

**2012-2013 ALA CD#27.1
2013 ALA Annual Conference**

**American Library Association Committee on Organization
Report to Council
Annual Conference 2013—Chicago, Illinois**

ACTION ITEMS

COO brings two action items to Council at the 2013 Annual Conference:

1. **Revised composition for the ALA Scholarships and Study Grants Committee:**

The Scholarships and Study Grants Committee (SSGC) has sent to COO a recommendation to revise its size and composition. The SSGC has written a detailed explanation of the desirability of this change; the SSGC report is appended to this COO report (see SSGC Appendix). The SSGC has concluded that the structural change it proposes will eliminate what have proved to be systemic problems and will increase the committee's effectiveness. The root of the problem is

that the majority of SSGC committee members are appointed by their respective constituent groups, in which those individuals already have significant time commitments and responsibilities that take precedence over their roles in SSGC. In addition, several groups responsible for appointing representatives to SSGC fail each year to do so. Added to the fact that meeting times at Annual and Midwinter conferences for the appointing groups often conflict with SSGC schedules, these combined factors make it very difficult for those members who actually get appointed by stakeholder groups to contribute in any meaningful way.

The current authorized composition of the committee is:

The Committee shall consist of eleven (11) members, chair to be appointed annually by the ALA President-Elect:

- 1 member to be appointed by the Spectrum Advisory Committee
- 1 member to be appointed by the ERT Board
- 2 members to be selected by the divisions
- 1 member to be selected by the Round Table Coordinating Committee (excluding ERT)
- 1 member to be appointed by the Endowment Trustees
- 1 member from ALA Conference Committee's Bash Subcommittee, to be appointed by the Conference Committee
- 1 member to be appointed by the HRDR Advisory Committee
- 3 members to be appointed by the ALA President-Elect¹

As a remedy, the SSGC recommends and COO endorses that "all members of the SSGC be appointed by the president-elect" and that "the size of the committee be reduced from 11 members to 7 members, including the chair."

COO concurs with the SSGC's analysis of the challenges the committee has faced. COO also concurs with the remedy the SSGC proposes—i.e., reducing the size of the committee and assigning to the ALA president-elect responsibility for all appointments to the SSGC.

¹ Source: <http://www.ala.org/groups/committees/ala/ala-schol-gran>

Because the SSCG is an ALA committee, ongoing input and recommendations on appointment to this committee by the divisions is assured through the Committee on Appointments, chaired by the ALA president elect, and consisting of the presidents-elect of the divisions.

The SSGC charge is footnoted below.²

ACTION item #1: Resolved, that Council approves changing the size and composition of the Scholarships and Study Grants Committee to seven members, including the committee's chair, all to be appointed by the ALA president-elect.

²The ALA Scholarships and Study Grants Committee shall make recommendations to the Executive Board and the ALA Council on all policies relating to ALA scholarships, study grants, conference sponsorships or research grants to be made or sponsored by ALA and its units. It shall administer the general scholarships, study grants, conference sponsorships, and research grants presented in the name of the American Library Association, known as "ALA General Scholarships and Study Grants." All ALA General Scholarships and Study Grants shall exist to advance study or knowledge in library science. The Committee shall review periodically the appropriateness of existing ALA General Scholarships and Study Grants; shall recommend modification, elimination, or suspension of existing ALA General Scholarships and Study Grants, as needed; and shall make recommendations with respect to proposed new ALA General Scholarships and Study Grants. The Committee shall appoint juries to select recipients of ALA General Scholarships and Study Grants (i.e., scholarships and study grants not administered by a unit of the Association), with the exception of Spectrum juries, and shall coordinate the work of these juries and committees. The committee will work with other units of the Association to coordinate tracking, statistics, and other information about all scholarships and study grants sponsored by ALA and its units.

The Scholarships and Study Grants Committee shall be responsible for maintaining the ALA Scholarships and Study Grants Manual, which includes information for all scholarships and study grants presented by ALA or any of its units; it shall also provide general guidance regarding the procedural aspects of the Scholarships and Study Grants Program (such as information concerning deadline dates and publicity releases).

