

Leadership Talking Points: 2019 ALA Midwinter Meeting – Seattle

22 January 2019

Over the past few months, as people across the library community have been asked about the future, the core response has been consistent. Libraries and library-related work are changing rapidly and will continue to evolve as communities change, as technology changes options. For those who work in the library world, there are both opportunities and challenges. How, then, does ALA need to change in order “to provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all”? In meetings and conversations across this Midwinter Meeting, members and other participants will be helping to shape the future of ALA.

To do this important work for libraries and, ultimately, for all the diverse publics they serve, it is essential that we continue to innovate, grow, and focus on our mission and our members who, working with staff, enables us to achieve critical goals. It also means we must be financially and operationally strong, nourish strong collaborations internally and externally, and be able to focus our resources, including the valuable work of ALA members and staff, on work that moves us forward toward shared goals. That work – the work of change – is embodied in a series of multi-year projects within our “streams of change.”

Streams of Change

- **Investment Budget / ALA Headquarters Building**

The approved FY2019 budget begins a 3-year investment cycle designed to build capacity in critical infrastructure areas (information technology), in revenue growth (Development), and in core mission-forward activity (advocacy). During this 2-3 year period, ALA will utilize its strong financial position to improve operational capacity and businesses to sustain the growth of the Association following this investment cycle.

At their Fall 2017 (FY2018) meeting, the ALA Executive Board and Management discussed a package of forward steps including internal reorganization, various revenue growth strategies, and strategic use of a portion of ALA’s net assets. As part of that process, the Board authorized Management to engage a commercial real estate firm to examine the “highest and best use” of ALA’s real estate in Chicago, based on both investment and ongoing operational needs of the Association. Based on responses to an RFP, Cushman and Wakefield was retained and reported to the ALA Executive Board at the 2018 Annual Conference.

On December 18, 2018, ALA’s Executive Board agreed to sign a letter of intent with an external party interested in buying ALA’s Chicago real estate assets. We have now entered a period of review that will continue over the next three to four months as the parties proceed with due diligence and negotiations. At the end of that period, we will know the outcome of the proposed sale transaction. This is a complex process and unfortunately nothing is certain. We

will continue in the spirit of transparency to update both staff and members when there is news to share. At this point, the source and amount of the offer we are entertaining cannot be shared. As is often the case with real estate transactions, the timeline is very fluid.

Concurrently, ALA management has engaged the services of an architect and a change management specialist to begin a parallel process of reviewing our options for a new workspace and understanding how we can use this opportunity to improve ALA's culture of innovation and collaboration. This, also, is the beginning of a long process and we will continue to share more about it in the coming months. We are committed to finding a new home in downtown Chicago, convenient to public transportation for both staff and visiting members. If the deal currently on the table is completed, we could potentially be looking at a move by the end of 2019. If we move, we believe we will be in a better position to succeed and lead in the future. If we do not, we are confident the current analysis and assessment will still serve us well as we go forward.

Members have asked how proceeds from a potential sale would be used. Essentially, we are seeking to convert a real estate asset to an endowment asset, where it will generate additional operating revenue for the Association and its various programs. While some of the proceeds will be used in the move itself, most of the proceeds will be invested in the ALA endowment.

- **Organizational Effectiveness and Governance Review**

At the 2018 Midwinter Meeting in Denver, the Board issued a call for ALA Council, Committees, Round Tables, Divisions and the myriad Communities of Practice to consider what it would take to align ALA's organizational structure, policies, and rules with the Association's mission and its 21st century values, key action areas and strategic directions. Those discussions continued at the 2018 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans.

A representative Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness (SCOE) was appointed prior to the 2018 Annual Conference. Members of SCOE are Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada (Palos Verdes Library District), Chair; Emily Daly (Duke University), Emmanuel Faulkner (Baltimore County Public Schools), Kenny Garcia (California State University Monterey Bay), Mandi Goodsett (Cleveland State College), Terri Grief (McCracken County High School – retired), Alexia Hudson-Ward (Oberlin College), Ben Hunter (University of Idaho), Steve Laird (Reference USA), Jack Martin (Providence Public Library), Alanna Aiko Moore (University of California, San Diego), Lucinda Nord (Indiana Library Federation), Vailey Oehlke (Multnomah County Library), Andrew Pace (OCLC), Juan Rivera (A. Philip Randolph Campus High School), Karen Schneider (Sonoma State University), Felton Thomas (Cleveland Public Library), Kerry Ward (ALA), Nora Wiltse (Chicago Public Schools), Steven Yates (University of Alabama) and Shali Zhang (University of Montana).

