

RUSA Division Level Restructuring Recommendations

The Reference and User Services Association has a long history with its roots going back to the 1950s. As the organization has matured, the role of libraries has changed, and technology has transformed how we work and communicate. The structure of the association has become an intertwined network of committees, volunteers, representatives, elected officials, and paid staff with our work blending in physical and virtual spaces. Additionally, given the national trend of smaller memberships in professional organization, the current structure is too large. By streamlining and readjusting the division level organization we will be able to better meet the needs of the organization.

The RUSA Organization and Planning Committee (O&P) has taken the opportunity of their regular review of all division level committees, as well as a directive from the RUSA Executive Committee, to review the divisional level structure of RUSA. With this charge, the O&P has built upon the work of task forces such as: RUSA Review, Strategic Planning, Web Site Review, and Learning Opportunities and Knowledge Coordination. Additionally, we have sought the counsel and the institutional memory of current and past RUSA presidents, division committee chairs, and many other RUSA division and section leaders in order to arrive at the following eight recommendations:

1. **[Modify the RUSA Board](#)**

The RUSA Board currently seats 18 members, in order to streamline the work of RUSA it is recommended that the board is reduced in size to 11 members and the Executive Committee is disbanded. It is recommended that the Budget & Finance Committee become a subcommittee of the RUSA Board.

2. **[Create a RUSA Leadership Council](#)**

To create shared strategic vision and foster greater ownership over fiscal responsibility, it is proposed that we create a Leadership Council that will increase communication and engagement within RUSA.

3. **[Restructure and Grow Committees on Membership](#)**

At the heart of RUSA are its members and the leaders that organize the work of RUSA. It is proposed that the Membership Committee reconstitute itself as the Membership Engagement Committee and a new Volunteer Development Committee is created to support RUSA leaders.

4. **[Create New Volunteer Role](#)**

In order to increase effectiveness it is recommend that a newly appointed role is created within RUSA to facilitate communication and reduce bureaucracy. This role is: Continuing Education Coordinator.

5. **Modify Committees to Address Professional Development**

As technology and revenue streams change, there needs to be an increased focus on professional development opportunities and resources. It is recommended that the Professional Development Committee expand its focus to all forms of professional development beyond webinars. We further recommend to broaden the charge of the Standards and Guidelines committee to more fully encompass professional resources and rename the committee to Professional Resources Committee. The Publications & Communications Committee will sunset as a result.

6. **Sunset Committees**

With the above changes, certain committees would be disbanded. These include: Organization and Planning; and Publications and Communications.

7. **Develop a new model of division review**

The current review process does not provide enough immediate feedback for sections and division committees to make decisions on a regular basis. A new model should be developed in order to ensure that the work of the sections and the division contribute to the overall success of the association and all units have the needed resources in order to enable them to succeed.

8. **Clarify the use of Ad-Hoc Committees and Task Forces**

With a more streamlined structure and fewer committees, the use of ad-hoc committees and task forces may increase. In order to keep the organization operating efficiently, the roles of these groups should be clarified.

9. **Review RUSA Awards processes and governance**

The awards program at RUSA has grown and developed with varying processes, roles, and responsibilities that have changed over time. With RUSA restructuring, this provides an opportunity to examine the Awards program and realign resources and processes.

Organization and Planning believes that a structural change at the division level will increase the value of RUSA to all its members, provide a mechanism for reducing our budgetary deficit, and create a more modern and engaging professional association.

Organization and Planning Members

Tina Baich, Member
Ann Brown, Member
Bobray Bordelon, BRASS Rep
Beth German, Chair
Anne Houston, Member
Jennifer Jacobs, STARS Rep
Chris LeBeau, Member

Erin Rushton, Member
Jenny Presnell, HS Rep
Donna Scanlon, ETS Rep
Colleen Seale, RSS Rep
Matthew Wayman, CODES Rep
Arlene Weismantel, Member

Recommendation 1: Modify the RUSA Board*

Description

The RUSA Board currently seats 18 members. In order to streamline the work of RUSA it is recommended that the Board, the voting body of RUSA, be reduced in size to 11 members and the Executive Committee be disbanded. It is recommended that the Budget & Finance Committee become a subcommittee of the RUSA Board. (See also Recommendation 6)

* The bylaws amendment to modify the RUSA Board has passed. Please see notes section in this recommendation for more details.

Benefit

By having a smaller board, the association can be more nimble in making decisions and respond more quickly to situations that arise.

