



Informal consultation paper on changes to the WALS presidency, the WALS Council and to the WALS Executive Committee

This informal consultation has been unanimously approved to be subject to a vote of WALS members as the first item on the agenda of the 2021 Annual General Meeting on 2 December. It considers and makes specific proposals in relation to the following:

- (i) The way that WALS organises its presidential roles (Vice President (VP), President and Immediate Past President (IPP)) and their terms of office in order to improve succession planning, continuity, and organisational renewal by encouraging the involvement of a wider sector of WALS members in developing and leading WALS;
- (ii) the purpose, composition and remit of the WALS Council, and
- (iii) the expectation that WALS Executive Committee includes office bearers and also members with specific and active roles determined by the President and Council in order to support the ability of WALS to develop with the times and to carry out its core functions and ensure financial stability.

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Informal and possible formal consultation process timeline

If, following informal discussion with ExCo and Council members in October, there is a consensus that a formal consultation should be held on the constitutional implications of any of the above, a formal consultation will take place during November through the WALS website. The proposals will be posted on the WALS website in a formal consultation document and put to the vote in the AGM ahead of the Presidential elections that will follow later in the same meeting.

1.0 Rationale behind these proposals

1.1 Fifteen years-on from the founding of WALS in 2006, global interest in Lesson Study continues to grow and paradoxically has been given increased impetus by the need for new ways of developing pedagogy, curriculum, learning and teaching during the current pandemic.

1.2 *A WALS that represents the whole world*

At the last face-to-face WALS Council meeting in 2019 matters concerning the purpose and shape of the future WALS were discussed with **an emphasis on securing greater representation from all global regions** – including the global South. The move to an online WALS conference in 2020 moved this forward as WALS organised its international conference across three time zones, each with a commissioning and scheduling team. This same global organising frame is being used again in 2021.

Feedback from across the world to the online format suggests that when WALS returns to face-to-face conferences (we hope in Malaysia in 2022) there will still be a demand for an online version of the conference - especially from WALS members in areas where economic conditions are challenging, who cannot afford to come to the conference but who are, arguably, the members that WALS should be doing the most to support. This consultation makes proposals **to recognise the time zone structure formally within the WALS constitution both in terms of Council representation and also in terms of WALS activity and participation.**

1.3 *Council Governance*

The consultation also suggests overtly **formalising the ‘governance’** role of the WALS Council in WALS affairs. It has always been a core function of the governing body to ‘take care of’ WALS, acting as a critical friend to WALS officers and ExCo but also as the body that holds these functions to account – scrutinising and challenging before agreeing proposed strategic plans, budgets, or approving accounts and formal evaluative reports.

1.4 *An active Executive Committee that makes things happen*

The role of the Executive Committee (ExCo) in ‘making things happen’ within WALS, particularly to increase the reasons for being a WALS member, has also been a focus for Council discussions over recent years – for example enabling ‘secondments’ to ExCo of Council members to carry out specific development roles. An increasingly active ExCo has helped to create the WALS webinar and the WALS PhD network. The 2020 online conference brought additional active Council (and ordinary) WALS members into the heart of conference production. This informal proposal seeks to **formalise this action-oriented** role of the ExCo.

1.5 *A more dynamic WALS Presidency*

The word ‘dynamic’ here does not refer to any individual people but to the combined offices. **The current model of static presidential offices does not itself stimulate dynamic change.** This document proposes a model of President, Vice President (Elect), Vice President and Immediate Past Present and how they could become more structurally interactive and developmental by introducing an expectation of succession. The term for all would be fixed at two years.

2.0 Detail proposals for consultation

2.1 *Global representation on the WALS Council*

This consultation proposes that the WALS constitution be amended to recognise a new *representational* role for the WALS council to ensure that WALS broadly represents and reflects its global membership. It proposes this be accomplished through the formal adoption of three WALS (time) zones (1. The Americas; 2. Africa, Middle East and Europe; and 3. Central, South and East Asia and the antipodes). Ideally the northern and southern hemispheres of each should be represented in the membership of the WALS council.

