

American Library Association  
Council Orientation Committee  
Report to Council  
Midwinter Conference 2013 – Seattle, Washington

The Council Self-Assessment Discussion that took place at the 2012 Annual Conference revealed a strong interest among many members of Council to strengthen the Council orientation process. Members of the Council Orientation Committee met several times via conference call after the Annual Conference to set a course for responding to the expressed desires of the ALA Councilors and to recommit to the Committee's charge: *To develop and carry out a mentoring and orientation program for new and continuing councilors and to manage the council suite or lounge at the Midwinter Meeting and at the Annual Conference.*

Committee members reviewed the report on the Council Self-Assessment and identified the following themes and areas of emphasis: reorientation, phased orientation, communication, understanding of roles, and relationship building.

Committee members agreed to the following action steps:

1. Develop a mechanism (based on the concept of speed dating) for Councilors to become better acquainted at the Saturday night Council reception. It was hoped that the new approach would boost attendance at this Midwinter event.
2. Conduct a survey of Council based on the 3-2-1 model to gather more information for further development of the orientation process. The survey was conducted in late fall 2012 and highlights of the results are attached to this report.
3. Personally contact new and returning Councilors to invite them to Midwinter orientation. Every member of the committee was assigned a group of Councilors to contact.
4. Restructure Midwinter orientation session so that at-large councilors, division/roundtable councilors, and chapter councilors remain together for the session.
5. Explore options for developing orientation modules for online, self-paced learning, following the model that BARC established.

The Saturday night Council reception was well attended – more than 50 were there and it appeared that only two pieces of dessert were left when the hotel staff cleared away the refreshments. The frequent laughter and friendly conversation were good indicators that Councilors were mingling and becoming better acquainted.

The highlights of the 3-2-1 survey were shared at the Saturday morning orientation and will be used to help determine content for online orientation modules. Orientation was also well attended and, based on feedback from attendees, provided practical, interesting, and useful information.

Next steps for members of the Council Orientation will be to develop online orientation modules. Those modules will focus on the following areas:

- ALA structure with an emphasis on committees;
- the resolution process; and
- practical information on things such as Council documents, voting cards, housing, registration, meeting schedules, etc.

The Committee members extend a special thank you to Lois Ann Gregory-Wood for the excellent staff support she provides, to Dora Ho in her role as the Executive Board Liaison, and to Eli Mina for demystifying parliamentary procedure.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberto Delgadillo  
Rhonda Puntney Gould  
Pam Hickson-Stevenson, Chair  
Nann Blaine Hilyard  
Rodney Lippard  
Sarah Horton Smith  
Tom Wilding  
Lois Ann Gregory-Wood, Staff Liaison

Midwinter 2013  
Advice from ALA Councilors  
Presented by the ALA Council Orientation Committee

In November 2012, the Council Orientation Committee conducted a 3-2-1 survey of current councilors and others who recently served. Committee members wanted to glean helpful tips and sage advice to pass along to new members of Council.

We hope the following selections from the survey results assist you as you serve on Council.

What three things do you wish you had known when you first started on Council?

- How to draft and put forward a resolution
- The amount of material that needs to be read prior to Council
- The number of meetings to attend
- When the meetings are scheduled
- The amount of meeting time devoted to pro-forma business
- The importance of ALA Committees in the work of the Council and in introducing motions
- The importance of testing out ideas with key 'people in the know' or even people sitting next to me before taking steps towards motions
- I wish I had known all the consequences of participating on the council lists, that people outside the council would be watching and interacting with us as well.
- That a continental breakfast would be available on the last morning of Council in the room.
- The things that were expected of me as being a Chapter Councilor (writing reports, the kinds of information I should relay back to my state library association, etc).
- The routines with the folders, etc.
- The importance of networking & getting to know other Councilors
- Better understanding of the committee appointment process, e.g. how-to become actively involved
- How numbering on documents does NOT match the agenda's order
- That "current" docs may be out of date when Council meets
- I was also an ALA-APA Councilor
- The role of resolutions in the Association's work.
- The importance of going to Council Forums
- Another seasoned councilor to connect with
- To register early using bundled registration
- To write reports immediately following the council meetings or simultaneously in Council.
- It's OK to speak at the mike
- More familiar with bylaws and handbook
- You can sit where you want to
- Parliamentary procedure
- Bring a laptop to council so I could create my report to my division in real time

What two things would you never do again in your role as a member of Council?

- Not speak up on an issue because I was scared of the time clock
- Print out and bring any documents from home
- Bring all my printouts of the council documents to the meetings
- Forget something warm to wear
- Vote (either with or outside of the popular vote) without being able to clarify the reasons to those I represent
- Come to Council unprepared
- Keep to myself and not network with other Councilors
- Come to Council without snacks
- Miss the Executive Board Candidates Forum
- Take all my council docs home after the conference

What one thing is the best piece of advice you could give to a new Councilor?

- Keep your sense of purpose
- Ask questions and find a buddy to help you
- Be patient and ask anyone for assistance
- Attend the informal forums
- Remember that every opinion is valid, even your own
- Introduce yourself to lots of people before/after meetings and during breaks and talk with everyone possible about your ideas
- Don't wait to speak your mind, but speak formally
- Be brave and be strong in your convictions
- Attend all ALA and APA Council events, read and use ALA Connect, stay connected with fellow Councilors
- Get information about serving on committees as soon as possible
- Engage the general membership and let them know their opinions matter
- Ask a seasoned member to sit with you for your first conference
- Ask questions and smile - you'll make some new friends
- Recognize that a lot of councilors are new
- Network-talk to as many people as possible-ask questions
- Speak up on council floor on issues of great importance to you
- Read, seek input, and be prepared to discuss
- It is confusing at first but just listen and take notes, ask questions and it will get better
- Be open and willing to compromise. Remember the folks that you are representing.
- Listen to others, consider the pros and cons, but vote your conscience
- Read the resolutions and reports posted to ALA Connect before attending Council.
- Learn the structure of ALA, especially Council committees
- Find a mentor and familiarize yourself with the *ALA Policy Manual*