TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: Election Process Task Force

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:
Approval of the recommendations of the task force in the body of the document.

CONTACT PERSON:
Courtney L. Young, chair, Election Process Task Force

DATE: June 1, 2016

BACKGROUND:
Recommendations from the task force.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Election Process Task Force Recommendations
- Appendix A: Confidentiality Statements in Nominating Communication Process
- Appendix B: Proposed ALA Elections Calendar

Election Process Task Force

The charge of the task force is to review the process for conducting ALA elections and make recommendations for new and/or revised policies as needed. The review might include but is not limited to:

> The timing of the election process, from the time of eligibility (or the work of the Nominating Committee) through the final counting of ballots, including the length of time people may self-nominate.

> Review and possible revision of ALA information on ALA nomination vs. self-nomination process.

> Review and possible revision of the number of names needed on petitions by petition candidates.

> Review and possible revision of the content of communication, regarding confidentiality during Nominating Committee correspondence with potential nominees.

The task force has met four times since being appointed. Once during the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Boston, MA, and via conference call in February, March, and April. The task force has also worked via a closed task force listserv. JoAnne Kempf and Lois Ann Gregory-Wood also provided us with a number of documents from past groups tasked to tackle similar issues to provide additional context for our work.

At our initial meeting, we discussed our charge and prioritized our work. We framed our discussion and subsequent discussion in a very practical way: What problem are we trying to solve?

1. "Review and possible revision of the number of names needed on petitions by petition candidates."

The task force members considered the current policy regarding the minimum number of names (signatures) needed to run by petition for ALA President-elect, ALA Treasurer, and ALA Councilor-at-large. The majority of task force members felt twenty-five (25) was still an appropriate number for those seeking to run by petition for Councilor-at-large. We do not recommend a change to the number of signatures required to run for Councilor-at-large.

We were initially split on the minimum number of names (signatures) needed to run for ALA President-elect and ALA Treasurer. Some felt a higher number would be more appropriate given the responsibilities of the positions. Others also factored in the work of the Nominating Committee to bring forward two candidates. While some potential signature numbers were mentioned, ranging from one hundred to one thousand, the task force asked JoAnne Kempf provide the group with some petition signature data to inform its potential recommendation. After further discussion, we came to a recommendation we felt was appropriate for the two offices: two-hundred signatures. This recommendation is in recognition of the significant role and work of each officer and the significant role of the Nominating Committee to identify,

recruit, and slate candidates for these offices. The task force is also aware this change needs to be referred to Constitution & Bylaws.

The task force recommends any candidate running for ALA President-Elect or ALA Treasurer by petition must obtain a minimum of 200 petition signatures in order to be placed on the ballot as a candidate. The task force further recommends this proposed change to Bylaws Article III, Section 3 (b) be referred to the ALA Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

2. "Petition versus nominated candidates."

The task force agreed that after the initial announcement of a candidate running by petition for ALA President-elect or ALA Treasurer, there was no need for any other communications to indicate the candidate is a petition candidate. JoAnne has sent us several ALA officer candidate information documents. We considered ways to make it clear how these paths to nomination differ with regards to becoming a candidate and the relevance of that path once someone is a candidate.

The following language has been added to the ALA Election Information page on the ALA website. Similar language will appear in any press releases announcing petition candidacies:

> Individuals who were not selected by the Nominating Committee may run for office by petition. Members who are interested in running for office by petition may do so by completing a petition form with the signatures of no fewer than 25 ALA current personal members. In addition to the petition itself, members must complete the Petition Candidate Biographical Information Form. Once the petition process is completed, petition candidates and nominated candidates are treated exactly the same. They are not differentiated on the ballot because they are on equal footing and are all viable candidates for these positions.

The chair feels this could also make for a very good infographic and encourages the Governance Office staff to work with the ALA Social Media team to make use of the available in-house software to design one.

The task force recommends adding explanatory language regarding the non-differentiation of petition candidates vs. nominated candidates in any press releases announcing petition candidates.

3. "Review and possible revision of the content of communication, regarding confidentiality during Nominating Committee correspondence with potential nominees."

Much of our discussion in this area was related to the need for confidentiality and its impact on the Nominating Committee doing its work effectively. This is of particular concern with potential candidates for President-elect. Larry Neal, Tyrone Cannon, Barbara Ford, and Aaron Dobbs volunteered to 1. review the current process (as informed by our conference call conversation) and bring recommendations to the task force and 2. review a new script for contacting prospective candidates and make any recommendations. The small group made

several recommendations that were affirmed by the task force. The small group's marked up proposed changes are in Appendix A. The final recommendations are in Appendix B.

The task force recommends adoption of the "Confidentiality statements in nominating communication process" document (Appendix A).

4. "Election Time Line"

In our investigation of the election time line, the task force members were particularly interested in the deadline for running as a petition candidate for ALA President-elect and ALA Treasurer; time between the end of voting and the announcement of winners; length of the open voting period; and the announcement of nominated candidates.

