

Report of the Presidential Task Force for Improving the Effectiveness of ALA's Council

Introduction:

In the fall of 2010 American Library Association president Roberta Stevens appointed a Task Force for Improving the Effectiveness of ALA's Council. She charged this task force to:

- 1) Recommend options for preparing for Council "business" ahead of Midwinter Meetings and Annual Conferences.
- 2) Prepare recommendations on the timing, scheduling and content of Council sessions with the aim of making them as productive and worthwhile as possible.
- 3) Examine the issue of committee reports to Council. Are there other options? For example, should we only have a presentation by a committee chair if there is a resolution being presented to Council? How can committees assist Council in being forward-thinking in issues that will affect the profession in the future?
- 4) Examine the resolution process and recommend how we can improve it and the relevancy of resolutions. A related concern is how to ensure Council has adequate information to consider resolutions of major impact.
- 5) Make recommendations on additional improvements to the way that Council conducts its business resulting from the work of the task force.

In her document sending this charge to the Task Force's members, she noted that "the task force should feel free to explore a range of issues related to the functioning of Council." (The full transmittal document containing the charge is Appendix A of this report.)

The individuals who have served on the Task Force represent varied experience in Council, including a new first-term member, a recent one-term members, several multi-term members, and one who has had the privilege to preside over Council meetings.

For convenience sake, the Task Force's members came to call it the Council Effectiveness Task Force or CETF. (The Task Force's roster of members and staff liaisons is Appendix B of this report.)

Council's Importance and Potential:

ALA's Constitution empowers the Council: "The Council of the American Library Association shall be the governing body of the Association" (Article IV, sec. 1.a) and "The Council shall determine all policies of the Association." (Article IV, sec. 1.b)

By its structure, the Planning and Budget Assembly is the most representative body within ALA. It "consist[s] of one representative of each division, ALA committee, round table, and five councilors-at-large and five councilors from chapters." However attendance at its meetings often falls short of being so broadly representative. Council, because it includes representatives of the divisions, the round tables, the chapters, and the membership at large, is almost certainly the next most representative body within the association. All Council members are elected; none is appointed. Although it is not a proportional representation of the membership by any of many conceivable criteria, Council is a rich cross section of the membership. As such it is positioned to provide strategic leadership to ALA. It has done so in the past, providing important input into development of ALA's first strategic plan. Through experimentation with formats—and even with seating arrangements to facilitate small group discussion

on significant issues—Council has demonstrated that it can play an important role, both in setting the Association’s strategic direction and in furthering its progress in that direction.

ALA Council can reclaim and exercise this role. To do so effectively, however, it needs the time and the tools to realize that potential. Its meeting agendas will necessarily devote most of their time to policy issues. Just as importantly, though, Council needs time—time to focus on ALA’s strategic direction and how Councilors can contribute to realization of ALA’s strategic goals.

In that spirit the Council Effectiveness Task Force makes recommendations that will help Council focus on strategic interests by keeping those interest in the foreground of its work and making more purposeful and intentional use of its time.

The Task Force’s Process in Brief:

The Task Force conducted its work through a series of conference calls, the first held in November 2010, and a single face-to-face meeting during the 2011 Midwinter Meeting in San Diego. During that meeting it identified key issues and established a schedule and process for sharing work among its members. From the very start of its work, the Task Force reached consensus that Council effectiveness does not equate to Council efficiency (i.e., the speed with which Council moves through its agendas). The body’s effectiveness is a product of its focus, procedures that enable its work, and its ability to communicate its role and its work to the ALA Membership.

Key Issues:

Based on its charge and initial discussions, the Task Force identified the following key issues related to Council’s effectiveness:

- How Council can prepare for its “business” ahead of the Midwinter Meetings and Annual Conferences.
- Timing, scheduling, and content of Council sessions and how those can contribute to overall Council effectiveness.
- Committee reports to Council—their timing, their content, and their nature.
- The resolution process and how it can contribute to overall Council effectiveness.
- Improving Council’s internal communication and its communication with members.
- The role of the Council/Executive Board/Membership information session and its relation to Membership Meetings.
- How Council can play a more strategic role in ALA.

Discussion of these issues repeatedly demonstrated their interrelatedness.

Council is but one part of ALA’s complex governance structure and has varied relationships with the membership and the Executive Board. The roles and responsibilities of both the membership and the Executive Board influence the work of Council and the content of its sessions. Some of the recommendations resulting from the Task Force’s charge therefore affect more than just the Council.

Rapidly evolving communication technologies, their social impact, the opportunities they present, and the fiscal issues they pose create a context in which every organization of any size operates today. ALA as a whole and Council carry out their responsibilities In this environment. The Task Force has kept this in mind throughout its deliberations.

At all times the Task Force was mindful of the high value ALA places on transparency, openness, and opportunities for members “to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from engagement in their association.”¹

Recommendations:

The Task Force offers a number of recommendations for changes in practice and/or policy that in its collective judgment can improve Council’s effectiveness. The recommendations are introduced and stated below.

Recommendations 3.2, 5.1, and 6.4 require Council action. The Task Force encourages Council to use all of the tools at its disposal—its various forums and caucuses, its electronic discussion list, its face-to-face discussions among Councilors at the Annual Conference and other occasions to discuss the other recommendations and adopt them or experiment with them as a step towards their implementation.

