The ALSC Board is actively developing the 2020-2023 ALSC Strategic Plan to set the roadmap for success in achieving mission, vision, and the goals of the organization. Part of this work involves intentional and regular review of ALSC’s programs and services as well as assessing the organizational structures, processes, and culture to ensure alignment with the association’s future direction as a modern association, resulting in efficiency (e.g., reducing barriers and redundancy) and enabling strategic use of the association’s limited human and financial resources to serve the mission.

Part of the review of structural organization and processes is to align committee work with ALSC’s strategic priorities and capacity. Questions and concerns that have recently been expressed to ALSC leadership:

- Do the right committees exist to meet the goals of the association or can the goal be achieved in a more impactful way? Have any of the committees outlived member interest?
- Is there a duplication of effort?
- Do the function statements for each committee meet the association’s need?
- Finding members to fill spaces on committees has been problematic for some process committees, particularly in a timely manner.
- Finding members to fill spaces on task forces formed to address a pressing need or issue in a timely manner has been challenging. Is there another way to more quickly respond to the need or issue?
- Process for being named to a committee includes barriers (attendance requirement) and is complex. For instance, there are limiters in place, such as the four-year waiting period between service on some, but not all, award committees and the five-year wait between service on the Nominating and Leadership Development committee. Appointing officers, staff, and members find it difficult and time-consuming to track an individual member’s eligibility to serve on a committee.
- Two-year commitment is too long for some. Are there other opportunities to engage with ALSC more easily, in a virtual way?
- Is there capacity to support the work? For instance, the consultant for Priority Group IV: Organizational Support currently assists and connects with 14 committees, task forces, and discussion groups. On the other hand, the consultant for Priority Group VI: Partnerships supports 3 committees. While it is helpful to categorize the work committees do, the current system of utilizing a member volunteer (i.e. PGC) to support chairs in their work is untenable in certain cases when the number of committees under the category is so vast.

In addition to the review and study of ALSC’s organization, the ALSC Board must also consider several large areas of ALA change that will impact the way all members and staff work. Many changes are occurring simultaneously such as the sale of the ALA Headquarters building, which will result in a move to leased office space and new work environment; the Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness (SCOE) work and the group’s recently submitted recommendations (login required) which
could potentially result in an impact to division operations; and leadership transition as ALA announces its new Executive Director in January.

The most pressing ALA change centers around the Midwinter Meeting. The discussion around the future of Midwinter is not a new one. In 2011, ALA Council was presented with a “White Paper on the ALA Midwinter.”

Several key points, still relevant, taken verbatim from this white paper are:

- The combination of technological advances and economic stress has caused many members to question the way in which ALA groups accomplish work. ALA groups have already begun to redefine “participation” and have pioneered new ways of working together. In 2008, Council made critical policy changes that recognize and enable new ways of working together and “meeting”.
- The advent of sophisticated electronic communication technologies provides us with the opportunity to spend less time on bureaucratic and procedural matters and more time focusing on strategic issues facing libraries and the Association. That means much of our past business can – and should be – conducted virtually.
- ALA groups sponsor discussion and networking opportunities aimed specifically at new members or potential members. Midwinter also attracts many regional attendees who are non-members, and a substantial portion of registrations are always “join and save” registrations (non members who join for discounted registration and in many instances may not renew). This presents a unique opportunity to engage and retain these non members, both through the meeting itself and through follow up communications.
- There is no policy that requires a group to meet at Midwinter - or requires any group to meet in-person at all. The policy defining “participation” (4.5: Requirements for Committee Service) was changed by the ALA Council following the recommendation of the Task Force on Electronic Member Participation in 2008. No member accepting an appointment has to commit to face-to-face meetings unless it is a specific requirement based on the nature of the committee’s work. For division and round table committees, that decision is appropriately made by the executive body of the division or round table, in consultation with the individual group. For ALA committees, the ALA Committee on Organization is considering how to approach that question, in consultation with individual committees, in order to make appropriate recommendations to Council. The decision as to whether or not groups will schedule specific meetings at Midwinter rests with individual groups and the bodies that authorize them.