2.2 *Time zone representatives to lead and promote WALS activity at zone level*

We propose that the WALS council elects one time zone representative and one deputy representative from each Time Zone, drawn whenever possible from northern and southern hemispheres. If a time zone or if the global north or south of a timezone zone is unrepresented, the President should, with the support of regional representatives, seek to procure a Council member who is active and influential in lesson studies or learning studies in the unrepresented zone who can be elected to the Council at the earliest opportunity.

The role of these elected representatives is: to lead promotion and coordination of WALS activities across the zone; to encourage and procure contributions from the zone to WALS online events and to the international WALS conference, and to support the WALS conference organising committee in procuring high quality submissions and events from the Time Zone.

2.3 *Council governance*

The current roles of the Council set out in the constitution are:

To carry on the work of WALS between Annual General Meetings.

To provide policy and administrative guidance to the Executive Committee such as:

(a) Taking steps as may be necessary to achieve the purposes and objectives of WALS laid down in this Constitution.

(b) Ensuring the execution of decisions taken by any Annual General Meeting.

(c) Deciding on matters under dispute. (*WALS Constitution*)

We propose that the longstanding functions of the Council (a,b, and c above) are clarified as pertaining to the governance of WALS and in particular to the work of the Executive Committee (see below) which is charged with making it all happen. This will secure the governance role of the Council as the body that ‘takes care’ of WALS, overseeing its activity, acting as a critical friend to WALS office bearers and ExCo but also being the body that holds these functions to account – scrutinising and challenging before agreeing proposed strategic plans, budgets, or approving accounts and formal evaluative reports prior to formal adoption by the AGM.

2.4 *An active Executive Committee (ExCo) designed to make things happen*



We propose that the WALS constitution is amended to recognise the growing and more complex action-orientation of the Executive Committee in making things happen within WALS where ExCo members (elected from the Council) lead on different areas of WALS activity. This increases the capacity and capability of WALS to secure and grow its mission: to promote and develop understanding and use of lesson and learning studies around the world. ExCo members would continue to be drawn from the WALS council and also elected to their specific ExCo role by the Council). However, where there is a need for a new WALS venture but no-one on the Council with the necessary skill set, this mechanism will provide for a WALS member - who has the necessary knowledge and skills and is willing to lead on the venture – to be procured for election to the Council and then to ExCo.

The difference proposed by this document from the current constitution is to create a formal expectation that at any one time, each ExCo role has a specific responsibility, leadership and/or action-oriented purpose and function. These roles will change from time to time in accordance with changes in organisational need. Such changes in role are likely to be accompanied by a change in the role-holder dependent on peoples' willingness and possession of the relevant skills-sets. This consultation does not therefore propose that any roles themselves are written-into the constitution but that what *is* recognised within the constitution is the *principle* that ExCo roles are specifically action-oriented in relation to WALS strategic priorities agreed by the Council and voted on annually by the AGM. One implication of this change would be that the WALS AGM agrees a brief annual plan to accompany the annual WALS budget setting process.

A worked-up and *purely illustrative* example of what these roles could look like is provided in Figure 1 below on page 5. While what follows proposes changes the Presidency and Vice Presidency, no proposals are made concerning the roles of the Honorary General Secretary or Treasurer.

3.0 A more dynamic WALS presidency

In recognition of a need for WALS to discuss in depth its procedures for leadership, this consultation proposes that the organisation considers and then votes either to retain or amend the status quo or alternatively to adopt a dynamic and succession-oriented presidential model. The following tables summarise (i) the current role of the President, Vice President and Immediate Past President and (ii) changes in role and term proposed for the President and (Vice President-Elect) and the Immediate Past President.