One of the Task Force’s recommendations applies to the ALA-APA. In conformance to the ALA-APA Bylaws this recommendation is being sent to the ALA-APA Board for its consideration, most probably at its fall 2011 meeting. This will give the ALA-APA Bylaws Committee time to review the recommendation and offer counsel to the ALA-APA Board of Directors. For the ALA Council’s information, background information on this and the action item being recommended to the ALA-APA Board are in Appendix C. This recommendation is rooted in part in a recurring recommendation from Eli Mina, ALA’s and ALA-APA’s parliamentarian. More importantly it is consistent with other CETF recommendations designed to create additional time for Council to proactively address “mega-issues.”

Section 1: Preparing for Council “business” ahead of Midwinter Meetings and Annual Conferences:

A great deal of information about events that will be held at the Midwinter Meeting or Annual Conference is sent to members before these meetings. Information about Council’s anticipated work at these meetings is relatively scarce. Communication technologies and ALA members’ widespread use of these technologies indicate that there are neglected opportunities for Council to prepare for its work before it meets.

RECOMMENDATION 1.1: The extensive “What’s Happening” document distributed to Council members and many others prior to both the Midwinter Meeting and the Annual Conference is very informative. It is also widely appreciated and read. An examination of successive “What’s Happening” reports reveals that they consistently provide a great deal of information about what is going on in the divisions but virtually nothing about what is going on in the ALA Committees and Council Committees. Yet these committees often bring significant issues to Council. Surely with very little effort these committees can enrich “What’s Happening.” The Task force urges chairs and staff liaisons of these committees to contribute to this compilation.

Implementation: The senior associate executive director can communicate with the chairs and staff liaisons of ALA committees and Council committees and urge them to contribute information to the

¹ ALA’s 2015 Strategic Plan, <http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/missionhistory/plan/index.cfm>, accessed May 22, 2011.

What's Happening document, especially information about issues that will be brought to Council for action.

RECOMMENDATION 1.2: The chairs of the ALA and Council committees have posting privileges to the Council list. In addition to contributing to the "What's Happening" document, they should be encouraged to use the Council list share information about their committees' ongoing work as well as sharing draft reports and action proposals to be presented to Council.

Implementation: The Training, Orientation, and Leadership Development Committee and its staff liaison, Lorelle Swader, conducts an annual orientation for committee chairs. The orientation should include this sort of advice and reinforce it through follow-up communications to the committee chairs.

RECOMMENDATION 1.3: In their face-to-face meetings during the Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference the various Council forums and caucuses provide opportunities for Councilors to discuss pending resolutions. Councilors develop a better understanding of resolutions' intent, meaning, and implications. In short, they become well informed voters. The Council discussion list serves as a de facto Council-wide forum. However the existence of forums and caucuses demonstrate that the list does not serve all Councilors' needs.

Implementation: Leadership of the various Council forums and caucuses can experiment with communication about forthcoming Council business before members arrive at the meeting site. ALA Connect groups for individual forums or caucuses may facilitate this sort of communication.

Section 2: Enhancing Council's internal communication and its communication with members:

For many years the Council list has served its purpose well. However this technology has limits. With a more robust communications technology, Council can communicate more effectively and can do more to prepare for its work prior to its meetings.

ALA Connect offers features not currently available with the Council list, notably threaded discussions. At the same time a strength of the Council list is its accommodation of read-only access for interested members, a capability currently lacking from ALA Connect. However Connect now includes a "Follow this group" option that allows non-members of closed groups such as the ALA Council Connect group to receive email alerts when new public content is posted to a group. This is similar to read-only access.

Furthermore the Task Force recommends that ALA management, perhaps assisted by a small ad hoc group of interested Councilors, assess the current capabilities of tools such as Google Docs for sharing documents in draft state with the full membership of Council. Desiderata include: tracked changes assignable to their respective authors, signed marginal comments attached to specific passages of a text, version control, the option to modulate access (e.g., open to all, access limited to members of a specified group, etc.) , and any other useful features that would allow comment on and revision of a public document. Some of these capabilities are already available in Connect's "Online docs" feature.

Such a collaborative workspace would have benefit to committees, task forces, etc., throughout ALA. It would be most useful if it can be integrated with the ALA Connect file repository feature. See the "Files" button on the right side of the screen for access to a Connect group's repository. This features

provides a convenient place for a group's documents, which can be organized into folders. Group members receive email notifications when new files are posted, as do followers, when public documents are posted.

A recent informal survey of ALA members who did not participate in the 2011 election indicated that among various other reasons some chose not to vote because they do not know enough about the candidates or because they did not think the election results would make a difference. Even before this information was discussed on the Council list the Task Force discussed ways to bridge the gap between members and Council. It appears that members do not understand the composition of Council and how they are represented in Council. That is a minor consideration compared to the real issue—some members' sense that their voice doesn't matter or that they can't have any influence.

RECOMMENDATION 2.1: The Task Force recommends that Council, in cooperation with appropriate ALA units (perhaps the Communications and Member Relations office) experiment with ways in which members can convey to individual Councilors or to the full Council their concerns, resolutions members would like Council to debate, resolutions members would like a Councilor and seconder to sponsor, issues members would like Council to make its priorities, etc.

Implementation: Member's and staff members' imaginations will be the limit. Multiple approaches should be tried. Brief videos contributed by members and/or Councilors posted on the ALA YouTube channel (<http://www.youtube.com/user/AmLibraryAssociation>), profiles (voluntary) of individual Council members and their issue interests in AL Direct, a Web form that allows members to express their concerns or proposed resolutions that will transmit those messages to all Council members (and maybe to an even wider audience), whatever! Jenny Levine has suggested the possibility of a service within ALA Connect that would enable members to identify what they consider the most pressing issues are that Council should address. An approach immediately available is to create as part of Council's Connect space an open forum using Connect's "Discussions" feature. Perhaps it could be called "Suggestions and Questions from Members." Connect's "polls/votes" feature also offers opportunities to solicit member sentiment about issues on Council's agenda. It also has potential as a way to assess members' ranking of the importance or relevance of various issues.