ALSC President Cecilia McGowan held a Zoom meeting with the Priority Group Consultants on October 29, 2019 to discuss the limited information ALSC knows about upcoming changes to the 2020 and 2021 Midwinters and the “new January event” to begin 2022 and beyond and how the changes might impact meeting space and thus face-to-face committee and Board work.

- The divisions have been told that meeting space will be significantly reduced for Midwinter 2021. It is unknown what this means, but it is likely that the divisions will only have enough space/time made available for their governance meetings.
  - The ALSC Board will consider how the association can conduct its work and projects as face-to-face meeting space becomes limited, as it conducts its review of committee structure and work.
- After 2021, Midwinter will sunset as it is known and something entirely new will be taking its place (ALSC has been informed it involves the Youth Media Awards and will celebrate youth literature, notable books, and be paired with more educational programming for all).
• ALA Conference Services continues to explore and develop the new event and plans to interview stakeholders, such as to the publishing community, to provide input on the design process.
• ALSC has been assured that the award and notable committees will continue to have meeting space.
• It is assumed that committee and Board space at Annual Conferences remain unchanged.
• The PGCs also discussed ways in which PGCs and the ALSC Board could help support chairs/co-chairs and members through this change that is beginning to happen quickly. Communication will be key.

During the ALSC Executive Committee’s fall meeting on Friday, November 22, 2019 the following considerations and general recommendations were made for the Board to review and begin discussing. The attached excel sheet is a more visual representation of the specific structure and committee changes.

1) Examined the way committees and PGCs were organized and looked for opportunities to streamline.
2) All process committees and several of the evaluation of media committees could transition to more virtual work. Shared understanding that committees should operate as a hybrid combination of in-person and virtual participation and that committee discussions occur beyond in-person meetings.
   a. There is no distinction of virtual-only or face-to-face only. The expectation is that for those who can meet in person at Annual Conference, will, and those who can only meet online will. All members will have the same designation—member.
   b. Exceptions are the book and media award committees, Odyssey, Notable Children’s Books, and the BIPOC Discussion Group. These groups will still have face-to-face meetings, as currently required.
   c. Establish a standardization- committees can select the tools (zoom, Google hangouts, ALA Connect) to conduct their work, but this is the basic level of what needs to be done to operate (establish regular meeting calendar, establish a definition for participation, submitting quarterly reports).
3) The Executive Committee recognized that many employers and institutions are decreasing support for member travel to conferences. Oftentimes in-person attendance is required to receive travel support or time off from work. However, by removing the attendance requirement, ALSC will increase engagement and create a more equitable and inclusive environment. As barriers to participation are removed (i.e. requiring attendance), more members will be able to participate in ALSC. Additionally, volunteer members will have more meaningful opportunities to engage throughout the entire service year rather than at two events per year.
   a. Additionally, explore, identify and promote additional ways for members to engage and participate in ALSC beyond committee work.
   b. Work to ensure employers recognize this valuable contribution and support member travel to conferences for the valuable opportunities to network, learn practical and useful information to take home, and promote the work their own organization does.
4) What work and communicate will need to be done with members of committees that might be disbanded to ensure those members whose terms go beyond June 30, 2020 have an opportunity to continue to participate for the entire length of their term?
5) Prioritize development of resources for virtual committee work, particularly for those transitioning out of face-to-face only.

   a. As ALSC committee work changes, also consider and identify opportunities to streamline complexity and bureaucracy so that activity to support more than 70 committees, task forces and discussion groups is more self-service and requires less intense support from PGCs, staff, and leadership. What does a nimble association look like?

The ALSC Board will begin discussing and reviewing the Executive Committees recommendations during their online meeting this Tuesday, December 17, 2019. Time will be set aside on the Board’s Midwinter meeting agenda to discuss further and possibly take action on a final draft of recommendations. The tentative timeline is to adopt changes in time for President-Elect Kirby McCurtis’ spring appointments which will begin in late January/early February. Change inevitably starts with a bumpy road and over time those bumps smooth out. Committees and member feedback will help pave the road and ALSC leadership will seek feedback on how ALSC can support their virtual work and adjust, within the parameters of ALA, to ensure we get to a smoother road, sooner rather than later.