TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness (SCOE)

Action Requested/Information/Report:
Update on activities of SCOE

Draft Motion:
No motion proposed – informational only

Date: January 28, 2020

Requested by: Lessa Kanani’opua Pelayo-Lozada, Chair, SCOE

Background:
The Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness (SCOE) is pleased to present an update of its activities.
Forward Together Report

After the board convened in October for its Fall meeting, *Forward Together* was shared with members in mid-November on ALA Connect. Since mid-December, the report can also be viewed on the *Forward Together* website (forwardtogether.ala.org). Other than the timeline, the report itself has not significantly changed. Attached is an executive summary of the report for reference.

Committee on Organizations (COO) and Constitution & Bylaws Committee (C&B)

The Board approved *Forward Together* to be further analyzed by COO and C&B. This analysis is to include a determination of what areas of the Constitution and Bylaws and the structure of the organization will be affected by the recommendations in the report. An update will provided to the board at its spring meeting.

Eli Mina, ALA Parliamentarian, conducted a review of ALA’s Bylaws. His report is attached.

New Committee

In Spring 2020 a new committee(s) of members and staff will be established and appointed to carry on the work of SCOE and *Forward Together*. This work will include testing and piloting certain parts of the model and evaluating its success as well as more in depth analyses of it’s potential impacts on members and the organization.

Timeline and Framework

SCOE is developing preliminary timelines and frameworks for each part of *Forward Together*. This information will be passed along to the new group.
Executive Summary

The Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness (SCOE) is proud to present Forward Together which aims to create a vibrant and effective organization that supports libraries and library workers. Relying on input from thousands of members and data about ALA membership and finances, SCOE has worked since early 2018 to develop and refine a package of recommendations to members. Forward Together aligns with the streams of change already underway within ALA related to finances, real estate holdings, technology and staffing.

Forward Together proposes this once-in-a-century opportunity to modernize the governance structure—not through incremental tweaks, but through evidence-based structures for improved member engagement and effective governance. This will help lower barriers to member engagement, increase individual member impact, and widen the pool of potential leaders.

Board of Directors

The Executive Board will be known as the Board of Directors and will be directly elected by members with five appointed positions to fill in gaps of diversity left by the election process. The name change is intended to reset expectations of the Board. The Board envisioned here is accountable directly to the membership and will receive critical, ongoing input from general members and assemblies of leaders.

6 Standing Committees of the Board


The functions of the 187 member Council will be replaced with these six standing committees, which each will have direct input to the Board. ALA Members will elect two-thirds of the leaders on these committees and the Board of Directors, and Nominating and Leadership Development Committees will appoint one-third of the member leaders to ensure the best skills, experiences and diversity involved with governance of such a large and complex organization.

Leadership Assemblies

The functions of leadership assemblies build upon the strengths of current groups like ALA Council, the Chapter Leaders Forum, and the Round Table Coordinating Assembly by maintaining a place for discussion and influence, by opening membership to wider representation, and by creating a direct path to recommending change. The groups of each assembly, while directly participating in ALA’s governance, also can facilitate information sharing, partnership building, and networking between each other, and, ultimately, between the assemblies themselves.

Member Engagement Opportunities

Communities of Interest, Working Groups, and Advisory Groups all serve as avenues for meaningful and influential engagement in ALA. Once Forward Together is approved by ALA members, a reconstitution phase is proposed to get to the new member engagement structure: All ALA and Council committees will have one year to reconstitute as an advisory group, working group, round table, or community of interest.
Divisions

*Forward Together* imagines divisions that collaborate with each other and with the rest of the association to build on the enriching experience members have in their division home as well as the expertise division members hold. A direct line of influence to the Board of Directors will exist through the Division Leadership Assembly. Several recommendations have been made for divisions:

- A regular review of each division in consultation with the ALA executive director. Potential mergers within the divisions may occur, including one merger already underway between LLAMA, ALCTS, and LITA to create one new proposed division, CORE: Leadership, Infrastructure, Futures.

- A review of the “Operating Agreement” in relationship to the Forward Together recommendations. This review may include but is not limited to a review of bylaws, dues, and dues structures.

- Align member engagement structures in the divisions and throughout ALA. Divisions may have, but are not required to have: advisory groups, working groups, and communities of interest. Sections can continue to exist in their current form, but it is strongly recommended that each Section consider whether they should instead be reconstituted as an advisory group, working group, or community of interest. Section elections will be administered through an online platform following best practices developed by ALA staff.

Round Tables

Like divisions, *Forward Together* imagines round tables that collaborate with each other and the rest of the association to build on the enriching experience members have as well as the expertise of their round table. Round tables will be encouraged to recommend advisory groups and working groups to the Board of Directors to help accomplish their work and bring action and influence around important issues. They will have a direct line of communication and influence with the Board of Directors through the Round Table Leadership Assembly and will be looked to for their expertise and advice around issues important to them. A number of recommendations have been made for round tables to focus on the programming and member driven aspects of the groups and are already being reviewed by the Round Table Effectiveness Committee including:

- Replace individual round table bylaws and create a shared policies and procedures document. This will help identify the relationship and fiscal responsibility of round tables with members and leaders, helping them understand the symbiotic relationship between round tables and all of ALA.