Section 3: The resolutions process:

Council regularly receives several documents relating to the resolutions process. These include the Resolutions Committee's table schedule and the Guidelines for Preparation of Resolutions for Council. The latter is ALA policy 5.3, last revised in 2008. It addresses the formal requirements for resolutions. In discussion with the chair of the Resolutions Committee he has indicated that the committee conducts a technical audit to be sure that resolutions fulfill the requirements of policy 5.3. It does not offer Council members who submit resolutions recommendations that will assure clarity in a resolution's expression of its intent.

RECOMMENDATION 3.1: That a document consisting of the ALA mission statement, the ALA Strategic Plan, and core values be regularly distributed as a Council document and be numbered as Council

Document xx.1 to associate it with the document number assigned to the Guidelines for Preparation of Resolutions for Council.

Implementation: Unless Council objects, this can be incorporated into the processes of the ALA Governance office.

RECOMMENDATION 3.2: The Task Force recommends that one sentence of policy 5.3 be observed with greater consistency and rigor. That sentence, provision #6 of the “Content” section of policy 5.3 states that “Resolutions should clearly support ALA’s mission, core values and/or strategic directions.” The Task Force recommends that primacy be given to the Strategic Plan.

CETF also recommends that a supplemental explanation should accompany every resolution clearly stating *how* the resolution supports ALA’s Strategic Plan as well as its mission and/or its core values. The explanation should be made through one or more expository paragraphs. This explanation is not a part of a resolution proper, but should be distributed with the text of the resolution.

These recommendations require revision of policy 5.3 as follows.

Implementation requires Council action: Resolved, that the ALA Council amends provision #6 of the “Content” section of policy 5.3 to state “Resolutions should clearly support ALA’s Strategic Plan as well as its mission and/or its core values; and add to the “Process” provisions of policy 5.3 the statement that “A supplemental explanation consisting of one or more expository paragraphs should accompany every resolution clearly stating *how* the resolution supports ALA’s Strategic Plan as well as its mission and/or its core values. This supplementary explanation is not a part of the resolution proper.”

RECOMMENDATION 3.3: In her valedictory delivered to Council on June 29, 2010, Janet Swan Hill said:

As to wordsmithing, it is important to remember that words matter. When we approve something, we approve exactly what the words said, and NOT just what we meant. Wordsmithing helps make sure that the words actually say what we mean. People sometimes get impatient and say ‘you know what we mean, let’s just pass the motion’... but while we may know what we mean TODAY, (although some of us may not), those who come after us weren’t here, and they have nothing but our words to go by. Words matter. Grammar matters. Syntax matters. It is through careful choice of words, and attention to grammar and syntax that our meaning is made clear.

When a poorly worded resolution whose intent and implications are not clear comes to the Council floor for debate, the debate sometimes devolves into on the fly wordsmithing. A member who is third in the queue for recognition to speak may have an amendment to propose that would resolve this problem but if the first and second speakers propose other amendments and Council approves those, the third speaker’s proposal may not graft successfully to the now revised resolution. Working its way out of these complications can be time consuming; it does not exemplify Council effectiveness.

The Task Force has conferred with Eli Mina, ALA’s parliamentarian. He has informed us that Sturgis offers a procedural approach that would provide a more effective approach to carry Council from a poorly worded resolution to a resolution that clearly expresses the resolution’s author’s intent.

When piecemeal wordsmithing bogs Council down, a member can make a motion to “postpone the resolution temporarily” and state that the purpose of making the motion is to create an opportunity for the resolution’s author, perhaps with assistance of other Councilors, to rewrite the motion and indicate the intention to make a motion to “*Resume Consideration*”² of the resolution after it has been re-worded. Once Council votes in favor of the motion to resume consideration, a member of Council can then amend by substitution the motion that was under consideration when the motion to postpone temporarily was made.³

Implementation: The Task Force recommends that Council apply the sequence of steps described above when it promises to clarify the purpose and intent of a poorly worded motion. The Task Force also recommends that the Council chamber be equipped with a round table able to accommodate four to six Council members. If he or she chooses, the author of a resolution requiring revision, along with recruits and/or volunteers, can use this table to discuss and rewrite the resolution so that it can come back to the Council floor through the motion to resume consideration and a motion to amend by substitution.

Section 4: Council agendas:

The Task Force examined past Council agendas. It discussed practices that might be carried out effectively outside of Council sessions or through communication channels that would not require Council session time. These included reporting the names of tellers for elections Council holds, the report of the Nominating Committee, and announcing the names of members who have submitted petitions for candidacy for Council, treasurer, or president-elect. The Task Force chose not to recommend deletion of any of these items from the agenda. Reasons included courtesy to volunteers, the opportunity for Councilors to ask questions, or avoidance of complicating staff’s work routines.

The Task Force has only one recommendation for managing the Council agendas.

