

TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: Establishment of ALA/ALISE Joint Task Forces

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:

The working group of the Executive Board that was established to collaborate with a subcommittee of Deans and Directors from ALISE to review the process of accreditation has identified specific areas in the accreditation process, communication, and the future of the field that should be investigated in greater depth in order to improve accreditation. The working group recommends the establishment of two special Task Forces and a reconfiguration of the composition of the Committee on Accreditation.

ACTION REQUESTED BY:

Barbara Stripling, ALA Immediate Past President

CONTACT PERSON:

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DRAFT OF MOTIONS:

- (1) The ALA Executive Board approves appointment of the Task Force on Accreditation Process and Communication and the Task Force on the Context of Future Accreditation, with the charge, timeline and composition described.
- (2) The ALA Executive Board approves the change in the process of appointment of members to the ALA Committee on Accreditation, as described.

DATE: 28 June 2015

BACKGROUND:

Process

At the Fall 2014 meeting of the ALA Executive Board, a working group of the Board was appointed to work with ALISE and the ALISE Council of Deans and Directors to improve communication and look at issues related to accreditation of graduate programs in library and information studies.

On January 29, 2015, in conjunction with the ALISE Annual Conference and ALA Midwinter Meeting, both in Chicago, a group representing the ALA Executive Board, ALISE and its Council of Deans and Directors, and the ALA Committee on Accreditation held its initial discussion. Concerns and questions were discussed in three broad areas: (a) communication, (b) process, and (c) standards. A follow-up meeting was held in New York City on May 18, 2015,

and again on 24 June 2015, in conjunction with the ALA Annual Conference. In addition, ALA Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels and Senior Associate Executive Director Mary Ghikas met with Mary Stansbury, 2014-2015 Chair, ALA Committee on Accreditation, and Joan Howland, 2015-2016 Chair, COA, to discuss the process for retaining an external consultant to review COA processes in the context of the broader accreditation environment, e.g., practices of other specialized accrediting bodies.

Recommendations for ALA Executive Board Action:

1. The working group recommends to the ALA Executive Board the formation of two task forces, both with a one-year working life. Documents prepared for and by the current Working Group will be transmitted to both Task Forces.

(1) Task Force on Accreditation Process and Communication

Charge: The Task Force on Accreditation Process and Communication will make recommendations to the ALA Executive Board on the following areas:

- External communications, including the importance of LIS education to the profession, the academy and the public; the celebration of the strengths of LIS programs; and advocacy and outreach about how the field is transforming to meet the needs of a changing society.
- Internal communications, including specifically a joint ALA/ALISE statement of the value of accreditation to LIS; an articulation of the value realized by an institution when librarians or faculty members serve on the Committee on Accreditation or on an External Review Panel; a protocol for improved accreditation-related communication between ALA/COA and ALISE (including particularly the Council of Deans/Directors/Chairs); a clear description of the accreditation process that will be accessible to both individuals in practice and in the academy; and, a clear description of the COA/ERP relationship and communication.

Timeline: The Task Force on Accreditation Process and Communication will make an interim report to the ALISE Board of Directors and the ALA Executive Board in January 2016, with a final report to the ALA Executive Board at the 2016 Annual Conference in Orlando.

Composition: The Task Force will include the following:

- A representative of the ALA Committee on Accreditation
- A representative of the ALA Committee on Education
- A representative of ALA/AASL with experience with the CAEP process
- A representative of the ALISE Council of Deans/Directors/Chairs (from among those on the current Working Group)
- A representative of the ALISE Board of Directors (from among those on the current Working Group)
- A representative of the Canadian Library Association
- Two representatives of the ALA Executive Board (from among those on the current Working Group)

All members of the task force will be appointed by the ALA appointing officer, with recommendations from the groups represented. The Task Force chair will be appointed by the ALA appointing officer. Staff liaison will be assigned by the ALA Executive Director.

(2) Task Force on the Context of Future Accreditation

Charge: The Task Force on the Context of Future Accreditation is charged to develop a white paper that describes the fields and context for which we will be accrediting in the future and to make such recommendations as may arise in the process of that development to the ALA Executive Board. The discussion should address the following:

- Accreditation of information programs – who is doing that, how do they or might they relate to LIS program
- Disconnect or perceived disconnect between skills increasingly needed (e.g., information architecture), the current curricula of LIS programs, and standards/statements of core competencies currently in place
- Values – e.g., public access, privacy, intellectual freedom – as the common thread binding together LIS and related fields and a core element in curricula
- The changing institutional context for accreditation, including factors such as pedagogical innovation, assessment and resources

The discussion/white paper should result in a conceptual statement as a framework for the development (by the ALA Committee on Accreditation) of future standards.

Timeline: The Task Force on the Context of Future Accreditation will make an interim report to the ALISE Board of Directors and ALA Executive Board in January 2016 in Boston, with a final report to the ALA Executive Board at the ALA Annual Conference in Orlando in June 2016.

Composition: The Task Force will include the following:

- A representative of the ALA Committee on Accreditation
- A representative of the ALA Committee on Education
- A representative of ALA/ACRL
- A representative of ALA/PLA
- A representative of ALA/AASL
- A representative of the ALISE Council of Deans/Directors/Chairs (from among those on the current working group)
- A representative of the ALISE Board of Directors (from among those on the current working group)
- Two representatives of the ALA Executive Board (from among those on the current working group)
- A representative of the I-School Consortium
- A representative of the Canadian Library Association

Additionally, the Task Force is explicitly charged to seek out consultation from other national associations, e.g., AALL, MLA, SLA, SAA, AAM, the Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations.

All appointments will be made by the ALA appointing officer, with recommendations from represented groups. Staff liaisons will be assigned by the ALA executive director.

2. The ALA Committee on Accreditation is composed of 12 members appointed by the ALA president-elect. Of the 12 members, 10 are personal members of ALA appointed to represent educators – both deans/directors/chairs and faculty – and practitioners. Of those 10 members, one must be Canadian, recognizing that ALA COA accredits programs in both the U.S. and Canada. The remaining two COA members must be appointed from the public-at-large – and may not be members of the profession or members of ALA, to represent the public interest in accreditation.

The Task Force makes three additional recommendations related to the process of appointment and the composition of the committee::

- (1) That the composition of COA include a designation for one slot to be held by a Dean/Director/Chair of a library or information science program. This appointment will be handled informally for the 2016-2017 appointment year, with the ALA President-Elect appointing from a list of recommended nominations submitted by the ALISE Council of Deans/Directors/Chairs.
- (2) That a formal process of approval of a designated slot for a Dean/Director/Chair on the COA be initiated through the Committee on Organization, with approval in place by the 2017-2018 appointment year. Once approved, this slot will be filled by the ALA President-Elect from a list of recommended nominations submitted the ALISE Council of Deans/Directors/Chairs.
- (3) That the process for appointment of a Canadian member be similarly formalized, with nominations to come from the Canadian Library Association (CLA).

Related Actions:

- (1) The ALA Committee on Accreditation will work with ALA Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels and Senior Associate Executive Director Mary Ghikas to contract with an external consultant to review the ALA COA accreditation process. The resulting report will be shared with the ALA Committee on Accreditation, the Task Force on Accreditation Process and Communication, and the ALA Executive Board.
- (2) The ALA Office for Accreditation will develop a database of individuals with External Review Panel experience as a mentoring network for future ERP participants and programs preparing for accreditation.