3.1 The current presidential model

Current Role, term and duties	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Role: WALS President</p> <p>Term: Two years extendable to a maximum of four years by re-election. There has been in the past an unwritten assumption that the presidency, will move between East and West hemispheres over time.</p> <p>Duties to: oversee the smooth, safe, legal and secure running and growth of WALS in its ability to fulfil its mission (See 2.4 above);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair the AGM, WALS Council and ExCo. • liaise with and foster external relations (e.g. with potential WALS conference hosts) • oversee the development of internal WALS activities • oversee WALS contracts. <p>A fuller list of presidential duties is provided in Appendix 1.</p>	<p>The two-year term provides enough time for the president to secure a sufficient track record to mean re-election (or not) to a second term is based on perceived success in the role.</p> <p>There is a danger in a one-year term that a president may not have sufficient time to develop a track record of success or finish things well leading to a culture of short-termism.</p>	<p>A four-year term is a long period in office. While it may provide stability it could result in WALS only having three presidents in a twelve-year period. This may put some excellent people off thinking of a leadership role in WALS.</p> <p>The same argument applies in terms of ensuring WALS is regularly led by globally representative Presidents.</p>
<p>Current Role: WALS Vice president (two posts)</p> <p>Term: Two years extendable by election at the AGM each successive two years with no limit. (The current Vice Presidents who have been in post for nine years represent global East and West).</p> <p>Duties: To actively promote and support WALS internationally; To stand-in for or otherwise represent the WALS president or WALS as required.</p>	<p>Current VPs are global ‘giants’ in lesson study and have provided authority, stability and excellent counsel and guidance to successive presidents throughout these nine years as well as supporting and representing WALS energetically and admirably.</p>	<p>There has been little opportunity for WALS to benefit from a fuller leadership role from these VPs.</p>
<p>Current role: Immediate past president (IPP)</p> <p>Term: As long as the sitting president holds office.</p> <p>Role: The IPP provides counsel and support to the sitting president, can ‘stand in’ if required and can act to informally ‘sound out’ people in contexts such as succession of offices that it could be seen as improper for a President to undertake.</p>	<p>There is no formal set of duties for a WALS IPP which has not caused an issue to date</p>	<p>But this certainly has the potential to do so at some point in the future.</p>

3.2 The proposed presidential model

<p>Proposed role, term and duties</p> <p>Role: President</p> <p>Proposed Term: Two years (following two years as (Vice) President Elect with no extension to four years.</p> <p>Duties: As current (See appendix 1) although could ask the (VPE) to chair certain meetings – such as Council where the President may be presenting new ideas or key reports thus making it difficult for him/her to chair.</p>
<p>Proposed Role: (Vice) President Elect (VPE)</p> <p>Proposed Term: Two years</p> <p>As per presidential term options above with assumed progression to become President after the two years as (V)PE.</p> <p>Duties: To support the president in her/his duties and deputise or otherwise represent the president when needed. And could take on regular chairing roles as directed – for example full Council.</p>
<p>Proposed role: Vice President (not elect) (VP)</p> <p>Proposed Term: Two years</p> <p>Duties: To support the president in her/his duties and deputise or otherwise represent the president when needed. Could take on regular chairing roles as directed – for example full Council.</p>
<p>Proposed Role: Immediate Past President (IPP)</p> <p>This role would usually fall to the outgoing President but in the event that this is not possible the duties could be passed to an Acting IPP.</p> <p>Term: As long as the sitting president is in office.</p> <p>Duties: As those of the current IPP set out above but formalised within the WALS constitution a an ‘office’ of WALS..</p>

4.0 Figure 1. An illustration of what a future action-oriented Executive Committee might look like (illustration only).

<p>1. WALS President (Chair)</p> <p>2. (Vice) President Elect</p> <p>3. Vice President (not elect)</p> <p>4. Secretary: Honorary General Secretary (HGS) oversees due process of WALS proceedings</p> <p>5. Financial and budgetary issues: Honorary Treasurer (HT) oversees WALS finances</p> <p>Plus eight Eight active Members. These could <i>for example</i> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publications officer: Normally Editor in Chief of IJLLS (1 person) - Conference Time-Zone 1 representative (1 person) - Conference Time-Zone 2 representative (1 person) - Conference Time-Zone 3 representative (1 person) - PhD-Network representative (1 person) - Communications and media officer (1 person) - Constitution & policy representative (1 person) - Chair of the Organising Committee of the next face-to-face conference (or in the event of an online only conference – the Chair of the Organising Committee of the most recent face to face WALS conference). <p>It will be usual for key paid WALS contracted staff members to attend meetings of ExCo as observers where they may make presentations and participate in discussions but will not have a vote.</p> <p>Immediate Past President (IPP) provides continuity and facilitates governance: – <i>continuity</i> by acting as a sounding board for the WALS president (with whom the IPP meets three times a year); and <i>governance</i> by chairing the annual meeting of the Council, assisting the president in resiling disputes and assisting in the informal ‘sounding out’ of future presidential nominees). The IPP would normally attend ExCo meetings <i>but not have a vote</i> at ExCo).</p>
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5.0 Summary of consultation proposals.

