ALA Executive Board
Fall 2011

TOPIC: **2011 Task Force Reports: Common Threads**

ACTION REQUESTED: Discussion

DRAFT MOTION: na

REQUESTED BY: Keith Michael Fiels, Executive Director
                              Mary W. Ghikas, Senior Association Executive Director

DATE: 5 October 2011

BACKGROUND:

Four task force reports presented to the ALA Executive Board and/or ALA Council at the
2011 Annual Conference contained "common threads": recommendations related to
ALA Membership, ALA Conferences and ALA Elections. To understand underlying
concerns as well as specific recommendations, it was useful to look at these "threads"
together, rather than as separate reports. Other recommendations – for example, those
related to governance structures – are not directly addressed here.

The attached spreadsheet indicates the recommendation and source task force, places the
economic impact of implementation in a range (from minimal to high), and provides a
status update and/or implementation recommendation. The document was prepared in
consultation with and with the significant assistance of Cathleen Bourdon (ALA
Membership), Joanne Kempf (ALA Elections), the ALA Conference Services staff (ALA
Conferences) and both staff and members engaged in conference planning. The report is
based on substantial ongoing work. The section on ALA Conferences was further
informed by responses to four post-conference surveys.

Related documents:

2010-2011 EBD#10.3, Young Professionals Task Force Report
2010-2011 ALA CD #45, Report of the Presidential Task Force for Improving the
Effectiveness of ALA's Council
2010-2011 EBD#10.4, Report of the Chapter Relations Task Force
2010-2011 EBD#10.6, Future Perfect Presidential Task Force

Four reports submitted to the ALA Executive Board and/or ALA Council at the 2011 Annual Conference included recommendations related to (a) ALA membership, (b) ALA conferences, and (c) ALA elections. The following report brings together these common threads from the following reports: (1) Young Professional Task Force Report [2010-2011 EBD#10.3], (2) Report of the Presidential Task Force for Improving the Effectiveness of ALA's Council [2010-2011 ALA CD#45], (3) Report of the Chapter Relations Task Force [2010-2011 EBD#10.4], and (4) Future Perfect Presidential Task Force [2010-2011 EBD#10.6].   In each case, _only_ those recommendations related to ALA membership, conferences and elections are included below.

To the extent possible, the magnitude of budget impact is indicated below. 0=minimal cost; 1=moderate cost; 2=high cost

#	Task Force/Recommendation	Budget Impact	Status
MEMBERSHIP RELATED			
YP M1	Investigate ways to track & publicize retention rates for young librarians, at the ALA level as well as within divisions and round tables,	1	ALA tracks overall retention rate. ALA has collected member demographic information on a voluntary basis since 2005. It is possible to begin reporting retention rates by age groupings.
YP M2	Continue working on ways for members to select e-publications instead of print, through a renewal form or new member registration form.	1-2	After some program adjustments, it would be possible for members to indicate their preference for e-publications. Although this has "green" implications, it would not necessarily have a positive financial impact because advertising revenue could be reduced.
YP M3	Continue to explore ways for ALA to partner with state and regional chapters for discounted dual membership, heightening the value of membership and streamlining the dues process.	1-2	ALA offers joint membership programs for students and support staff: 19 chapters participate in the joint student program and 6 in the support staff program. A proposal for joint trustee membership will be considered by BARC and the Executive Board this fall. In considering a joint program for regular members, the issues are on the chapter side (salary-tied dues structures).
YP LIS 4	Investigate the feasibility of expanding student membership discounts to cover new grads (newly hired or non-salaried) up to 3 years, with the goal of prolonging and strengthening an individual's association with ALA.	1-2	The student rate is currently available for 5 years. In FY2010, 1,143 students moved from paying student dues ($35) to paying 1st year regular dues ($65). This amounted to $74,295. If they had continued to receive the student rate, they would have paid $40,005, a reduction of $34,390. The rate for non-salaried and individuals earning under $25,000 ($46) is not time-limited.

