Chapter Relations Committee
Midwinter Meeting 2017 Report

Committee Charge:

To develop and recognize chapters as integral components of ALA. To encourage discussion, activities and programs that support the mutual interests of ALA and the chapters. To advise when requested on proposals and actions of other ALA units that may affect chapters. To provide a forum wherein chapters can share ideas and concerns of common interest and identify common needs and goals. To communicate these chapter needs and goals to ALA and ALA goals, programs and priorities to the chapters. To encourage and maintain a cooperative and supportive relationship among ALA, its units, and the chapters. To formulate and review periodically requirements for chapter status. To serve as an advisory committee to the Chapter Relations Office.

Committee Members:

Susan J. Schmidt (Chair), Melissa M. Brooks, Kristine L. Ferry, Terri L. Grief, Carol Hanan, Carey D. Hartmann, Julee A. Hector, Patricia Hofmann, Patti McCall, Louis Munoz, Jr, Lisa R. Varga, Steven Bailey (Intern), Jillian K. Hayes (Intern), James Neal (Executive Board Liaison), Michael Dowling (Staff Liaison), Don Wood (Staff Liaison)

Division Representatives to CRC: Nancy J. Weiner (ACRL Representative), Dana Lucile Jemison (ALCTS Representative), Carolyn Larson (RUSA Representative)

CRC Member Liaisons to Other Groups: ALA Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion—Majed Khader; Advocacy Coordinating Group—Ben Hunter; Freedom to Read Foundation—Patricia Hofmann; ALA Legislation Assembly—Carey Hartmann; Library Education Assembly—Patti McCall; Literacy Assembly—Jillian Hayes; Planning and Budget Assembly—Carol Hanan; Recruitment Assembly—Lisa Varga

Chapter Relations Committee at Annual Conference

Documents and reports related to this report are located in the Chapter Relations Committee ALA Connect community at http://connect.ala.org/node/261924.

Discussions and Action Item (Action Item is distinguished by Action Item:)

- The CRC held two meetings (Saturday, January 21, and Monday, January 23) in Atlanta. Attendees (approx. 50 each mtg.) included Chapter Presidents, Executive Directors, and Chapter Councilors.

- The CRC organized, with the Chapter Relations Office (CRO), another successful full-day Chapter Leaders Forum. The Forums, which have been held at each Midwinter and Annual for over twenty years, help prepare incoming Chapter Leaders (President-elects, treasurers, Chapter Councilors, Ex. Directors, etc.) for their roles guiding their associations. Forty-six participants from 26 state Chapters attended. Topics covered included “Reorganizing to Create More Effective Library Associations” [“Putting it All Together: Library Associations and the “R” word – One Association’s Journey of Restructuring,” Richard Grove, President, Susan Jennings, Past-President and Jeffie Nicholson, President-Elect, Tennessee Library Association; and “Indiana Preparing for the Future” (Lucinda Nord, Executive Director, Indiana Library Federation)]; “Tips for a Successful Library Advocacy Day,” Jeremy Johannesen, Executive Director, New York Library Association; and “We’ve Got to Stop Meeting Like This...” (Making Meetings Work), Eli Mina, ALA Parliamentarian. The afternoon session was an open discussion on topics and issues solicited from the attendees prior to conference.

- In the Spring, 2016, Jayne Beline, New Jersey Chapter Councilor, and Cindy Czesak, Director, Paterson Free Public Library, presented a draft ALA Council resolution Concerning the Role of Chapters in the American Library Association (now CD40, rev., rev.) to the CRC for discussion. She explained it was in response to Chapter Councilor discussions at Midwinter about how ALA initiatives are rolled out without Chapter input. The Chapters should have a role in developing national initiatives. The resolution also calls for more timely and thoughtful communication between ALA and the Chapters. One of the goals of this resolution is to support efforts to expand the roll of Chapter Relations Committee, and those who wrote the Resolution said they appreciated the COO proposal (discussed above). The writers also feel it is important to consult with Chapter
leadership prior to any and all dealings with an elected official from that state. They explained the resolution was an important conversation starter.

Beline and Czesak met with President-elect Julie B. Todaro and ALA Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels to discuss the resolution prior to the resolution being discussed by ALA Council.