<p>Q 1.</p>	<p><i>A WALS that represents the whole world</i> It is proposed that the WALS constitution be amended to recognise three WALS timezones (1. The Americas; 2. Africa, Middle East and Europe; and 3. Central, South and East Asia and the antipodes.) The northern and southern hemispheres of each of which should be represented in the membership of the WALS council. (See 2.1 above)</p>
<p>Q2.</p>	<p><i>Time zone representatives to lead and promote WALS activity at zone level</i> It is proposed that the WALS council elects one time zone representative and one deputy representative from each Time Zone, drawn whenever possible from north and south hemispheres. See 2.2 above)</p>
<p>Q3.</p>	<p><i>WALS council governance role</i> It is proposed that the longstanding core governance function of the WALS Council should be recognised in the WALS constitution (See 2.3 above)</p>
<p>Q4.</p>	<p><i>An active Executive Committee (ExCo) designed to make things happen</i> It is proposed that the WALS constitution is amended to recognise the growing action-orientation of the executive committee in making things happen within WALS where ExCo members (drawn from the Council) are each expected to lead on different areas of WALS activity, (See 2.4 above). <i>N.B. There is no intention to reflect the illustration given in Figure 1 above in the constitution as Presidents will need to change the precise roles from time to time as demands evolve. The office bearer roles are already written into the constitution.</i></p>
<p>Q5.</p>	<p><i>A more dynamic WALS presidency</i> It is proposed that WALS retains the existing arrangements and terms of office for the WALS president (two year term that can be extended by a further two year term. and Vice President (two year term extendable indefinitely? (See section 3 above).</p>
<p>Q7.</p>	<p>It is proposed that WALS adopts a two-year rolling presidency where both president and (Vice) President Elect serve a two-year term before the (Vice) President Elect moves on to become president for two years and where the IPP role is first offered to the outgoing President?</p>
<p>Q8.</p>	<p>It is proposed that the role of the Immediate Past President is formally recognised as an 'office bearing' role within the constitution of WALS.</p>

Thank you for reading this consultation. These proposals, as a whole package, will be put to a Yes/No vote of members at the 2021 annual General Meeting (to be confirmed) so please do attend and cast your vote (to be provided)



Appendix 1. Main duties of the current WALS president

To:

- oversee the smooth, safe, legal and secure running and growth of WALS in its ability to fulfil its mission to promote and develop understanding and use of lesson and learning studies around the world
- To Chair the annual general meeting and meetings of the WALS Council and ExCo.
- To liaise with and foster external relations (e.g. with potential WALS conference hosts)
- To oversee the development of internal WALS activities.
- To oversee WALS contracts.

In addition, to:

- ensure WALS membership numbers are healthy and grow;
- annually draw-up a financial plan to carry WALS forward for at least two years with a detailed budget report for the past 12 months and a forecast for 12 months forward
- balance the WALS budget annually and ensure financial stability and growth
- oversee a successful program of events (including the annual conference) that secures the necessary income to WALS and ensure a 'pipeline' of conferences are agreed for at least 24 months after the most recent WALS conference
- ensure that the reputation of WALS as the 'go to' international organisation concerning lesson and learning studies continues to grow
- work strategically to ensure WALS communications, presence, partnerships and activities are high quality, impactful and trusted.
- To act in a timely way where changes are needed to ensure the above and to ensure that WALS Council, ExCo, members and contractors/partners are consulted and informed at all times.
- To ensure WALS is compliant with host-country and relevant international law.