

ALA 2019 Annual Conference – Michigan Chapter Councilor’s Report

Below is a brief report of Council activities and other information from the 2019 American Library Association Annual Conference. All Council documents, committee reports, and resolutions from conference may be found online at: <http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/council/documents>

ALA Strategic Directions

The four strategic directions of ALA are:

- **Advocacy**
- **Information Policy**
- **Professional & Leadership Development**
- **Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion**

More information may be found online at: <http://www.ala.org/aboutala/>

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

Council I began with a facilitated discussion led by DeEtta Jones, DJA Founder and Principal—*Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion through a Social Justice Lens: The Role of the ALA Council*. The objectives of this two-hour session included understanding the role of EDI in decision making, exploring and agreeing on shared aspirations for how EDI does and should impact the work of ALA, use these aspirations to effectively reflect the organization’s values and fulfill the leadership role of Council, sharing tools to support individual and group development, reinforcing expectations of individual investment, acknowledging our work, and reinforcing the role of Councilors to lead the leaders of the organization. This session built on a webinar Jones presented to Councilors in advance of the meeting.

Jones explained that we are experiencing a paradigm shift that challenges traditional ways of seeing the world. As leaders experience this shift, we will be challenged to consider whether our practices and policies actually reflect our values. In the webinar, Councilors identified communication—formal and informal, between Councilors, at Council, and between Council meetings—and lack of onboarding for new Councilors as barriers. Building on this discussion, Jones connected the notion of individual identity to cross-cultural competence. At its core, cross-cultural competence begins when we have a deep awareness of our own culture—what is our power? What is our privilege...what do we have access to that other people don’t? This knowledge is not to shame us, but to help us determine how to conduct ourselves and take action.

Jones explained culture as the shared collection of values, norms, and attitudes that govern an organization. Culture goes on and on, continually shifting—it is never fixed at a point in time. Culture helps us determine who we are, and who we are not...and that determines who is in and who is out. Like an iceberg, the visible part, what we say we value (espoused values), and the invisible part, the way things really work (values in action), may be at odds with one another. The invisible part of the iceberg is the part we will run into because no one told us—because this part of the iceberg may not even be visible to those within the culture. An example: We may say we want all people to have access to our libraries, and yet we enact policies that place value on materials over people and limit access to those who may most need our services. To work with this, we need to talk about what it looks like to

demonstrate the values we espouse, and make barriers to demonstrating these barriers visible to ourselves and others. Leaders must invest in their own training and identity work to ensure that we can be active and engaged. We must develop and actively speak about our plan to ensure EDI is part of our work.

Key questions for Councilors – What actions can I personally take? What systems should we change or rethink to model the behaviors we value? What do we need from ALA?

President’s Report

President Loida Garcia-Febo noted that her column for *American Libraries* provided an overview of her work over the past year: <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2019/06/03/moving-the-needle/>

President Garcia-Febo focused her efforts on advocacy, EDI, wellness, international relations, and a national tour with the theme “Libraries = Strong Communities” over the past year.

The full [President’s Report](#) may be read online.

Executive Director Search Update

ALA has engaged search firm Isaacson Miller to screen potential candidates. The search committee met in April and will conduct interviews at various levels throughout Summer 2019, with the goal of presenting a candidate to the ALA Executive Board at their Fall 2019 meeting. The new Executive Director is expected to begin in January 2020 and work with Mary Ghikas, current Executive Director. Ghikas will retire following the 2020 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago.

Steering Committee on Organizational Change (SCOE)

As noted in the 2019 Midwinter Meeting report, SCOE was formed to review and study ALA’s governance, member participation, and legal structures and systems and provide advice and support to the Executive Board to make priority improvements. SCOE presented preliminary recommendations at the 2019 Annual Conference. These preliminary recommendations are intended to achieve the following goals:

- Enable consistent, strategic, and effective member engagement
- Enable organization-wide planning focused on a common mission and vision for library workers, library supporters, and libraries
- Be financially sustainable
- Enable sustainable, long-term change (including evaluation of progress and more frequent future adjustments)
- Allow stakeholders to have confidence in decisions made when they are not in the room
- Deliver high value products, services, and impact for members

Items of note, from a chapter leadership perspective:

- **Council, as it is currently configured and conducted, would be eliminated.** Some of the functions of Council will be redistributed to new committees. This will eliminate MLA’s Chapter

Councilor as we currently define the role, potentially necessitating a change to MLA bylaws and other documents and processes.

