

American Library Association Committee on Organization  
Report to Council  
Midwinter Meeting 2011—San Diego, California

**ACTION ITEMS**

COO brings the following two action items to Council in Toronto:

- A. **Proposal to rename the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table:** The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table requests that its name change to become the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table.

GLBRT requests this change to adopt current preferred usage—i.e., to change the word “Transgendered” to “Transgender.”

---

**ACTION #1:** *COO recommends that Council approve the change name of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table to the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table.*

---

- B. **Proposal to modify the composition of the Web Advisory Committee:** The Web Advisory Committee (WAC) requests to modify its composition by adding as an ex officio member of WAC the chair of the ASCLA Accessibility Assembly.

WAC has been dealing frequently with accessibility issues. It has consistently invited the chair of the ASCLA Accessibility Assembly to participate in its meetings. This will formalize a fruitful practice.

---

**ACTION #2:** *COO recommends that Council amend the composition of the Web Advisory Committee by adding as an ex officio member the chair of the ASCLA Accessibility Assembly.*

---

- C. **Proposal regarding American Library Association-Association of American Publishers Joint Committee:** The ALA Executive Director and the ALA president recommend the abolition of this committee and that in its place ALA adopt recent practice to build and sustain a relationship between the two associations.

The full request is appended to this report. It lays out the committee’s history, its challenges, the logistical obstacles to making its current structure function, and the cultural differences

between the two associations and a practical proposal to maintain an important inter-association relationship.

---

---

**ACTION #3:** *COO recommends that Council discontinue the ALA-AAP Joint Committee in favor of a more workable system of maintaining an important ongoing inter-association relationship.*

---

---

## INFORMATION ITEMS

1. COO has received a petition signed by a sufficient number of personal members to meet the requirements to establish a new Membership Initiative Group (MIG). The petition establishes a Graphic Novel and Comics Membership Initiative Group. COO approves establishment of the Graphic Novel and Comics Membership Initiative Group.

ALA Policy 6.12 states: "A Membership Initiative Groups (MIG) is formed when a group of ALA members identifies a common concern or interest about librarianship which falls outside the delegated responsibility of a single division, roundtable, or unit, and wishes to establish a short-term mechanism to address this concern or interest. To establish a MIG, which must be approved by COO and reported to Council, a group must submit to the Committee on Organization a statement of purpose, at least one hundred signatures of ALA members in good standing, and the names and addresses of designated organizers."

2. The Web Advisory Committee Submitted a request to establish the position of vice-chair. The intent of this proposal is to assure continuity in the committee's work.

The Bylaws do not provide for a vice chair this. WAC is an ALA committee (as distinct from a committee of Council; these are treated elsewhere in the Bylaws) and therefore appointments to WAC, including its chair, are governed by these sections of Article VIII of the Bylaws:

Sec. 6. The committee membership year shall be the same as the conference year. Not less than two weeks prior to the midwinter meeting the president-elect shall report to the Executive Board for the Committee on Appointments. At a meeting prior to or during the midwinter meeting of the Council, the Executive Board shall consider the nominations and make its decisions as to appointments.

Sec. 7. (a) The Executive Board shall designate the chair of each committee annually except for the committees of council, which chairs are designated as set out in Article VIII, Sec. 2(b) of the Bylaws.

ACRL has recently been experimenting with a vice chair for its committees. Its practice bears watching to help judge its feasibility for ALA.

COO conferred with Eli Mina, ALA's parliamentarian. He recommended that rather than propose changes to the Bylaws to accommodate a single committee, an informal experiment to create a vice chair for WAC would be preferable. The COO chair broached this option to Molly Raphael, ALA president-elect, and Aaron Dobbs, WAC chair. They have agreed to develop a vice chair experiment in WAC during 2011-12 and to document and assess this experiment.

COO recommends no action at this time.