Each unit of ALA shall determine, within general ALA policies, new scholarships and study grants relating to its specific area of responsibility, known as "ALA Unit Scholarships and Study Grants." Each unit shall review periodically the appropriateness of its existing scholarships and study grants; and shall, as needed, modify, eliminate, or suspend its existing scholarship and study grant(s) and shall handle all details and expenses with respect to its scholarship and study grant(s).

Each unit is also responsible for submitting complete records as prescribed in the ALA Scholarships and Study Grants Manual concerning its award(s) to the Scholarships and Study Grants Committee in order that the ALA Scholarships and Study Grants Manual may be maintained.

Source: <http://www.ala.org/groups/committees/ala/ala-schol-gran>

2. **Revised reporting requirements for ALA and Council Committees :**

During the past year COO has had concerns about the effectiveness of communication and reporting by ALA and Council committees. COO has reviewed the “Committee Information Update” (CIU) form, the vehicle Council adopted some years ago with the requirement that every committee complete and submit it to the Governance Office within one month after each Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference. Only about 50 percent of committees have complied with this policy during the past two years. That includes the reports that some committees have submitted to Council.

In COO’s assessment the CIU has functioned too much as an attendance report on committee members, fails to take into consideration the different ways in which some committees carry out their work using electronic media outside of the Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference, and does not encourage committees to show how their work furthers ALA’s strategic goals.

COO proposes retiring the CIU form in favor of an expectation and requirement that every committee semiannually submit a report of its plan, activities, and accomplishments. Rather than a template such as the CIU, COO recommends that each committee prepare a report in a form that most effectively conveys information that should be shared with and made available to elected leaders and members. Committee chairs would receive reminders along with offer what composition teachers call “writing prompts”—i.e., suggestions or topics that can stimulate ideas worth writing about. Prompts include:

- Accomplishments
- Planned activities
- Issues that affect the committee’s work and their implications for the future
- Interactions with other units within ALA
- Relationship of the committee’s work to the ALA strategic plan
- Current level of committee members’ involvement (more substantive than an attendance roll)
- Committee self-check on its value and viability (update charge, discontinue committee, consolidate with another, change structure, other observations)
- Other issues of each committee’s own devising

The report the Scholarships and Study Grants Committee submitted to COO in spring 2013 embodies the sort of mindfulness committee reports can and should reflect. Committee reports to Council will continue to meet this reporting requirement. COO encourages committees to include a section in those reports that goes beyond action items brought to Council—a section that addresses issues, as appropriate, such as those in the bulleted list above.

The COO staff liaison will work with other committees’ staff liaisons to assure that reports are submitted, are posted on each committee’s web site, and are listed with links at http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/council/cmte_info_report. Staff will also investigate options for giving greater visibility to this collection of linked report.

COO recommends that such reports be submitted and posted semi-annually. This does not preclude more frequent reports. Nor does this tie reports to the Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference. This accommodates differences in workflows among the committees. COO recognizes that at least two committees—the Nominating Committee and the Election Committee—each have an annual deadline tied to the annual elections cycle. In the case of

these committees, one of its two semi-annual reports might refer back or forward to its other report with the explanation that its work is carried out during a particular, recurrent part of each year.

ACTION item #2: Resolved, that Council approves retiring the current Committee Information update form, to be replaced by a semi-annual report by each ALA committee and each Council committee that, as appropriate, addresses:

- Accomplishments
 - Planned activities
 - Issues that affect the committee's work and their implications for the future
 - Interactions with other units within ALA
 - Relationship of the committee's work to the ALA strategic plan
 - Current level of committee members' involvement (more substantive than an attendance roll)
 - Committee self-check on its value and viability (update charge, discontinue committee, consolidate with another, change structure, other observations)
 - Other issues of each committee's own devising
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Respectfully submitted, June 30, 2013

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Proposed change to the appointment process for members of the ALA Scholarships and Study Grants Committee

Over the last few years, the ALA Scholarships and Study Grants Committee (SSGC) has experienced increasing problems with availability of and commitment from its members. This has resulted in ongoing difficulties such as a lack of quorum at in-person meetings and an insufficient number of participants to be able to conduct business online asynchronously. This situation has undermined the effectiveness of the committee as, too frequently, work has been delayed to the point of interfering with the needs of ALA units that provide awards, sponsorships, grants or scholarships.