After it was brought to Council, this resolution was referred to the yet-to-be-formed task force to be appointed by ALA President-elect at the time Julie Todaro’s task force on June 27, 2016. It was decided that the task force should become a subcommittee of the Chapter Relations Committee, which should work on specific recommendations for both better communication and engagement. Consequently, a CRC subcommittee was created: Subcommittee on Improving Communication and Coordination Among ALA and its Chapters.

- The mission of the Subcommittee on Improving Communication and Coordination Among ALA and its Chapters is to identify potential solutions to improve Chapter engagement by identifying roles for Chapters in national ALA efforts, roles for ALA in Chapter efforts, and solutions to improve the communication among ALA and its Chapters.

Members of the subcommittee are Susan J. Schmidt, Chair, Chapter Relations Committee, and President, United for Libraries; Gloria Creed-Dikeogu, President, Kansas Library Association; Cynthia Czesak, Member, New Jersey Library Association; Ben Hunter, Chapter Councilor, Idaho Library Association; Jeremy Johannesen, Executive Director, New York Library Association; Dale K. McNeill, Chapter Councilor, Texas Library Association; Lisa R. Varga, Executive Director, Virginia Library Association; ALA Executive Board Liaison Gina A. Persichini, Member, Idaho Library Association, and Networking Consultant, Idaho Commission for Libraries. Staff Liaisons are ALA President Julie B. Todaro; ALA Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels; Michael Dowling, Director, Chapter Relations Committee; and Don Wood, Program Officer, Chapter Relations Committee.

- The subcommittee shared its methods for gathering information and its progress. Methods including requesting participants in the Chapter Leaders Forum, CRC I, and the Chapter Councilors Forum to share their ideas and priority concerns on posters available during each meeting. Each poster had a unique question Chapter leaders were encouraged to answer. An accompanying “Parking Lot” poster provided an opportunity for them to share other concerns. The following are the results of the gathered information.

**Chapter Leaders Forum - Friday, 1/20/17**

Q: What about ALA would you like to know more about to help you function in your role as a chapter leader?

1. ALA initiatives before they are rolled out, and consulting people “on the ground” before an initiative is rolled out. [amplified by six respondents]
2. What influence, if any, does a chapter have on ALA, and how? [amplified by two respondents]
3. Will ALA supply us with names & emails of ALA members in our state, to increase outreach and engagement, find councilor successors, etc. [amplified by two respondents]
4. Availability of speakers. [amplified by two respondents]
5. Is Carla Hayden available to speak at state conferences?
6. Membership involvement — would like to learn more (not basics) about how to reach library staff and potential supporters who are not currently serving or involved with our associations, to help enlist active participation as well as new members. How to get beyond the “I don’t have time” barrier.
7. A “library of resources” that associations are using (strategic planning tools, advocacy tools, etc.), collected in one place for chapters leaders to access.
8. What specific tools and resources does ALA provide our chapters that are the most useful/popular (e.g. online meeting software, access to conference presenters, etc.)

Parking Lot:

1. How can ALA help associations that don’t have Executive Directors
2. For the report from Chapters for next year, might you add “state of State Libraries (if both state library and LDO function) and if they receive money from state to state Library Association?
Chapter Relations Committee I — 1/21/17

Q: What could ALA provide to your chapter that you could use now in your state?

1. A less complicated website. There’s so much there, but what are the most important things to know? The average ALA member is overwhelmed.
2. Chapter Leaders “Boot Camp” webinar for Presidents Elect. Also a separate Chapter Councilor Boot Camp webinar. Make these archived and accessible any time, because chapters have different election cycles. [amplified by one respondent]
3. Information on other chapters’ structures, funding, membership types/levels. Thinking of some sort of “chapter bio” we could use to find peers to go to with questions.
4. ALA could provide to my state materials and suggestions for advocacy - for libraries, education (K-12 and higher ed).
5. When the news media released the “Freedom of Speech” incident at Kansas City Public Library, many of the Missouri Library Association were unaware. ALA reached out to our chapter president and me (the chapter councilor), and that allowed us to voice our concerns too.
6. Information on what a new Chapter Councilor needs to know, organized in a way that is listed step-by-step. Talking points on the value of libraries. Consult a chapter when issues are going on. Feedback on new ALA initiatives before too far along in the process.
7. Tools, structure, local (state) members with national membership, value to librarians and trustees.

