

American Library Association Constitution and Bylaws Committee
Report to Council
Annual Conference 2015—San Francisco, California

1. Follow-up to the Committee’s Work at the 2015 Midwinter Meeting

In January the Constitution and Bylaws Committee presented a proposal to the ALA Council to place on the spring 2015 ballot the following:

Amend Article XII of the ALA Bylaws to state:
Robert's Rules of Order in the latest edition, shall govern the Association in all cases to which it can be applied and in which it is not inconsistent with the Constitution, the Bylaws, or special rules of order of the Association.

The ALA membership voted in favor of this. The vote was 7,407 (84.5% of votes cast) in favor and 1,363 (15.5% of votes cast) against. The change took effect immediately upon certification of the vote.

2. Affiliation Issue

A. Questions about Wording and Meaning:

In the course of answering a reference question, Karen Muller, ALA’s Librarian and Knowledge Management Specialist, brought this question to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee:

Article X. Affiliated Organizations and Chapters

- **Section 1.** The Council may by vote affiliate with the American Library Association or with any subdivision thereof upon its request, any national or international organization having purposes similar to those of the Association or its subdivision. The dues of affiliated organizations shall be as provided in the Bylaws.
- **Section 2.** The Council may by vote affiliate the Association, or any subdivision thereof upon its request, with; provided, however, that no subdivision of the Association may separately affiliate itself with an organization with which the Association as a whole is affiliated.
- **Section 3.** By action of the Council, and in accordance with the Bylaws of the American Library Association, any legally constituted state, provincial, regional, or territorial library association may become a chapter of the American Library Association and receive such rights and privileges as provided in the Bylaws of the Association and under such conditions as may be provided in the Bylaws.

From <http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/constitution/constitution#affiliated>

I [*i.e.*, Karen Muller]checked the last printed Handbook, and it has the same text.

Should it read “The Council may by vote **to** affiliate with the American Library Association or with...” Or “The Council may by vote **affiliation** with the American Library Association or with...”?

The phrase “The Council may by vote affiliate with...” is problematic; there seems to be a word missing—or something else wrong with it. Furthermore, the text overall suffers from

awkwardness and ambiguity. Do these sections of Article X address ALA affiliating “with any national or international organization having purposes similar to those of the Association”? Or is it that “any national or international organization having purposes similar to those of the Association” can, with Council’s approval, affiliate with ALA? Or both? It appears that Section 1 deals with organizations that want to affiliate with ALA and that Section 2 refers to ALA or some part of ALA that wants to affiliate with an external national or international organization.

Karen Muller and her ALA Library colleague Valerie Hawkins have provided direction to documents that provide information about the early history of these sections of the bylaws. These shed light on the intent and purpose of at least Article X, Section 1.

B. The Historical Record

1907 The ALA Handbook published in the *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, vol. 1, no. 5 (September 1907) includes the text of the ALA Constitution adopted in 1900. Sec. 17 of the 1900 Constitution lists duties and powers of the Council including “It may by a two-thirds vote upon suitable conditions, affiliate with the American Library Association other organizations kindred in purpose.” (Source: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25684712>)

1909 The ALA Handbook published in the *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, vol. 3, no. 4 (July 1909) includes the text of the ALA Constitution as adopted in 1909. Sec. 16 of the 1909 Constitution lists duties of the Council including ““It may by a two-thirds vote upon suitable conditions, affiliate with the American Library Association other organizations kindred in purpose and by the same vote establish sections of the Association.” (Source: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25684826>)

1920 The *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, vol. 14, no. 1 (January 1920) includes proceedings of the Special ALA Conference held in Chicago, January 1-3, 1920. Its purpose included “a proposed revision of the Constitution of the Association.” (Source: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25685799>) Debate during the Third General Session held the morning of Friday, January 2 includes:

Mr. Hamilton: In view of the fact that the committee was unable to recommend anything in reference to affiliated organizations, under Section 25, I am unable to find anything in the old constitution as to what the meaning is, I would like to ask the secretary what is meant.

Secretary Utley: There is a provision in the constitution, as I recall it, that the Council may affiliate with the American Library Association any other body engaged in kindred work, and there is a provision for affiliating regional or other associations as affiliated organizations, with representation on Council.”

