

2007-2008 ALA CD#27
2008 ALA Midwinter Meeting

American Library Association
Committee on Organization
Report to ALA Council
Midwinter Meeting 2008

Action Items

I. To establish an Advocacy Committee

Charge: To support the efforts of advocates for all types of libraries; to develop resources, networks and training materials for advocates at the local, state and national levels; to work closely with the Office for Library Advocacy, the Public Information Office, and other ALA offices, units, and committees, and with external groups to integrate advocacy efforts into the overall planning, priorities, and policies of the association; and to cultivate future leadership in order to sustain and enhance the advocacy efforts of the association.

Composition: To be composed of 13 ALA members. Terms would last for two years, on a staggered basis, so that 6 members would end their term at the close of the 2009 Annual Conference, and the remaining 7 would end theirs at the close of the 2010 Annual Conference.

Date of active status: To become active at the close of the 2008 Annual Conference., who will check to see if the individual is a member of an ALA Chapter or AASL Affiliate.

Background:

- The ALA Public Awareness Committee recommends the establishment of an Advocacy Committee. The work of the proposed committee is currently being done by a subcommittee of the Public Awareness Committee.
- The ALA Advocacy Office was established in September 2007; the Advocacy Committee would become the committee primarily devoted to working with that office.
- This group needs to become its own established and robust committee due to the increased scope and scale of the work (COO 17,000 individuals have received training so far).
- Committee of Council (as is the Public Awareness Committee), because it deals with matters that involve dissemination of policy.
- Definitions: Public awareness primarily comprises the information we generate and package; advocacy is the process of generating grassroots action to disseminate and spread support. "Turning passive support into educated action."
- Has the support of related offices and committees.

II. Reports on Demographic Information for ALA Committee Nominees and Appointees

COO moves:

The President-elect, as chair of the Committee on Appointments and the Committee on Committees, shall present a preliminary report at Midwinter Meeting and a final report at Annual

Conference to the ALA Council that provides demographic information about members who a) volunteered to serve on, and b) who were appointed to committees. This information shall include but not be limited to:

- Type of work place and work activity
- Years of membership in the association
- Division and Round Table memberships
- Geographic (State/Province) Location

Background:

Background:

- At the 2007 ALA Annual Conference, the ALA Council requested the Committee on Organization to develop and propose improvements a) to the processes of selecting committee members and b) to the communications protocol for successful and unsuccessful committee candidates. The Committee on Organization was requested to report such improvements to the ALA Council at the 2008 Midwinter Meeting.
- COO has been informed that the following actions are now being taken: President Lorienne Roy has sent letters to all of the committee volunteers who were not appointed to committees. A similar letter will be sent each year. Each person completing the ALA committee volunteer form automatically receives an acknowledgment. People who do not get appointments will be encouraged to explore possible activity with other ALA units (divisions, round tables, etc.)
- The following were some questions explored during electronic discussions:
 - Should the makeup of the Nominating and The Committee on Committees be changed to require representation from all divisions and/or types of libraries?
 - Should an ALA Leadership Development Committee be established?
 - Could the establishment of an easily-accessible and searchable database of members which includes both their experience and their current interests aid in representation efforts?
- COO's considerations have primarily been focused upon process.
 - How might current processes be improved to better facilitate equitable representation by all types of libraries in committees of the Association?
 - How can we gather data for decision-making?
 - What data is currently available at no additional charge?
 - How can we annually disseminate data relevant to representation?
- COO is appreciative of President-Elect Jim Rettig's efforts this year to share this sort of data

III. Policy

Any candidate for an elected or appointed position within ALA shall refrain from any committee or board activity that could advance--or appear to advance--his or her candidacy.

Background:

This item was developed in response to a member objection to an objection by a member to a restriction in the charge of the Committee on Elections which conflicted with the Bylaws. The restriction was subsequently removed from the charge. Concerns that something should be

developed to attempt to avoid an appearance of impropriety led to the development of a proposal by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, which has worked with COO and consulted with others to develop the final proposal. COO believes that this slight change to the statement submitted for Council review at the ALA Annual Conference will serve the Association well in this regard. It is important to note that "any committee or board activity that could advance--or appear to advance--his or her candidacy" applies only to the activities specifically required by service on that particular committee or board (e.g., ones dealing directly with such duties as certifying elections or nominations). This policy would not impact the ability of persons serving in various capacities from promoting their candidacies.