RECOMMENDATION 4.1: Council should abide by its own policy stated in policy 5.5.4: “Matters and reports of a purely informational nature will be distributed to Council in writing. Oral reports will be confined to matters requiring Council action or which are requested by the Council or by the Executive Board.” By practice in recent years the Freedom to Read Foundation has reported even though it has proposed no action items for Council. Furthermore, since the FRTF is a separate organization, it is not clear whether or not it is within its authority to present an action item to the ALA Council. Council has well established, functioning stems for distributing such information prior to as well as during its Midwinter Meetings and Annual Conferences. Additionally, the Council agenda review provides a mechanism for Councilors who choose to propose an exception to policy 5.5.4 as well as a response mechanism for Councilors who disagree.

² “A motion that is postponed temporarily—or ‘tabled’—is postponed to an undetermined time. If a time or date is specified, the motion is not considered to be tabled.”—Sturgis, 4th ed., p. 69. The motion to postpone temporarily to a specified time “can be debated and amended.”—*ibid*.

³ “When the wording or effect of a motion as proposed is not satisfactory, it is sometimes better, instead of proposing several amendments, to reword the motion and propose it as an amendment by substitution. Such an amendment must be germane to the subject of the original motion, but it may differ completely from the original motion in wording, purpose and effect. The amendment by substitution of a new or reworded motion follows the usual rules governing amendments...”—Sturgis, 4th ed., pp. 51-52.

Implementation: Unless Council objects, this can be incorporated into the processes of the ALA Governance office.

The Task Force has developed another recommendation that would have implications for managing Council's time. The ALA-APA Board of Directors will receive this recommendation and must decide whether or not to approve it and forward it to the ALA-APA Council for its action. See Appendix C for information about a recommendation regarding the ALA-APA Council. If accepted, this recommendation will provide the ALA Council with additional time in which to address strategic issues.

Implementation: Requires initial action by the ALA-APA Board of Directors, most likely at its fall 2011 meeting.

Section 5: The Council/Executive Board/Membership Information Sessions:

Policy 5.5.2 states "At each Midwinter Meeting, there shall be at least one session of Council with the Executive Board for information only, to be held prior to other meetings of Council. Any member of the Association may participate in the information session. At each annual Conference, there shall be at least one joint session of Membership and Council with the Executive Board, for information only, to be held prior to other meetings of Council and Membership."

Membership Meetings are established in policy 7.4.10: "A membership meeting shall be held during the first two days of the Annual Conference, excluding days when pre-conferences are held, and at such times as may be set by the Executive Board, Council, or by membership petition, as provided for in Article II, Section 4 of the Bylaws. Agendas of membership meetings shall provide priority to discussion of membership resolutions during the second part of the meeting. Memorials, tributes, and testimonials shall be introduced at the beginning of the last Membership Meeting." Additional information on introducing resolutions at Membership Meetings makes up the majority of policy 7.4.10.

Over a number of years the Committee on Membership Meetings has tried different approaches to attract members to these meetings. The results have been very mixed. At the most recent Annual Conference neither Membership Meeting attracted a quorum.

The first half of recent Membership Meetings has typically consisted of a program addressing a specific topic. Because Membership Meetings are held only during the Annual Conference, a conference that has a surfeit of program opportunities for every member's interests, the Task Force questions the need for a program within a Membership Meeting.

Several weeks before the 2011 Annual Conference, ALA experimented for the first time with an online Virtual Town Hall for members, different for a Membership Meeting since the ALA bylaws do not authorize online voting at a Membership Meeting, although the Town Hall employed technology to poll participants online in real-time. That can be viewed as a test of feasibility for online voting in the future. The Task Force applauds ALA's effort to expand member's opportunities to participate online.

Attendance at the Midwinter Meeting is strong and that meeting's character is changing. The only opportunity at Midwinter for members to hear in person about major issues affecting the Association is the Council/Executive Board/Membership information session. At the Annual Conference members can avail themselves of this opportunity and—depending upon the content of the first part of the Membership Meeting—the Membership Meeting.

Other communications channels and technologies (e.g., *AL Direct*, the abundant information about Council and the Executive Board on the ALA Website, numerous blogs) make information about ALA widely available to members regardless of where they are or the time of day they wish to access that information. What these technologies lack—at least at present—is the opportunity for members to respond and to interact with ALA leadership. Both the Membership Meeting and the Council/Executive Board/Membership information session offer this opportunity, an opportunity that ought to be preserved and that can be enhanced.

The action recommended immediately below has the support of the Membership Meetings Committee.

RECOMMENDATION 5.1: Task Force has concluded that ALA can expand these opportunities for members present at the Midwinter Meeting or Annual Conference by combining the best of the Membership Meeting and the best of the Council/Executive Board/Membership information session. This will require amendment of policy 5.2.2 and policy 7.4.10.

NOTE: All changes in the text of policy 5.5.2 and policy 7.4.10 are highlighted; in addition, text to be deleted has a ~~strikethrough~~ and new text appears in *italics*; some of the existing text has been moved.