Mr. Hamilton: Regional and affiliated organizations are both mentioned here, and I do not get the distinction.

Secretary Utley: They are all affiliated organizations. In our general practice we mean by “Affiliated organizations” the four organizations affiliated with the American Library Association—the National Association of State Libraries, the League of Library Commissioners, the American Association of Law Libraries, and the Special Libraries Association.

...

Mr. Bishop: May I recall to the gentlemen who have been speaking my remark of this morning on the difficulty the committee found itself in as to the matter of affiliated

associations? This rather difficult question remains to be solved as to what is an affiliated organization.

The ALA Handbook published in the *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, vol. 14, no. 5 (September 1920) includes the text of the ALA Constitution as adopted in 1909. The “affiliate” statement in Sec. 16 is identical to that published in the 1909 handbook. (Source: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25685874>)

1921 A report on the 1921 Colorado published in *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, vol.15, no, 3 (May 1921) notes that at the 1920 Annual Conference in Colorado Springs Section 26 of the Constitution was amended. The ALA Handbook published in the *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, vol. 15, no. 5 (September 1921) includes the amended text of the ALA Constitution as adopted in 1921. Sec. 26 of the 1921 Constitution is titled “Affiliated Organizations” and states: “The Council may by vote affiliate with the American Library Association any national society having purposes similar to those of the American Library Association. The dues of affiliated societies shall be based on the number of its members who are not also members of the American Library Association as specified in the by-laws.” (Source: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25685960>)

C. Current Issues

Are affiliates organization members?¹

Article 1 of the current ALA Bylaws is labeled “Classification of Membership.” Its section 1 lists Personal, Chapter, Organization, and Corporate members. It appears that affiliates are treated as Organization members. Article 1, Section 1 of the ALA Bylaws states:

Organization Members: Non-profit libraries and nonprofit schools conducting programs of library education; library associations; affiliated organizations; foreign organizations; and non-profit organizations other than libraries and library schools.

This implies that all affiliated organizations are organizational members and pay dues to belong to ALA as organizational members. That supports, at least implicitly, the interpretation that Article X section 1 of the Constitution refers to Council’s approving external organizations to become affiliates of ALA.

Section 2 of Article 1 of the ALA Bylaws addresses member “Categories and Dues.” It states that “Dues for Chapter Members, Organization Members, and Corporate Members shall be set by Council upon recommendation of the Executive Board. Dues for September 1, 2014-August 31, 2015 for organizational members are published at <http://www.ala.org/membership/ala-organizational-membership>:

\$175 - *Very Small Library*

\$300 – *Small*

\$500 – *Medium*

\$1,300 – *Large*

\$2,000 - *Very Large*

\$150 - *Other* —includes Chapters and Affiliates, International Libraries, and non-profit organizations other than libraries

¹ ALA documents seem to use the words “organization” and “organizational” interchangeably when referring to this category of members.

This confirms and clarifies that affiliates are organization members and that their current annual dues are \$150.

D. Procedural Information on Amending the ALA Constitution

The ALA Constitution and Bylaws Committee has concluded that both Sections 1 and 2 of Article X of the ALA Constitution should be rewritten to clarify their meaning. This requires amending the ALA Constitution.

Article XII of the ALA Constitution states:

All proposals for amending the Constitution shall originate in the Council. A proposed amendment shall become effective when it shall have been approved by a majority of the members of the Council present and voting at two consecutive meetings held not less than two months apart, followed by ratification by the members of the Association either by a vote by mail of a majority of the members of the Association voting, or by a majority vote of the members present and voting at a membership meeting of the Association. The Council, on approving a proposed amendment for the second time, shall specify whether a vote on ratification shall be taken at a membership meeting of the Association or by mail, and if a mail vote is ordered, the Council shall fix the time for the beginning and closing of the balloting. If a vote at a membership meeting is ordered, at least one month's written notice shall be given to the Association of the text of the proposed amendment.