- The formation of the Chapter Leadership Assembly will offer an opportunity for MLA—our board, and our members—to determine what chapter leadership will look like, and how we should participate in ALA governance. Chapters have a role in governance, but chapters also have a need to engage with and learn from other state chapters.
- The SCOE recommendations are built on the understanding that in-person attendance at ALA meetings will not be required. This will enable broader member participation in ALA governance—for example, an MLA member from a library that has not typically been able to attend ALA meetings could serve as a chapter leader—but only if we are all prepared to use technology to communicate effectively. MLA may wish to consider effective online meeting conduct and technology a professional development opportunity.
- **The final SCOE recommendations must be approved twice by the Council, and by a vote of the membership, to pass.** This means that Councilors, myself included, will be voting to eliminate ourselves. The current timeline—although this may be pushed back, if needed—is for Council to vote at Annual 2020 and Midwinter 2021. If the final SCOE recommendations are passed twice by the Council, 25% of the membership must vote to approve the changes for them to pass. This vote is expected in Spring 2021. MLA has a role in providing information and encouraging our members to vote.

For more information on the work of SCOE, and to stay up to date, follow the ALA Connect Group: <https://bit.ly/2ZGwxiC>

Provide feedback by email to SCOE Chair, Lessa Pelayo-Lozada: lessalozada@gmail.com

Tune in to the virtual presentation on July 8, 2019, 1 pm.

The full preliminary recommendations, [*A Better ALA: A Modern Association for a Modern Profession*](#), may be read online.

ALA Treasurer's Report

ALA began a cycle of regular deficits in FY2011. At that time, the recession, coupled with the acquisition of Neal-Schumann in FY12, caused ALA to expend more than its annual revenues. Although ALA had three years in the black, deficits began again in FY16. In FY19, the Council and Board approved an investment plan, a budget that deliberately took on deficit spending with the intent of using funding from our endowment to make investments in ALA's infrastructure.

For FY20, ALA continues a planned deficit budget, including deficit spending of \$3.6M. The Executive Board will use a mix of operating and capital funds to invest in the future of our association. Although the budget will use funds from ALA's endowment, ALA will not touch the endowment itself. \$2.4M of the planned deficit will go toward making badly needed technology infrastructure updates. ALA will implement a customer relations management (CRM) system that will help us better track our supporters and donors. This system will support supplemental investments in advocacy.

The \$1.2M unanticipated deficit had several causes, as explained by ALA Treasurer Susan Hildreth. These causes included unanticipated AV costs for the 2019 Midwinter Meeting, lower publishing revenues, and

lower cash interest income. The ALA board and staff are revising the budget now to avoid this situation in FY20.

Council approved ALA's Estimates of Income for FY2020. The not-to-exceed amount is \$85.7M. The ALA Executive Board will approve the final budget in October 2019. Ultimately, ALA is in a strong position—our assets outweigh our liabilities.

President Garcia-Febo recognized outgoing ALA Treasurer Susan Hildreth, presenting her with a Citation for Distinguished Service. Maggie Farrell is the new incoming ALA Treasurer.

The full [Treasurer's Report on FY2020 Programmatic Priorities](#) may be read online.

ALA Council Forum Working Group

As reported in the 2019 Midwinter Meeting Chapter Councilor's report, a widely publicized violation of ALA's Code of Conduct occurred at Council Forum III at the Midwinter Meeting in Seattle, WA. Following this incident, President Loida Garcia-Febo appointed a working group to look at the viability and continuation of the ALA Council's unofficial forum Meetings. The working group will continue its work and plans to provide suggestions for moving forward based on member feedback by Fall 2019.

Councilors participated in three Council Forum Sessions at the 2019 Annual Conference, as usual, with no incidents reported. Sessions were intentionally facilitated with microphones and closed-captioning.

The full [Council Forum Working Group report](#) may be read online.

Other Reports to Note

[ALA President Elect's Report](#)

[ALA Executive Director's Report](#)

[Committee on Legislation \(COL\)](#)

[Freedom to Read Foundation \(FTRF\) Report](#)

Library Bill of Rights Updates

Council approved several updates to the *Library Bill of Rights* as proposed by the Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC). The IFC began working on these proposals and other intellectual freedom resources in March in preparation for the upcoming 10th edition of the *Intellectual Freedom Manual*.

The full IFC report may be read online. It is in two parts—[Part 1](#), and [Part 2](#).

Council Resolutions

Council adopted the following resolutions:

- [Resolution on Renaming the Melvil Dewey Medal](#)
- [Resolution on Library Service for Children in Detention at Migrant Detention Centers](#)
- [Resolution on eBook Pricing for Libraries](#)

These resolutions will be presented the ALA Executive Board.