Both SSGC members and ALA support staff for the committee have come to the conclusion that the problem stems from the fact that the majority of SSGC committee members are appointed by their respective constituent groups, in which those individuals already have significant time commitments and responsibilities that take precedence over their roles in SSGC. In addition, several groups responsible for appointing representatives to SSGC fail each year to do so. Added to the fact that meeting times at Annual and Midwinter conferences for the appointing groups often conflict with SSGC schedules, these combined factors make it very difficult for those members who actually get appointed by stakeholder groups to contribute in any meaningful way.

Therefore, the SSGC proposes that a consistent and reliable method of direct appointment of its members be implemented to assist in directing the primary focus of all its members to the work of the committee. We recommend that all members of the SSGC be appointed by the ALA president-elect. This revised method of appointment is intended correct the deficiencies of the current approach which relies heavily on having members appointed by and sent as representatives to SSGC from a variety of other ALA units. The purpose of this change is to insure that SSGC seats are not left unfilled and to foster active participation in the committee by all members. With this change, the work of the Scholarships and Study Grants Committee can be carried out in an effective and timely manner.

In addition, the SSGC recommends that the size of the committee be reduced from 11 members to 7 members, including the chair. This is a sufficient size to handle the workload and a keeps the number required for a quorum manageable.

Please see the FAQ that accompanies this proposal for additional points of clarification about the current appointment process for members of the Scholarships and Study grants Committee, problems that result from that process and how the proposal addresses them.

June 14, 2013

FAQ for the Proposed Change to the Appointment Process for Members of the ALA Scholarships and Study Grants Committee

- Why is the change of appointments needed?
 - o The ability to maintain a quorum necessary to conduct business has become a chronic problem for the SSGC, due to the lack of appointments made by the responsible stakeholder groups and the lack of consistent participation by a number of those who have been appointed.
 - o 5 of 8 seats appointed by ALA units are vacant for 2012/13
 - o No quorum was attained at half of the Midwinter and Annual meetings during the last 3 years.
 - o A change is necessary to facilitate the annual process of SSGC filling vacancies.
- What role would stakeholder groups have in the revised process?
 - o Interested ALA groups would retain the ability to actively promote involvement of their members in the SSGC through the call for volunteer forms for ALA committee service that are made available to the ALA President-elect for appointments.
- What are the current terms of the SSGC committee members?
 - o The terms are staggered 2 year appointments
- How are the current SSGC members appointed?
 1. 1 member to be appointed by the Spectrum Advisory Committee (Currently unfilled)
 - o Participation rate of appointed members – 4 absences across 11 meetings in the last 5 years
 - o The Chair of the Spectrum Advisory Committee is responsible for the appointment of SSGC members.
 - o The Spectrum Advisory Committee's SSGC appointment process is not available as of this compilation.
 2. 1 member to be appointed by the ERT Board (Alice Knapp, 2012-2014)
 - o Participation rate of appointed members – 3 absences across 11 meetings in the last 5 years
 - o The member is part of the ERT Board and volunteers for the position.
 - o The member's SSGC term should run parallel with their term on the ERT Board.
 3. 2 members to be selected by the ALA Divisions (Currently unfilled)
 - o Participation rate of appointed members – 10 absences across 11 meetings in the last 5 years
 - o Appointments are made by the Division Presidents Group
 - o SSGC appointments are infrequent.
 - o Members should be from the divisions that have scholarships or grants that the SSGC currently administers.

