
Lynn Hoffman, President

The past year has been one of uncertainty on several different fronts, including considering the creation of a new division, reduced capacity among office staff, and activity at the ALA level around reorganization, but the Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA) has still been able to deliver on the value to members promised in our own reorganization.

New Division
At the division leadership level, 2018-2019 was largely taken up by the project to investigate creating a new division with our colleagues from the Association for Library Collection and Technical Services (ALTCS) and the Library Information Technology Association (LITA). Kerry Ward, LLAMA Executive Director, Pixey Mosely, LLAMA Past President, Anne Cooper Moore, LLAMA President-Elect, and I attended regular Steering Committee meetings, first bi-weekly, then weekly, to move the project forward. In addition, I chaired the project’s Communications Working Group, which also met bi-weekly starting in September 2018, to plan, draft and broadcast communication about the project to the membership of all three divisions.

The goal of the Steering Committee was to deliver a set of bylaws for the new division by January 2019, for inclusion with a spring ballot question to dissolve the existing division and create the new division as of September 1, 2019. This was an ambitious timeline, and LLAMA’s support for it was informed by our experiences with our own reorganization, as well as other professional experiences around leading change. LLAMA participants in this process, including our members serving on the project’s three working groups (Communications, Activities and Operations), contributed tremendous time and expertise to this effort and helped move the project close to its goal.

As we came to the end of 2019, however, it became clear that the ways in which the cultures of the three divisions were different posed an unforeseen obstacle: no matter how much we all supported the idea of the new division, and no matter how much effort we put into the process, coming to consensus within the allotted time would be challenging, if not impossible. In recognition of this, the three division Boards agreed at Midwinter to pause the project. This would give us more time to make sure the new division could provide far more robust service to members than the three divisions can provide separately, and to work through key operational details and to sufficiently involve our members in the discussion.

In March 2019, the leadership of all three divisions agreed to continue work on the project with the intention of presenting a proposal for consideration on the spring 2020 ballot. A new project Steering Committee was created, led by the three incoming presidents-elect, including Tyler Dzuba, the successful LLAMA candidate, and given explicit authority by leadership of all three divisions to move forward with the project without having to come back to the division Boards with recommendations or for approval. I am confident that the new committee will take the best of what has been created so far, find ways to improve, and take thoughtful care to communicate with and involve members in the process, giving us the best possible chance of continued success for the project.
ALA Reorganization
Another dimension of uncertainty in the last year has been activity at the ALA level to look at streamlining the organization to make it more responsive and sustainable. The work of SCOE was in the back of the Board’s mind at Midwinter in particular, when the path forward for the new division was still unclear. Some of LLAMA’s sense of urgency around the new division timeline was driven by a desire to control our own future—actively driving the process of creating a new functional division in order to put our organizational vision and commitment to member value at the forefront—rather than wait to let ALA’s actions happen to us. With the pace of SCOE’s work now slowing down as well, we still feel that LLAMA will be well-positioned to give our members the best possible outcome, no matter what happens with ALA reorganization or the new division.

LLAMA Office
In the midst of the intensive work around the new division project, Kerry Ward was tapped to fill in as interim Executive Director for ALCTS when their prior ED resigned in the fall. At the same time, he became an ALA staff representative on the Steering Committee for Organization Effectiveness (SCOE), which has given LLAMA leadership an informative inside view of that process, but which has also made demands on his time. Other circumstances led to Fred Reuland, LLAMA Program Officer for Continuing Education, needing to be away from the office for extended periods of time in the spring. This reduced capacity in the office has been challenging, but both Kerry and Fred have continued to serve LLAMA well.

Division Successes
All of the uncertainty and split attention of the last year has drawn leadership resources away from ongoing LLAMA projects, and yet the division continues to succeed, due in large part to the dedication and engagement of its membership. Key positive indicators include:

- Very stable membership numbers with room for growth
- Strong revenue for continuing education events (any deficits for the year being the result of webinars cancelled due to Fred’s leave that have yet to be rescheduled)
- Healthy engagement by LLAMA during an eForum about the new division, using ALCTS’s existing platform and list
- Continued efforts by Communities of Practice to adapt and evolve, including another restructuring for the Assessment Community, and development of a new leadership model by the Buildings and Equipment Community

LLAMA has tremendous strengths, including an agile Board with consistent goals, a strong set of continuing education offerings, a number of engaged and active member communities, and a stable fiscal footing. Although the activities of the last year have not focused on fully-realizing the vision of our own reorganization efforts, we are still positioned very well to make the most of any future changes for our members.