

TO: ALA Executive Board and Council

RE: Report of the Nominating Committee for the 2015 ALA Election

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:

Information only.

ACTION REQUESTED BY:

Nominating Committee for the 2015 ALA Election:

Teri R. Switzer, Chair
Sonia Alcantara-Antoine
Jennifer Baxmeyer
Peter Bromberg
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DRAFT OF MOTION:

N/A

DATE: Oct. 3, 2014

BACKGROUND:

The Committee began its work at the 2014 ALA Midwinter Meeting, and reviewed the Committee process with a member of the previous nominating committee, Nick Buron. JoAnne Kempf, Director, ALA Governance Office, assisted with the process review, and distributed key documents to each committee member, including the committee roster, job descriptions for ALA President and Councilor, Nominating Committee Guidelines, campaign guidelines, Council Resolution from 1997 about the timeframe for the presidential election along with the timeline itself as well as an election schedule, relevant ALA bylaws, a sample potential candidate biographical information form, sample committee correspondence to potential candidates, sample publicity documents, FAQ information from the ALA website, and a roster of current

Council members. This packet was invaluable in gaining an understanding of the nomination and election process. JoAnne also set up a private group on ALA Connect and arranged for countless conference calls, which were necessary in order to complete our charge in a confidential manner.

During the meetings at Midwinter 2014, the Committee conducted an inventory of chapter, caucus, affiliate, division and other unit connections maintained by each Committee member, and agreed to use these networks to seek a broad and diverse pool of candidates. During the 2014 Midwinter Meeting and at our meeting during the Annual Conference 2014, we developed a strategy for our work with the goal of being as inclusive as possible. This strategy included contacting several current and former ALA Presidents; reaching out to the full range of ALA groups with committee contacts and formal ALA announcements; ensuring that we reach out to ethnic caucuses and other groups such as Emerging Leaders and Spectrum Scholars to include diverse and younger nominees. We discussed the critical importance of maintaining confidentiality throughout the process.

The Work of the Committee

The Committee began making initial contacts with potential President and Council candidates after the 2014 Midwinter Meetings. Beginning with the preparation of a master spreadsheet of names of possible candidates, the Committee continually added potential names to the list. Many names were recommended by members of the committee; others were from recommendations of such sources as Emerging Leaders; Spectrum Scholars; Executive Board members and other member leaders; recommendations from division, roundtable, and caucus (including ethnic caucuses) leadership; recommendations from former ALA Presidents; Council and presidential candidates who had not been successful, among others.

JoAnne worked within ALA to distribute the call for nominations on the ALA website, and throughout all ALA divisions and units, posting the call for nominations in ALA publications. JoAnne also sent emails to all those who unsuccessfully ran for Council in the recent election, encouraging them to run again. Current councilors whose terms will expire in 2015 were also contacted and encouraged to run again. The call for nominations appeared in the May issues of *American Libraries* and in *AL Direct*.

We had numerous conference calls between the Midwinter Meeting and the Annual Conference to discuss the work of each Committee member, and to review names of people on the spreadsheet known to committee members. During the annual conference, we met once and received flyers that JoAnne had printed for the Committee to distribute to potential candidates. Committee members were active in promoting the nomination process, soliciting names from member leaders, communicating with potential nominees in person, by phone, and by email, or using various ALA unit lists to communicate about the call for nominations. A great deal of time was spent vetting Presidential candidates.

After the Annual Conference, the Committee agreed to a schedule of weekly conference calls. During the calls, we reviewed the status of individuals on the potential candidate lists, and

discussed the qualifications of all candidates. For President, we contacted many individuals who had division and unit leadership experience, or who had served on an Executive Board.

We used the following document that was developed by the 2012 Nominating Committee and expanded by this Committee as a guide during our discussions about the qualifications and traits of potential President candidates. Throughout our work, we remained committed to presenting a slate of nominees who are independent thinkers, members who are committed to the Association and librarianship, who would carry on the great work of past ALA Presidents while moving the Association forward, and those who could advocate for libraries and library workers of all types.