4. 1 member to be selected by the Round Table Coordinating Assembly (excluding ERT) (Currently unfilled)
 - o Participation rate – 5 absences across 11 meetings in the last 5 years
 - o Chair offices within their round table.
 - o The members should be from the round tables that have scholarships or grants that the SSGC currently administers.
 - o The Chair of the RTCA should be informed about the needed appointment.
 - o SSGC appointments are infrequent.
 5. 1 member to be appointed by the Endowment Trustees (Robert Walton, 2011-2013)
 - o Participation rate – 4 absences across 11 meetings in the last 5 years
 - o Staff from the ALA Finance Department provide the name of a qualified member to the Endowment Trustees who make the appointment to the SSGC.
 6. 1 member from the ALA Conference Committee Bash Subcommittee, to be appointed by the Conference Committee (Currently unfilled)
 - o Participation rate – 7 absences across 11 meetings in the last 5 years
 - o The Chair of the Conference Committee should be informed about the needed appointment.
 - o SSGC appointments are infrequent – None since 2011.
 7. 1 member to be appointed by the HRDR Advisory Committee (Keisha L. Garnett, 2012-2014)
 - o Participation rate – 1 absence across 11 meetings in the last 5 years
 - o HRDR Advisory Committee members are canvassed for interest and approved by the committee as vacancies occur.
 8. 3 Members to be appointed by the ALA President-Elect (Jade Albuero, 2011-2013; Jonathan J. Lu, 2012-2014, Andrea R. Malone, 2012-2014)
 - o Participation rate – 3 absences across 11 meetings in the last 5 years
 - o SSGC member appointments are made from qualified ALA members who have submitted volunteer forms for ALA committee service and have the ability to attend Midwinter and Annual conferences and to be available to conduct business online between conferences.
- What revision is proposed to address the need for the timely appointment of members who are fully available to serve on the Scholarships and Study Grants Committee?

In order to more routinely achieve a quorum to conduct business through consistently made appointments of SSGC members, increased SSGC member participation resulting from the sole focus of each member's appointment on the operations of the SSGC rather than work in a parent group and by means of a smaller committee size, we recommend:

- 1) that the number of SSGC members be reduced from 11 to 7 (including the chair).

Rationale: A committee of this size is both large enough to handle the workload and to provide the necessary expertise and variety of perspectives from committee member experience in divisions, round tables or other ALA units while requiring a small quorum size.

2) that all members of the SSGC be appointed by the ALA president-elect.

Rationale: Committee member participation will be increased by an appointment with a single focus of responsibility on the work of the SSGC, rather than through an appointment as a representative from another ALA unit with that requires additional meeting attendance and assignments.

June 14, 2013

Considerations on ALA Committee and Council Committee Reporting

Section 1: Introduction

By revitalizing and reorienting the “Committee Information Update” form the ALA Committee on Organization can contribute to the collective effort launched by President Maureen Sullivan to “re-imagine ALA.” The Committee Information Update (CIU) is a template geared to a roll call of members attending face-to-face meetings at the Midwinter Meeting and the Annual Conference. Even though it has been called an “evaluation” sheet, there is nothing inherently evaluative about the form.

COO has the opportunity to create a more effective, more informative system through which ALA and Council Committees can keep the Association’s elected leadership and members informed about the issues the committees address and the work they do.

Section 2: COO’s charge

The Committee on Organization’s charge is:

To advise and assist regarding structural and organizational concerns in ALA. To recommend to council the establishment or discontinuance of divisions, round tables, membership initiative groups, ALA committees, assemblies and joint committees, as the needs of the association may require. To define the functions of these units, subject to the approval of council. To recommend to council the establishment, including the name and size, of other standing committees to consider matters of the association that require continuity of attention by the members. To recommend to executive board the appropriate unit to appoint official representatives to outside organizations. To receive notification of the formation of interdivisional committees.

Section 3: Council’s Relationship to ALA and Council Committees

As a long thread of exchanges on the ALA Council list during March 2013 demonstrated, even Council members are unclear about the roles and areas of responsibilities of these committees. In a debate about the appropriate size of the Council, in particular its number of at-large seats, some councilors recommended that prospective plans for changing the size and composition of the Council be referred to various committees whose charges do not include that responsibility. Even though a former chair of ALA’s Constitution and Bylaws Committee and several others explained that the proposal had to originate as a bylaws change and then had to follow a certain process, some Councilors continued to recommend referrals to other committees.

