

WiLS Board Meeting

Tuesday, August 16

10:23am -1:54pm

Edgewood College, The Stream, Room 210

Board Members in Attendance In-Person

Mark Arend, Winnefox Library System

Martha Berninger, DPI

Peg Billing, Tomahawk School District

Sylvia Contreras, Edgewood College

Melissa Matz, Elmbrook School District

Stef Morrill, WiLS (Ex-officio)

Steve Platteter, Arrowhead Library System

Kristin Vogel, St. Norbert College

Scott Vrieze, Wisconsin Indianhead Tech College

Heather Winter, Milwaukee Art Museum

Board Members in Attendance by Phone

Lee Konrad, UW-Madison (left early)

Tasha Saecker, Appleton Public Library (left early)

Kristin Vogel, St. Norbert College

Board Members Absent

Catherine Lavalley-Welch, UW-La Crosse

Andrea Schmitz, Verona Area School District

WiLS Staff in Attendance:

Jeff Brunner, Melody Clark, Andi Coffin, Melissa McLimans, Bruce Smith

Call to Order: Changes/Additions to the Agenda

H. Winter called the meeting to order at 10:23. There were no changes to the agenda.

Approval of May 2016 Meeting Notes

Motion: Approval of May 2016 WiLS Board Meeting minutes

Moved to approve: P. Billing

Second: S. Platteter

Discussion: No discussion. Motion passes unanimously.

Advisory Committee/workgroup updates

Review of charge of Cooperative Purchasing (CooPAC) charge (<http://www.wils.org/about-wils/27-2/coopac/>):

CooPAC has not met since our last board meeting, and WiLS would like to grow and make some changes to this committee. WiLS staff has identified some representatives and will provide those names to H. Winter as soon as possible.

Treasurer's report/Financial report for FY15/16 (M. Arend/T. Klement)

This is the end of WiLS' fiscal year. T. Klement was unable to be present at today's meeting but supplied a summary for the Board, which can be found in the WiLS Dropbox. The balance sheet has a large negative number from end-of-year cooperative purchasing reconciliation. Overall, WiLS finances are solid. Membership is growing, and the AmEx program is still going strong, but this revenue could change next year as some vendor partners are now declining AmEx. While our average service fee percentage on cooperative purchasing dropped a little, our net sales grew significantly. There were also additional expenses that were not budgeted. Staff and software/technology expenses grew, as we added staff. Funds were spent on MyWiLS development. This project was approved by the Board to come from reserve funding, but we did not need to use reserves for it. WiLS consulting service brought in \$160,000 and those services are booked through the end of the 2016/17 fiscal year. Consortia management has grown and WiLS continues to foster a strong reputation in this space.

Director's report: sent in print prior to meeting

S. Morrill provided some highlights from the report. The new Financial & Administrative Assistant, Becky Collyard, started last week. The Regional Meeting topic has been decided and we'll be spending time at those meetings talking about strategic partnerships and community mapping. Please take a moment to look at the staff monthly reports if you are able.

Discussion of strategic directions

The WiLS staff presented some potential strategic directions for 2017. The Board will take action on these recommendations at their October meeting. Each staff member researched a "How might we" question for the July staff retreat, and those that were present at the Board meeting presented their question.

How might we support open access resources or help libraries to get buy in for open academic resources? (J. Brunner)

There is tremendous consolidation in scholarly publishing, and less competition means higher prices. In addition, there is flagging public support for higher education for both public and private institutions. Also, most scientific research is funded from the public trust (NIH, NSF, etc.) and the research is then given to a for-profit entity to own and resell, which creates limited access and many restrictions to the information needed by libraries and students in academia. One potential approach to this problem is to support open access publishing efforts. There are many obstacles to this adoption: faculty and administrative buy-in to "less prestigious" journals and the factors involved in gaining tenure and generally advancing in an academic career are two examples. WiLS might be able to participate by negotiating open access fees with publishers, sharing trend information about open access initiatives, learning and sharing with other consortia, and talking with the Board about potential organizations and initiatives we could join to show support (such as SPARC). This is, of course, in addition to the cooperative purchasing services that WiLS provides which are, in part, a reaction to increasing costs in scholarly publication.

The group discussed this idea and thought that it could be a question for larger membership, or a presentation / organized discussion for WAAL. This year might be the year to start thinking about this issue, dipping our toes in, and talking amongst ourselves to find that middle ground between the interests of our members and business interests of our vendor partners. DPI is actively participating in OERs for K12s. It is likely that the needle will not move until there is a groundswell of support for open access publications as valid and prestigious publications. There is a need to participate in the advocacy and to understand how the organizations that fund the library feel about the publishing industry. Lawrence Lessig might offer some insight into how to approach this problem from a grassroots perspective. WiLS could offer more education and support so librarians can be articulate on this issue. There could also be information awareness materials to distribute among librarians and faculty in the state, and / or bring this to WAAL to engage in a group setting or with a panel.

