

Task Force on the Relationship between CCCC and NCTE

To: CCCC Executive Committee

Report Author: The Committee

Date of This Report: September 24, 2020

1. What are the recommendations/actions that your committee would like the CCCC Executive Committee to consider?

The committee has four separate motions it offers as its recommendations. They are:

- a. We move that CCCC create a task force consisting of Past Chairs to create an “onboarding document” to help the officers better understand what they will be expected to do, what their resources are, and when they will be expected to perform certain duties.
- b. We move that policies and procedures that affect the relationship between NCTE and CCCC, such as how decisions are made between the two entities, be removed from the CCCC EC Handbook in order to create a new CCCC/NCTE Policies and Procedures Handbook that will define the only ways that decisions are made, which should be modified as necessary over time.
- c. We move that the CCCC EC no longer meet physically at the NCTE annual convention and, instead, hold multiple, required, remote meetings (e.g., Zoom) in October-December.
- d. We recommend the Cs create a permanent, “Independent Inquiry Committee,” drawn periodically from CCCC and NCTE members who report to CCCC members only, in order to investigate any form of discrimination or ethical misconduct that may happen or is suspected of happening in the interactions among CCCC officers, EC members, journal editors and reviewers, or incidents at the CCCC annual convention.

2. Please explain why your committee is making the recommendations/actions. Provide a brief rationale and narrative for each recommendation and/or action stated above and how it relates to and advances the committee/task force’s charges.

- a. Many of the problems in #s 1, 4, 5, and 6 below stem from not understanding the inner workings between CCCC and NCTE. If the officers had a better understanding of why and how CCCC works within the structures of NCTE, fewer problems will arise. Only Past Chairs really know what information would have helped them better navigate this relationship, so they should be the sole make-up of the task force.
- b. Because NCTE policies and procedures affect the CCCC and because those policies need to be changed, deleted, and added as time goes by, if they are moved to a separate handbook, those policies will be easier to identify and, thereby, reduce confusion. Doing so will also allow for the Cs to address the “unwritten rules” that are surely to arise between NCTE and CCCC. To prevent any future confusion, any “unwritten rule” that does arise needs to be negotiated with NCTE and then codified and added to the handbook as soon as possible.
- c. With the exception of dual enrollment sessions, very few sessions at NCTE are of interest to CCCC members. There is no other evidence or reason that is apparent as to why Cs members want to attend the meeting. Plus, the costs of NCTE are too high to warrant the Cs EC attending.
- d. CCCC needs a mechanism in place whereby its members can investigate and receive a report concerning any NCTE or CCCC member who holds a governing or organizational position.

3. What has your committee done that the membership in general should know? Please compose a brief post for the CCCC web site that highlights your ongoing work. NCTE staff will see that your text is posted on your committee's behalf.

This task force interviewed past CCCC Chairs, along with considering past organizational documents, in order to learn about the historical relationship between CCCC and NCTE, which went back to the 1990s. The task force inquired into the relationship between both organizations and any potential structural inequities that warranted resolution. After analyzing interviews from past CCCC chairs that the task force conducted, there were several recommendations for the EC to consider. These recommendations addressed issues of CCCC officer onboarding and their expectations and duties; ways to make clearer how policies and procedures that affect the relationship between NCTE and CCCC works; the creation of an “Independent Inquiry Committee” to help investigate future forms of discrimination or ethical misconduct by CCCC officers, EC members, editors, and reviewers, or incidents at the CCCC annual convention.

4. Please give a very brief historical overview of this Committee:

We decided early on to interview Past Cs Chairs in order to learn about the historical relationship between the Cs Chairs and NCTE. After meeting with Cs Chair, Vershawn Ashanti Young, he provided the task force with a number of questions he wanted us to pose to the Past Chairs. We divvied up the Past Chairs from a list of Past Chairs going back into the ‘90s. We asked them Vay’s questions and then analyzed the Past Chairs’s responses to look for patterns. Below is each question we asked, and under each question is our findings.

1. How might CCCC strengthen its relationship to NCTE in terms of CCCC being able to steer its own course without the oversight of NCTE?

The general consensus was that incoming Cs Chairs need to better understand the relationship between Cs and NCTE.

2. Does CCCC EC need to attend the NCTE November meeting to do its work each year? Is this the best time? Most efficient use of resources, etc.?

