

**2010-2011 ALA CD#40**  
**2011 ALA Midwinter Meeting**

**Committee on Membership Meetings Report**  
by Loida Garcia-Febo, Chair

Dear colleagues, as per ALA Policy 7.4.10, the charge of the Committee on Membership Meetings includes points such as plan the agenda for the membership meetings, identify potential discussion topics for the meetings, advise staff on logistics for membership meetings, assess the effectiveness of the membership meetings in addressing the ALA membership's needs; and recommend changes in light of that assessment.

During the past months I have worked with a dedicated group to discuss and plan our next annual membership meetings in New Orleans. The Committee also worked with a Subcommittee I created to collaborate with new librarians. That type of exchange, between new and seasoned colleagues, helped us to become aware of how members from different demographic groups and at various stages of their career see the membership meetings.

The Committee held three online meetings via ALA Connect. During these conversations, a number of us noted that at times it was challenging to attract a quorum to the membership meetings. For instance, from ALA more than 61,000 members, about 25,000 attend the conference. Still our committee work very hard to meet the quorum of 75 members attending the membership meetings. Most of the reasons discussed took us to the fact that increasingly, a number of members are not attending the conference itself. Other reasons included many parallel programs, some members felt no connection with the topics and the type of speakers presented at the membership meetings, and other members didn't know these meetings took place. To sum it up, it was evident that to move forward with the membership meetings which are specified in ALA Policy, ALA needs to completely rethink everything that it has done regarding these meetings. We need to try something new.

Based on our discussions, during the past months, the committee has looked into piloting a virtual membership meeting during the annual conference in New Orleans. This would help us to reach out to ALA members that do not attend the annual conference. We have discussed our ideas with Roberta Stevens and Keith Michael Fiels, and understand that the ALA Executive Board see the value of such effort. The Committee crafted a membership survey to find out what the ALA members think about the membership meetings, who they would like to see as speakers, would they attend a virtual membership meeting?, if so, when would be a good time. We should post it shortly after the conclusion of the Midwinter Conference. We are working with Lois Ann Gregory-Wood and John Chrastka to disseminate the survey via a news release, American Libraries Online, ALA Facebook and Twitter, and a blast email to the membership.

Thanks for your support to move forward with ALA membership meetings.