TRAITS AND ATTRIBUTES OF ALA PRESIDENT-ELECT CANDIDATES

- Outstanding ability to speak publicly and deal with media/legislative interactions on the state, national and international levels
- Leadership, management and organizational skills particularly for leading Council and Executive Board; strong ability to build consensus
- Sees the broad ALA picture and has a thorough knowledge of all aspects of ALA, its governing bodies, units, and its procedures and goals
- Passionate about libraries, our profession and our values and ALA's mission
- Fiscal experience and knowledge of sizable budgets
- Someone who recognizes and voices the reality of our environments, circumstances, opportunities, and situations, and works toward moving the Association forward
- Willing and able to advocate for libraries of all types

The Slate for President and Council

After an unfruitful President nominee list, the Committee extended the application deadline twice. By the September 5th deadline, we were more comfortable with the list of 8 potential President candidates and the biographical form site was closed.

Putting together a slate for Councilor was somewhat easier. However, it was still important to the Committee that all library types were included and candidates were from all parts of the country. An analysis of the 67 Council candidates follows on the next page.

Type of Library	#
Academic Librarians	25
Public Librarians	27
School Librarians	8
Other (special, government, trustees, etc.)	7
Gender	
Male	20
Female	47
Geographic Distribution	
Northeast	22
Southeast	8
Midwest	17
West	20

Candidates came from the following 27 states, including the District of Columbia:

AR – 1	ME – 1
CA – 12	MI – 3
CO – 4	MO – 1
DC – 6	NC – 3
DE – 1	NJ – 2
FL – 1	NY – 4
GA – 2	OH – 2
IL – 3	OR – 2
IN – 4	TN – 3
KS – 1	VA – 2
KY – 1	WI – 2
LA – 1	WA – 1
MA – 1	WY - 1
MD – 4	

Closing Observations

As a whole, the Committee found our task to be very frustrating. We approached close to 45 very viable ALA members to consider being a President nominee. We recommend to future nominating committees that they “leave no stone unturned.” Even though past master files indicate that some people have been invited to submit their interest to be considered as a Presidential nominee, this just might be their year, even though the past 5 have not. We also recommend that future committees think outside the box and go beyond what normally are called the “usual suspects.” It certainly is not necessary for President nominees to have served on the ALA Executive Board or on ALA Council. Nor do they have to have been former division presidents or leaders. Nor does the ALA President have to have a graduate degree in Library and Information Science. Our Association has a very diverse membership and our Association leaders are very diverse. By keeping in mind the traits listed above, the field opens widely.

Reasons for declining were numerous, and were not unlike prior years, with the exception of the first four bullet points, which cause some concern:

- The campaigning process seems so grueling.
- I didn’t realize how political the campaigning process was until last year or why are divisions pitted against one another?
- Even with some financial support from ALA, I cannot afford to run a campaign that could cost me several thousand dollars.
- I do not have the staff at work who can help with my campaign.
- Not this year, but maybe in the future.
- Personal issues, retirement, family, etc.
- Just not interested, or do not have time.

Perhaps the campaigning process can be looked at with respect to financial commitment and the expectations of the campaign. Two people who were approached suggested that ALA move to the model some state library associations practice – that is to rotate years in which library types are represented. For example, this year could be the year for a public librarian, while next year will be the year for school librarians to be slated on the ballot. Although this may address the comment that some campaigns seem to pit divisions against one another, the Committee believes that the ALA President should be chosen on her or his individual merits and not because of the type of library represented, nor on whether that person is a degreed librarian or not. The ALA President represents ALL library types and ALL library workers, not only the library type that person is associated with.

With regards to the financial commitment, there are several ways nominees can approach this. The Committee suggests that the *Guidelines for Campaigning by Candidates for ALA Office* is revised to include a couple sentences added to the section on “Campaign Spending” that suggest different ways candidates can raise funds, such as having individual supporters sponsor receptions or other events to solicit donations, and to work with their home library or employer

to use their resources (web hosting, clerical help, photocopier, etc.) as a discount or possibly as a donation to the candidate's campaign.

The Committee thanks President Courtney Young for our appointments to this important committee. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to serve our Association. Finally, we would especially like to thank JoAnne Kempf for her tireless support, quick turnaround on all matters, and her never-ending good humor throughout the process.