Some Chairs felt the in-person meetings were beneficial, especially since it’s the only convention where all four sections of NCTE meet, but others did not feel a face-to-face meeting at NCTE was necessary. Some Chairs mentioned the unfortunate timing of NCTE.

3. Did you experience any historical practices that were not written down, any rules, policies, or vetoes that you felt should have been written? If so, what were they? Who was the NCTE leadership during your time as Chair?

It was reported that because Emily Kirkpatrick was an outside hire, she didn’t know the history of how NCTE and its umbrella organizations worked. Therefore, she had to learn about the various relationships, and she codified any unwritten rules she encountered. Before Kirkpatrick, there were a number of unwritten rules because the previous Executive Directors moved up the ranks and “understood” how things had always worked. Yet, with NCTE’s 111-year history—72 of which they share with the Cs—more NCTE unwritten rules are bound to arise.

4. NCTE Executive Director is both the organizational head/director of NCTE and an *Ex-Officio* member as the treasurer of CCCC officers. Should this role be dual in this way? Is there a conflict of interest that exists between having the organization head also serve in this role?

Because almost all Past Chairs saw no conflict of interest for the NCTE Executive Director to act as the Cs Treasurer, because many felt they benefited from this relationship, because the dual roles are outlined in both the NCTE and Cs constitutions, because most Cs members don't have the ability—in time or expertise—to take on this kind of role, because like organizations also have this same (or similar) processes in place, and because the Cs doesn't have the money to pay for such a professional, a vast majority of Past Chairs felt there is no conflict of interest for the Executive Director of NCTE to act as the Treasurer of the Cs.

5. How much control/information of the annual convention program budget did you have when you were Program Chair?

Most Past Chairs felt they were in control of the annual convention budget, but some felt the process was confusing.

6. Should CCCC officers have direct input into making CCCC proposed organizational budget?

All respondents agreed that officers should have direct input into the budget, and all recalled a process that did involve CCCC officers providing input into the budget. Since some officers come in with experience with budget and long-term organizational planning, but others do not, it was reported that there could be more transparent communication around the budget.

7. There has been some consistent and public interracial conflict between officers of color of CCCC and NCTE, knowing this is sensitive and certainly frightens people who are not steeped in research on race, still what do you think can be done to mitigate such conflicts?

Most Past Chairs saw racial and racist problems either between CCCC and NCTE or within each entity; several were more forceful about the racist problems CCCC faces. A few mentioned the conflict around the hiring of Emily Kirkpatrick in an application pool where Mila Fuller (a Black female candidate) didn't make the final list of candidates. This was the moment when Adam Banks stepped down as CCCC Chair because of the situation. More recent Chairs seemed to see more problems with racism within the organizations than older Chairs. Most Chairs, however, were in agreement: There are problems, and substantive ways of addressing them need to come from CCCC. Some of the things mentioned in responses that might address the racism in the organization and its annual convention, and perhaps the interracial conflict between leaders in NCTE and CCCC, were things like journal themes dedicated to these problems, reports that have recommendations and action items, establishing of antiracist and anti-White supremacist goals and benchmarks, more collaborative work among the identity caucuses, explicitly antiracist and anti-White supremacist programming (e.g., webinars) from Cs, identifying explicitly the harm that has been done to parties (listening to each other), and taking compassionate and brave actions after that to mend and change how things are done between NCTE and CCCC.

5. Members on the Committee:

- Steven Alvarez
- Ronisha Browdy
- Heidi Estrem
- Asao Inoue (Co-Chair)
- Sarah Z. Johnson
- Donnie Sackey

- Cheryl Hogue Smith (Co-Chair)

6. **Members Active in On-Line Discussion:**

- Steven Alvarez
- Ronisha Browdy
- Heidi Estrem
- Asao Inoue (Co-Chair)
- Sarah Z. Johnson
- Donnie Sackey
- Cheryl Hogue Smith (Co-Chair)

7. **Committee Charge(s):**

Charge 1: Answer the question of whether or not the CCCC EC should move on an assessment of the relationship between CCCC and NCTE, and if not, why not, and if so, why so. If so, what are the recommendations for what the assessment would look like? What would be assessed? What would be the timeline? Any other recommendations.