SCOE was charged "to carry out a comprehensive review and study of ALA's governance, member participation and legal structures and systems, with the goal of proposing changes that will revitalize its success, strength and agility as a 21st century association." The overall effort is led by an executive team including ALA Past President Jim Neal, ALA President-elect Wanda Brown, SCOE Chair Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada, and ALA Executive Director Mary Ghikas.

Members of SCOE and the Executive Team met in late October, joined by Miguel Figueroa (Director, ALA Center for the Future of Libraries). The working session was facilitated by Paul Meyer and Jim Meffert of Tecker International, a consulting firm retained by ALA management to facilitate the organizational effectiveness study. At this meeting, informed by feedback from ALA members over the years and a series of phone interviews conducted by Tecker International, they discussed what is/isn't working, drivers of change and broad concepts for a possible future.

There will be several opportunities during the Midwinter Meeting in Seattle to discuss a variety of conceptual models with Tecker International Consultants and members of SCOE.

- SCOE Chair Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada will report on SCOE's work to date at the ALA Council/Executive Board/Membership Information Session, Saturday, January 26, 3:00-4:30pm, Sheraton Hotel, Grand Ballroom
- SCOE Chair Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada will lead a discussion at ALA Council I, Sunday, January 27, 9:30-11:00am, Sheraton Hotel, Grand Ballroom.
- There will be several open discussions (and bring your snack or lunch if you wish):
 - Saturday, January 26, 10:30-11:30a.m., Sheraton, Cedar Room.
 - Sunday, January 27, noon-1:00pm, Sheraton, Cedar Room.
 - Monday, January 28, noon-1:00pm, Sheraton, Cedar Room.
- There will also be several open discussions at which input is being particularly sought from specific groups:
 - Monday, January 28, 1-2:00, Sheraton Cedar Room – Round Tables
 - Monday, January 28, 2:30-3:30, Sheraton Cedar Room – Council
 - Monday, January 28, 4:00-5:00pm Sheraton Cedar Room – Divisions

If you plan to be at the meeting in Seattle, please take advantage of one of these opportunities to participate in shaping ALA's future. Following the Midwinter Meeting, watch for an announcement of web-based opportunities to join this discussion.

- **Membership and Communications Study**

In spring 2018, ALA contracted with Avenue M, a Chicago-based consulting firm, to conduct a communications and membership study, with the goal of improving services for and communication with members. A series of questions were posed that are relevant to current discussions:

On Membership

- *What are the barriers that may prevent individuals from joining ALA?*
- *Are there membership models that might better respond to the needs of current and prospective members?*
- *How might we improve or increase member engagement?*

On Communications

- *How do we refresh and refocus our message framework?*

- *How do we focus individual communications to avoid “over-communicating” with members – a frequent member complaint?*
- *How might we more effectively coordinate and collaborate across the Association – again, to avoid “over-communicating” and confusion?*

In July 2018, a survey of ALA members, as well as former members, was conducted. The purpose of the study was to better understand the interests, needs and motivations of current and former members, as well as some individuals in the field who have never been ALA members. The survey was delivered to 65,152 individual email addresses, with responses received from 10,386 (16%).

Top-level survey results have been shared with SCOE and will help inform their discussions on organizational effectiveness. Survey results relevant to conferences was also shared with the ALA Conference Committee, to help them in their discussion of Annual Conference and Midwinter Meeting changes. Among the “top-level” results were the following:

- ALA members are drawn to ALA because they see the Association as an advocate for the profession.
- While 49% of members responding were satisfied with their ALA membership, only another 8% were extremely satisfied. That suggests that the current focus on rethinking ALA for a changing world is both timely and worth the effort being invested by member leaders and staff.
- Two-thirds of ALA members pay their own membership dues.
- The most widely-utilized ALA benefits include *American Libraries* magazine, ALA Annual Conference, AL Direct, ALA eLearning and ALA Standards and Guidelines.
- The number one professional challenge reported was keeping up-to-date with new trends and developments in the field.

The extensive survey results and consultant recommendations are still being reviewed by ALA staff and committees. They are expected to inform changes in processes, communications and structures over the coming year.

○ **Internal Changes and IT Assessment**

Internal assessment and realignment are also needed in order to allocate essential staff resources to critical areas, to support changing workflows and changing member needs, and to take best advantage of new approaches and new opportunities in critical support and mission areas. Internal changes to date are “neutral”; that is, they assume no particular outcome to the Organizational Effectiveness/Governance Review. Overall, increased simplicity and clarity is assumed.

While IT is an area of major investment, the combination of ALA’s complexity and rapidly changing technology strongly suggested the need for an external assessment. In summer 2018, management contracted with DelCor, an IT consulting firm whose practice is based in associations and other nonprofits, to conduct an assessment of ALA IT. The initial assessment is currently in its final stage and next steps are being defined. Representatives of DelCor will be

present at a number of open meetings to provide a brief summary of their findings and respond to questions.