Benefit of the Reconfigured Budget & Finance Committee

The benefits will be better division of work, a specific focus on budget, more effective decision-making.

Rationale

The Division's membership is now smaller and RUSA has one of the larger boards currently among ALA divisions. Due to the size of the board, it makes it difficult to gather a quorum for voting thus by making the board smaller, the association will be able to respond more quickly. A smaller board also eliminates the need for a separate Executive Committee. The Board will play that role and the section representatives will play a more vital role in the overall association.

Due to the amount of organizational work undertaken by the Board, there is need for a smaller working committee to focus exclusively on budget. The Budget and Finance Subcommittee will bring budget decisions and issues to the Board for vote. Budget and Finance will consult with the RUSA Leadership Council on fiscal matters.

Proposed Membership of Board

- President, Vice-President/President-Elect, Past President, Secretary, Councilor
- A representative from each Section (to be determined)

Proposed Membership of Budget and Finance Subcommittee

- President
 - VP
 - Past President
 - RUSQ Editor
 - Section rep (multi-year term)
 - Section rep (multi-year term)
 - Section rep (multi-year term)
 - BARC liaison (ex-officio)
- (Sections will take turns serving on the B&F Subcommittee)

Notes

- The Directors-at-Large elected in 2017 will serve out their terms as will the other remaining Directors-at-Large. No new ones will be elected.
- The representative from each Section is not necessarily the chair of the section.
- In the Spring 2017 election, the RUSA membership voted to approve an amendment to modify the board as described in this recommendation. Determining the selection of section representatives to the board is in progress. The Board is moving forward with reconstituting the Budget and Finance committee as a sub-committee.

Recommendation 2: Create a RUSA Leadership Council

Description

The Council will advise, in a non-voting capacity, the RUSA Board on RUSA goals, objectives, priorities and budget.

Benefit

This new organizational body will better unify the RUSA leadership, improve communication throughout the division, reduce duplication of effort, and align goals of units within RUSA with the overall strategic plan.

Rationale

As RUSA downsizes its Board, it needs to reconfigure its governance structure to include a body representing the sections, other officers, representatives, and leadership within the organization.

Proposed Membership

- The Board of Directors
- Division Committee Chairs
- Division Coordinators
- Section Chairs
- Interest Group Chairs
- RUSQ and RUSA Update editors
- Active Task Force chairs
- All RUSA office staff

Notes

- Working groups within the Council can be formed and charged with specific tasks in order to accomplish goals and it is the expectation that members of the RUSA Leadership Council will be active and engaged in its work.
- The newly constituted Council will advise and provide feedback on the budget.
- The work of the Council will include elements of the work formerly done by the Organization and Planning Committee.
- The work of this group will be conducted via email, the RUSA Leadership Listserv, and possible in-person or virtual meetings.
- The RUSA Update and RUSA Voices editor positions are currently under review.

Recommendation 3: Restructure and Grow Committees on Membership

Purpose

The purpose for dividing the Membership Committee into two new committees is to reorganize the way RUSA manages membership and volunteer development. The two new committees are: Member Engagement Committee and Volunteer Development Committee. This structure affords volunteers the opportunity for increased involvement with recruitment, member retention, and leader development. Narrowing the charge of these two new committees will allow each committee greater focus to accomplish its tasks.

Member Engagement Committee

Rationale

The charge of this committee is to work with the RUSA Office and RUSA Board on member engagement through membership recruitment, public relations, creating and providing effective tools and communication, and providing input for continuing education (CE) efforts. While the committee's overarching role involves quality engagement of all RUSA members, a subset of the committee should focus primarily on the attraction and engagement of RUSA's newest members whether they are new to the profession or new to RUSA.

Benefit

The intent of this committee is to be a sounding board that can represent the needs and interests of the current membership, but also provide a new avenue of communication with the new membership. Expected benefits are a low barrier to entry into RUSA volunteer positions, a more responsive organization, and stronger member retention.

Membership

- 8-12 Members (exact size to be determined)
- Members of the committee would include: a) volunteers who affiliate with the sections, b) volunteers affiliate as general RUSA members, and c) RUSA members of less than 5 years.
- Appoint co-chairs with staggered terms. Reappoint current Membership Committee Chair (or member) for a one year term and appoint a new co-chair to serve a two-year term.

Volunteer Development Committee

Rationale

The charge of this committee will be to coordinate volunteer development. Activities will include:

- Coordinate with the RUSA Office and RUSA Board on leadership training and documentation including volunteer onboarding, leadership orientation, and on-going development opportunities.
- Develop and maintain training on RUSA specific practices such as scheduling virtual meetings, ALA open meeting requirements, semi-annual reports, posting to social media, and other operational activities.
- Develop best practices and materials on topics such as team development, succession planning, strategic planning, meeting management; committee engagement.