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	MEMBERSHIP RELATED		
YP Future	Creation of a subgroup of the Membership Committee to work with ALA, its divisions, round tables and other units and expand on the work that has been done over the past several years.	0	The ALA Membership Committee discussed the recommendation at the 2011 Annual Conference but did not take any action. Discussion is continuing this fall.
CR CEB 6	Investigate (and establish, if possible) additional joint membership options for ALA and Chapters.	1-2	ALA offers joint membership programs for students and support staff: 19 chapters participate in the joint student program and 6 in the support staff program. A proposal for joint trustee membership will be considered by BARC and the Executive Board this fall. In considering a joint program for regular members, the issues are on the chapter side (salary-tied dues structures).
CR CEB 7	Investigate (and establish, if feasible) joint purchasing opportunities for ALA and Chapters, i.e. membership software; website hosting; electronic meeting capabilities, etc.	1-2	Beginning investigation into joint purchasing opportunities and other shared service support for Chapters.
CR CRC 8	In consultation with the ALA Chapter Relations Office, develop / initiate a plan for ALA outreach to all Student Chapters.	0	Through Student Chapters Facebook Page will begin promotion of the importance of Chapter membership to students and promote Chapter leader presentations at ALA Student Chapter programs.

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	CONFERENCE RELATED		
YP C 1	Create a custom set of links to the ALA Conference Planner highlighting sessions of interest to young professionals.	1	This will be done beginning with FY2012 conferences, through the ALA Connect Scheduler.
YP C 2	Create session type descriptions that highlight the unique characteristics of the types of sessions that happen and provide specific guidance targeted at young professionals on how to participate in each type.	1	This can be done. It will require modification to the data entry form/process currently used by ALA Conference Services, to provide a drop-down list of session characteristics to enable consistent entry by staff & members across the Association. This could delay implementation to MW2013. Conference Services & ITTS are currently moving forward to develop an implementation strategy.
YP C 2.1	Encourage YPs to attend discussion and interest groups.	0	Since 2010, staff have compiled lists of discussion/interest groups meeting at the Annual Conference and (primarily) the Midwinter Meeting, in order to encourage participation in such groups. The Conference Communications Committee will explore ways to more effectively reach members likely to be interested in various groups.
YP C 3	Explore the benefits and options available for those who disclose "First Time Attendee" status on the ALA Conference registration form.	1-2	Based on feedback from first-time attendees at the 2007 Midwinter Meeting (Seattle), Conference Communications Committee, ALA Membership Development and various ALA units worked together to develop an array of "ALA101" programs, aimed to easing the integration of first-time conference attendees into the active membership. The ALA Ambassadors program was developed, giving experienced conference-goers an opportunity to mentor first-timers. ALA Membership Development has also sent out a special "welcome" letter to first-time attendees. First-time attendees are asked to self-identify at registration and "first-time attendee" ribbons are available at check-in (Registration desk).

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			√ A "dine-around" will be implemented (effective Midwinter 2012) to facilitate the formation of social groups. Experienced conference goers will be recruited as "table captains" and restaurant/group signups will be facilitated on ALA Connect. √ A special lounge area (similar to the International Attendee Lounge) in the convention center will be established (effective Annual 2012), with admittance open to those wearing the "first time attendee" ribbon. Conference Services will work with the ALA Conference Committee to explore ways to use this space to enhance the first-time attendee experience.
YP C 4	Investigate ways to highlight and promote a variety of session types that happen at the conference, particularly structured networking events, social events, discussion groups, lightning rounds and unconference events in the same way general sessions and traditional speakers. (see YP C 2)	1	Since 2010, there has been increased focus in "What's Happening" on informal events. Informal events were included in the ALA Connect Scheduler, beginning Annual 2011. Conference Services is examining ways to both "rationalize" the utilization of physical space at conferences and highlight alternative formats. Among the "dedicated" highlight spaces being explored are the following: √ "Book Buzz Room" to bring together (sequentially) in a single space the various "book buzz" events currently being offered. √ A "lightning round" space -- optimized for "short format" programming such as IGNITE!, Pecha Kucha, Battledecks and similar formats. Conference Services will also explore with the ALA Conference Committee a direct solicitation for juried short-form programs.