Implementation requires Council action: Resolved, that the ALA Council amends policy 5.5.2 and policy 7.4.10 as follows:

Policy 5.5.2: At each Midwinter Meeting, there shall be at least one session of Council with the Executive Board for information only, to be held prior to other meetings of Council. Any member of the Association may participate in the information session. ~~At each annual Conference, there shall be at least one joint session of Membership and Council with the Executive Board, for information only, to be held prior to other meetings of Council and Membership.~~

Policy 7.4.10: A membership meeting shall be held during ~~the first two days of the Annual Conference, excluding days when pre-conferences are held, prior to the meetings of Council. and at such times as may be set by the Executive Board, Council, or by membership petition, as provided for in Article II, Section 4 of the Bylaws. Agendas of membership meetings shall provide priority to discussion of membership resolutions during the second part of the meeting. Memorials, tributes, and testimonials shall be introduced at the beginning of the last Membership Meeting.~~

The membership meeting shall consist of:

- *A session during which the Executive Board, Council, and members may provide information to one another. Any member of the Association may participate in this information session.*
- *A session during which the voting members of the Association may exercise their authority to act as set out in Article VI, Sections 4(a) and 4(c) of the Constitution.*
- *Memorials, tributes, and testimonials may be mentioned by the presiding officer.*

Membership meetings may also be held at such times as may be set by the Executive Board, Council, or by membership petition, as provided for in Article II, Section 4 of the Bylaws.

Additional requirements for Implementation: The Membership Meetings Committee will need to develop the agendas for these revamped membership meetings. The Task Force recommends that the agendas for both the Council/Executive Board/Membership information session at Midwinter and the Membership Meeting at the Annual Conference include the president's report, president-elect's report, and the executive director's report. Reports from BARC and the Endowment Trustees

are also desirable. If this report's recommendation in appendix C is implemented, the executive director's report can include information about the ALA-APA. The Task Force further recommends that the Membership Meetings Committee confer with the Executive Board's Executive Committee on the agenda for this meeting, the amount of time required to accommodate that agenda, and how to accommodate resolutions as described in the part of policy 7.4.10 that is untouched by this amendment to policy 7.4.10. If recommendations explained in Appendix C are implemented, the executive director's reports should include information about ALA-APA.

Section 6: Opportunities for Council to play a more strategic role within ALA:

ALA's Strategic Plan is adopted by a vote of Council. Presumably Council takes actions within the context of the Strategic Plan and ALA's programmatic priorities of "diversity, equitable access to information & library services, education and lifelong learning, intellectual freedom, advocacy for libraries and the profession, literacy, and organizational excellence."⁴

RECOMMENDATION 6.1: The ALA Strategic Plan and the list of key action areas should be distributed as a Council document just the Rules for Council Meetings are regularly distributed as a Council document.

Implementation: Unless Council objects, this can be incorporated into the processes of the ALA Governance office.

RECOMMENDATION 6.2: The Council Orientation session should include a review of the ALA Strategic Plan and its role in budget setting, informing presidential initiatives, and guiding ongoing operations.

Implementation: The Council Orientation Committee can incorporate this into its orientation sessions and, as appropriate, invite key ALA staff or officers (e.g., the treasurer) to participate in this.

RECOMMENDATION 6.3: Recommendations above offer opportunities to free time in Council sessions. This "found time" should be built into the Council II or Council III agenda and reserved for a Council discussion of a "mega-issue" that can be explored for 30-45 minutes. This might result in action items that will further progress on ALA's strategic goals.

Implementation: The Executive Board should select a topic at its fall and spring meetings and solicit "experts" from within the membership of ALA to provide a brief white paper on the issue selected to be distributed to Council a minimum of six weeks prior to the conference. As a catalyst to the discussion an expert(s) (not necessarily the author of the white paper) will provide a brief synopsis of the issue selected for discussion. The ALA President or a designee will facilitate the discussion during the last (approximately) 45 minutes of Council II.⁵ The format of discussions may need to change depending on the topic; i.e., general discussion, small breakout groups, panel discussion, etc.

⁴ These priorities, also called "key action areas," are listed and described at <http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/missionhistory/keyactionareas/index.cfm>, accessed May 21, 2011.

⁵ The Task Force recommends that this be done during Council II rather than Council III when the pressure of travel commitments could diminish the fruitfulness of such a discussion. Furthermore, if one or more action items emerge from that discussion, there would be opportunity to deal with them during Council II rather than wait until council convenes again.

Through these discussions Council may identify policy issues or other matters on which it is appropriate to take action.

RECOMMENDATION 6.4: The Task Force recommends that Council conduct a self-assessment of how well it carries out its role, how well its practices and procedures serve its mission—in other words, a self-assessment of its effectiveness. This effort should be led by a disinterested third party facilitator. This almost certainly has fiscal implications.

Implementation requires action by Council: Resolved, that Council direct the ALA executive director to develop a proposal and budget to enable the ALA Council to conduct a self-assessment of its effectiveness.

Addendum: The “relevancy” issue

The “Background” section of president Stevens’s charge to the Task Force notes “there have been longstanding expressions of concern by members about the relevance of the some of the issues covered by the Council. The comments tend to center around the perception that ALA’s governing body is not dealing with matters of importance to libraries.”

The Task Force discussed this matter. The recommendation above that the resolutions process be revised to require that resolutions “must articulate in one or more expository paragraphs how they support ALA’s Strategic Plan as well as its mission and/or its core values” addresses this issue. A one- or two-paragraph explanation of how a resolution supports ALA’s mission, core values and/or strategic directions will surely be open to interpretations— interpretations probably as varied as ALA’s membership. ALA values democracy, both within the Association and far beyond. The highest profile demonstration of democracy in action in ALA is in the work of Council, the deliberative policy making body elected by ALA members to represent them. No group of ALA members can be established nor establish itself as the arbiters about what issues and topics and resolutions are germane to Council. Ultimately the deliberative process and votes of our democratically elected Council determine this on a case-by-case basis. Through its vote Council will determine whether or not the issues a resolution addresses is relevant.

