

ALA Board of Directors Informational Session Summary

11 September, 2020

Councilors in Attendance: An estimated 60 current councilors attend this session. There were a total of 96 participants, including staff, former councilors, and active members.

Notes:

Articulate the difference between mechanisms for decision-making and member participation/engagement activities

Overall feedback heard, and reflected back to the group in the session.

Representation

- Representation on a 17 member ALA Board of Directors is a concern. Many councilors were supportive of increasing the board size.
 - Clear guidelines are needed to ensure representation; that representation may need to be more deliberate (ie, include a rep from each assembly, or that the BOD is divided up to represent library types [ie, a slot for school librarians, and only school librarians would run against each other] or regions [ie, anyone wanting to run from New England would run for that slot and run against each other])
- Every board member should be on the board using the same process; all or nearly all of the comments shared about appointments was against
- We should consider the cost of bringing on new directly elected members
- It is important to have representation from multiple parts of the organization; it was expressed that in moving to a BOD of 17 members, it may be less likely the concerns of smaller groups will be fully expressed
- It is essential that BOD members have broad knowledge, regardless of representation (ie, you shouldn't have to be a school librarian to keep school library needs in mind)
- Current EB is made up of Dean and Director level members. How to get new and emerging library leaders on BoD?
- School Librarians currently underrepresented, how will this be addressed in the new structure?
- Voices can be heard in many ways, not just from a BoD. By reimagining a new governance model, members will be able to be heard in many ways i.e. (Board Committees, Leadership Assemblies, short term working groups & task forces).

Appointment of members to the ALA Board of Directors

- If members are appointed to fill gaps, should their terms be shorter so that needs can be addressed more readily?
- Nominating Committee would need clear guidelines and should be involved to help BoD appoint for the gaps from the election process.
- Having the BoD appoint members to the board could imply mistrust in the electing body (membership's) ability to elect viable candidates.

Other questions to address

- Where does the ALA-APA fit within the new structure?
- Process for communication between members and BoD would need to be created and clearly articulated.
- Recommendations were created before pandemic, are we missing any creative solutions that have arisen out of the new environment?

Some quotes:

- “Council is the breeding ground for ALA governance”
- “More pathways to leadership ensure more member engagement”
- Appointments to the BOD may make the statement that we “don’t trust membership”
- “How do we build in a channel for member feedback to the EB/BOD?”
- “185+ is just too big to get work done in a timely fashion”

Speakers:

Jennifer Boettcher (3)

Amy Lappin

Martin Garnar

Tara Brady

Diane Chen (2)

John DeSantis

Victor Baeza

Eileen Palmer

Aaron Dobbs

Deb Sica

Lessa Pelayo-Lozada

Ann Ewbank