- ALA Budget Analysis & Review Committee (BARC), Friday, noon-3:00pm (near the end of the meeting), Sheraton, Redwood Room.
- Planning and Budget Assembly, Sunday, January 27, 1:00-2:30pm, Sheraton, Metropolitan Ballroom.
- BARC/Division Leaders meeting, Sunday, January 27, 2:30-3:30pm, Sheraton, Metropolitan Ballroom.
- Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC), Sunday, January 27, 4:00-5:30pm, WSCC Room 204.

- **Aligning Advocacy – Stronger Chapter/State Relationships**

Working closely with Chapters and other State Associations (e.g., AASL Affiliates, ACRL Chapters) – ALA will build a national network of key library advocates. To provide a strong resource base for this network, ALA has brought together advocacy resources in both the Washington Office and Chicago headquarters, under the director of Washington Office Director Kathi Kromer. ALA is also enhancing technology support, piloting an application of Salesforce.

- The national network will build on -- and more effectively utilize -- ALA's most significant strength: a national membership reaching into communities of all sizes and characteristics.
- The national network will ground advocacy in community-based relationships and knowledge, and also magnify that impact through the network and through national communications.
- It recognizes that while we are bound together by essential values and a fundamental belief in the importance of libraries and library people, libraries themselves are rooted in a local community – academic, civic, school or corporate.
- Based a national advocacy network structure firmly on a local base is an approach to stability and sustainability in an unstable world. It strengthens focus on local relationships, provides a solid foundation for national advocacy and strengthens libraries, beginning at the local level and reaching to the national level.

ALA Midwinter Meeting

Over the past two years, the ALA Conference Committee has discussed options to (a) change Midwinter, (b) eliminate Midwinter and (c) eliminate the present Midwinter but replace with an alternative event. In Seattle, the ALA Conference Committee will be seeking discussion and feedback on a proposal to replace the current Midwinter Meeting with an alternative event.

The proposed event – as yet unnamed – would be strongly focused on content in two areas:

- Leadership, Strategy & the Future, building on the successful Symposium of the Center for the Future of Libraries, currently offered in conjunction with the ALA Midwinter Meeting. It will address both topics (or *what* to know) and skills (or *how* to know).
- Building on the strength of the Youth Media Awards, the Andrew Carnegie Medal Announcements and similar events, a second strand would focus on books, literacy, multimedia collections and services to children, teens and adults.
- Key governance groups and content will occupy separate times, enabling leadership to participate with other members in important discussion on future trends, directions and concerns.
- Session formats will include information sessions, interactive workshops and "campfire" discussions.
- Exhibits will continue to play a major role, with changes in format still under discussion.
- Initial implementation of planned for January 2021, in Indianapolis, and 2022, in San Antonio.

As with other areas of change, there will be opportunities to meet with members of the ALA Conference Committee:

- ALA Conference Committee Meeting, Saturday, January 26, 10:30-12:30 – WSCC Room 3B
- ALA Conference Committee – Town Hall, Sunday, January 27, 10:30-11:30pm, Sheraton, Cedar Room.
- ALA Conference Committee – Town Hall, Sunday, January 27, 4:00-5:00pm, Sheraton, Cedar Room

As with the changes to the Annual Conference, implemented at the 2018 Annual Conference in New Orleans, the ALA Conference Committee will gather feedback and continue to improve the format and related processes. Following this Midwinter Meeting, discussions will continue in ALA Connect.

ALA Executive Director Search

The new ALA Executive Director search is expected to open in February 2019 and conclude in October 2019. At the Midwinter Meeting in Seattle, the work of assembling a new search committee will move forward, with representation from the same groups that formed the search committee in 2017:

- ALA Divisions (2 representatives, selected by a collaborative Division process)
- ALA Round Tables (1 representative, selected through the Round Tables' process)
- ALA Council (two Councilors – one at-large, one chapter – elected at the 2019 ALA Midwinter Meeting)
- ALA Staff (2 representatives, with final selections by the Executive Director and AED Human Resources)
- Joint Conference of Librarians of Color (1 representative, selected by JCLC's process)

Emerging Leaders (nominations and self-nominations solicited, with final selection by Courtney Young and ALA President Loida Garcia-Febo)

BARC (1 representative from among BARC members serving a term until 2020).

ALA Executive Board (two representatives) Trevor A Dawes and Tamika Barnes will represent the Board

Staff Liaison – AED ALA Human Resources – Dan Hoppe

The ALA Executive Board asked ALA past president Courtney Young to chair the search committee again, and she has accepted.

After review by ALA Human Resources and the ALA Executive Board, Isaacson Miller will continue as the search firm to assist in this important search.

