



Memorandum

To: NJLA Executive Board
From: Eileen M. Palmer, Chapter Councilor
Date: 6/30/2021
Re: ALA Annual Conference Council Actions

Council receives a variety of reports and updates throughout all three Council sessions. My report will only focus on specific actions taken by Council and reports I think of special interest to NJLA and its members. A full record of Council actions will be made available by ALA on its website. All documents referred to may be found at [https://www.ala.org/aboutala/Virtual Council Meetings](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/Virtual_Council_Meetings)

Council I

After approving the agenda, minutes from previous meetings and the consent agenda, Council turned its attention to reports from two task forces.

The Forward Together Fiscal Analysis Working Group (FT-FAWG) was appointed in June of 2020 by then President Wand K. Brown and charged to “conduct a comprehensive fiscal analysis of the amended Forward Together recommendations.” They provided their initial report at Midwinter Conference in January of 2021 and provided an updated report at this conference (documents 37 and 37.1). The work is difficult as they are tasked with identifying fiscal issues with an organizational structure that is still being developed. However, it was clear from their work thus far, that some of the proposed changes to ALA will create additional complexity and costs. This was particularly clear when discussing potentially large and complex voting requirements for the proposed assemblies and committees.

The FT-FAWG also provided a review of a proposed standardized dues structure for ALA Divisions and Round Tables.

The Forward Together Resolutions Working Group's report was presented (document 46.1). Its charge: "... develop resolutions based on the Forward Together Working Group report that provided an analysis of the SCOE recommendations. The resolutions will include the various parameters of the proposed new structure at a conceptual (i.e.: non-Bylaws) level. Council will debate on the various components via the resolution and will continue to work in the development of the resolutions virtually with the goal to bring forward for vote at subsequent Council meetings."

I was appointed to this committee and worked on the subcommittee charged with developing resolutions relating to Council. The committee asked for an extension to complete its work which was not granted. The report submitted did not include the recommendations from the subcommittee on Council. The Chairs opted to revise the most substantive of those recommendations.

The report was divided into 6 sections (Core Values, Round Tables, Council, Committees, Executive Board and Assemblies). Council debated, voted, and approved the resolution related to Core Values (158 yes, 0 no, 2 abstain) and deferred Round Table resolutions to Council II. The remaining resolutions were deemed not yet ready to be debated by general consensus. Incoming President Wong asked for referral of these items to a new working group that she will appoint. The new group's composition, timeline and charge will be provided to Council and the Board in the coming weeks. (motion to refer passed on a vote of 150 yes, 12 no, and 1 abstain).

Clearly this process needs more time and this was a reasonable way to move forward. But in my view part of the reason we are so far down this path without a coherent new structure to propose is because every time the subject of the future of Council comes up the discussion is deferred. I don't understand how we will be able to move forward if we don't have an honest and open debate on how we want the Association to be governed and whether or not that governance structure has room for a 'legislative' policy body. What we do with Council has a huge impact on how we proceed with everything else being proposed. I don't see how anything can move forward until that is resolved. But every time we get close to having a real conversation about it someone proposes a new working group and another delay.

I think it is also important to note that ALA's past presidents Patricia Glass Schuman, Richard Dougherty, and our own Betty Turock, spoke to ALA members about this process through open letters posted on ALA Connect (ALA's member engagement tool) during the conference. Betty especially, in addressing the proposed resolution relating to the composition of Council, spoke on the importance of retaining the role of Chapters within ALA's governance. Betty has also spent a lot of time with me during this process. Her counsel and support have been so valuable to me and to NJLA as we continue to advocate for the role of Chapters within ALA. NJLA members are indebted to Betty for her advocacy on behalf of the role we play in ALA. She and I plan to talk more about how NJLA can best continue to advocate for the role of Chapters within ALA.

Council II

Following on the heels of Council I (a one hour break) Council II began. Again we started with reports. The selection of locations for future LibLearnX conferences: Orlando, FL (2024); Phoenix, AZ (2025); and Washington, DC (2026) was announced. LibLearnX is the new brand for MidWinter.

We resumed discussion of the remaining item from the Forward Together Resolutions Working Group deemed ready for Council action and approved the resolution relating to Round Tables after some discussion (154 yes, 4 no, 0 abstain).

A report from Committee on Organization was presented with 5 action items. None were controversial and all passed. They can be found in the Committee's report. (document 27.1) The most notable action in my view is the creation of a member driven committee to respond to reports of violations to the ALA Online Code of Conduct.

Next on the agenda was the [Resolution to Achieve Carbon Neutrality for ALA Conferences](#) (document # 53) which Council approved (145 yes, 9 no, 4 abstain). I would encourage the NJLA Board to consider what we can do during future NJLA conferences to work towards carbon neutrality. Purchasing carbon offsets is not the only option, although some NJLA members might support doing so while incorporating the cost into registration fees. But there are other things we could do. NJLA might consider a task force to look into what we could do, what the costs would be, and whether or not our members would support such actions.

Council II ended without any further substantive action.

Council III

Early in Council III the Council approves memorial and tribute resolutions. This conference included the resolution honoring NJLA's Penny Brome.

