

ALA Committees Informational Session Summary

25 September, 2020

Presenters: Camila Alire, Lesliediana Jones, Christina Rodriques

Councilors in Attendance: An estimated 66 current councilors attend this session. There were a total of 100 participants, including staff, former councilors, and active members.

Presentation (Slides Discussion points)

- Standing Committee of the Board of Directors (SCOE proposal)
- Standing Committees commentary
- Direct Election to ALA Committees commentary
- Appointed Members to ALA Committees commentary

SCOE Recommendations on ALA Committees in the Forward Together report were reviewed as they currently stand. Overall feedback heard from members on the recommendations was reviewed and reflected back to the group in the session.

Notes of the discussion portion of the session are below;

6 standing committees of the ALA Board of Directors **Important to note - the proposed 6 standing committees of the ALA Board of Directors do not affect those committees of Divisions or Roundtables*

- The proposed 6 Committees are largely based on operations (with the exception of the Social Justice committee) **There is strong support for an ALA Core Values committee, and an Intellectual Freedom Committee to be added to the list of standing committees.**
- Should have more standing committees due to the cost of membership. Some members cannot afford a division or roundtable and standing committees are the only way they have to connect.
- Currently there are 21 committees of the association, and 16 committees of council. Many councilors voiced concern on not knowing which of the 6 standing committees would accomplish the work of the current 37 (with the exception of the Committee on Accreditation which has a separate agreement with ALA).
- **A request for mapping the current committees to the proposed standing committees was requested.** This was seconded by many of the council members.
 - Request for how much member involvement the new structure allows (standing committees, advisory groups etc) Is there an increase or decrease in opportunities?

- Concern was raised that the proposed committees do not have authority and are advisory only, and that this could limit a member's interest in volunteering. *This is true even in the current structure for committees of the association & committees of council. They do not make policy, only recommendations to the Board or Council.*
 - How will the ALA Board of Directors be held accountable for the recommendations made to them?
- With a small number of committees, there are less spots for members to volunteer and if a member volunteers and doesn't get selected, they may not volunteer again.

Structure of Committees

- There needs to be clarity around the size of the committees, it's not 15 members but 14 due to 1 spot designated for a Board liaison.
- There was a request for clarity in the work & responsibilities of each committee outside what is mentioned on pg 14-15 of the [Forward Together report](#).
- Requests to see equity, representation and engagement occur in the new committee structure, concern around the document being too vague. Values need to be represented.
- Term limits do not allow for training and expertise to be developed.
- Concern that certain groups will be less represented in current structure (AASL etc.)

Leadership Assemblies, Advisory groups, working groups & communities of interest

- Advisory groups offer good flexibility and agility for members who do not want long term commitments.
- Clarity needed on the makeup of these groups; how many members, how do they get connected to these opportunities?
- Concern over term limits for these groups as well. Seems to limit participation.
- Support for the ad hoc groups - will allow for agility to meet needs as they arise.

Member Engagement and Governance *Pages 17-19 of the [Forward Together report](#) outline *Member Engagement opportunities in addition to standing committees.*

- For future reports and clarity, there was support for separating the member engagement opportunities from those of governance activities.
- Chapters, divisions and roundtables will continue to be strong avenues for member engagement.

Additional Questions/Feedback heard in the session

- There is a **request for clarity around what will take place at the Constitutional Convention**
- There was a call for councilors to offer suggestions and solutions for concerns raised
- Strong support for the idea that we are one ALA

- We need to clarify what problems we are trying to solve
- Important to remember we now meet virtually and that lowers barriers to participation
- Will there be avenues for members to override the ALA Board of Directors if they disagree?
- Where does ALA-APA fit into the proposed new structure?

Speaker log:

Edward Sanchez (2)

Martin Garnar (2)

Jennifer Boettcher (3)

Natalie DeJonghe

Christina Rodriques

Lindsay Cronk

Ann Ewbank

Diane Chen

Aaron Dobbs

Eileen Palmer