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			√ Since 2009, ALA has included an Unconference. Beginning in 2010, it has included a flexible space usable for last-minute group discussions or presentations -- the Uncommons. Based on feedback from members, a "rolling unconference" is currently under consideration, which would bring these two concepts together in a potentially more effective manner. There is an active discussion of various concepts in the ALA Connect member group Library Camp.
YP C 5	Solicit moderators for structured networking events (e.g., speed networking sessions, dine-arounds, socials that include icebreakers).	1	See #20. A number of ALA groups (e.g. ALSC, YALSA) currently sponsor speed networking or other icebreaker events. ALA Conference Services will work with the ALA Conference Committee and various ALA units to bring together information about these sessions.
YP C 6	Conference Programming Committee could consider more lightning rounds, Pecha Kucha, and other types of alternative presentation that allow for shorter lead time.	0	ALA Annual currently includes the ALA Unconference (2009-), Uncommons (2010-), Battledecks (2010-), Pecha Kucha and/or Ignite sessions (DIVs, e.g. YALSA) See #21. There is current consideration of an "unconference" at Midwinter.
YP UV1	Make it easier to be a virtual committee member. *[NOTE: The following item, not included among final recommendations, represents an area that has been the subject of other reports and an update is, therefore, included here.]*	1-2	At the 2011 Annual, ALA Conference Services made "Skype kits" available on a trial basis. ("Skype kits" included everything needed to "skype-in" a committee member -- except the Skype subscription -- e.g. laptop, mic, speaker). Kits could be checked out and returned by committee chairs or staff. Conference Services is currently evaluating the experience of groups that used these kits in New Orleans.
		1-2	√ The Medical Library Association uses "air cards" to facilitate participation in committee by absent members. ALA Conference Services is currently exploring that option.

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		1-2	While funadmental busines models in major conference hotels will not change rapidly, they will ultimately change. Until then, wireless access is meeting space in conference hotels will remain costly. ALA Conference Services is currently exploring a number of contractual options -- short of "buying out" hotel wireless access.
		1-2	√ In particular, ALA Conference Services will explore the cost of setting up 1-2 rooms in the headquarters hotel (only) for "virtual" access. This will control cost -- but will also ration the number of such meetings.
			√ It is notable that many post-conference survey comments indicated there need to be fewer "meetings" at conference, allowing attendees to attend programs, discussion groups and other events.
3.3 Imp 2	The Council chamber be equipped with a round table able to accommodate four to six Council members. If he or she chooses, the author of a resolution requiring revision, along with recruits and/or volunteers, can use this table to discuss and rewrite the resolution so that it can come back to the Council floor through the motion to resume consideration and a motion to amend by substitution. *[This conference-related recommendation was part of the Council Effectiveness TF report and is included here for convenience.]*	0	ALA Conference Services will include this in the "set up" for the Council space, effective with the 2012 ALA Midwinter Meeting.
CR CRC 2	Develop and present a program on issues relevant to Chapters at least once each Committee year either at Midwinter and/or Annual.	0	ALA Conference Services will work with ALA Chapter Relations and appropriate member groups to facilitate this.

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FP CONF 1	ALA should provide more options for virtual conference attendance by taking advantage of contemporary communications technology. (p5)	2	(1) Beginning in 2009, ALA has offered an annual Virtual Conference. Starting in 2010, the Virtual Conference was shifted away from the Annual Conference dates, based on (a) ALA's dominant weekend schedule and (b) contention for speaker time. In 2011, there were 249 individual and 58 group registrations for the Virtual Conference. The Virtual Conference featured a mix of both new content (content *not* presented at the 2011 Annual) and repeat content from the 2011 Annual presented "live" to the virtual audience. A modest registration ($69/individual; $300/group) was charged for live/interactive participation. Average participation during the course of the Virtual Conference was 600. The Virtual Conference archive is available for one-year to <u>both</u> Annual Conference and Virtual Conference attendees. Based on 2011 feedback, ALA Conference Services is currently exploring several changes, which will be recommended to the ALA Conference Committee: √ A shift from a single-track to a two-track Virtual Conference, with common "keynotes." √ A shift to primarily "new" content -- content not offered at the Annual Conference, which opens up a presentation opportunity also to those unable to attend the physical conference. √ Providing an option to ALA Annual Conference attendees to add-on "live" participation in the Virtual Conference for a minimal cost-recovery fee. (2) By late September 2011, ALA Conference Services expects to have a plan to capture on-site program content at the ALA Annual Conference, beginning in <u>2013</u>. Using a model common to many associations, "free" access to a limited number of sessions would be built into the ALA Annual Conference registration, with access to the full archive available at a reasonable cost. Access to non-registrants would be available for purchase at a reasonable price.