Benefit

The intent of this committee is ensure that volunteer leaders have the resources and support needed for the yearly turnover of leadership. They will also help communicate expectations including involvement in RUSA Leadership Council.

Membership

- 8 Members
- Membership will be solicited from each of the sections and the general membership
- Appoint co-chairs with staggered terms. Reappoint current Membership Committee Chair (or member) for a one year term and appoint a new co-chair to serve a two-year term.

Notes

- It is intended that changing the charge and scope of these committees will mitigate issues related to the size of the committees.

Recommendation 4: Create New Volunteer Role

Purpose

In order to increase effectiveness it is recommend that a newly appointed role is created within RUSA to facilitate communication and reduce bureaucracy. This role is: Continuing Education Coordinator.

Continuing Education Coordinator

Rationale

Continuing Education (CE) is a critical component of the future success of RUSA. Many roles and groups within RUSA from the Division, Section, and Interest Groups are actively creating CE opportunities. In order to ensure that all groups have the proper support, the Continuing Education Coordinator would be actively involved and strategically plan activities between the committees and groups that have purview in regards to CE. The Continuing Education Coordinator is an appointed volunteer position, originally recommended by the Learning Opportunities and Knowledge Coordination Task Force.

Benefit

Adding the Continuing Education Coordinator will help facilitate better communication throughout RUSA.

Notes

This coordinator would be an ex-officio to the Conference Program Coordinating Committee, Professional Development Committee, and the proposed Professional Resources Committee

Notes

It is recommended that the appointment of coordinator positions will follow an open call process. For example:

- The RUSA Vice President/President Elect appoints the RUSA Continuing Education Coordinator to serve a three year term.
- The RUSA Continuing Education Coordinator must be a member of the Division.
- If a vacancy should occur, The RUSA President may appoint a RUSA Continuing Education Coordinator to fill a vacancy for the remaining term.
- The Coordinator reports directly to the RUSA Board.

- To fill this position, the RUSA Vice President/President Elect will announce a call for nominations. Nominees will be asked to provide a statement of interest. The Vice President/President Elect will appoint a member to begin serving in this role at the ALA Annual Conference.

Recommendation 5: Modify Committees to Address Professional Development

Purpose

As technology and revenue streams change, there needs to be an increased focus on professional development opportunities and resources. Historically the three committees that have had the largest purview over professional development and continuing education are: Publications and Communications; Professional Development; and Standards and Guidelines. The interwoven work of these committees is often misaligned with one another and under resourced. In order to meet the needs of RUSA it is recommended that:

- A. the Professional Development Committee expands its focus;
- B. create a new Professional Resources committee that would modify the Standards and Guidelines committee charge and include aspects of the Publications and Communication committee's work;
- C. and sunset the current Publications and Communications Committee (fully addressed in Recommendation 6).

Expand focus of Professional Development Committee

Rationale

The Professional Development Committee over the past few years has been focused on webinars. While this is a much needed service, other innovative professional development opportunities have been identified by the Learning Opportunities and Knowledge Coordination Task Force.

Benefit

By broadening the focus of the Professional Development Committee it will allow the volunteers the liberty to experiment and to find innovative professional development opportunities for RUSA membership and the wider reference and user services community.

Membership

- 3 members
- 6 section reps
- Professional Resources Committee chair, ex-officio
- Continuing Education Coordinator, ex-officio

Change Standards and Guidelines Committee to Professional Resources Committee

Rationale

Support for the division's publications and communications has improved markedly thanks to increased assistance from the RUSA office. RUSA support staff are also investigating alternative technologies to support the work of the division. In the past, volunteers had to play a much larger role with technology, but that is no longer the case. Moreover, the nature and delivery of both RUSA publications and communications has changed since the initial charge of this committee; there is less need for this work from volunteers. The membership, however, would benefit from a newly constituted and more broadly conceived Professional Resources committee which could incorporate the Standards and Guidelines committee in addition to any future publications of an educational or professional development nature. The committee's charge would be to support and coordinate the development and maintenance of professional resources generated by RUSA such as guidelines, tool kits, best practice documents and other similar resources. The Professional Resources committee could choose to make Standards and Guidelines a subcommittee. RUSA volunteers from all committees should work collaboratively with the RUSA office personnel to achieve the best communication for membership.