3. COO discussed a report on recent and future enhancements to ALA Connect.
4. COO discussed a proposal from the Committee on Training, Orientation, and Leadership Development (TOLD) a document clarifying the committee internship program. TOLD will bring this to Council as an action item.
5. COO discussed plans to develop a questionnaire for ALA and Council committee chairs about the sort of activities they can do outside of face-to-face meetings. Results of this survey can help COO examine options for committee service that support the 2015 strategic plan goal that:  

ALA provides an environment in which all members, regardless of location or position, have the opportunity to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from engagement in their association.

---

Respectfully submitted, January 9, 2011

James Rettig, chair  
Sandra M. Barstow  
Kathleen E. Bethel  
Cynthia N. Cobb  
Christopher J. Cronin  
John C. DeSantis  
Gail K. Dickinson  
Peter D. Hepburn  
Margaret Anne Oettinger  
Jan W. Sanders  
Dora U. Sims

2010-2011 ALA CD#27.1  
2011 ALA Midwinter Meeting

COMMITTEE ON ORGANIZATION  
ACTION/INFORMATION REPORTING FORM  
DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING FORM TO COO: December 30, 2010

TO:    X    ALA Committee on Organization  
      \_\_\_ ALA-APA Committee on Organization  
      *(Please check one of the above committees)*

DATE: December 28, 2010

RE:     *The ALA-AAP Joint Committee*

**ACTION REQUEST/INFORMATION/REPORT:**

*Discontinue the ALA-AAP Joint Committee in favor of a more workable system of maintaining an important ongoing inter-association relationship.*

**CONTACT PERSON:** *(Name, telephone, and e-mail address):*

Keith Michael Fiels, ALA Executive Director  
800/545-2433, ext. 1392  
[kfiels@ala.org](mailto:kfiels@ala.org)

**COMMITTEE/UNITS AFFECTED:**

ALA-AAP Joint Committee, Executive Director, ALA Officers

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:**

Keith Michael Fiels, ALA Executive Director  
Roberta Stevens, ALA President

**CONTACT PERSONS FROM EACH AFFECTED UNIT/COMMITTEE:** *(Name, telephone, and e-mail address):*

Keith Michael Fiels, ALA Executive Director  
800/545-2433, ext. 1392  
[kfiels@ala.org](mailto:kfiels@ala.org)

**BACKGROUND:**

*(Provide a brief background summary of what is being presented. Include reason for action as well as a summary of known arguments for and against, if any).*

**Purpose:** It is important for librarians and publishers to maintain a healthy dialog. The American Library Association and the Association of American Publishers, respectively, are the most important groups representing these two sectors. The two associations have a number of important areas of common interest. On some issues they hold very similar positions (e.g., intellectual freedom, the freedom to read, literacy). On others they hold differing views (e.g., copyright). Whether an issue presents opportunities for inter-association collaboration or the potential for disagreement, it is important to maintain open and regular communication between

the two organizations. The ALA Washington Office regularly interacts with AAP staff, as does the Office for Intellectual Freedom, ALSC, ALCTS and others.

**Purpose and History:** The American Library Association and American Association of Publishers have had various joint committees working on individual projects for many for many decades. In 1975, the current Joint Committee was established to provide an ongoing formal channel for communication between the two associations on “matters not covered by or in the province of activities of any single unit of ALA”.

Over time, the committee had become inactive. In 2006, Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels attempted to revive the group when it came to his attention that the AAP had not been making appointments to the Joint Committee and that meetings had not been held for as many years as anyone could remember. Meetings were held in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009, all in conjunction with ALA’s spring Legislative Day. During this period, AAP has not made formal appointments to the Joint Committee, but has relied on individuals available depending on the scheduling of the meeting.

