

Forward Together Informational Session - Core Values

Notes:

On August 28, 2020, approximately 88 people attended a Forward Together Informational Session to explore areas in which Core Values are reflected in the Forward Together plan.

Forward Together co-chairs, Joslyn Dixon and Steven Yates provided an overview of the process and facilitated the meeting.

The purpose of the session was to share information about ALA Core Values found in SCOE and Forward Together and to listen to ALA Councilors speak to Core Values. Discussing Core Values as the first of the six informational sessions for Councilors could help set the stage for those future discussions. People were encouraged to share comments and concerns during the informational session or send comments to the Forward Together working group.

ALA's Core Values of Librarianship: <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/corevalues>

“The foundation of modern librarianship rests on an essential set of core values that define, inform, and guide our professional practice. These values reflect the history and ongoing development of the profession and have been advanced, expanded, and refined by numerous policy statements of the American Library Association.”

The core values are:

Access

Confidentiality/privacy

Democracy

Diversity

Education and lifelong learning

Intellectual freedom

Preservation

The public good

Professionalism

Service

Social responsibility

Sustainability

Core values should be reflected in all work done by the ALA and its membership. Councilors discussed how the values were developed and if all were still relevant or if some could be jettisoned given association challenges with finances and capacity.

A councilor noted, when everyone is responsible for core values, no one is.

ALA should be inclusive - at all levels of the organization

Concerns about member engagement and at what level - via committees, instruction, support, divisions and roundtables. A Councilor suggested keeping the mission, not the core values, as there are too many core values.

Core values cannot be lost - they need to be in all of our work - if no one is paying attention or coordinating, they can be lost.

A Councilor noted, no one is paying attention to the core values, yet it should be in all of our work. The Committee on Professional Ethics and Committee on Intellectual Freedom recommend a committee on social justice; EDI, Intellectual Freedom, Social Justice,

There was support for a Standing Committee on Core Values.

Keep ALA mission, not core values - too many core values.

There must be a way to address or accommodate ethnic causes and groups which represent the marginalized in the ALA.

Where are core values addressed in ALA?

Core values have no place in ALA Governance.

How does Forward Together address the core value of democracy as it relates to the governance of ALA? What checks and balances assure members have opportunities for democratic participation in governance (not engagement, but governance)?

Core values should inform our policies and actions.

The core values were voted upon by Council throughout the years and they are all defined. This discussion leads me to support a core values committee.

Compliant Trust: The Public Good and Democracy in the ALA's "Core Values of Librarianship"
Maura Seale Library Trends Johns Hopkins University Press Volume 64, Number 3, Winter 2016 pp. 585-603 10.1353/lib.2016.0003

Of note, but not addressing Core Values:

Adjustments ALA has made are reflected in our work

Councilors are looking for a long discussion on the role of Council and questioned the order of the discussions.

Silos and reduction of cross interested groups, elimination of large body of people (Council) with disparate interests. How to ensure full consideration of actions and recommendations?

Must reduce silos and allow ideas and work to cross pollinate; must reach marginalized communities, include POC, GLBTQ, PWD, etc.

ALA must commit to marginalized communities

Assemblies are silos and Assemblies are free and would be more inclusive

Council could be bloated

Purpose and Mission statement - people expressed they were both dated and some said it was timeless.

ALA should be smaller and member driven, rather than staff driven

Member engagement - can it be done through committees? Role of ALA instruction and support, it was noted that much of instruction and support is done through the divisions and roundtables.

A councilor noted that we are working with blinders on. Council needs to consider pandemic, financial issues, virtual meetings, and have a long discussion on Council and other avenues and visions.

The recommendation of the COO/CBL was to set aside current constitution and by-laws and have a single by-laws for the entire Association.

Some steps are already being taken.

The discussion in a large council room means different perspectives are heard before voting or making decisions.

The ALA's Washington Office and Council brings things to consensus

Success of Committees is dependent upon chairs.

Policy Manuals need to be updated (only three people are on this committee)

It is the role of the Executive Director to restructure staff

Concern about APA in Forward Together - who will represent librarians in ALA?

Speaker List:

Jennifer Boettcher (4)

Martin Garnar

Aaron Dobbs (3)

Meredith Wickham

Jack Martin (2)

Eileen Palmer

Ed Sanchez