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FP CONF 2	Live video and audio streaming, and archives of all conference sessions, should be provided for free.	2	See #30. While "free" access is not feasible, given the substantial cost to capture and archive a large volume of content professionally (est. $225,000), ALA Conference Services is currently exploring various ways to balance "free" access and reasonably-priced access. One likely scenario: (a) provide "free" member access to a limited number of selected sessions (based on available "rights") -- e.g. an Opening General Session speaker; (b) provide "free" access to registrants to a limited package of conference sessions, with (c) reasonably priced (discounted) access by registrants to the larger body of recorded sessions; and (d) reasonably priced (not discounted) access by non-registrants to recorded sessions.
FP CONF 3	Host conferences in additional cities and sites.	2	Given the requirements of exhibit space + meeting rooms + sleeping rooms, ALA can utilize a narrow "range" of sites. ALA Conference Services routinely monitors convention center and hotel construction in cities across the country, as well as other changes (e.g., changes in airline hubs) that affect conference city performance. Based on such changes, new sites are inserted into the future schedule, e.g. a future Midwinter in Indiannapolis, a future Annual in San Diego. ALA also selects sites 10+ years in advance of conference dates, making change slow. ALA Conference Services is currently preparing a list of all possible sites, with their specific characteristics, for discussion with the Exhibits Round Table executive committee and ALA Conference Committee. (See also #26, ALA Meetups at Chapter conferences)

#	Task Force/Recommendation	Budget Impact	Status
	Election Related		
YP EL 1	Create a searchable, sortable document or database of all candidates in ALA Elections and distribute widely among the membership annually.	1-2	This is currently being pursued; a cost estimate is still pending. The plan is to (a) create a searchable database and (b) make it available from the "ALA Election" pod on the homepage (ala.org). A straight text (i.e., "candidate booklet") would also be available from the home page. The "ALA Election" site will go live approximately 2 weeks prior to the opening of the voting period (estimate March 1).
YP EL 2	Strongly encourage all candidates to provide links to personal or professional profiles along with their candidate statements.	0	The ALA Executive Office will send a message to all 2012 ALA candidates (officers, Council).
YP EL 3	Increase communication about elections, possibly creating a simple guide to clarify elected positions and election processes for voters.	1	The ALA Executive Offfice will create an enhanced ALA Election information site, including candidate information, the election schedule, job descriptions and FAQs. Such a site currently exists, but will be expanded and made more findable.
YP EL 4	Investigate the possibility of adopting a new elections software program that facilitates equal exposure for all candidates by providing candidate information in a user-friendly, searchable format. (see YP EL 1)	1-2	The current electronic ballot randomizes the sequence of the Council ballot. Different people see the Council ballot in a different sequence -- to eliminate any bias for the top, bottom or middle of the list.

#	Task Force/Recommendation	Budget Impact	Status
	Election Related		
FP GOV 2	Offer more ballot measures and provide more frequent voting opportunities.	2	While offering a formal ballot process multiple times/year would have significant fnancial implications, it is possible to use the "polling" feature in ALA Connect to enable members to indicate their positions on emerging issues, directions, etc. There is an "ALA Member" group in Connect, including the polling feature.
FP EL 1	Reconfigure and divide the ballot (see YP EL1)	1-2	Separation of the ALA Officer (president-elect, treasurer) ballot from the ALA Council ballot is recommended. A cost estimate is pending.
EL 1 Imp 2	Provide a separate ballot, at a different time of the year or at the beginning of voting cycle, that is to be used only for electing the President and other officers. *[NOTE: While this was not included in the final recommendations, it is reflective of the overall discontent with the perceived length and complexity of the Council ballot. It would be possible to present the officer (president, treasurer) and Council candidates in two separate ALA ballots.]*	1	See response to FP EL 1. Separation of the ALA Officer ballot from the Council ballot is proposed. All ballots would be distributed simultaneously -- as at present. A member would, however, have the option to vote the ALA Officer ballot and not vote the Council ballot.
FP EL 2	Merge Council and the Executive Board, enabling members to research and connect with candidates and their platforms.	2	This would require amendment of the ALA Constitution and Bylaws. Note that direct election of ALA Executive Board members has previously been raised -- and defeated -- in membership meetings.
FP EL 3	Increase the amount of publicity devoted to "getting the word out" about voting and its importance in relation to the future of the organization.	1	(a) The ALA Executive Office will work with AL Direct to expand visibility. (b) Staff will develop a "Council FAQ" to help members understand the role and operation of ALA Council.