

**Public Library Association  
Spring Board of Directors Meeting  
April 29 & 30, 2009  
Chicago, IL**

**DRAFT Board Actions**

**Present:** Carol Sheffer, President; Jan Sanders, Past President; Sari Feldman, President Elect; Directors at Large: Irene Blalock; Audra Caplan; Marion Francis; Mary Anne Hodel; Kathy Knox; Judy Napier; Larry Neal; Neel Parikh; Susan Hill Pieper; Eva Poole; Cathy Elizabeth Sanford; Gary Shaffer; Marcia Warner;

**PLA Councilor:** Christine Lind Hage;

**Representative from Assoc. of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends & Foundations:** Donald Roalkvam (non-voting board member);

**PLA Staff:** Greta Southard, Executive Director; Joseph Potaczek, Deputy Director; Kathleen Hughes, Manager Publications/Editor *Public Libraries*; Louisa Worthington, Manager Marketing & Communications; Julianna Kloeppel, Program Coordinator; Kathleen Chau, Project Manager Gates Grant; Mary Hirsh, Project Coordinator Gates Grant

**Excused Absence:** Jan Sanders, Past President; Sara Dallas, Michael Golrick;

**Unexcused Absence:** Lillian Snyder

**Guests:** Carolyn Anthony, Marilyn Boria.

1. Welcome and introductions.
2. **By consent, approved** the adoption of the agenda as amended by noting that there was a data error in the Membership Report, 2009.45. Document was recalculated and redistributed. Removed Education Activities Update, 2009.49 and 2009 Spring Symposium Preliminary Report, 2009.51, from the consent agenda and moved to discussion agenda.
3. **By consent, accepted** the following reports on the consent agenda:
  - Draft 2009 Midwinter Board Actions, 2009.44; Membership Report, 2009.45; PLA Publications Report, 2009.46; Partners Program Status Report, 2009.47; *Public Libraries* Magazine Report, 2009.48; Leadership Task Force Report, 2009.50; Gates Project Update, 2009.52; Strategic Opportunities Update, 2009.53; FY08-09 Financial Analysis and Management Update, 2009.54; FY08-09 Year-to-Date by Project, through February, 2009.55.

**Discussion agenda**

4. **Reviewed and discussed** the following reports previously on the consent agenda, and noted that we would review the activities in greater detail as part of our strategic program review process.
  - 2009 Spring Symposium Preliminary Report, 2009.51, concern expressed about the ongoing viability of this endeavor when weighing the cost of the activity against the minimal financial return.

- Education Activities Update, 2009.49, concern expressed about the low preconference registration. Staff advised that we are closely monitoring registration and will cancel those events that will not be self-supporting.

5. **Reviewed and discussed** Library Support Staff Certification Program Briefing, 2009.56. C. Anthony reported that two ALA Divisions (LLAMA & ALCTS) have already approved the report and program. Anthony requested that the PLA Board also approve the program and help publicize the program as well as be involved in an ongoing basis. She noted that PLA could become a course provider. Much discussion ensued on the advantages and disadvantages to both PLA and public libraries as institutions regarding the notion of creating a certification program for library support staff that would be housed at the ALA. Discussion included the following points:

- Concern expressed with the programs' financial plan;
- Concern expressed about the perception of devaluing the librarian MLS degree;
- Noted that the opportunity for better support staff continuing education would hopefully translate into better public library service;
- Concern expressed that libraries would not have the funds available to support certification for their support staff;
- Concern expressed regarding the overall viability of the ALA/APA as a certifying body;
- The competencies look very good and are well thought out;

**Motion** that PLA stay involved in the development of the library support staff certification program but is not named as an entity 'approving' the program. Motion defeated.

**Motion** to table the issue of the library support staff certification program until the Annual Conference Board meeting. Motion defeated.

**Motion** that PLA approve the Library Support Staff Certification Program. Approved. Feldman requested that it be noted in the minutes that she disagrees with this action and that she recommends that PLA stand by the principles of supporting the librarian MLS degree rather than encroachment of the degree and the potential to devalue the MLS.

5. **Reviewed and discussed** Communities of Practice Update, 2009.57. Discussion included the following points:
- CoP's are starting to get some momentum, but there is a learning curve
  - Discussed whether we need to be 'prescriptive' about what the CoP's do—i.e. give them specific outputs or tasks to accomplish. Consensus was no that defeats the entire purpose of creating these free forming groups.
  - Discussed the need for more coaching for CoP facilitators;
  - Noted that CoP leaders feel frustrated that members of their CoP do not contribute or participate. Discussed various ways to help nurture the growth and development of CoP's.
  - Noted that the PLA Conference is the best thing that we do as a division and that as a division we are willing to do pilot projects, test, evaluate, and regroup as necessary.
  - Discussed that we need to recognize that the population most likely to use new tools will have different expectations than our existing active members, and that we should set target measures that we can use to evaluate CoP's.

6. Meeting adjourned.

Note: a work session, strategic program review, was facilitated by Paul Meyer. See separate report on the outcomes of that session.