In its 2012 Self-Assessment, Council’s responses to two questions indicate that understanding of ALA’s committees can stand some improvement:

- ✓ In response to the question “The committee structure is sensible and widely understood,” responses were
 - 4 strongly disagree
 - 30 neutral
 - 32 agree
 - 4 strongly agree

- ✓ In response to the question “The committee structure is appropriate to current realities,” response were
 - 4 strongly disagree
 - 23 disagree
 - 41 neutral
 - 42 agree
 - 6 strongly agree

At the same time,

- ✓ In response to the question “Committees and task forces function well and deliver high value to Council and to ALA,” response were
 - 0 strongly disagree
 - 142 disagree
 - 25 neutral
 - 62 agree
 - 15 strongly agree

It is impossible to discern whether the response to this last question would have been different if it had been split into two questions, one specifying the value of committees and the other specifying the value of task forces. Task forces generally conclude their work with a report to Council.

It is not clear on what information sources Council members based their responses to these three questions. Of 36 ALA and Council committees, 19 (52.77%) do not have a report posted at http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/council/cmte_info_report during or after the 2012 Midwinter Meeting. Of the 17 committees that submitted a report, 7 used the CIU in some form.

More recently, of 36 ALA and Council committees, 18 (50.0%) do not have a report posted at http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/council/cmte_info_report during or after the 2013 Midwinter Meeting. Of the 18 committees that submitted a report, 9 used the CIU in some form.

Section 4: Role of Communication in an Association and Its Recent History in ALA

At the 2012 committee chairs orientation in Anaheim, chairs received a copy of John F. Schlegel’s pamphlet *Enhancing Committee Effectiveness: Guidelines and Policies for Committee Administration* (Washington: American Society of Association Executives, 1994). It advises that “The committee chair and staff are responsible for keeping leadership and appropriate staff fully informed of committee activities. A written report of goals and achievements should be provided to the board of directors two or three times a year.” (p. 3)

See also the appendix to this document: Eileen Morgan Johnson’s “The Golden Rule” article.

This relates to the Goal Area of Organizational Excellence in ALA’s “2015 Strategic Plan.” (http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/missionhistory/plan/strategic%20plan%202015%20documents/strategic_plan_2.pdf) It states that “ALA operates effectively, efficiently, creatively and in a socially responsible fashion to accomplish its mission.” Objectives include:

- Enhance the association’s organizational structure to meet the changing needs of members, libraries and the users they serve.
- Assess and continuously improve products and services to better serve current members and to attract new members.

Some years ago the Committee on Organization proposed and Council approved a reporting form, the “Committee Information Update,” to be used by all ALA and Council committee chairs after each Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference. Council adopted that form and the requirement that committee chairs “submit an update report of their activities within one-month after each Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference.” The form and its use are explained to committee chairs during their annual orientation program. The directions state that it should be sent to the COO staff liaison in the Governance Office. When committee chairs carry out this responsibility, they have fulfilled Mr. Schlegel’s criteria for keeping staff informed. Unless a committee has brought an action item before Council, the committee chair may not have kept leadership informed. The Governance Office posts the reports it receives at http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/council/cmte_info_report.

The record shows that communication from ALA and Council Committees is inconsistent and, in the case of some committees, non-existent in recent years. This raises several questions for which answers simply are not available:

- What evidence (or absence of evidence) did Council members consider when a majority of its members disagreed that “Committees and task forces function well and deliver high value to Council and to ALA”?
- Would consistent communication from committees change that assessment? And, if so, how?
- What benefit has ALA realized from its committees’ work?
- Have the committees provided information to the association’s elected leadership that they can incorporate in their decision making and planning?

Section 5: Potential Benefits of Universal Reporting by Committees

Two of ALA’s core organizational values (ALA Policy A.1.4) are:

- Member service
- An open, inclusive, and collaborative environment

ALA units such as the ALA and Council Committees can demonstrate these values through transparency, accountability, and communication with elected leaders and interested members. Regular reporting can be a reliable vehicle for demonstrating these.

Potential benefits include:

Transparency—Regular reports available to the membership demonstrate transparency, giving members access to information they might not otherwise have. This is an extension of the spirit of ALA’s open meetings policy. (Policy A.7.4.4)

Accountability—Regular substantive reporting demonstrates that a committee is doing its work and addressing issues appropriate to its charge.

