

TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: ALA and Council Committee Reporting

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:

For information purposes. No actions requested.

ACTION REQUESTED BY:

N/A

CONTACT PERSON:

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DRAFT OF MOTION:

N/A

DATE:

April 2, 2014

ATTACHMENTS:

1. ALA & Council Committee Reporting—Potential Actions
2. Committee Reports Record 2012-2014

Attachment 1: ALA & Council Committee Reporting—Potential Actions

Prepared for the ALA Executive Board, April 2014

by Jim Rettig, Chair of the Committee on Organization (COO)

Background

At the 2013 Annual Conference the COO report included the following:

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.

COO’s concern was not whether or not committees file a report such as the CIU which functioned largely as committee member attendance sheet at meetings at the Annual Conference and Midwinter

Meeting. Rather, COO was concerned that reporting communicate substance about each committee's work and its contribution to execution of ALA's mission. In a voluntary membership organization for which members pay dues, it is reasonable for members to expect access to information about how various parts of the organization serve them. In the absence of substantive intermittent reports, members cannot know that. Hence COO's concern about this issue.

COO Actions at the 2014 Midwinter Meeting

During its discussions at the 2014 Midwinter Meeting COO identified two courses of action that it concluded will strengthen communication by ALA and Council committees. It seeks the ALA Executive Board's counsel on both of them.

#1: Incorporating the importance of communication into EB liaison visits:

The first recommends that the effective EB liaison program to committees make it a routine part of the EB members' message to committees that communication from each committee is important.

The ALA Executive Board has a robust liaison program with every ALA and Council committee. As Board members' schedules permit, they make a face-to-face visit to the committees for which they have liaison responsibility. These visits offer an opportunity to explain to committees the importance of communication and the expectation that they submit reports about their work two times a year. EB liaisons could communicate this when, as is routine, they email the Board "talking points" document to the committee chair. A brief document explaining the sorts of things a report can address and how to submit their reports could accompany that. (The COO chair is very willing draft a brief, less-than-a-page document for that purpose.) A paper copy can also be shared during those visits to committees.

#2: When to implement the procedure that COO developed to respond to a committee that consistently fails to communicate

The second issue is when COO should begin to implement a procedure it developed at Midwinter 2014 and during subsequent discussion. Since this is procedure rather than policy, it was not presented to Council for Council's action. It was shared with Council several weeks after Midwinter. The procedure is explained in the boxed text below:

COO's Response Plan when a Committee Has Not Communicated for a Period of Two Years:

If a committee fails to submit reports about its work for a period of two years, the COO chair will write to the committee's chair. The purpose of that communication will be to:

- A. Reiterate the importance of communication so that members can know what the Association's committees are doing on their behalf.
- B. Explain that during the previous two years it appears that the committee has not fulfilled its responsibility to communicate about its work.
- C. Explain that this absence of communication raises questions about whether or not the committee has been active, whether or not it is contributing to the ALA's mission, and whether or not the committee is needed any longer.
- D. Notify the committee chair that the two-year period of lack of communication from the committee has prompted a review of the committee by the Committee on Organization.
- E. Explain that the committee must submit to COO, via the COO chair, a report explaining:
 - a. What the committee has done during the previous two years

- b. How its work aligns with ALA's mission and strategic plan
- c. Whether or not its charge should be updated, and if so, how
- d. What the committee's agenda is for the next six months
- e. This report should be submitted no later than thirty days prior to the start of the next Annual Conference or Midwinter Meeting, whichever comes first. This will allow COO to review the report and respond to the committee no later than two weeks prior to that Annual Conference or Midwinter Meeting.

COO will review that report. If COO concludes that the report does not provide evidence that the committee is active and is doing work aligned with ALA's mission and strategic plan, COO will offer the committee chair (or another designated member of the committee) the opportunity to meet with COO face-to-face at the next Annual Conference or Midwinter Meeting (whichever comes first).

If the committee chair chooses not to meet with COO or if the committee chair meets with COO but COO concludes

- that the committee has not been active during the two-year period, or
- that it does not do work aligned with ALA's mission and strategic plan or does not have a work plan aligned with ALA mission and goals

COO will decide whether or not it should make a recommendation to the ALA Council to discontinue the committee. After Council considers and votes on that recommendation, the COO chair will report the results of its review and Council's action to the committee's chair.