Q: What could your chapter provide that would be useful to ALA?

1. Know our congresspeople. Promote the value off ALA in our state, and what ALA can do.
2. We could host more ALA staffers/leadership at our local conferences and meetings, to forge relationships. Smaller chapters don’t see ALA people often; we don’t even know [if] they will come when asked.
3. High touch with members.

Parking Lot:

1. The survey of Directors is great! Can this survey be conducted of chapters w/o paid staff?
2. Chapter Leader Orientation — the “Joseph/Gina webinar is a good place to start.
3. Chapter training would be quite helpful. Include info on communication channels — what lists do we need to be on? What meetings are good to go to but not “required”?
4. Chapter Councilor orientation webinar.
5. Chapter Leaders 101 session at Annual and/or Midwinter.

Chapter Councilors Forum - Sunday, 1/22/17

Q: What about ALA would you like to know more about to help you function in your role as Chapter Councilor?

1. Speakers available for conferences or workshops posted on CRO website.
2. List Chapter Councilor expectations (from ALA) so chapters can make sure that these are included in job description.
3. On a super-practical level, a more user-friendly, organized website (and ALA Connect) would be a great start.
4. Thanks for all the advocacy tools for public libraries...how about providing tools, webinars, presentations on advocacy for academic libraries!
5. What is the relationship of ALA with chapters? What are ground rules? Opportunities? It’s never been clear to me after three years as Chapter Councilor.
6. I would like to know more about ALA “improving communication”; seems to me to be a matter of either (or both) orientation or reviewing/replacing listserves (Connect). In other words, there are systems in place. I don't want ALA to "check" with me/us on all decisions that might relate to our state.
7. How to better communicate about specific statewide issues (how/when/to whom ALA state chapter when they are making statement/taking action on a state issue).
Parking Lot:

1. Chapter Councilors should have to present program at state conferences to provide info and news from ALA. States don’t know enough about what ALA is all about.
2. Mechanism is needed so that Chapter Councilors know more about committee work (IFLA, COL, etc.). Communications — procedure so that ALA can find out what is going on in the chapters besides the annual chapter report.
3. Looking down the road, I think ALA may need to rethink the nature of chapters. For example, we might cancel Midwinter (and state conferences) and have regional conferences and then one national conference at Annual. That would streamline things in response to increasing costs/decreasing membership and the disconnect between the grassroots and ALA. What do you need to know from ALA Office that would make Chapter Councilor’s more? The Chapter Forum was great!!!

- The subcommittee asked four speakers to attend CRC sessions: Emily Sheketoff, Executive Director, Washington Office; International Council of Library Association Executives (ICLAE) Chair Doug Evans (Ohio Library Council Executive Director); Marci Merola, Director, Office for Library Advocacy; and Jeff Julian, Director, Public Awareness Office. Staff were asked questions specific to their ALA positions and how they might better engage with Chapters. The OLC director was asked questions related to his experience with working with ALA. The subcommittee will develop recommendations and strategies based on their answers, as well as follow up on what ALA staff may be able to do to engage and communicate with Chapters.

- A number of other suggestions were proposed and discussed, such as polling the Chapters after Midwinter; providing an orientation webinar for incoming Chapter leaders, including Chapter Councilors, establishing “office hours” at both Midwinter and Annual with Chapter mentors for new leaders; creating a subcommittee to ensure continued information exchanges among committees and CRC; working with ALA committees (eg., Committee on Legislation, the Committee on Library Advocacy and Public Awareness Committee) to learn what’s going on to accurately enhance communication; and finding a way to include Chapters that do not have executive directors in the information sharing.

- In light of the time devoted to the work of the Subcommittee on Improving Communication and Coordination Among ALA and its Chapters, liaisons and representatives were asked to submit reports after the ALA Midwinter Meeting.

2017 Annual Conference in Chicago, IL

The Subcommittee on Improving Communication and Coordination Among ALA and its Chapters will continue its work to gather additional information, as needed, and submit recommendations for both better communication and engagement, as well as address other issues related to its charge. The Chapter Relations Office and the CRC and other Chapter leaders will work together to create welcoming and orienting letters and webinars for new Chapter leaders.