Janet Swan Hill summed this up in her valedictory delivered to Council on June 29, 2010:

...about the issue of “it’s not ALA’s business.” Our profession and our association are based on communication, access to information and ideas, and the exchange of ideas. There has to be a place in the organization where issues that many of our members DO consider to be important, and relevant, and connected to librarianship—w here those issues can be brought forward for serious discussion, and where action can be taken.

It’s our job to afford that opportunity, and to listen, to think, to participate, to approach each debate with an open mind, and ultimately to decide. If we defeat the motions brought forward, so be it.

CETF Appendix A: Task Force charge

Presidential Task Force for Improving the Effectiveness of ALA's Council

Background:

With the decision to eliminate the Council session on Wednesday morning at both the ALA Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference, the resulting compressed time frame has required adjustments to the Midwinter and Annual schedules and to the schedules of the sessions themselves. The net effect is a more rapid pace for completing committee and Council work.

In addition, there have been longstanding expressions of concern by members about the relevance of the some of the issues covered by the Council. The comments tend to center around the perception that ALA's governing body is not dealing with matters of importance to libraries, particularly in these difficult economic times with flat or reduced funding for staff, collections and services.

Charge:

I have asked Jim Rettig, the 2008-2009 ALA President, to chair a task force examining the Council's schedule and the structure of its sessions, Council's operation and modes of communication, and any other factors they deem helpful in developing recommendations to make the governing body more productive and responsive to the concerns of ALA's membership. In an overall sense, the charge for this task force is focused on transforming the ALA Council to reflect the transformation in the ways are libraries and society in the 21st century are communicating, collaborating, and "doing business."

While the task force should feel free to explore a range of issues related to the functioning of Council, I am specifically requesting that they:

- 1) Recommend options for preparing for Council "business" ahead of Midwinter Meetings and Annual Conferences.
- 2) Prepare recommendations on the timing, scheduling and content of Council sessions with the aim of making them as productive and worthwhile as possible.
- 3) Examine the issue of committee reports to Council. Are there other options? For example, should we only have a presentation by a committee chair if there is a resolution being presented to Council? How can committees assist Council in being forward-thinking in issues that will affect the profession in the future?
- 4) Examine the resolution process and recommend how we can improve it and the relevancy of resolutions. A related concern is how to ensure Council has adequate information to consider resolutions of major impact.
- 5) Make recommendations on additional improvements to the way that Council conducts its business resulting from the work of the task force.

The time frame for release of the task force's recommendations is the spring of 2011 to ensure sufficient time for review by ALA's Council prior to the Annual Conference in New Orleans.

CETF Appendix B: Task Force members and staff liaisons

Presidential Task Force for Improving the Effectiveness of ALA's Council

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CETF Appendix C: Task Force Recommendation to the ALA-APA Board on the ALA-APA Council

Introduction:

In the fall of 2010 American Library Association president Roberta Stevens appointed a Task Force for Improving the Effectiveness of ALA's Council. She charged this task force to:

- 6) Recommend options for preparing for Council "business" ahead of Midwinter Meetings and Annual Conferences.
- 7) Prepare recommendations on the timing, scheduling and content of Council sessions with the aim of making them as productive and worthwhile as possible.
- 8) Examine the issue of committee reports to Council. Are there other options? For example, should we only have a presentation by a committee chair if there is a resolution being presented to Council? How can committees assist Council in being forward-thinking in issues that will affect the profession in the future?
- 9) Examine the resolution process and recommend how we can improve it and the relevancy of resolutions. A related concern is how to ensure Council has adequate information to consider resolutions of major impact.
- 10) Make recommendations on additional improvements to the way that Council conducts its business resulting from the work of the task force.

In her document sending this charge to the Task Force's members, she noted that "the task force should feel free to explore a range of issues related to the functioning of Council." As Task Force for Improving the Effectiveness of ALA's Council (hereafter CETF) considered issues that affect the Council meeting agendas, it examined a recurring recommendation for changes be made to the ALA-APA Council that Eli Mina, ALA's parliamentarian, has made in his semi-annual reports. In his July 2, 2010 memo to Keith Fiels conveying his observations on Council during the 2010 Annual Conference, Mr. Mina wrote:

As I suggested in past reports, it may be useful to consider modifying the ALA-APA governance structures (via Bylaw amendments), so that the ALA-APA is governed by a separate Board (instead of the large ALA Council). Such a Board could then report on its activities to the ALA Executive Board and/or ALA Council. Such a move can simplify the decision-making processes and make them better focused and more efficient.

With staff assistance, the CETF gathered considerable information about ALA-APA's origins, plans for its governance, the meetings of the ALA Council that led up to ALA-APA's creation, and the several versions of the document(s) the ALA Council considered and the version on which it ultimately acted.

Background of the ALA-APA Council

1. The ALA-APA's history is explained at <http://ala-apa.org/about-ala-apa/ala-apa-history/>.
2. Council document #50.3 from the 2001 Annual Conference is the report to Council from the Committee on Education (full report at <http://ala-apa.org/certification-news/post-masters-certification/>). That document makes the case for creation of a 501(c)6 professional organization called the ALA Institute for Professional Practice (later the ALA-Allied Professional Association). The "Bylaws Outline" provided for an ALA-IPP Board of Directors:

"The ALA/APA Board of Directors will include all officers and members of the ALA Executive Board, elected by ALA membership or ALA Council, according to the ALA Constitution and

Bylaws. No additional Directors may be elected or appointed by the ALA/APA . Vacancies and resignations will handled consistent with the ALA Constitution and Bylaws.”

