

WLU Constitution



Constitution of the Whole Language Umbrella: A Confederation of Whole Language Support Groups and Individuals

July 2014

ARTICLE I – Name

The name of the association shall be the Whole Language Umbrella (hereinafter referred to as WLU).

As a conference of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), WLU endorses the constitution of NCTE and agrees to abide by its principles.

ARTICLE II – Nature and Purpose of the WLU

Section 1. Nature

- A. WLU: An educational confederation of support groups, individual professionals and others interested in developing and implementing whole language in educational institutions.
- B. WLU is based on a view of whole language as a dynamic philosophy of education. While no test of conformity to a set of beliefs shall be imposed on groups of individuals as a condition of affiliation, WLU accepts the following beliefs as being common to whole language practitioners:
 - 1. A holistic approach to the acquisition and development of literacy in all its aspects.
 - 2. A positive view of all human learners.
 - 3. A belief that language is central to human learning.
 - 4. A belief that learning is easiest when it is from whole to part, when it is in authentic contexts, and when it is functional for the learners.
 - 5. A belief in the empowerment of learners and teachers.
 - 6. A belief that learning is both personal and social and that classrooms and other educational settings must be learning communities.
 - 7. An acceptance of all learners and languages, cultures, and experiences they bring to their education.
 - 8. A belief that learning is both joyous and fulfilling.

Section 2. Purposes

- A. To provide support for individual members and member groups. As a confederation of individuals and support groups for teachers, WLU shall serve as an umbrella organization which:
 - 1. Provides encouragement and promotes the formation of whole language support groups.
 - 2. Facilitates networking among members of WLU.
 - 3. Identifies local groups for individuals interested in affiliation.
 - 4. Sanctions local and regional conferences and other activities of local groups.
 - 5. Sponsors national and international conferences.
 - 6. Publishes and distributes books, articles, and other materials which support whole language.
 - 7. Supports and defends whole language educators who may be unfairly attacked.

- B. To improve the quality of learning and teaching at all levels of education by:
 - 1. Encouraging the study of the whole language philosophy in all aspects through:
 - (a) high-quality teacher education programs that include in their curriculum whole language theory, research, and strategies;
 - (b) staff development programs; and
 - (c) self-study programs in teacher support groups.
 - 2. Promoting whole language teaching;
 - 3. Promoting and critiquing whole language policies, curricula, and frameworks:
 - (a) at federal and state/provincial levels; and
 - (b) at local education agency and school levels;
 - 4. Stimulating and promoting research in whole language;
 - 5. Publicizing whole language and its benefits to the profession and the public;
 - 6. Disseminating information on whole language to teachers, administrators, school decision makers, parents, and others participating in the development of whole language education; and
 - 7. Facilitating collaboration among teachers, researchers, parents, administrators, and teacher educators in the development of whole language.

ARTICLE III – Membership

Section 1. Group Membership

- A. Eligibility: Any group interested in whole language will be eligible for membership.
- B. Procedures for group membership:
 - 1. Formal application together with currently applicable dues for the first year.
 - 2. Group members shall be in good standing as long as their current dues are paid and they subscribe to WLU beliefs.
- C. Structure of group members:
 - 1. WLU shall impose no uniform requirements on member groups concerning how they are structured or conduct their business except the following:
 - (a) one member from the group must be an individual member of WLU and NCTE;
 - (b) and the group must acknowledge that WLU is affiliated as a conference with NCTE.
 - 2. Member groups may be affiliated with other groups such as NCTE, IRA, or their local affiliates.
 - 3. Member groups shall be in good standing as long as their current dues are paid and they subscribe to WLU beliefs.

Section 2. Other Membership Classes

- A. Eligibility: Individuals interested in whole language shall be eligible for membership whether or not they are affiliated with member groups.
- B. Procedures for individual membership:
 - 1. Formal application and submission of currently applicable NCTE/WLU dues for the year;
 - 2. and individual members shall be in good standing as long as their current dues are paid and they subscribe to WLU beliefs.
- C. The Executive Board may establish other categories of membership, criteria, and procedures for affiliation.

Section 3. Dues

- A. Dues schedules
 - 1. The Executive Board shall establish dues schedules for the various categories.
 - 2. Dues schedules may be revised periodically.
- B. Procedures for payment of dues: The Executive Board shall establish procedures for how dues shall be paid and who shall collect them.

ARTICLE IV – Structure and Organization

Section 1. The Delegates Assembly

- A. Composition

The Delegates Assembly shall consist of individual and TAWL group members. Each individual member present at the Delegates Assembly shall be entitled to one vote. Each TAWL group member (as evidenced by the membership roster of a current TAWL group) is entitled to one vote.
- B. Responsibilities
 - 1. The Delegates Assembly shall be the policy-making body of WLU.
 - 2. It shall meet at least once a year at a place designated by the Executive Board.
- C. Quorum
 - 1. Each member group shall notify the secretary of those who will be attending the assembly as delegates.
 - 2. A quorum shall be at least 20 individuals with the right to vote either as voting delegates or as individual members, excluding the voting members of the Executive Board.

