

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION AND
THE COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION

This document constitutes an agreement between the American Library Association (ALA) and the Committee on Accreditation (COA), a standing committee of the ALA.

Statement of Purpose

This Memorandum of Understanding is entered into by the parties in order to acknowledge the central role of the COA accreditation process to the recognition of librarianship as a distinct and autonomous profession, and its work in sustaining relationships on behalf of the profession with critical stakeholders including the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), private accreditation agencies, institutions of higher education, and the public. This agreement serves to recognize the mutually supporting activities of the ALA and COA and delineates the commitments of the parties to each other.

The Principles

The Parties agree to the following principles:

1. The primary functions of COA are referred to in its charge in the ALA Handbook of Organization "To be responsible for the execution of the accreditation program of ALA, and to develop and formulate standards of education for library and information studies for the approval of Council" (1) establish standards for accreditation of educational programs for librarians at the master-level, (2) establish policies and procedures to ensure that educational programs comply with such standards; and (3) conduct accreditation reviews in accordance such standards, policies, and procedures.
2. COA recognizes that ALA is the primary association for librarians and further recognizes that the infrastructure to support the professional activities and needs of its members resides within the ALA.
3. ALA recognizes that COA, as part of the professional association, serves the needs of the profession by protecting the public, including students seeking quality education and consumers of library services, by ensuring that academic programs in library and information studies are qualified to prepare individuals as librarians.
4. COA and the ALA acknowledge that COA must have autonomy as specified herein to ensure that its professional accreditation functions are carried out independent of improper influence by ALA.
5. ALA shall respect the confidentiality of reports issued by programs seeking accreditation and COA decision documentation in order to protect the consultative, developmental nature of the accreditation process..

Responsibilities of the Parties

Consistent with the mutual desire to create a relationship in harmony with the principles stated above, the ALA and COA agree as follows:

Accreditation Functions – COA shall have complete and unfettered autonomy in formulating standards for educational programs within the framework of the formal process designated for stakeholder input and ALA Council adoption; developing and implementing policies, rules, and procedures for conducting accreditation reviews; and making accreditation decisions.

ALA presidents elect shall appoint members of COA in consultation with the COA staff liaison, the ALA director of the Office for Accreditation, to protect the integrity of the accreditation process.

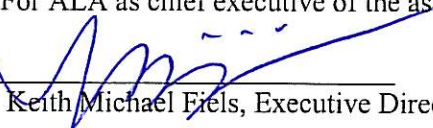
Budget – The Office for Accreditation (OA) as COA secretariat shall have the authority to prepare and manage its own budget and establish accreditation fees. The ALA executive staff shall review and approve the proposed budget consistent with its fiduciary responsibilities and the requirement that such budget provide for adequate administrative staff and financial resources as appropriate for COA's scale of accreditation activities and operations.

Insurance – ALA will procure insurance to cover liability for all of COA's accreditation activities and operations. Such coverage shall expressly include accreditation decisions and actions. ALA shall provide indemnification for volunteers for actions taken within the scope of their accreditation activities. ALA shall also provide insurance coverage for accidental injury or death for volunteers while traveling on COA business which is the same as such coverage provided for ALA volunteers.

Accreditation Personnel – OA shall have a full time director to serve as COA's principal representative to its communities of interest. The position shall be held by a person with education, expertise and experience to command respect and have credibility with the academic and accreditation communities. The review, hiring, and /or termination of said director will an ALA decision. OA's director shall have responsibility for identifying OA's staffing needs and making hiring and termination decisions in consultation with ALA Human Resources, to meet those needs within the parameters of existing ALA management and personnel policies and approved personnel budget.

Signed,


For ALA as chief executive of the association:



Keith Michael Fiels, Executive Director, ALA

8/3/10
Date

For COA as chief staff liaison:



Karen L. O'Brien, Director
ALA Office for Accreditation

July 20, 2010

Date