Informational Items

I. Formation of a Member Initiative Group on Library Assessment, pending signature verification by ALA Staff

Purpose: To explore and nurture a growing library assessment community of librarians, researchers, and administrators from all types of libraries and to further an understanding of the library assessment process.

Having verified that proper procedure had been followed, appropriate, COO approved the formation of this MIG pending verification of member signatures by ALA Staff.

II. Formation of a Member Initiative Group on Games and Gaming

Purpose: To engage those interested in games and gaming activities in libraries and to collaborate with ALA units to support gaming initiatives and programs across the Association. Games are defined here in their broadest sense to include traditional and modern board, card, video, mobile, computer, live-action, role playing and miniature games; gaming activities include planning and running gaming programs, providing games for informal play, developing a game collection, creating games, development of information and other literacies through games and partnering with other community organizations to support gaming, will be topics for professional exploration.

Background

Membership Initiative Groups

Membership Initiative Groups were originally authorized in 1980. In 1985, on recommendation of the ALA Committee on Organization (COO), the ALA Council voted that Membership Initiative Groups be continued and given "organizational status" in the ALA Constitution and Bylaws. A Bylaws amendment was subsequently approved by ALA members and Article VIII, Sec. 2 (b) (ii) of the Bylaws now reads: "There shall be a Committee on Organization which shall recommend to Council the establishment or discontinuance of divisions, round tables, and committees, as the needs of the Association may require....The Committee on Organization shall also authorize membership initiative groups."

The Guidelines for Membership Initiative Groups define the Membership Initiative Group and its purpose as follows:

GUIDELINES FOR MEMBERSHIP INITIATIVE GROUPS

Definition:

A membership initiative group is a short-term organizational vehicle which provides for prompt, organized membership activity on topical issues in librarianship of mutual interest.

While possibly overlapping with other ALA units for brief times, a MIG may not assume any of the delegated responsibilities of said units which are currently being carried out by said units, nor may a MIG speak for the Association.

Formation:

A group of members, having identified their common concern for some aspect of librarianship, would register the following with the Committee on Organization:

1. A statement of purpose.
2. At least 100 signatures of ALA members in good standing.
3. The Signatures and addresses of designated organizers.

The COO chairperson will acknowledge receipt of the required documentation, with a copy to the ALA Conference Arrangements Office, and this registration will be reported to Council in the Committee report at the next conference.

The ALA Conference Arrangements Office will acknowledge receipt of notification and make every effort to accommodate the space/time/place needs of the group.

The unit may function in ALA for a maximum of three years, and may have meetings and programs. During this time, the Association will provide meeting space, a listing in the Handbook of Organization, inclusion in conference schedules, and a contact person at Headquarters designated by the Executive Director to provide parliamentary counseling. In addition, the MIG may request small support items, either from Headquarters or as budgetary requests to BARC. All other MIG activities will be handled by the group.

III. Committee Update Forms and Process

COO had a discussion regarding the Committee Update Forms process that was instituted recently. In particular, COO considered the possibility that Committee who file in-depth reports might simply wish to file those reports, as opposed to filling out the brief summary requested on the form developed by COO.

There was consensus that the brief information requested on the form better serves the purposes of the form: namely, to provide a brief and accessible review of a committee's activities that will provide the substance for a searchable database for members who may be interested in learning about the work of the committees, as well as for updating Council and COO regarding these activities.

Therefore, no change was recommended to the currently established process; COO members will assist staff in following up on the forms with the various committees as needed. It was noted that development of an interactive form might make the process easier for committee chairs to complete. It was also noted that wide promotion of the evolving database and links to it encouraging members to review it are essential to the process's being perceived as useful by membership.

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*Present