on mailchimp (another positive outcome of AWLL14), which automatically includes an *unsubscribe* link within mailing-list messages, there is an easy opt-out method that anyone can avail themselves of at any time.

Moreover, all participants were also strongly encouraged to regard themselves as members of AWLL's core community; a more explicit form of recognition of having participated at an AWLL conference. However, because core members are entitled to have a brief profile [i.e., website links and list of research interests] on the AWLL website, to announce recent publications in AWLL newsletters and to contribute to them, recognition of core community status operates as an opt-in system [i.e., anyone eligible should request a profile].

[Postscript: Positively, the number of community profiles has increased since AWLL14, but eligible conference participants can activate their profile at any time. For fuller explanations about community and profile notions, see <http://faculty-sgs.tama.ac.jp/terry/awll/community.html>]

At this junction, having mentioned the AWLL newsletters, Terry also shared a few comments about them. Since mid-November 2014, there have generally been two each year (usually in both mid-May and mid-November). However, participants were asked not to expect the next one in mid-November 2023, immediately after AWLL14; Terry will endeavor to prepare the next for the end of the 2023 (to mark this special year of AWLL14!). In that context, everyone was asked to consider providing contributions, even launching new Introducing writing systems (see Japanese writing system series since September 2016 and Brahmic writing system series since May 2022).

#### **4. AWLL14 special issue**

Traditionally, the local organizer(s) of an AWLL conference is invited to become the co-guest editor of a collection of papers to appear as a special issue of the *Written Language and Literacy* (WLL) journal. AWLL14 has, however, been unique in that respect, as the local organizer role has essentially fallen to Terry, who is willing to undertake the first co-guest editor role for AWLL14 special issue. After the conference, the board will invite another AWLL14 participant to become a second co-guest editor.

Moreover, given the quality of AWLL14 presentations, with Dorit's blessing (WLL's general editor), the collection of AWLL14 papers will appear over two WLL issues.

*Postscript:* In response to a subsequent participant question, Terry also explained that once a second co-editor is confirmed, they will prepare instructions for manuscript submissions to the special issue. It was also later clarified that all submitted manuscript will undergo a peer-review process consistent with the WLL's guidelines for all submissions.

## **5. Presentation files + recordings**

Terry plans to upload all presentations files and recordings to the AWLL14 website as soon as possible. To that aim, all presenters were asked to provide a PDF version of their PPT file (if not done so already).

[Postscript: Presentation PDFS were uploaded on 01/12/2023 and the recordings on 20/12/2023]

## **6. AWLL15**

While it is most gratifying to know that the AWLL14 participants are already expressing great interest about AWLL15 (asking about when and where?), the board informed everyone that, as always, this is something that the board will discuss and start to work toward once all the post-meeting work for AWLL14 is completed.

## **7. Other topics**

Beyond clarifying a couple of points related to item 4 above (AWLL14 special issue, as inserted there), as there was little time for extended discussions at this AWLL business meeting (due to the adjusted dinner schedule), participants were invited to ask further about these matters during the conference dinner or, indeed, at any time by email.