Informed elected leaders and interested members—Both John Schlegel and Eileen Morgan emphasize the importance of this.

Source of opportunities for committees to discover opportunities for collaboration—Sometimes ALA and Council committee chairs and members alert other interested committee about work that is of potential interest to both. When they neglect to do this, regular reports would give others the opportunity to make these connections.

Section 6: Substitutes for the “Committee Information Update”

The following documents can be, at the discretion of the committee chair, substitutes for a revised “Committee Information Update”:

A report submitted to Council at the Annual Conference or the Midwinter Meeting

A revised “Committee Information Update.” Rather than the present template, this revised sheet could offer what composition teachers call “writing prompts”—i.e., suggestions or topics that can stimulate ideas worth writing about. Potential prompts include:

- Accomplishments
- Planned activities
- Issues that affect the committee’s work and their implications for the future
- Interactions with other units within ALA
- Relationship of the committee’s work to the ALA strategic plan
- Current level of committee members’ involvement (more substantive than an attendance roll)
- Committee self-check on its value and viability (update charge, discontinue committee, consolidate with another, change structure, other observations)
- Other issues of each committee’s own devising

Section 7: Report Dissemination

Chairs of ALA and Council Committees have a variety of options for disseminating reports:

- Chairs of these committees have posting privileges to the Council listserv.
- They can also post to the Council ALA Connect group. (At present Council behavior vastly favors the listserv despite its more limited functionality.)
- The chairs of these committees are members of the ALA Council and Committee Chairs group on ALA Connect.
- The staff liaison makes reports accessible on a web page devoted to that purpose.
- All ALA members have access to the ALA Members group on ALA Connect (<http://connect.ala.org/members>).

Ideally, committee chairs would post reports to all of these venues.

Section 8: Limitations of the “Committee Information Update”

The implicit purpose of the current Committee Information Update template is to provide Council and others information about each committee:

- recent work—i.e., “Accomplishments [at this meeting], a concise account”
- anticipated future work—i.e., “Planned activities for upcoming year, a concise account”
- ideas and suggestions of value to —i.e., “Other comments/information you believe will help the Association in its work”

The first of these, with the direct reference to “at this meeting,” anchors this to the twice-a-year face-to-face meetings pattern of much committee work.

COO has identified a weakness of the form in its roll call/attendance view of committee service, requiring a list of members present at and members absent from each meeting. This implies that committee work is carried out only during formal committee meetings. It also implies that every committee meets, most likely face-to-face, at each Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference. While most follow such a meeting schedule, there are exceptions.

To the extent that committee chairs submit this or some other form, it fulfills a requirement. But are the reports as informative and useful a tool as they can be?

The purpose of a revised reporting mechanism as described in Section 6 above would be to assure communication and transparency, to show committees’ progress towards achieving their goals, and to connect committees’ work to the ALA Strategic Plan.

Section 9: COO’s Role

COO would have a monitoring role, much as it has indirectly today in the way that the COO staff liaison updates the list of committees and links to their reports posted at http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/council/cmte_info_report. However, a more proactive role would be to encourage regular reporting by every committee. COO would not, however, have a policing role. The consistent absence of a report from a committee over a period of time (perhaps three cycles—equivalent to a Midwinter Meeting, an Annual Conference, and the subsequent Midwinter Meeting) would, however, trigger an inquiry.

Ideally this inquiry would have two possible stages:

- In the first stage the COO chair would inform the ALA president which committees had long reporting delinquencies. The president would contact the committee chair (whom the president appointed) and remind the chair of the need to communicate and would set a short turnaround deadline for a report. (This, admittedly, would be less potent in follow-up after the Annual Conference when the serving chair may not have served on the committee the previous year or may have served but not as its chair.)
- If that deadline passes the COO chair would follow up with the chair of the silent committee and the committee’s staff liaison. The COO chair would ask if the absence of reports is a symptom that the committee is not serving its purpose, not carrying out its charge. If so, COO could request that the committee conduct and submit a self-study report assessing its recent work against its charge and making recommendations regarding the future of the committee. Options for recommendations could include a revised charge, a revised size and/or composition, a plan of work derived from the charge, or discontinuance of the committee because it no longer meets a need of the Association. This would be consistent with that part of COO’s charge that states:

To recommend to Council the establishment or discontinuance of divisions, round tables, membership initiative groups, ALA committees, assemblies and joint committees, as the needs of the association may require.