JoAnne Kempf provided us with a time line for the nomination and election process as it currently stands. This provided us with a picture of the process allowing us to make recommendations that do not "break" the process in such a way to cause unforeseen disruption to the work of ALA staff, particularly as it relates to Division and Round Table candidates.

There was agreement the deadline for running by petition should be the same for ALA President-elect, Treasurer, and Councilor-at-large. Our recommendation is to close petitions the first Wednesday in December.

A common question about the election process is "why does it take a week to get election results?" JoAnne Kempf checked with SBS, ALA's ballot provider, regarding how long it takes to get results once the ballot has closed. The SBS contact provided a very thorough answer noting "the length of time to complete the ALA election reports can be summed up by saying, it is an extremely large election with many different moving parts to it." Major contributors to this include "size and complexity given the number of ballots, candidates, bylaws, and write-ins" and "Officers ballot Report and Division/Section/Round Table reports are sorted into their separate files for delivery to ALA, in a manner for ALA to distribute to appropriate Directors."

The task force anticipated this would be the most challenging, complex, and critical part of our discussions and recommendations. After a number of discussions via email and conference call, we arrived at recommendations we feel address the concerns of those who consider running (either by nomination or petition) and vote in the election.

Our recommendations for changes to the election time line include:
a. Shorten the voting period to three weeks from the current five-and-one-half weeks
b. Open elections the second Monday in March
c. Close elections the first Wednesday in April
d. Announce results the second Wednesday in April

The rationale for the Monday-Wednesday open/close is because the ballots are emailed over the course of three days, so closing on Wednesday allows the members who receive their ballots on the third day a full three weeks to vote.

The rationale for a three-week voting period is to provide sufficient time for any requested paper

ballots to be sent and returned.

Announcing the results the second Wednesday in April will avoid Spring Executive Board meeting and the associated activities going on that week.

The task force recommends changing the election time line as outlined in the "Proposed ALA Elections Calendar" document (Appendix B).

5. "Candidate Endorsements"

We had a lively discussion regarding candidate endorsements. There was agreement any endorsements taking place on an ALA email listserv should come from an individual and only be signed using that person's name and not reflect their role on a board, committee, etc. If they want to add credentials, they may include "ALA Personal Member". Guidelines or tips might want to suggest those writing such a message double check their email signature settings to avoid accidentally adding any ALA leadership affiliation credentials.

Many task force members also felt there should be a very clear list of those who cannot endorse a candidate when they are in a particular role. This list includes:

Current ALA President
Current ALA President-elect
Current ALA Immediate Past President
Current ALA Treasurer
Current ALA Executive Board members
ALA Nominating Committee chair
ALA Nominating Committee members
ALA Election Committee chair
ALA Election Committee members
All ALA Staff

The task force recommends adoption of the list of elected officers, board members, appointed Nominating Committee members, and ALA staff who cannot endorse candidates.

A question was raised whether the list of those who cannot endorse should include members currently seated on any elected board across the association (divisions and round tables). There was discussion as to how expanding the list did or did not align with the Operating Agreement. At this time the task force suggests those elected to division and round table boards consider following the recommended guidelines for endorsements on ALA email listservs and endorse as personal members.

The task force recommends that as much as possible, any changes the Board approves be put in place for the 2017 elections.

The task force would like to acknowledge and thank JoAnne Kempf and Lois Ann Gregory-Wood for their support in allowing the task force to conduct and complete its work.

Respectfully submitted,

Courtney L. Young, chair
Tyrone Cannon
Aaron Dobbs
Tyler Dzuba
Barbara Ford
Sarah Ann Long
Larry Neal
Jim Rettig
J. Linda Williams

JoAnne Kempf, ALA Staff Liaison
Lois Ann Gregory-Wood, ALA Staff Liaison

Confidentiality statements in nominating communication process

Nominations Process

Current process as shared on the call:

- At the start of the process the Nominating Committee creates a list of *__potential__* candidates for president-elect (and treasurer every three years).
- The committee members usually divvy up the list and start contacting the potential candidates to determine their interest in possibly being slated.
  (At this point they are not being asked if they want to run for office; they are just being asked if they would be willing to be considered.)
- The potential candidates are advised that everything must remain confidential; they are not to spread the word that the Nominating Committee has contacted them and that they are thinking about it, or they might run, or whatever.
- Once the Nominating Committee has a final list of individuals who would be willing to be considered they usually rank the individuals and come up with the top two individuals they would formally like to invite to run for office.
- The chair of the committee contacts the top two candidates and tells them that the committee would like to place them on the ballot.
  (They are again reminded that this remains confidential until the slate is final &neither individual is told who their opponent is until both have accepted at which point the chair contacts them again to tell them who their opponent is.)
- If an individual declines, the chair moves down the list in rank order and contacts the third, fourth, etc., individual until there are two individuals willing to run for office.
- The Nominating Committee does not use email to discuss any potential candidates' attributes. Any discussions about candidates are done on conference calls or face-to-face meetings at Annual Conference.
- However, updated spreadsheets of potential candidates have been posted to ALA Connect.