How might we help develop statewide solutions for digital repository / digital preservation initiatives? (M. McLimans; researched with Emily Pfotenhauer, who was not at the meeting.)

What if there were one repository where all researchers in Wisconsin can go?

M. McLimans began by sharing some terms: “Institutional repositories” are typically found in academic institutions and may include raw data, work produced by faculty, staff, and student, etc. While open access is encouraged, it is not necessary. Collections are often not curated. “Digital preservation” is taking care of all the things that have been or are being digitized. Digital items are more fragile, and more easily corrupted. The challenge is that this activity is an ongoing commitment of resources and needs active management.

Some potential initiatives for WiLS could be to undertake a process to gain understanding and start conversations around digital preservation by mapping the potential players, convening discussion, and/or identifying WiLS’ role in such an initiative.

The group discussed. Some board members felt this issue was personally important to them. Digital preservation is also coming up during the PLSR project workgroups, and those participants have been unable to identify where something is happening to support a solution. The VRA (Visual Resources Association) might be a place to look for initiatives going on. Librarians should be the people to lead this charge in public education to help folks understand that you don’t just digitize everything. Branding considerations might come into play in a consortial environment.

How might we improve virtual meetings so they are smoother, more productive, and more inclusive? (M. Clark)

M. Clark distributed a handout of information about how we might improve virtual meetings. Some ways we think that we can help with this are: develop virtual meeting planning template/checklist, employ template with consortia we manage and internally, and share what we learn.

Board discussion: WiLS may also want to think about how the physical space where the meeting is taking place to make sure that all participants can be heard. WiLS may also want to do a little research to find out what the best technology might be, platform, best microphones, etc. Meetings are best when it’s either all virtual or all in-person, and still best when in-person to pick up on the non-verbal cues. Skype meetings are helpful because you do get the visual, and some muting might be undesirable because you don’t get the audio feedback. Academic institutions can offer help on this to share what they have learned in the distance education realm.

How might we continue to meet demand for consulting services we currently provide and develop other consulting and project management services where there is need? (Building, expansion, and renovation projects; marketing, awareness, website, workflows, etc.) (B. Smith)

This service has grown incredibly with little promotion except in presenting to the community. We fill a unique niche in the ecosystem: we are part of the community, our approach is customized for the library, we can design our services to fit the library’s budget, and be flexible and strategic about which services WiLS provides and where the library can do their own work. Libraries are finding value in WiLS ability to move projects forward and in the one-on-one approach. We have also had great success with the Experts Connection tool, but it does take time to manage and find them. One approach could be to learn more about the building / renovation process for public and academic libraries and develop a process / service to provide guidance and project management for building/renovation projects.

The group discussed. We also have reserves that we can spend thoughtfully and WiLS would like to convene interested members of the board and the WiLS staff and finance committee to make decisions about how to do that to support our growth.

How might we help members with data? (S. Morrill)

One way to help members with data is to investigate Consortia Manager as a way to provide additional information/interpretation of usage statistics for members. The second way is to advocate for additional funding for data projects from LSTA. Another approach is to develop our in-house knowledge as a test case for a curriculum to educate members about data topics.

Board discussion: This issue ties well into the potential initiative to manage and preserve digital collections. It's a good thing for our members and can apply to many important areas of their work.

How might we learn more about new products, trends, and vendors, and share that knowledge with members. (Sara Gold researched; S. Morrill presented)

We want to make sure that we are learning and sharing that information with our members so that we are an innovative organization and encourage innovation in our community. One way we might want to address this is to rethink our conference strategy to place the emphasis on learning about what's happening in the wider community rather than focusing on vendor visits. We are often able to arrange meetings outside of the conference with vendors. We might consider different conferences with different scopes. We will also schedule calls with other consortia to share information and learn from them. We will also include awareness as part of our quarterly learning goals. We also want to share what we learn internally and outwardly. We can provide opportunities for members and vendors to share innovations through webinars and / or newsletters. We can also share through our communication channels, including Twitter, LinkedIn, and conference presentations.

The group discussed. ALA summer is more beneficial for learning than Midwinter. Potentially ACRL and AASL might be good for WiLS, too. PLA could also prove to be beneficial. Learning about what specific institutions are doing will help WiLS grow and share with members.

How might we continue to engage our community, grow participation in all things, and spread the WiLSiness? (A. Coffin)

Participation from members is important to our work, and we need to make sure we are reaching the people we need to reach in our communications and service offerings -- existing and emerging library leaders, technology folks, etc. WiLSiness is a mix of earnestness and playfulness, and this characteristic exists in the membership but how do we encourage it so we can all move our service forward?