- Work with the Membership Office and Membership Committee to align dues and dues structures across ALA so that discounted rate opportunities for special categories are consistent across the association.

- Increase the minimum number of dues-paying members needed to create a round table to one percent of ALA’s membership unless identified as a strategic priority by the Board of Directors.

Overall members seek a modern ALA that is the voice for libraries and librarianship into the future. The financial realities and advocacy needs faced by libraries demands ALA members to be bold. Share the excitement in moving ALA *Forward Together*. We invite you to review the full report that details the input and refinement process, background information, rationale for recommendations, and some of the most important data reviewed related to membership trends and dues, ALA finances and streams of change.
ALC Bylaw Revision: Goals and Principles  Prepared By Eli Mina PRP 12/2019

1. Association Bylaws in General (Positive versus Negative Traits)

Association Bylaws should:
- Provide an appropriate balance between individual and organizational rights;
- Provide an appropriate balance between unit rights and organizational rights;
- Advance knowledge-intensive governance that values and engages relevant input;
- Have a logical flow, thereby making it easy to locate significant provisions;
- Be easy to understand, increasing usage of plain language over complex legal terminology;
- Be sensible and natural to embrace **willingly**, thereby becoming more enforceable;
- Be concise, clear and brief, and contain no more than the essential information;
- Conform with all relevant legislative provisions;
- Help ALA earn the respect and trust of the Library Community and the General Public.

Association Bylaws should not:
- Be overly-prescriptive, constraining, oppressive, inflexible, and difficult to adhere to;
- Inadvertently slow things down and prevent or impede efficient and effective governance;
- Contain vague, esoteric, overly legalistic, ambiguous provisions;
- Contain provisions that are senseless and unreasonable to follow;
- Fail to balance rights and entitlements of individuals and units versus organizational rights;
- Be confusing and poorly organized, therefore making it hard to locate relevant provisions;
- Contain contradictions and inconsistencies;
- Contain formalities that slow things down, without producing benefits;
- Contain language that can place an organization at increased levels of risk.

2. Weaknesses in the Current ALA Governing Documents

Having worked with ALA’s Constitution and Bylaws since 2002, I have these observations:

- As the current governing documents have been in place for several decades, they are quite outdated and do not reflect contemporary governance discipline and practices. As an example, instead of setting governance structures that promote a knowledge-based organization, these governing documents seem to focus more on rights and entitlements.

- The current documents are far too detailed and prescriptive. My experience with numerous organizations has shown me that it is futile to attempt to anticipate all eventualities and then prescribe how each of them would be tackled. What this complex task requires is a nimble drafting style and a focus on the best ways to deliver ALA’s mandate.

- The current governing documents entrench a complex and unwieldy structure. They firmly establish numerous silos within the Association and make it clumsy and awkward to move forward, especially in fast changing realities that ALA Membership and Society face.
3. Bylaw Revision Process

Recently the Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness (SCOE) developed and proposed substantial structural changes for ALA. These changes are intended to make ALA more efficient, nimble and responsive to the needs of its Membership and Society. These changes need to be reflected in ALA’s governing documents, or its Constitution and Bylaws. Here are my suggestions regarding the re-drafting process:

- Given the substantial scope and magnitude of the changes that SCOE has proposed, I believe a total re-write would be the most effective and efficient approach to this task. Piecemeal amendments will likely make the assignment tedious and ineffective.

- ALA now has two core governing documents that define it: Constitution and Bylaws. Unless there is a specific legal requirement to have two separate documents, the two should be combined into one (Bylaws), with only one amending formula instead of two.

- Having assisted several organizations in re-structuring, my most important observation is that ‘The devil is in the details.’ SCOE defined ALA’s re-structuring with a high level intent of simplifying the Association and making it more efficient, cost effective, nimble and responsive, and having greater capacity to deliver its important mandate. However, I have often witnessed good intentions followed by tough discussions at the detail level, as well as inadvertent yet significant errors that becoming apparent later on.

- Given the above observations, the Revision process will benefit from these suggestions:
  - Engaging professionals, possibly including a professional writer, as well as ALA’s Legal Counsel and a Parliamentarian, to achieve concise and clear documents.
  - Engaging a Committee at the oversight level, to ask questions like:
    - a. How easy are SCOE’s proposed changes to implement? Are changes needed?
    - b. How will certain structural changes fit within ALA’s practical realities?
    - c. What must happen to make desirable but challenging changes possible?
    - d. At what pace should ALA shift from the current structure to the new one?
    - e. How should strong selection, orientation and evaluation processes supplement the Bylaws and help achieve judicious and responsible governance?
    - f. Where would policies fit in the context of developing a new set of Bylaws?
  - Engaging the ALA Executive Board, Council, and ALA Units in discussions of the fine and delicate aspects that will benefit from their feedback.
  - Allowing enough time for a few drafts to evolve before the revision is put to TWO Council votes and then a Membership vote. By investing the needed time while proceeding in a disciplined and professional manner, the Association will achieve stronger and better governing documents as well as better governance structures.