Recommended Changes to Script

Yellow highlights are recommended changes to the script

- Your name has been suggested by a colleague as a potential [Presidential, Council, Treasurer] candidate in the 20XX ALA election.
- As a member of the Nominating Committee, I hope that you will agree to have your candidacy considered by the committee. At this point we are only collecting names to be considered by the committee; this is not a confirmation that you will be placed on the ballot.

Appendix A: Confidentiality Statements in Nominating Communication Process

- If you are interested in being placed on the list of potential candidates, please complete the "Candidate Biographical Information Form" which can be found at [URL]. You will be able to edit your form further if you are asked to run. If you tend to be difficult to reach over the summer please be sure to include a personal phone number where you can be reached. The deadline for completing the form is [date].

NOTE: The form does not collect contact information. Contact information is provided by the staff liaison based on what is in the member database.
[Note: recommend adding request for "preferred contact information" to the Candidate Biographical Information Form]

- Details about running for office, including job descriptions for ALA President, Treasurer, and Councilor-at-Large, can be found on the ALA website: http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/alaelection

[FOR PRESIDENT AND TREASURER CANDIDATES:]

- As we will likely be making our decisions during the summer, what is the best way to contact you?
- At this point the names of all potential candidates are to be kept confidential. It is very important, for the nominations process that the nominations process is kept confidential. Please do not publicly announce that you are being contacted about your interest in the following position.
- You may of course discuss this opportunity with your family, close friends/mentors, and your employer, but we do ask that you not "spread the word" broadly or publicly until your candidacy has been confirmed. We expect to have a decision by [TENTATIVE DATE]. All candidates will be notified one way or another about the Committee's decision.
- Thank you!

Original (unchanged) Script

Sample "Script" when contacting potential candidates:

- Your name has been suggested by a colleague as a potential [Presidential, Council, Treasurer] candidate in the 20XX ALA election.
- As a member of the Nominating Committee, I hope that you will agree to have your candidacy considered by the committee. At this point we are collecting names to be considered by the committee; this is not a confirmation that you will be placed on the ballot.

Appendix A: Confidentiality Statements in Nominating Communication Process

- If you are interested in being placed on the list of potential candidates, please complete the "Candidate Biographical Information Form" which can be found at [URL]. The deadline for completing the form is {date}.
- Details about running for office, including job descriptions for ALA President, Treasurer, and Councilor-at-Large, can be found on the ALA website: http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/alaelection

[FOR PRESIDENT AND TREASURER CANDIDATES:]

- At this point the names of all potential candidates are to be kept confidential. You may of course discuss this opportunity with your family and your employer, but we do ask that you not "spread the word" until your candidacy has been confirmed.
- Thank you!

Appendix B: Proposed ALA Elections Calendar

The ALA Nominating Committee is charged with developing a slate of candidates for President-elect (1-2 candidates), Treasurer (1-2 candidates every 3 years) and Councilor-at-Large (typically minimum of 50 candidates to fill 33 vacancies).

YEAR 1

Midwinter	Newly appointed Nominating Committee meets with outgoing Nominating Chair and an ALA staff member. Nominating Committee begins seeking potential candidates.
Second Wednesday in April	Biographical form for self-nomination and those asked to run opens. "Call for Nominees" distributed. E-mail message sent to encourage Council candidates who did not win in previous election to submit forms for next election.
Annual Conference	"Call for Nominees" article published in COGNOTES.
Second Wednesday in July	Form for self-nomination and those asked to run closed.
Last Wednesday in September	Deadline for Nominating Committee to complete slate. Slate e-mailed to ALA Executive Board. Slate announced via a press release.
First Wednesday in October	Form for running by petition opened.
Late October	Nominating Chair presents Committee report to Executive Board during Fall Executive Board meeting.
First Wednesday in December	Deadline for filing to run by petition. (May require a bylaws change for Article III, Sec 3(b), wherein acceptance of nominating petitions is required "at least four months before the Annual Conference.") Form for running by petition closed.
Mid-December	Deadline for president-elect and treasurer candidates' web pages to be launched.

YEAR 2

First week of January	Full slate of nominated and petition candidates appears in AL Direct. (Would require a bylaw change to Article III, Sec 2(a): "The ALA Nominating Committee shall report its nominations in the American Libraries not less than three weeks before the Midwinter meeting of the Council. At that meeting, the names of the candidates shall be announced.")
Midwinter	Nominating Chair presents report at Council/Executive Board/Membership Session. Officer Candidates Forum.
First Monday in March	Special "election edition" of AL Direct distributed.
Second Monday in March	Ballot sent/polls open. (Complies with Article III, Sec 4(b), wherein ballots must be mailed at least six weeks prior to the Annual Conference.)
3 weeks after polls open	Polls close
One week after polls close	Certification of election results by Election Committee. Candidates notified and elections results report distributed.

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