Benefit

Redefining professional resources to a modern definition is a critical step in providing added value resources and opportunities to RUSA members. Reconstituting Standards and Guidelines will allow for the opportunity to explore a new model for coordination. Additionally by sunseting the Publications and Communications committee, this will reduce the number of communication channels and create a more efficient coordination throughout the association. Lastly, by handing the responsibility for providing the coordination of professional resources to the Professional Resources Committee, the Professional Development Committee will be able to focus on creating opportunities for professional development.

Membership

- 3 members
- 6 section reps
- Professional Development Committee chair, ex-officio
- Continuing Education Coordinator, ex-officio

Recommendation 6: Sunset Committees

Purpose

With these changes two committees would be sunsetted. These include:

- Organization and Planning
- Publications and Communications.

Organization & Planning

Rationale

Work will be done RUSA Leadership Council (See Recommendation 2)

Benefit

Reduce redundancy and effort.

Publications and Communication

Rationale

Work will be done by the Professional Development and Professional Resources Committees as well as the RUSA office.

Benefit

Reduce redundancy and effort.

Recommendation 7: Develop a new model of division review

Purpose

To create a model of division review that is effective, efficient, and provides all groups with a meaningful evaluation that can impact the association.

Rationale

While many efforts have attempted to streamline the RUSA review process, it still requires too many resources and does not provide effective change within the association.

Benefit

A continuous review model will reduce the burden of the reviews and insure that all levels of RUSA are working towards our shared strategic goals and that resources and support are appropriately applied.

Notes

- The exact implementation of the recommendation will be at the purview of the RUSA Board.
- With the RUSA Board approval of the formation of a RUSA Restructuring Implementation Task Force, this task force should be charged with carrying out developing a new model of division review.

Recommendation 8: Clarify the use of Ad-Hoc committees and Task Forces

Purpose

To clarify the use of Ad-Hoc committees and Task Forces.

Rationale

As the association moves to a more streamlined task based approach to accomplishing work, there have been instances of miscommunication and redundancy of efforts.

Benefit

Clarifying the use of Ad-Hoc Committees and Task Forces will increase the communication between the groups within RUSA and allow for more flexibility with their increased use.

Recommendation 9: Review RUSA Awards processes and governance

Description

During the upcoming year the Awards Coordinating Committee will review the number and desirability of individual awards, evaluate award processes, help implement alternative means of recognizing achievement award winners, complete policies currently in progress, and finish organizing awards manuals. ACC will coordinate with the RUSA Senior Program Officer to devise a governance structure that meets the needs of both the Association and the RUSA Office, facilitating deserved recognition in a more manageable way. ACC may create subcommittees or task forces to expedite this work.

Benefit

A review and recommendation on how to move forward with Awards will provide RUSA with a robust and impactful Awards program, reduce costs to the Association and allow the RUSA Office to devote energy to other member services.

Rationale

The awards program at RUSA has grown and developed with varying processes, roles, and responsibilities that have changed over time. With RUSA restructuring, this provides an opportunity to examine the Awards program and realign resources and processes.

Notes

- Sunsetting the Awards committee can be an option for 2018-19

Appendix A: Summary of Committee Changes

Current Structure	Proposed Structure	Rec Status
RUSA Board Budget and Finance	RUSA Board (with reduced size) Budget and Finance becomes sub-committee of RUSA Board	Approved through bylaws amendment by RUSA members
Executive committee	With a smaller board, the executive committee will not be needed.	
	 Leadership Council	Accepted by RUSA Board
Membership Committee	Member Engagement Committee Volunteer Development Committee	Accepted by RUSA Board
Awards Coordinating Committee	 Awards Coordinating Committee will be charged to review awards structure and make recommendation by ALA Midwinter 2018	Accepted by RUSA Board
	 Continuing Education Coordinator	Tabled
Professional Development Committee	Professional Development Committee (with expanded focus)	O&P will draft a new charge for RUSA Board approval
Standards and Guidelines	Professional Resources Committee (with expanded focus)	Accepted by RUSA Board
Organization and Planning	Leadership Council will serve as the strategic advising arm to the RUSA Board. A new model of division review will be created.	Accepted by RUSA Board
Publications and Communications	Work will be divided between: Professional Development Committee, Professional Resources Committee, RUSA Office	Accepted by RUSA Board

Committees with no change: Access to Information; AFL-CIO/ALA Labor Committee; All individual awards committees; Conference Program Coordination Committee; Nomination committee; President's Program Planning Committee