

LSSIRT Questions for ALA Presidential Candidates ALA 2003 Midwinter Meeting--Philadelphia, PA

1. Since approximately two-thirds of all library workers are support staff, and since this same group of library employees is under-represented in ALA, what would you be willing to do to correct this situation if elected President?
2. Do you foresee greater commitment on ALA's part to monetary support for paraprofessional membership in the organization and attendance at conferences? If there are many librarians who cannot afford to join or attend meetings, the case is even more extreme for library paraprofessionals. Due in large part to the current membership initiative for support staff, our roundtable membership is growing and we have members who would like to actively serve but cannot afford to do so.
3. Please share with us your thoughts on increasing the participation of support staff in the functions of ALA, and if you agree that increased participation is a good and reasonable goal, what specific steps would you recommend and actively support to achieve this goal? It is hard for a relatively small roundtable like LSSIRT to have representatives elected to positions within ALA, but the ALA President has the power to appoint LSSIRT members to a number of key committees.
4. Many people with bachelors' and masters' degrees in subjects other than library science are finding themselves hired as support staff, but performing activities previously carried out by degreed librarians. Do you see this as a problem for the library profession, or is it an opportunity? Should anything be done to change the situation, and if so, what would you recommend?
5. One of the reasons for establishing the Allied Professional Association (APA) was to explore the issue of certification for librarians. What are your views on national certification of library paraprofessionals? Should ALA/APA take a leadership role in this area? Also, what are your views on ALA accreditation of Library Technical Assistant (LTA) programs?