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2015-2016 Annual Report Jeff Steely, President

Strategic Directions

Last year the LLAMA Board approved a new strategic directions document. This one-page set of high-level priorities offers both a simple framework for understanding the organization and a list of guiding principles for the Board. There is a clear tension between the forward-looking goals in the strategic directions document and the cumbersome structure of the organization. With that in mind, the Board authorized the President to establish a task force with a charge to develop a plan for reorganizing the division. Over this past year, as LLAMA has continued to operate through its sections and division committees, we have simultaneously taken important first steps toward an exciting new future.

In the summary below, organized around our three strategic directions, I will list ways in which we have endeavored to accomplish our aims and the challenges that have informed the reorganization discussion.

Provide targeted, high quality professional and leadership development opportunities

LLAMA continues to provide a range of professional development experiences through conference programming, discussion groups, our mentoring program, social media, a successful webinar series, and various other activities. This year we also experimented with outreach at a regional level by co-sponsoring the 2015 LITA Forum. One of my goals for this year was to bring a high-profile keynote speaker for the LLAMA President's Program. Through the hard work of the President's Planning Committee, we will have best-selling author and world-renowned negotiator William Ury as our speaker.

One of the challenges posed by LLAMA's structure and approach to program development is that proposals to the Program Committee and the Continuing Education Committee arise in an unstructured way from the various sections, committee, members, and even non-members. The result is an inconsistent approach to providing leadership development, without a coherent plan for providing a comprehensive set of leadership development opportunities.

One step in the right direction, which has been under development for a while and is now coming to fruition, is a set of leadership and management competencies. The Competencies Committee has been actively engaged with the Executive Committee over the past two years to complete and prioritize these competencies. We anticipate that this list will serve as the basis for a coordinated approach to shaping our professional development program going forward.

Create a welcoming and inclusive community for members and potential members

The Informz service in use by ALA for the past couple years has definitely helped begin to bridge the communication gap between LLAMA and its members. The Executive Director has been able to send targeted messages and all-member information blasts. Increased communication about LLAMA conference events and a webpage summarizing LLAMA conference activities has, I believe, improved communication with members.

LLAMA leadership has had a goal for the past couple years to make better use of the President's suite at Annual Conference. At Annual 2015 we added "LLAMA Lounge," an opportunity for members to relax and unwind between sessions. This year, we will add a series of three chats in the suite. I have heard from members who are new to senior leadership roles that they lack professional development needed at this stage of their careers. We will have late evening socials for new public library directors on Friday evening and for new academic library directors on Saturday evening. This will be a chance to both hear from these groups about what they would like to get from LLAMA, and perhaps create a cohort of professionals who can support each other during a challenging transition. On Saturday morning, we will host a light breakfast for new professionals. This will be an opportunity to share with those new to librarianship the opportunities available to them through LLAMA.

LLAMA has hosted a series of "kitchen table conversations" over the past two years to gather input from members and non-members on the needs of our community and on perceptions of LLAMA. One clear message from those conversations has been the confusion caused by our current organizational structure. People do not understand the role of sections, they don't know what the frequently-used section acronyms stand for, they are confused by the division committees and how they are different from sections and section committees, etc. While many have told stories of how easy it was to first get involved in LLAMA, others have felt excluded by the complexity of the organization. Some members have complained of paying dues but then, if not attending Annual Conference, not hearing anything from or about LLAMA's work. It is our hope that the reorganization will create a LLAMA which is far more understandable and that provides a high level of value to the membership.

Be a model for innovation

Over the past several years, LLAMA leadership has been talking about aligning our division with best practices for professional associations. In light of declining membership, lack of coherence in programming, and an arcane and confusing organizational structure, I formed a Reorganization Task Force. Maureen Sullivan offered her services as a facilitator. The task force began by reading *Race for Relevance: 5 Radical Changes for Associations*, by Harrison Coerver and Mary Byers. The first meeting of the task force occurred during the 2016 Midwinter Meeting. The result of this half-day workshop was a set of guiding principles and a plan for drafting new bylaws. The guiding principles were widely shared during Midwinter and well-received. During the spring, the Executive Director created a draft of new bylaws. This draft, and an outline of the reorganization, will serve as the starting point for a second task force workshop immediately preceding the Annual Conference. It is my hope that in the next year LLAMA will approve a new set of bylaws and that, by the 2017 Annual Meeting, LLAMA will operate under this radically different and far more effective structure.