The group discussed. WiLS should identify non-participants and target them. We might want to continue to bolster the practicum opportunities with SLIS and SOIS; it would be great to get a post-MLS grad for a short term position. The challenge with the library schools is demonstrating the solid learning component with limited staff supervision. We do want to engage the students in the process and potentially focus on selling it to students (social media campaign, have the board talk it up). A practicum should combine the high level stuff along with the spreadsheet-level grunt work. We could take this directly to student library organizations to expand what they see and offer the opportunities directly to them without the restrictions of practicums (learning outcomes, required hours, etc.). It also plants the seed that a student is supported following their school experience. There also could be a program that focuses on mentoring new librarians or library students like the ACRL / ALA internship program.

How might we better utilize the tools we have and employ new tools as needed to help us help the libraries? (Lisa Marten researched; S. Morrill presented)

We can learn more about the tools through “Lisa’s Tool Tip Time” and hands-on training from Lisa at staff meetings (and keep educating Lisa!). We will also learn more about potential tools to help do our work better and spread the word about tools we learn about, provide consulting services to members interested in implementing our tools for their institutions, and complete a “tools audit” pilot with a member to determine if this may be an area for future consulting services.

WiLSWorld update & discussion

The WiLS staff shared a debrief document with the Board and the group discussed some of the questions and concerns about the conference:

- Participation was down this year, though we are hearing that conference participation is down in other states for other conferences, too. We are going to be more aggressive in our timeline so that we can get things planned earlier and get information out to potential attendees earlier. We should ask why workshop attendees did not attend the conference. If we can make the conference day about the big ideas, and the Workshop Wednesday is more practical application, the mix might appeal more broadly. We can also investigate getting WiLSWorld more on the radar of the public library continuing education staff, especially by making it clear that public library directors will get CE hours for attending.
- Birds of a Feather dinners were not successful again this year. There is little interest. The group agreed that trying to implement birds of a feather dinners is not worth the time.
- There was an issue with people leaving early. We may want to consider prizes (free WiLS membership or conference registration for next year) that you must be present to win or ending the day with a stellar program / speaker. Strategic planning is a topic that might get people to stick around – very applicable, practical material - or an institute to assess your internal assets to maximize them. We might consider ending earlier in case people are leaving to avoid rush hour traffic. We could potentially move the technology showcase to the end of the day, ending with the demonstrations.
- There was some talk about program ideas for next year: finding grants (Ellen Jacks, UW Grants Librarian); ILS landscape, how ILS platforms are evolving and what it means to move to web-based ILSs. We may want to make an effort to focus on programs that show a connectedness between library types – information literacy from K12 to academic, for instance. Use the opportunity that is at WiLSWorld to link different library types and encourage them to share with one another.
- It may be beneficial to have a clearer understanding of the purpose and scope of the conference and figuring out what makes it unique. WiLSWorld could focus on big trends that should be on the minds of members, including what we see with other consortia / organizations. We should think about WiLSWorld as part of the ecosystem of library events (WLA, other WiLS events, etc.) and identify and articulate the key unique value to WiLSWorld. One potentially unique thing is the emphasis, especially on the workshop day, on sessions that allow people to walk out with something done, see something different or check something off a list. WiLS should investigate the professional development gaps that aren’t being covered by WLA, etc. Directors of small libraries value very practical learning opportunities. Are there topics that don’t work for WLA’s format (session length, etc.) that would work best as a WiLSWorld Workshop?

The board is encouraged to send WiLS staff any ideas for the conference, including keynotes and programs for the end of the day. Fundraising and marketing would be a strong program;

Annual review of documents

The group reviewed the Conflict of Interest policy, the mission and values, the service standards, and the board member expectations. No changes were recommended. Each Board member should submit a signed Conflict of Interest policy.

The group discussed the organizational chart. The current chart is simplistic and doesn't really reflect the way the organization works. The board showed support for creating a visual representation of how WiLS works together, functions non-linearly, in a complex Venn diagram or something similar. This format could help to identify the people who might not be central to a project, but are involved. It also could be an expression of all the work WiLS does (that people don't know about), and could be used at WiLSWorld.

Action on replacement for board member

Andrea Schmitz has taken a new position at the Monroe Public Library and is no longer eligible to hold one of the K12 seats. S. Morrill is working on finding a replacement, and would welcome suggestions from the Board members.

Election of officers for 2016/17

The Nominations Committee has identified Peg Billing as a willing candidate for chair-elect and Mark Arend as willing candidate for treasurer.

Motion: Approval of Peg Billing as WiLS Chair-Elect and Mark Arend as WiLS Treasurer.

Moved to approve: S. Platteter

Second: S. Contreras

Discussion: No discussion. Motion passes unanimously.

2016/17 meeting dates

1. October 17: GoToMeeting
2. February 24: In person, location TBD
3. May 25: GoToMeeting

The Board feels an earlier August meeting would be helpful, but if there is no agenda for WILSWorld lunch, that could be the summer meeting of the WILS Board.

Adjourn

Motion: Adjournment of WiLS August 2016 Meeting

Moved to approve: P. Billing

Second: S. Contreras

Discussion: No discussion. Motion passes unanimously and the meeting adjourns at 1:54.