The [Resolution in Defense of Free Speech of Supporters of the Movement for Palestinian Rights](#) was referred to the Committee on Legislation for further work.

Lois Ann Gregory-Wood Fellowship

Lois Ann Gregory-Wood, recently retired as ALA Council Secretariat, has been recognized with a fellowship in her name. This fellowship is a scholarship program designed to give mid-career ALA members an opportunity to understand ALA governance and to help them engage in the governance of the Association at any level. The first fellow will be announced July 8. This fellowship provides \$2,500 to support conference attendance and foster understanding of ALA governance and structure. More information, application instructions, and criteria are available [online](#).

Christine Lind Hage Recognized

Councilor-at-Large Larry Neal moved to pass a Tribute Resolution honoring Christine Lind Hage, Director of the Rochester Hills Public Library. The full text of the resolution is available [online](#). Congratulations to Christine, and thank you for her many years of dedicated, excellent service.

Resolution in Memory of Nicolette Warisse Sosulski

Councilor-at-Large Jennifer Boettcher moved to pass a Memorial Resolution honoring the memory of Nicolette Warisse Sosulski of the Portage District Library. Nicolette passed away in May following a long battle with illness. The full text of the resolution is available [online](#). Condolences to the Portage District Library, Nicolette’s family, and everyone whose lives were enriched by Nicolette’s work.

New Division – Combined ALCTS, LITA, LLAMA

Councilors heard a brief report on the status of the realignment project to combine the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services (ALCTS), Library Information Technology Association (LITA), and the Library Leadership & Management Association (LLAMA) into a single new division. The proposed working title for this new group is Core: Leadership, Infrastructure, Futures.

Final Conference Numbers

The total registration for the 2019 Annual Conference was strong. Although the totals were less than the 2017 Chicago conference, profits were up for 2019. The total registration clocked in at 21,460, comprised of 6,827 exhibitors and 14,633 attendees.

Report submitted by:

Submitted by Jennifer L. Dean, ALA Chapter Councilor, MLA Board of Directors

Overview of Chapter Councilor Events at ALA

Below is a breakdown of mandatory (M) and recommended (R) meetings for Chapter Councilors:

Chapter Leaders Forum (R) – This day-long Friday pre-conference provides an opportunity for chapter presidents and councilors, state association executives, and other chapter leaders to meet, present, discuss, and learn about what chapters are doing, what issues chapters are facing, and how the chapters can work together and with ALA.

Chapter Relations Committee (CRC) I and II (R) – This ALA committee is charged “To develop and recognize chapters as integral components of ALA.” Chapter Councilors are encouraged to attend these two meetings at each conference. Information online at:

<http://www.ala.org/groups/committees/ala/ala-crc>

Chapter Councilor's Forum (R) – Always held between the two CRC meetings, the forum is an opportunity for chapter attendees to discuss chapter related topics, updates, and concerns. Chapter Councilors should make this a priority to attend.

Council Forums I, II, and III (R) – Held prior to each Council meeting, the Council Forum events are for all interested individuals to discuss and work on resolutions and other agenda items or possible Council interest topics that will or may be covered on forthcoming Council meeting agendas at the conference. These meetings are open to anyone and they are recommended but not required for Chapter Councilors.

Council Meetings I, II, and III (M) – Council meetings are the official venue for ALA business. Council meetings are held in the mornings at the main conference center venue. All materials for meetings are posted on the Council Documents page and Councilors should read them prior to each Council meeting at the conference, checking regularly throughout the conference for updates. Councilors keep a paper record of each vote they take at Council sessions. Chapter Councilors may consult with their chapter board, staff, and members prior to each Council session when time permits, but due to the fluid nature of Council, Chapter Councilors must vote in accordance with their own conscience and knowledge.

Council Orientation Session for New and Re-elected Councilors (R) – Any Councilor may attend this session. It is particularly recommended for new councilors for an orientation to Council basics, including parliamentary procedure, understanding financial reports, and drafting resolutions.

Council/Executive Board/Membership/Information Session (R) – Held prior to the ALA Membership Meeting, this session offers a report to the membership of ALA Executive Board, staff, and Council activity in between in-person meetings.

ALA Membership Meeting (R) – The official member meeting is part of every conference. Councilors should attend this meeting. Any ALA member may present a resolution for members to vote on. Resolutions affirmed by member vote will be forwarded to Council for further discussion and action.

In addition to meetings, there are numerous programs and events that may be of interest.

It is the responsibility of the Chapter Councilor to report to the chapter after attending conference.