

W&M Libraries Professional Assembly (LPA) Minutes

Wednesday, January 29, 2020 2:00 – 3:00pm

Swem Library, Ford Classroom

Present:

Kristy Borda (co-chair), Mary Oberlies (co-chair), Sara Belmont (secretary), James Glosson (member-at-large), Michael Umberger (member-at-large), Paul Showalter, Jessica Ramey, Jean Sibley, Liz Bellamy, Alex Flores, Natasha McFarland, Georgie Donovan, Rebecca Beasley, Ali Zawoyski, Candice Benjes-Small, Debbie Cornell, Anna Millholland, Jay Gaidmore, Laura Morales, David Morales, Carol Coughlin, Lisa Nickel, Tami Back, Morgan Davis

Kristy Borda called the meeting to order at 3:05pm with quorum.

Agenda – to discuss the dissolution of the LPA:

1. Hear context from the Executive Committee
2. Brief history of the LPA
3. Open discussion
4. Formal vote to disband
5. Steps to move forward

Borda called a sense vote to agree on the proposed agenda for the meeting, with a majority agreeing.

Executive Committee issues:

- Perceived lack of interest and participation
- Difficulty in recruiting for leadership
- Historical difficulty of meeting quorum in meetings, so it's hard to vote on issues or discuss ideas with a representative body of the Assembly
- Bureaucracy of the organization – a lot of attention goes to keeping the Executive Committee going, but the Committee's main responsibilities seem to be arranging only the two annual meetings
- Most Assembly meetings don't have much on the agenda
- The greatest interest in programming for the LPA is professional development and social and service activities, but:
 - LPA excludes operational employees, and isn't truly a "librarian" organization since some of the members don't have professional degrees
 - While the Professional Development Committee was formed with the intention that all planned activities would be open to all library employees, only LPA members can determine the programming. Similarly, a social/services committee doesn't seem like a

good fit for the LPA to manage because it would also exclude operational employees from the planning

The Executive Committee stressed they do not want to dissolve an organization that people find useful, however.

History of the LPA:

- Existed before the PPFA and served as a model for the creation of the PPFA
- Created a salary task force in the early 2000's to highlight the discrepancy in librarian salaries at W&M compared to peer institutions. Resulted in a 7% salary increase in 2007 for librarians, while the rest of campus received a 3% increase.

Borda facilitated the open discussion and also announced she would abstain from voting as facilitator.

Open forum:

1. One proposal is to open the Assembly up to all library employees and rename it
2. Another proposal is to continue the LPA, but only call meetings when needed. One concern was raised about the logistics of letting the LPA go quiet – how do we maintain the institutional memory that the group exists, and who is responsible for it?
3. Pro: LPA and Professional Development Committees don't report to the Dean. They're the only groups where the members solely guide the agenda
4. Pro: The LPA's history and voice is a strength – if an issue comes up in the future, we have a stronger voice as a group with a defined history and track record
5. Pro: Librarians tend to be more tuned into professional concerns and are organized. PPFA is not as organized in responding to changes proposed by administration
6. On the other hand, when issues on campus do come up, it's simple to call a group together to discuss and decide what to do. Example was creating a group to discuss the change on campus to classified hirings and how to approach future hiring policies
7. There is a concern that if we change the Assembly to merge operational and professional staff, that might serve as an example for campus administration to do the same thing
8. Concerns about the operational/professional system as a form of classism and status – Staff Assembly presented to the PPFA on this issue, saying it created a hindrance in their ability to do their work and that they perceive it as a status signifier
9. Proposal to have a designated library professional on PPFA. PPFA isn't structured to be representative of departments, so this could be difficult

Vote

Oberlies called a vote by show of hands to disband the LPA or not – where yes is a vote to continue the LPA and we figure out where to go next. Majority voted not to disband.

Next Steps:

Oberlies presented a list of possible options going forward:

- PPFA rep brings LPA together when needed
- Create a library workers group with other groups like staff, ppf, professional development, etc. underneath it
- LPA continues but functions on quiet level that's active only when needed
- Convert LPA to standing committee with chair
- In place of two LPA meetings a year, hold one yearly annual forum
- Allow operational staff on LPA standing committees
- Lobby group for library PPF

Oberlies called a motion for the Executive Committee to appoint an ad hoc committee to come up with a plan for next steps. Motion passed with majority vote.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Belmont, secretary