Section 3. The Executive Board

- A. Composition
 - 1. The Executive Board shall consist of the elected officers of WLU plus six others elected at large. The immediate Past President shall serve as a nonvoting advisor to the Executive Board for one year.
 - 2. The Executive Board members shall be elected by mail or electronic ballot.
 - 3. In order to respect the international nature of WLU, no more than five Executive Board members should be from the same country whenever possible.
- B. Responsibilities
 - 1. The Executive Board shall be responsible for making all on-going operational decisions for WLU whether explicitly mentioned in the Constitution or not.
 - 2. The Executive Board may appoint and/or hire a secretary, treasurer, and other personnel necessary to carry on the business of WLU. The Executive Board may designate any such staff as ex-officio nonvoting members.
 - 3. The Executive Board members shall attend meetings of both the Executive Board and the Delegates Assembly as voting members.
 - 4. Within the policies and procedures established by NCTE, the Executive Board shall monitor the raising of funds, including dues, and the operating budget of WLU.
- C. Term

Executive Board members shall each serve three years with two Executive Board members being elected each year.
- D. Quorum

Fifty percent of the Executive Board voting members shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE V – Officers

Section 1. The President

- A. Responsibilities
 1. The President shall preside over the Executive Board and the Delegates Assembly.
 2. The President shall be the principal spokesperson for WLU.
 3. The President shall propose and appoint ad hoc committees with the approval of the Executive Board.
 4. The President shall annually report the number of individual and group memberships to the Executive Board.

- B. Term of Office
The President shall serve for two years beginning at “Magic Hour” of the NCTE Annual Convention (noon on Sunday).

Section 2. The President-Elect

- A. Responsibilities
 1. The President-Elect shall preside over the Executive Board and the Delegates Assembly in the absence of the President.
 2. The President-Elect shall become President when the term of the current President expires.
 3. In the event that the office of the President becomes vacant, the President-Elect shall become President and serve the balance of the President’s term as well as the two-year term originally expected. A new President-Elect shall be elected at the next meeting of the Delegates Assembly following the vacancy of the position of President-Elect.

- B. Term of Office
The term of office shall be one year as President-Elect and will begin 72 hours after the Delegates Assembly. The President-Elect will be elected in the president’s second year of office.

- C. In order to respect the international nature of WLU, the President and President-Elect, whenever possible, shall be from different countries.

Section 3. Executive Treasurer Secretary

NCTE Executive Director shall be a nonvoting member of the Executive Board and shall hold the position of Executive Treasurer Secretary with the responsibilities for maintaining the financial and contractual matters of WLU.

ARTICLE VI – Elections

Section 1. Procedures

- A. Elections for officers and Executive Board members shall take place by mail or electronic ballot. All terms shall commence 72 hours after the Delegates Assembly.

- B. Elections of Executive Board members shall be by mail or electronic ballot. All nominees shall be listed alphabetically on the ballot. The nominees with the largest number of legal votes cast shall be declared elected.

Section 2. Nominations

- A. Nominations will be solicited from the membership.

- B. A slate, prepared by the Nominating Committee, shall be circulated at least 90 days before the meeting at which the election results are announced.

ARTICLE VII – Committees

Section 1. Standing Committees

- A. WLU shall have the following standing committees:
 - 1. Nominating Committee
The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for soliciting nominees and preparing the slate for all elections.
 - 2. Publications Committee
The Publications Committee collaborates with NCTE on co-published books/works and serves as an advisory board to the editor of *Talking Points*.
 - 3. Membership Communications Committee
The Membership Communications Committee shall develop membership recruitment initiatives and shall provide NCTE with information to disseminate to members through mailings, newsletters, and other publications.

- B. Additional Standing Committees may be established by amendments to this Constitution.

Section 2. Ad Hoc Committees

The Executive Board may appoint ad hoc committees for specific tasks. Each ad hoc committee shall be given specific responsibilities and a specific time limit set in advance to accomplish its task.

Section 3. Committee Membership

Members of committees shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall ensure that the selection of committee members reflects the ethnic and racial diversity of WLU.

ARTICLE VIII – Amendments

Section 1. Procedures

- A. Amendments may be proposed by the Executive Board or by a petition signed by at least five individual members.
- B. Proposed amendments shall be circulated to the membership at least 30 days before the Delegates Assembly meeting or online forum at which they will be discussed.
- C. Amendments will be voted upon by paper or electronic ballot following discussion at a Delegates Assembly or an online forum. Ballots will be cast within 45 days following the Delegates Assembly or online discussion.
- D. To be adopted, amendments shall require a two-thirds majority of the legal votes cast by members, with a minimum of 30 ballots cast.

ARTICLE IX – Operations

Section 1. Establishing Procedures

- A. The Executive Board shall establish rules for the operations of WLU consistent with the provisions of this Constitution.
- B. A public record of all operational procedures shall be kept by the President, a committee, or secretary designated by the President.
- C. The Executive Board may establish bylaws and/or procedures for the operations of WLU.

Section 2. Annual Report

An annual report of the operations, memberships, and finances of WLU shall be published to the membership by the officers and the Executive Board.