COO’s role would be as a catalyst for committee self-examination; the burden of reaching conclusions would be on the committee itself. If a committee recommends changes in its charge and/or structure or recommends that it be discontinued, COO would discuss these

recommendations with the committee chair and determine what sort of action, if any, COO should present to Council.

Summary: Potential Actions for COO's Consideration

1. Make a policy recommendation to Council that the present Committee Information Update template be replaced by a policy requiring periodic reports from each ALA and Council committee, x times per year.
 - a. Committees would have the option of submitting their reports to Council or, especially those that do not have action items to present to Council, through a free form report addressing the most pertinent issues mention in Section 6 above.
2. Accompany that policy recommendation with a policy that ALA and Council committee chairs post their reports to all (or specific) venues listed in Section 7 above.
3. Adopt as an operational practice the compliance monitoring steps described in Section 9 above.

From: *Non Profit Report*, Nonprofit Organizations and Associations, Whiteford Taylor & Preston LLP. <http://www.wtplaw.com/newsletters/2011/07/non-profit-report-may-2011>.

The Golden Rules for Committees

by Eileen Morgan Johnson

As associations grow and mature, they can find themselves with too many committees. There might be standing committees that are required by the association's bylaws or others that have been formed over time and never disbanded. An association's leaders might ask, how many committees do we really need?

Committees play a key role in the governance of an association. Boards of all sizes often do their real work at the committee level, and this is particularly true for large boards. Committees often include members of the association who are not on the board, which allows them to become involved and demonstrate their leadership ability

On the other hand, committees can be a drain on an association's resources, both human and financial. Too many committee meetings will result in overload and meeting fatigue - participation drops significantly when the committee members are overwhelmed, bored, or uninterested in the committee's work (or lack of work).

To address the problem of too many committees - or perhaps the wrong committees - follow the four golden rules for committees:

1. Not every committee has a right to exist forever.
2. A committee must have real work and goals to be of value to the association and the committee members.
3. Even standing committees can be changed through bylaw amendments.
4. Don't create a committee when a task force or study group will do.

1. Killing Committees Gracefully

There are several ways to pare down an association's committees: "zero based" committees and sunseting are particularly effective

The zero based committee system is based on the concept of a zero based budget. Each year the association starts fresh with only those committees in place that are required by its bylaws. From there, the board determines what the association's programmatic, operational and governance needs are for the year ahead and forms committees to address those needs.

Sunseting committees takes a slightly different approach. Each committee is given a specified duration. The committee ceases to exist on the date that it reaches the end of its life unless the board takes action to extend the duration. This can be an effective tool for those associations that want change but do not want to take affirmative action (or responsibility) to bring it about

2. Put Your Committees to Work

Committees often devote great time and energy to developing the perfect committee charter - which then gets put away and never looked at again. While a committee charter can be useful to focus a committee's work and help the members agree on what they are supposed to do, a committee charter alone isn't enough. The board should give each committee a specific charge, either at the start of each year or upon the committee's formation. The committee's charge will

identify particular issues that the committee will focus on that year and the actions they are expected to take.

Committee actions can include:

- Studying an issue and reporting back to the board on the results of the study;
- Recommending board action;
- Monitoring activities such as conflicts of interest or finances;
- Developing new programs, fundraising strategies, or membership activities, usually in conjunction with staff and/or members; or
- Handling specific tasks for the board such as nominations or bylaws review.

A committee with a charge that clearly states the expected action or result will be more focused, more energized, and more likely to deliver a product or service

3. Review Standing Committees Regularly

It might be cumbersome to amend the association's bylaws just to change the standing committees that are established there. However, it is a good practice for an association to review its bylaws every two years or so. (This not only allows the association to identify those sections of the bylaws that should be changed but also allows the board to confirm that its practices conform to the bylaws.) A review of standing committees should be part of such a regular bylaws review.