Since 2006, the committee’s ALA membership has been chaired annually by ALA’s immediate past president. The rationale for assigning this responsibility to the immediate past president has been:

- The immediate past president is well versed in the principal issues of interest to librarians and publishers
- The president’s responsibilities are more than enough to keep her/him busy throughout the presidential year

**Challenges:** The committee’s ALA complement is composed of the “president, immediate past president, treasurer and two members at large.” By practice rather than policy, the ALA members have been appointed from the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. This is based on the pragmatic consideration that the AAP has an office in Washington (it is headquartered in New York), the committee has no budget, and its single annual meeting has since 2006 been held in conjunction with the ALA Legislative Day in the spring. The AAP has been represented by its president, a full-time paid position, as distinct from the one-year elected ALA’s president (ALA’s counterpart to AAP’s president is our executive director). It has not always been possible to schedule a meeting with the AAP president in conjunction with the ALA Legislative Day due to conflicts with his or her schedule.

Finding a date and location when the ALA president, immediate past president, treasurer, executive director, other ALA members on the joint committee and the AAP president can meet has proven to be impossible in practice. As noted above, prior to 2006 the committee had not met for quite some time for this reason.

**Cultural and structural differences:** ALA and AAP are both membership associations. However they differ in a fundamental way—the overwhelming majority of ALA members are individuals; all members of the AAP are organizations (i.e., publishing companies). This accounts for ALA’s perennial practice of appointing personal members to this committee. The AAP does not have a similar practice nor a ready mechanism to appoint individuals to a joint committee with

an external organization. In fact, appointments have not been made by AAP to the committee for many years.

**Accommodation of realities:** In recent years Keith Michael Fiels has brokered an annual meeting with ALA's immediate past president, the AAP president, those ALA at large members who were available, and other representatives from AAP who were available on an ad hoc basis. In 2010 ALA did not hold its Legislative Day in May; instead it was folded into the Annual Conference in Washington. As an alternative, Mr. Fiels arranged a meeting with AAP president Tom Allen and immediate past president James Rettig in early June at the AAP's office in DC.

**Ongoing nature of interaction:** Because the committee meets only once a year at best, and AAP representatives may vary, there is no continuity whatsoever from year to year. Ongoing interactions have been between ALA Offices and AAP staff, and have been based on specific projects involving intellectual freedom challenges, book awards, cataloging and copyright matters. These projects have all been handled effectively at the Committee level, are most appropriately within the Council-designated policy areas of specific Committees, and are not well suited to a once a year meeting cycle. This means that the meetings have consisted primarily of informal reports on projects, information that is readily available online. The meeting has not yielded a significant return on the investment given the logistic challenges involved in attempting to schedule it. Nor have we been able to identify any significant matters "not covered by or in the province of activities of any single unit of ALA." Existing Committee level relationships are far more productive.

**Proposal:** It remains important to maintain a healthy ongoing communication channel between ALA and the AAP. The joint committee structure has proved problematic at best. It also remains important to have ALA member representation as a part of this communication channel. In recognition of the history of this joint committee and acknowledging that a committee consisting on the one hand of a group of ALA members and on the other hand the president of another association has been neither practical nor effective, it is recommended that:

- The ALA-APA Joint Committee as constituted be abolished
- The ALA executive director and immediate past president be charged with maintaining ongoing communication with the AAP, including at least one annual face-to-face meeting
- A brief written report of this meeting be provided to the Executive Board and Council
- Should a matter emerge requiring immediate attention, the ALA President can quickly appoint an ad hoc Task Force to work with AAP on the matter on a project basis. The composition of any such group can be tailored to the circumstances.
- Advantage be taken of any other opportunities that may arise for interaction between the ALA president, other officers and AAP leadership.
- Ongoing communication be maintained through email, telephone conversations and other venues involving various sectors of the publishing industry.

**Implementation:** The current ALA president-elect has withheld making appointments to this joint committee pending the outcome of this requested action. There is a minor fiscal implication to this proposal; where a meeting cannot be arranged in conjunction with another ALA meeting, the executive director would support the immediate past president's travel expenses, which are projected to be minimal.