A recommendation to Council to discontinue a committee is authorized in COO's charge:

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.

Except for the absence of reports associated with the 2012 Annual Conference, we now have a record of committee reporting covering more two full years. That record is an appendix to this document. (The gap for the 2012 Annual Conference is attributable to turnover in the Governance Office that year.) That record shows an overall pattern of improved communication, especially this year. It also shows (with the caveat that behavior might have been different in mid-2012) that some committees have been silent since at least Midwinter 2012. Those committees are:

- American Libraries Advisory Committee*
- Diversity Committee*
- Information Technology Policy Advisory Committee*
- Literacy Committee*
- Rural, Native, and Tribal Libraries of All Kinds Committee*

The ALA-Children’s Book Council has also been delinquent; however since it is a joint committee with an external organization, it is not clear how ALA practices and, or even should, apply to it.

COO would appreciate the Executive Board’s counsel on when it should initiate the process described above for the *American Libraries* Advisory, Diversity, Information Technology Policy Advisory, Literacy, and Rural, Native, and Tribal Libraries of All Kinds Committees. There is sufficient time between the conclusion of the spring 2014 Executive Board meeting and the 2014 Annual Conference to carry out and complete this process. The other option is to wait until after the Annual Conference and at that time examine reporting behavior from two continuous years and then, if any of these committees has remained silent that entire period, initiate the process well in advance of the 2015 Midwinter Meeting.

Because of the nature and scheduling of their work, several committees—the Nominating Committee, the Election Committee, the Membership Meetings Committee—generally have occasion provide a substantive report only once a year. The appendix simplifies this by indicating they have reported at both Midwinter and the Annual Conference.

Attachment 2: ALA Committee, Council Committee, and Joint Committee Reports

This table notes which committees submitted a report to the ALA Governance Office or to Council at or in conjunction with the Midwinter Meeting or Annual Conference. Reports are available through links posted at http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/council/cmte_info_report

ALA and Council Committees	MW12	AC12	MW13	AC13	MW14
Accreditation	Y	RECORD NOT AVAILABLE FOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2012	Y	Y	Y
American Libraries Advisory	N		N	N	N
Appointments	Y		Y	Y	Y
Awards	Y		N	N	Y
Budget Analysis and Review	Y		Y	Y	Y
Chapter Relations	N		N	N	Y
Conference	N		Y	N	N
Constitution and Bylaws	Y		Y	Y	N
Council Orientation	N		Y	N	N
Diversity	N		N	N	N
Education	N		N	Y	Y
Election	Y		Y	Y	Y
Human Resource Development and Recruitment Advisory	N		Y	Y	N
Information Technology Policy Advisory	N		N	N	N
Intellectual Freedom	Y		Y	Y	Y
International Relations	Y		Y	Y	Y
Legislation	Y		Y	Y	Y
Library Advocacy	N		N	N	Y
Literacy	N		N	N	N
Literacy and Outreach Services Advisory	N		Y	Y	Y
Membership	N	N	Y	Y	
Membership Meetings	Y	N	N	Y	
Nominating Committee	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Organization	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Policy Monitoring	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Professional Ethics	N	Y	Y	Y	
Public and Cultural Programs Advisory	Y	Y	Y	Y	

ALA Committee, Council Committee, and Joint Committee Reports

Public Awareness	Y		N	Y	Y
Publishing	N		N	Y	N
Research and Statistics	N		N	N	Y
Resolutions	N		Y	Y	N
Rural, Native, and Tribal Libraries of All Kinds	N		N	N	N
Scholarships and Study Grants	N		Y	Y	Y
Status of Women in Librarianship	Y		N	N	Y
Training, Orientation, and Leadership Development	Y		Y	Y	Y
Website Advisory	N		N	N	Y
Joint Committees					
ALA–Children’s Book Council	N		N	N	N
ALA/SAA/AAM– American Library Association Society of American Archivists American Association of Museums	N		N	N	Y