Mary Ghikas will continue as Executive Director through the 2020 Midwinter and will work with the ALA Executive Board to introduce the new Executive Director to the community at the 2020 Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia.

LIS Education

Over the past couple of years, there has been an ongoing discussion of the changing skills and preparation needed for future public librarians. That discussion is continuing in Seattle:

“A Continuing Conversation – Public Libraries and LIS Education,” Friday, January 25, 1:30-4:00pm, Washington State Convention Center (WSCC), Room 611-612.

This is a facilitated conversation, which will bring together perspectives from library practitioners, educators and representatives of ALA’s Committee on Education and Committee on Accreditation.

ALA Advocacy

ALA has seen some extraordinary success in federal advocacy efforts.

- The **Museum and Library Services Act** passed the Senate and the House and was signed by the president. This is cornerstone legislation that reauthorizes the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The most recent authorization expired in 2016. It represents an endorsement from Congress that IMLS is a federal priority.

This reauthorization includes some improvements on previous legislation:

- It allows Tribal libraries to be eligible for more IMLS grants.
- It allows libraries to use IMLS funding to prepare for or assist with disasters like Hurricane Harvey.

The bill authorizes IMLS through 2025 and allows ALA to make a stronger case for federal funding for libraries each year. ALA has fought hard to maintain funding over

the past two years. For the second year in a row, working together we've managed to increase funding, despite the president's proposals to close IMLS.

- ALA warded off the **Register of Copyrights Selection and Accountability Act**. This bill would have transferred the authority to appoint the Register of Copyrights from the Librarian of Congress to the president. ALA sees this as an attempt by copyright holders to undermine the authority of the Librarian of Congress, Dr. Carla Hayden. The legislation would have paved the way for moving the U.S. Copyright Office out of the Library of Congress.

The bill passed the House, but ALA members were so vocal in opposing the bill that it stalled in the Senate. Metrics from ALA's Legislative Action Center show that opposition to this Register of Copyrights legislation in December received some of ALA's highest advocacy engagement rates in 2018.

ALA members were also extremely active on other copyright issues in 2018, notably with the passage of the **Marrakesh Treaty**.

- Here at Midwinter, ALA is rolling out new resources to build on our advocacy wins in 2018. To see these new resources, go the new advocacy website at ala.org/advocacy

2019 ALA Midwinter Meeting -- Pre-Registration

Final preregistration for the 2019 Midwinter Meeting in Seattle is 7774, compared to 7054 in Denver (2018) and 7831 in Atlanta (2017). Of that, paid registration is 4120, compared to 3473 in Denver and 3896 in Atlanta. Exhibits-only registration is 836, compared to 731 in Denver and 814 in Atlanta.

ALA Membership Statistics

	Dec 2018	Dec 2017
Total	57,959	57,221
<i>Including:</i>		
<i>Personal</i>	52,333	51,940
<i>Organizational</i>	5,472	5,119
<i>Corporate</i>	154	162

	Dec 2018	Dec 2017
Division Memberships		
American Association of School Librarians (AASL)	7,072	6,583
Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL)	10,381	10,384
Association for Library Collections & Technical Services (ALCTS)	3,139	3,287
Association for Library Services to Children (ALSC)	4,268	4,254
<i>Association for Specialized, Government & Cooperative Library Agencies (ASGLA)</i>	1,093	767
Library & Information Technology Association (LITA)	2,352	2,426
<i>Library Leadership & Management Association (LLAMA)</i>	3,598	3,623
Public Library Association (PLA)	9,178	8,689
Reference & User Services Association (RUSA)	2,906	3,040
United for Libraries (United)	4,401	4,066
Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA)	4,516	4,768
Round Table Memberships		
Ethnic & Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table (EMIERT)	946	829
Exhibits Round Table (ERT)	381	454
Film and Media Round Table (FMRT) formally VRT	642	518
Games and Gaming Round Table (GameRT)	730	694
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Round Table (GLBTRT)	1,443	1,320
Graphic Novels & Comic Round Table (GNCRT) - NEW	367	N/A
Government Documents Round Table (GODORT)	559	578
Intellectual Freedom Round Table (IFRT)	1,268	1,255
International Relations Round Table (IRRT)	1,627	1,634
Learning Round Table (LearnRT)	399	358
Library History Round Table (LHRT)	413	395
Library Instruction Round Table (LIRT)	1,765	1,726
Library Research Round Table (LRRT)	1,332	1,298
Library Support Staff Interests Round Table (LSSIRT)	416	412
Map and Geospatial Information Round Table (MAGIRT)	270	291
New Members Round Table (NMRT)	1,495	1,363
Retired Members Round Table (RMRT)	303	272
Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT)	1,868	1,594
Staff Organizations Round Table (S[T]ORT)	185	153
Sustainability Round Table (SustainRT)	1,041	537