The draft of the bylaws presented to Council at the 2001 Annual Conference did not provide for a Council. Apparently the task force that initially drafted the bylaws thought that management and oversight by the APA Board of Directors would be adequate.

3. In Council’s discussion of revised APA bylaws on January 22, 2002 during the 2002 Midwinter Meeting, Blanche Wools, chair of the Committee on Education stated “a new article IV has been added to provide for an ALA/APA Council, whose members are the same individuals, concurrently serving on the ALA Council. The ALA/APA Council is named by the governing body of the ALA/APA.” A review of Council transcripts from the 2001 Annual Conference and the 2002 Midwinter Meeting provide no clear evidence about how nor exactly when this change came about. Memories of trusted sources such as Lois Ann Gregory-Wood and Mary Ghikas cannot provide such evidence. It is reasonable to assume that the APA Council was added as a response to discussion in various Council forums and other discussion outside of the Council sessions.
4. APA bylaws which ALA Council approved at the 2002 Midwinter Meeting include these provisions:
 - a. The members of the ALA-APA Council shall be those individuals who are concurrently serving as members of the ALA Council.
 - b. The Council of the ALA-APA shall be the governing body of the Association. The Council shall determine all policies of the ALA-APA and its decisions shall be binding upon ALA-APA.
5. During the 2002 Midwinter Meeting’s discussion by the ALA Council about the ALA-APA bylaws and the procedures by which they can be amended, a question came up about ALA-APA’s membership. The meeting transcript shows that ALA’s legal counsel explained: “The bylaws don't call for members. If you approve the bylaw, there are no members of the organization. It's tied to the ALA through a completely interlocking Board and Council. So by electing the membership of this Council, you are also electing individuals who will serve as the Council of the separate organization.” The ALA-APA Council members do not represent members since ALA-APA has no members.
6. The ALA-APA Council agenda at the 2011 Midwinter Meeting allowed 30 minutes for its meeting. The only actions the ALA-APA Council took during this meeting were to approve the agenda for this meeting and to approve the minutes of its meeting at the 201 Annual Conference. Twenty-five minutes elapsed from the time the meeting was called until it adjourned; most of that time was devoted to reports of the officers and several APA Committees.
7. ALA-APA currently has the following standing committees:
 - [Budget Analysis and Review Committee \(BARC\)](#)
 - [Bylaws Committee](#)
 - [Committee on Organization](#)
 - [Finance and Audit Committee \(F&A\)](#)
 - [Standing Committee on the Salaries and Status of Library Workers](#)
 - [Certification Program Committee](#)
 - [Certified Public Library Administrator Program Certification Review Committee](#)

- [Library Support Staff Certification Program Certification Review Committee](#)
- [Publishing Committee](#)
- [Promotion and Fundraising Committee](#)

Discussion

- A. The current committee structure assures close oversight over the ALA-APA's finances through [Budget Analysis and Review Committee \(BARC\)](#) and the Executive Board's [Finance and Audit Committee \(F&A\)](#). These two committee's receives data and support from staff. APA's finances has been an area of continual concern since its founding.
- B. It is common among large voluntary membership associations to delegate governance to an assembly, council, congress (by whatever name) that is elected by and represents the organization's personal members. In civic life representative democratic government bodies are the norm with exceptions such as the New England Town Meeting (in those towns where it still remains). A key characteristic of these bodies is that they represent members who elect them directly.
 - a. ALA-APA has no members.
 - b. Its Council is elected by ALA members by virtue of electing the ALA Council.
 - c. Council Document #24 Revised, distributed at the 2002 Midwinter Meeting, includes an appendix consisting of 14 questions and answers about APA. Question and answer #11 is:
 - Q: Will ALA members also be members of APA?
 - A: No. Not all ALA members are concerned with professional practice. ALA membership includes not only librarians, but also trustees, library supporters, other library staff, and organizations and corporations. Our broadly inclusive membership base is an important part of ALA's success. The transition task force [created to begin APA's work] will examine a variety of options for direct participation and support.
 - d. Because ALA-APA has no members and because a council is needed in a membership organization to represent the members, the inclusion of a Council in ALA-APA can be viewed as unfounded in governance theory.
 - e. Because the one area of ALA-APA business that has required the closest scrutiny has been its finances and because two ALA-APA committees provide the necessary rigorous oversight, a Council is not necessary to fulfill this role. This oversight is especially important as long as ALA-APA is a debtor to ALA's creditor role in relation to ALA-APA.
 - f. ALA members will continue to be interested in state of ALA-APA's finances, the scope and success of its programs, and its advocacy work on behalf of library workers. Information of this sort about APA can be shared by ALA-APA staff and the ALA-APA Board of Directors with ALA members and others through:
 - i. Periodical communications through the APA Web site and other communications channels.
 - ii. Committee reports can and should be posted on the ALA-APA Website.
 - iii. Even though it is a session of ALA it seems reasonable that the ALA Council/Executive Board/Membership information sessions and Membership

meetings are also vehicles for sharing information about ALA-APA with interested parties and providing them with an opportunity to ask questions or request additional information.

- iv. The ALA-APA Council electronic discussion group could be renamed and opened to all interested parties to subscribe to provide a forum in which to discuss topics excluded from the ALA Council list because of the legal framework in which ALA operates.

If the ALA-APA Council is abolished, time saved during the Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference will be time for ALA Council to manage its agenda with greater flexibility and to devote more time to ALA's most substantive policy issues. At the Midwinter Meeting it might also allow a closer connection between the Council sessions and the forum for the Executive Board candidates, perhaps even incorporating that forum into a Council session.

