

Board Retreat Update 2013

Happy summer everyone! If it's anything like our campuses, things have not really slowed down at all. No break for the harding working queer professionals! We hope you all are healthy and happy and doing your best to stay out of the summer heat. We also send our well wishes to our colleagues in the U.S. and abroad who are facing severe weather conditions in their communities.

We also want to state a big HOORAY for the DOMA and Prop 8 decisions! Although these wins do not speak to the most pressing issues facing our community, these are huge steps forward for the United States.

Here is our final update as Co-Chairs!

Thank You!

We want to take a minute to thank all the outgoing board members, whose terms end on July 1st:

Matt Carcella-Outreach and Advocacy Chair
Matthew Armstead-LGBT2 Constituency Chair
DA Dirks-Education Chair
Demere Woolway-Regions Working Group Chair
Warren Scherer-People of Color Constituency Chair

You all have helped enhance and grow the organization in so many ways over the last few years. You put countless hours into these volunteer positions (we wish we could pay you) and your energy, ideas, and passion helped us successfully move into our late teenage years (The Consortium celebrated it's 15th birthday at Creating Change this year).

We also want to welcome our new board members:

LB Hannahs-Outreach and Advocacy Chair
Craig Leets-LGBT2 Constituency Chair
Raja Bhattar-Education Chair
Danielle Steele-Regions Working Group Chair
Celianny Rivera-People of Color Constituency Chair

Demere Woolway-Co-Chair
Warren Scherer-Co-Chair

We are so excited about your new roles in the organization. We can't wait to get to know you more and witness the amazing things you will do for the organization and our profession (again, sorry we can't pay you).

Reflections

Since this will be our last letter as Co-Chairs, we want to take a minute to reflect back our our term. When we stepped into this role, we realized two things. First, we were terrified by the task in front of us. We were terrified because of the responsibility of leading an organization that saved our lives professionally and personally. As professionals at Texas A&M (Sara) and the University of Georgia (Michael), the Consortium was a place of growth, safety and security, and love. Since that time, we are at different institutions with very different cultures. Our experience and our current universities (American, Sara - Emory, Michael) enabled us to give back to the organization and to other professionals in a variety of ways.

The second thing we realized was the need for improved structures and procedures for the organization. The Board was spending the majority of its time on membership management and communications, which meant that it had very little time to strengthen our profession and support LGBT resource professionals. We therefore knew that we had to spend a lot of time on organizational development.

What did we achieve? With the hard work of the entire Board, we now have a membership management system and website that can be managed with very little time and effort. Our membership base was broadened to include affiliate members who are interested in LGBT support services but are not currently getting paid to do that work (although many are doing it for free). We updated our by-laws to enable us to apply for non-profit status. We also developed an Operating and Procedures Manual that respected our original by-laws and grounded our day to day operations. We reincorporated the organization in New York and applied for nonprofit status with Federal Government. Although we are still in the process, this status will enable us to apply for grants and accept tax deductible donations. We developed an Anti-Racism statement and an specific anti-racism action plan for the organization. We committed to the Board's leadership development through our annual retreats. We expanded our relationship with The Task Force and the National Conference on LGBT Equality: Creating Change. This resulted two academy sessions, expanded space for the institute, a Consortium suite, and the first Consortium award presented on stage at a plenary session.

Thank you for letting us represent you for the last three years. While we will sincerely miss our role as Co-Chairs, we are so excited to support our two new, incredible Co-Chairs, Demere and Warren. We expect great things from them. Good luck! We love you!!!

Updates

Here are some other updates to keep you in the loop!

Consortium Board Retreat: This will be our 5th annual retreat for the Consortium Board. It will be held in Milwaukee, WI from July 20-23rd. (Thanks to Jen Murray, Warren Scherer and Gabe Javier for all your work in putting this together!). The goals of the retreat

include:

- Create new Consortium Strategic Plan
- Fully develop and connect our team
- Clarify our roles and processes
- Clearly identified goals for all board members

Summer Drive-In Institute: In addition to the Board retreat, the Consortium partnered with the University of Wisconsin at Madison to host the 4th annual Consortium Summer Drive-In Institute for professionals in the region. Discussion topics include:

- Institutional Responses to Trans Inclusive Policies
- Advanced Ally Training
- Ally Networks: Building Campus-Wide Support
- Intersectionality Basics
- Preferred Name Policies and Gender Neutral Housing
- Health Insurance Policies inclusive of Trans* and Gender-Related Procedures
- Getting into LGBTQ Student Services
- Beyond Marriage Equality
- Meaningful QPOC Collaborations

A huge thank-you to the University of Wisconsin at Madison staff and the Drive-In planning committee for all your amazing work!

Membership: We are excited to say that we are completing our first year with our new

membership management system. You will soon be receiving an automated renewal reminder if you joined or renewed last summer. This will be the first cycle of automated renewals, so please let us know if you have any issues! Jen Miracle, Membership Chair, will jump to action to help you out! The great news is that our membership numbers are growing. Right now we have over 630 members or our organization!!!

Membership Survey: Thank you to everyone who took the time to fill out the membership survey (136 of you!). We value your feedback and suggestions for the Consortium's improvement. We will be looking at this data during the retreat to begin moving on your feedback and suggestions. If you did not have a chance to fill out the survey, we always welcome feedback. Please send us your thoughts anytime.

Strategic Plan: Thank you to everyone for participating in the SWOT survey and the focus groups. We are currently reviewing the responses and feedback and will present it to the Board at our retreat. We will then develop specific goals for the the organization. Once they are drafted, we will seek member feedback and then finalize the plan. The goal is to have our new strategic plan ready to launch January 1, 2014!!

As with everything, the Consortium is only as good as our members and board can make it. As we move forward on the Strategic Plan, please get involved. Whether this means being part of a committee, running for a board position, participating in conference calls, or providing feedback, it all matters. Please let us know if you would like to be involved and we will plug you in. If you do not feel like you have enough experience, knowledge, skills, or time to get involved, this is exactly how we felt when we attended our first Consortium Institute at Creating Change in 2005. We jumped in and never looked back!

We cannot thank you all enough for your love and support during our tenure as Co-Chairs. We look forward to continuing our work to strengthen our profession.

THANK YOU ALL!

Love,
Sara and Michael