E. ACTION ITEM—Recommendation that Council approve an amendment to the ALA Constitution as a first step towards placing the amendment on the spring 2016 ballot for a vote by the ALA membership:

Resolved, that the following amendment to the ALA Constitution be approved so that at the 2016 Midwinter Meeting Council can consider placing the amendment on the spring 2016 ballot for the membership's vote:

Amend Article X of the ALA Constitution to state:

Section 1. National or international organizations having purposes similar to those of the Association or to one or more of the Association's subdivisions may request to become an affiliate of the Association. Requests for affiliation are subject to Council's approval.

Section 2. The Association or any subdivision thereof may request to become an affiliate with national or international organizations having purposes similar to those of the Association or to one or more of the Association's subdivisions. However no subdivision of the Association may separately affiliate itself with an organization with which the Association is affiliated.

Article X, section 3 of the ALA Constitution is not affected by this amendment.

The Constitution and Bylaws Committee expresses its thanks to Karen Muller and Valerie Hawkins of the ALA Library for their excellent reference work in guiding the committee to relevant historical documents. Had Karen Muller not brought the ambiguity of Article X, section 1 to the committee's attention, this issue would probably remain a sleeper for an unknown time.

Respectfully submitted to the ALA Council June 27, 2015

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Appendix 1: Roles of the ALA Executive Board and the ALA Constitution and Bylaws Committee

On October 8, 1982 the ALA Executive Board approved criteria and a set of recommended procedures for reviewing applications for affiliation with ALA. This document was amended in 2010.

Source: <http://www.ala.org/groups/affiliates/affiliates/criteria>

The ALA Executive Board approves the following criteria and procedures for affiliation:

1. The organization should be national or international in scope;
2. The organization should be nonprofit;
3. The organization should have interests consistent with those of ALA;
4. The organization can affiliate only at one level, either with the Association or with a subdivision of the Association;
5. It has a sufficiently large membership (usually 100) and has been in existence for a sufficient time (usually 4 years) to give the promise of worthwhile activity and continued support;
6. The organization's constitution and bylaws do not conflict with ALA's;
7. The organization does not discriminate in its membership on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disabilities, or national origin.

Concerning procedures, it is recommended that:

1. Applications for affiliation should be supported by:
 - a) A statement including the year of founding; the total number of members; a list of journals and other publications, if any; or other evidence of interest in libraries and librarianship or information science
 - b) A brief history of the organization, including its aims.
 - c) A copy of its current constitution and bylaws.
 - d) The names and addresses of current officers.
 - e) A statement of ways in which the applicant visualizes cooperation with ALA.
 - f) A statement that the organization does not discriminate in its membership on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disabilities, or national origin.
2. The ALA Constitution and Bylaws Committee will examine the applicant's constitution and bylaws to see that no conflict exists between the ALA constitution and bylaws and the applicant's.
3. The Executive Director will evaluate the other documents mentioned above in point 1 to make a preliminary determination concerning the applicant's meeting ALA criteria and will so report to the Executive Board
4. The Executive Board will act on the Executive Director's report and forward recommended application to the Council for its action.

ALA Affiliate dues are \$150.00 per year. Dues are payable upon acceptance by ALA of your Affiliate application as discussed above. Your Affiliate anniversary will be one year from the month you begin paying dues and your status will automatically renew upon payment of dues in subsequent years.

You may end your Affiliates status by formal notice to ALA's Executive Director or by non-payment of dues. ALA reserves the right to withdraw your Affiliate status for reasons as described in the ALA Constitution and Bylaws for any member. Affiliate dues are currently tied to the dues level for 'Other Non-Profit Organizations' and may be changed upon a vote of the membership.

Appendix 2: Current ALA Affiliates

American Association of Law Libraries
American Indian Library Association
Association for Information Science and Technology
American Theological Library Association
Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA)
Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association
Association for Library and Information Science Education
Association for Rural and Small Libraries
Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services
Association of Jewish Libraries
Association of Research Libraries
Beta Phi Mu
Black Caucus of ALA
Canadian Library Association
Catholic Library Association
Chinese American Librarians Association
Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa
Medical Library Association
Music Library Association
National Storytelling Network
Online Audiovisual Catalogers
Patent and Trademark Resource Center Association
ProLiteracy Worldwide
REFORMA
Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials
Sociedad de Bibliotecarios de Puerto Rico
Theatre Library Association
Urban Libraries Council

Source: <http://www.ala.org/groups/affiliates/affiliates/current>