TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: Making ALA More Welcoming Update

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:

Informational report regarding ALA's work on making ALA more welcoming, based on input from the kitchen table conversations.

ACTION REQUESTED BY:

N/A

CONTACT PERSON:

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DATE: October 12, 2015

BACKGROUND:

Throughout FY15 and continuing in FY16, ALA has used information garnered via the kitchen table conversations, the member satisfaction research, and the cross-functional sharing of information to identify and work on numerous initiatives to help make ALA more welcoming to our members. A summary of that work is attached.

ATTACHMENTS:

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Throughout FY15 and continuing in FY16, ALA has used information garnered via the kitchen table conversations, member satisfaction research, and the cross-functional sharing of information to work on numerous initiatives to help make ALA more welcoming to our members. Many efforts were guided by the use of Harwood's "turning" outward approach: Highlights include:

- The ALA website Engage page (www.ala.org/membership/myala/engage) was launched. It lets members more easily find pathways to engagement throughout ALA. In FY16, ALA divisions will be developing similar web pages, using a similar look, to further assist members with their own easy-to-use pathways to engagement.

- A new, very visually appealing web page with professional photos of members and their testimonials on why they value ALA will launch by the end of October. It will link to the Engage page. Member-to-member communication is always very powerful.

- A staff "onboarding" program was developed to help staff better respond to member needs and questions because they will be more familiar with ALA work, the functions and work of ALA units, and be more prepared to assist members and/or guide them to the right resources.

- The "communities of practice" working group is in the early stages of encouraging a culture of organic collaboration and information sharing, intentionally bringing staff together who work on similar tasks or in specific areas to share information and experiences. The community itself identifies goals and how member experience and input can be incorporated. Tasks to be completed in the short term include identifying where communities of practice already exist throughout ALA, determining how/where we'll record these communities so everyone can find them easily, and analyzing the response and interest level from the recent onboarding survey results. Our test communities will include email marketing, eLearning, and a Youth Media Awards community.

- The first annual "thank you" email, with an all-staff photo, to ALA volunteers was distributed following this year's annual conference. The e-mail recognized volunteer efforts and served to help volunteers see staff as the people with whom they work throughout the year.

- ALA divisions worked together to develop a best practices menu to help improve/enhance their new member communication and welcome processes.

- The "increasing personal interaction with new members" working group has the goal of improving the member experience and member retention through more personal interaction with new ALA members. It is currently sharing information to identify what has been done throughout the organization, what has worked, and what obstacles have been encountered – to better learn to use personal interaction to improve the member experience.

Though this group's efforts, ALA's Member and Customer Service (MACS) Department began making welcome calls to about 50 randomly selected new members each week, resulting in very positive feedback. MACS also inaugurated a week-long program, helping increase staff awareness of how all of us, in a myriad of ways, provide customer/member service – along with ways to improve. Additionally, the Annual Conference Ambassador's program was expanded to help attendees better "navigate" the conference and have an improved, more enjoyable experience.

- In 2016, in conjunction with the launch of ALA's redesigned website, Membership and ALA Marketing will introduce a new home page feature called "I am ALA," profiling "everyday members," letting other members "connect" with ALA by seeing and relating to those facing similar real-life situations, challenges, and successes.

- Enhanced efforts to support students continues through the expansion of the student web portal by adding pathways to engagement and career development; developing a FY16 student information resource to help MLIS students learn more about the value of professional associations and the role of ALA as their professional association; and expanded information in *Student AL Direct*, a quarterly e-newsletter with news and insights for students.

- In FY16 ITTS will launch a new e-commerce system that makes the online join/renew experience easier. It will also allow members to more easily manage their memberships, via a new membership web page feature called "Manage My Membership" (www.ala.org/membership/manage-my-membership), which will improve members' abilities to administer things such as updating profiles, changing communications preferences, accessing new member welcome information, and more. Over time more robust features will be added.