Procedures for amending the Bylaws of the ALA-APA

The ALA-APA Bylaws (<http://ala-apa.org/about-ala-apa/governing-documents/bylaws/>) provide for their amendment thus:

Article XI. Amendments

Proposals for amending these bylaws shall originate in the ALA-APA Board of Directors or the ALA-APA Council. These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the ALA-APA Council, provided that notice of at least thirty days of the proposed Bylaws amendments shall be given to all Council members, or if no notice is given, the Bylaws may be amended by a three-fourths vote of the ALA-APA Council.

Recommendations from the CETF to the ALA-APA Board

In light of the background information and discussion above and given how little business the ALA-APA Council has had to conduct in recent years, the Council Effectiveness Task Force recommends that, in accordance with the provisions of the ALA-APA bylaws, the ALA-APA Board take action no later than its fall 2011 meeting to make a motion that the ALA-APA Council to amend the APA bylaws to abolish the APA Council and adopt the following changes in the ALA-APA Bylaws. The ALA-APA Council could debate and act on that motion at the 2012 Midwinter Meeting in Dallas.

The needed Bylaws changes to effect this change are presented below. All changes in the text below are highlighted; in addition, text to be deleted has a ~~strike through~~ and new text appears in *italics*.

- Amend Article IV (ALA-APA Council) of the ALA-APA Bylaws by deleting in full that Article:
 - A. ~~The ALA-APA Council shall consist of those individuals who are concurrently serving as members of the ALA Council.~~
 - B. ~~The ALA-APA Council shall be the governing body of the ALA-APA and shall determine all policies of the ALA-APA. Its decisions shall be binding on the ALA-APA.~~
 - C. ~~The ALA-APA Council shall hold at least two meetings each year, in conjunction with the ALA Midwinter Meeting and ALA Annual Conference. All meetings of the ALA-APA Council shall be open to ALA members and the press.~~
 - D. ~~The quorum for the ALA-APA Council shall be the same as that for the ALA Council.~~

CETF report to Council, June 2011—Appendix C: Recommendation to ALA-APA Board

- Amend Article V. (ALA-APA Board of Directors) to read:
 - A. The ALA-APA Board of Directors shall consist of those individuals are who concurrently serving as members of the ALA Executive Board.
 - B. *The ALA-APA Board of Directors shall be the governing body of the ALA-APA and shall determine all policies of the ALA-APA. Its decisions shall be binding on the ALA-APA.*
 - C. The Board of Directors shall ~~act for the ALA-APA Council in the~~ *oversee*-administration of established policies and programs. The Board shall be the body that manages, ~~within this context,~~ the affairs of the ALA-APA.
 - D. The ALA-APA Board of Directors shall hold at least one meeting each year. All meetings of the ALA-APA Board of Directors shall be open to ALA members and the press, except for discussions affecting the privacy of individuals or institutions, or on confidential legal matters.
 - E. A majority shall constitute a quorum of the Board of Directors.
- Amend Article VII (Committees) to read:
 - A. The ALA-APA Board of Directors ~~or Council~~ may establish standing or special committees and prescribe their purpose and composition. Only personal members of ALA shall be appointed to these committees, except by authorization of the ALA-APA Board of Directors or by Article VII B of these Bylaws. In such cases, a majority of members must be personal members of ALA, and the quorum shall be a majority of the members of ALA on that committee.
 - B. There shall be a standing certification review committee for each proposed certification specialty program, appointed by the ALA-APA Board of Directors, to exist for the life of that program. Each Certification Review Committee will include active practitioners and library and information studies educators. Each review committee must include at least one representative of the public (who may not be a librarian or employed by a library). The purpose of a certification review committee will be to oversee development and administration of a validated method of measuring competence, based on the subject standards for professional practice, licensed from the American Library Association; establishment of an appeals process for the specific program; and, other implementation processes, subject to the approval of the ALA-APA Council. Appointments to each certification review committee will be for four years, non-renewable. Initial appointments will be staggered. The certification review committee(s) will report to the ALA-APA Board of Directors ~~and ALA-APA Council.~~
 - C. There shall be a standing committee of nine members, appointed by the ALA-APA Board of Directors, to guide ALA-APA activities in support of better salaries, comparable worth, pay equity, and similar programs related to the status of librarians and other library workers. This committee will report to the ALA-APA ~~Council~~ *Board of Directors* at each regular meeting.
- Article VII (Resignation)

Notwithstanding the provisions in Articles ~~IV,~~ V, VI and VII, an individual who is unable or unwilling to serve as a member of ALA-APA ~~Council,~~ *the* Board or ~~a~~ Committee shall be entitled to submit a written resignation to the Executive Director, and upon submission of said resignation, that individual shall cease to be a member of the respective body.
- Article XI (Amendments)

Proposals for amending these bylaws shall originate in the ALA-APA Board of Directors ~~or the ALA-APA Council.~~ These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the ALA-APA ~~Council,~~

CETF report to Council, June 2011—Appendix C: Recommendation to ALA-APA Board

~~Board of Directors, provided that notice of at least thirty days of the proposed Bylaws amendments shall be given to all Council members, published in appropriate communication channels and the notice invites comment to the Board of Directors. or if no notice is given, the Bylaws may be amended by a three-fourths vote of the ALA-APA Council.~~

The motion should also authorize the APA Bylaws Committee to renumber, as necessary, articles in the APA Bylaws if this motion is approved by the ALA-APA Co