MEMORIAL RESOLUTIONS:

JOHN T. MA	LATANYA N. JENKINS	
DR. VARTAN GREGORIAN	ANITA SCHILLER	MICHELE LEBER
KATHIE COBLENTZ	XIAOQUI LI	LEONARD KNIFFEL
DR. HENRIETTA M. SMITH	BERNADETTE STORCK	WILLIAM G. ASP
DR. CHERYL MCCARTHY	DR. WILLIAM C. ROBINSON	REGINA U. MINUDRI
ELEANOR (PENNY) BROME	MARGARET R. MYERS	RITA JOYCE WILLIAMS JONES

ALA American Library Association

Council received a report from ALA Treasurer Maggie Farrell and was asked to approve the Annual Estimates of Income (156 yes, 1 no, 3 abstain). I'll pause here to say that ALA has made some very positive steps towards financial stability over the last year. Details are provided in several reports (13.2, 13.3, 33.1). The lone dissenting vote on the Annual Estimate of Income was from your Councilor – I think it is absurd to vote to allow ALA to spend all of its assets. It is no real exercise in financial oversight but apparently ALA would stop functioning if we did not vote to allow it. So I just quietly vote no.

Up next was a report from the Operating Agreement Working Group (document 40.1). The operating agreement between ALA and its units has not been revised since 1989. The work is extensive and the WG has been given a one year extension. From their report:

The WG continues its examination of the current Operating Agreement including various sections of the policy. Executive Director Tracie Hall presented the Strategic Pivot Plan with a focus on how the Association might shift with new revenue streams. The WG is particularly struck with the goal to function in a more wholistic manner with strong collaboration and coordination across Divisions. With this in mind, the WG is continuing its work on revising the policy examining the interrelationships within ALA.

While the policy defines the relationship between ALA and the Divisions, the overhead rate is a significant factor in how the relationship is manifested. As much as the WG would like to focus solely on the relationship with the financial structure underpinning the relationship, finances naturally influence the relationship. With this conundrum, the WG is examining two possibilities:

- Tweak the current overhead formula including the inclusion of new revenue streams
- Eliminate the overhead rate and consolidate financial reporting with budgets tied to specific ALA units, including Divisions and Round Tables.

Committee reports

The Constitution and Bylaws Committee (document 25 and 25.1) asked Council to vote a second time (as required by the Constitution) on a constitutional amendment to clarify that Council and Membership meetings may be conducted electronically and would allow electronic voting at those meetings. Council approved this motion (157 yes, 0 no, 1 abstain).

The Committee on Professional Ethics (document 24.1-24.2) proposed the addition of a ninth principle to the ALA Code of Professional Ethics addressing the importance of social and racial justice as a professional value.

We affirm the inherent dignity and rights of every person. We work to recognize and dismantle systemic and individual biases; to confront inequity and oppression; to enhance diversity and inclusion; and to advance racial and social justice in our libraries, communities, profession, and associations through awareness, advocacy, education, collaboration, services, and allocation of resources and spaces.

Council voted to adopt the ninth principle with no changes (160 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain).

The Intellectual Freedom Committee chair presented a report (document 19.5-19.7), which included updates on work from the Privacy Subcommittee and the Intellectual Freedom and Social Justice Working Group. The Resolution on U.S. Enterprises' Abridgement of Free

Speech (a joint IFC/International Relations Committee effort; available on page 9 of the first report) was approved by Council (158 yes, 0 no, 2 abstain). A footnote defining US enterprises as "intended to refer to corporations, businesses, and other commercial organizations based in the US. It is not directed at non-profit organizations such as libraries" will be added to the resolution by the Executive Director.

The Resolution in Support of Open Educational Resources (available on page 11 of the second report) was approved by Council (155 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain).

The final business items were two resolutions: Resolution on Greater Transparency in the Library of Congress Subject Headings Revision Process (document #55) and the Resolution on Replacing the Library of Congress Subject Heading Illegal Aliens Without Further Delay (document #56).

I thought, especially in light of the new principle added to our Code of Ethics, that both resolutions should pass. I thought they were well written, and even deferential in addressing the Library of Congress. Others disagreed, stating that we should not be seen as dictating to LC and that there are those in Congress who would punish ALA through our funding priorities for speaking out right now on these issues. It was noted that ALA staff are working behind the scenes on these issues. I leave to ALA members to assess whether we made the right choices but I voted for #55 and against referring #56 to the Committee on Legislation. Final vote tallies were #55 24 yes, 125 no, 9 abstain. #56 91 yes, 61 no, 6 abstain. I thought that approving both of these were small first steps towards demonstrating that we meant it when we added principle #9 to our Code of Ethics.

While ultimately unsuccessful, I am glad these resolutions were brought forward and I think the debate is a great example of why ALA Council should remain a broadly representative body. Many perspectives were shared as a part of that debate. Minds were changed. We did not create a new policy statement but we did have an open public debate.

The registration numbers as of Monday night were 9,133 compared to a goal of 9,100.

Shortly after the conclusion of Council, ALA inaugurated its first Asian American ALA President, Patty Wong.