4. Use Other Options

Task forces and study groups can be an informal, time-limited way to accomplish the same work as a committee. Typically, a task force or study group is formed to tackle a particular problem or issue and is expected to report back to the board promptly. Once the report is delivered, the group is disbanded

By following these four golden rules of committees, any association can streamline its committee structure and make service on its committees a pleasure rather than a pain for its members.

Committees of the Association

ALA Committees: Appointments to committees of the Association are made by the ALA president-elect, who chairs and acts on the advice of the Committee on Appointments.

Committee on Appointments Composition: The Committee on Appointments is composed of the ALA president-elect (chair) (1) and a president-elect from each of the ALA divisions (12).

Committee on Appointments: There shall be a committee on appointments to be comprised of the presidents-elect of the divisions and the president-elect of the association, who shall serve as chairperson, to advise the president-elect of the association on nominations for committee appointments. (Provided for in bylaw article viii, section 2(a)(i).)

- Accreditation
- American Libraries Advisory
- Appointments
- Awards
- Chapter Relations
- Conference
- Constitution & Bylaws
- Election
- Human Resource Development & Recruitment Advisory (Office for)
- Information Technology Policy Advisory (Office for)
- Literacy
- Literacy & Outreach Services Advisory (Office for)
- Membership
- Membership Meetings
- Nominating
- Public & Cultural Programs Advisory
- Research & Statistics
- Rural, Native & Tribal Libraries of All Kinds
- Scholarship & Study Grants
- Training, Orientation & Leadership Development
- Website Advisory

Committees of Council

Council Committees: Appointments to committees of Council are made by the ALA president-elect, who chairs and acts on the advice of the Committee on Committees.

Committee on Committees: The Committee on Committees is composed of the ALA president-elect (chair) (1) and four (4) councilors that are elected to serve a one-year term.

Article III, Sec. 6 (a), 6 (b), and 6 (c): Sec. 6. (a) There shall be a Council Committee on Committees made up of four Councilors elected for one-year terms by Council as provided for in Article III, Sec. 6(b) of the Bylaws. The president-elect shall be the fifth member of this committee and its chairperson.

Sec. 6 (b) The four elected members of the Council Committee on Committees shall be elected by ballot of the Councilors present and voting at the annual conference from a list of eight candidates submitted by the president-elect and included in the agenda mailed to Councilors

before the annual conference. Additional nominations for the Committee on Committees may be made by Councilors from the floor.

Committee on Committees charge: Article iii, sec. 6 (c): sec. 6 (c) such committee shall nominate annually candidates for three members of the executive board for three-year terms, and every third year two members of the executive board for three-year terms for election by the council from among the members of the council.* article viii, sec. 2 (b): sec. 2 (b) committees of council. (i) Appointments to the committees of the council will be made by the council committee on committees. (See bylaw, article iii, section 6(a), 6(b), and 6(c), and article viii, section 2(b)(i).)

- Budget Analysis & Review Committee
- Committee on Committees
- Committee on Diversity
- Committee on Education
- Committee on Legislation
- Committee on Library Advocacy
- Committee on Organization
- Committee on Professional Ethics
- Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship
- Council Orientation Committee
- Intellectual Freedom Committee
- International Relations Committee
- Policy Monitoring Committee
- Public Awareness Committee
- Publishing Committee
- Resolutions Committee

American Library Association
Committee Information Update

Please note: ALA and Council Committees are required to submit an update of their activities within one-month after each Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference. This form will be sent to the ALA Council and the ALA Committee on Organization.

Report for Midwinter _____

Report for Annual Conference _____

Name of Committee:

Committee Chair:

Committee Members Present:

Committee Members Absent:

Others Present:

Accomplishments [at this meeting], a concise account:

Planned activities for upcoming year, a concise account:

Other comments/information you believe will help the Association in its work:

Submitted by: _____

Date Submitted: _____

Please return the completed form to COO Staff Liaison, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611.

Current COO staff liaison is Kerri Price, kprice@ala.org