Orientation Manual for RUSA Board Members
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Your Responsibilities as a Board Member

• Welcome to the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) board! The Board supports the work of RUSA and provides mission-based leadership and strategic governance.
• The Board of Directors sets the policies of the division and the program for the division in relationship to the goals and objectives identified in its strategic plan.
• Day-to-day operations are led by RUSA’s executive director.
• Board members are representative of their constituencies and should view their role as ensuring that the views, beliefs, values, and self interests of the constituencies are on the table as part of the conversation.
• Board members are ambassadors for the division and ALA, and are required to have strong diplomacy skills.
• All members are expected to report on activities with which they are connected: section, committee work, liaisons to committees, assigned projects, etc. They are expected to speak to the issues during debate and to provide viewpoints and advice. The president may assign tasks to board members.
• The board approves the budget to enable attainment of the goals/objectives.
• The board monitors policy implementation and achievement of the goals/objectives.
• As a RUSA board member, you are expected to attend all board meetings whenever possible. If you are not able to do so, you must notify the executive director.

RUSA Executive Committee and RUSA Board Composition

• **RUSA Executive Committee:** The executive committee meets to establish the agenda for board meetings and otherwise facilitates the work of the board; to be responsible for orientation of new RUSA officers, board members, and committee chairs; and to take action on matters that require decisions between meetings of the board.

This is the composition of the RUSA executive committee:
  o RUSA President [elected]
  o RUSA President-Elect/Vice-President [elected]
• RUSA Past President [elected]
• RUSA Secretary [elected]
• RUSA Councilor [elected]
• RUSA Executive Director, ex-officio [staff]

• RUSA Board of Directors: The Board of Directors is composed of seventeen voting and three non-voting members, whose duties are set forth in the RUSA Bylaws. Voting members are the Executive Committee members, chairs of each section, six members elected at large from the Division membership for staggered three-year terms; non-voting members are the RUSA executive director and the editors of the divisional periodical publications (RUSQ and RUSA Update). The three non-voting members (the two editors of the division's periodicals, and the RUSA executive director) participate in deliberations of the board but do not vote.

Parliamentary Process:

• Sturgis' Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure is the standard for board and other governing meetings.

Board Meetings:

• Some board meetings may be held virtually between ALA conferences in Adobe Connect. They will be announced in advance and the access information will be sent to all board members.
• Voting members will be expected to vote on issues that come before the board. Voting members may second motions. If the board goes into executive session, voting members stay. If they have a vested interest in the outcome of the discussion, they may expect to be excused, unless the board requires their presence.
• Non-voting members participate in an advisory capacity in the board's deliberations, but they may not vote or second a motion. They may ask voting members to propose a motion for approval by the board.
• Board members may present motions or action items at board meetings. Requests to add motions or action items to board agendas are due 24 hours before board meetings. See Action Item form here: http://connect.ala.org/node/203971.
• If you or your constituency develops a document for board consideration, give it to the RUSA staff at least two hours before a board meeting.
• All board meeting documents posted in advance are available in Connect and you are responsible for bringing your own copies to board meetings.
• If you have a question on whether an issue requires action or a motion, consult an officer or a senior staff member, preferably before the start of the meeting. An easy rule of thumb is: If the issue is not a program or publication and it will have impact outside your own unit, the Board should be aware of it.
• If you know you are going to be on the board (if, for example, you are elected vice-chair of a section), it is very helpful to attend a board meeting before you take office.
• The schedule for board meetings is determined between annual conference and the start of the next fiscal year (Sept. 1 – Aug. 30). You are expected to attend all sessions.

*Observe the Deadlines for Action Items and Board Documents!*

• Action items are due 24 hours before board meetings.
• Board documents must be given to the RUSA staff at least 2 hours before a board meeting.

*Come Prepared!*

Read all board documents and reports before the meetings!

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Ground Rules for Board Meetings:

1. We will address requests for agenda items to the president who will set the agenda in consultation with the executive director.
2. We will use a “consent agenda” for consensus and non-controversial items.
3. We will use a “discussion/decision” section of the agenda for action items that need discussion prior to board action. Individuals bringing items to the board must make sure that all appropriate RUSA groups have had an opportunity to review the proposal prior to the board discussion.
4. We will focus on intended outcomes rather than specific details of achievement; we will not engage in undue “wordsmithing.”
5. We will arrive and finish on time.
6. We will address questions to the president who may direct questions to another board or staff member.
7. We direct the president to conclude each item with a consensus statement and intended action for confirmation.

Definitions:

**Motions and actions** are proposals for the RUSA Board to DO something, such as approve a policy or direct the RUSA Councilor to take an issue to Council. Examples of motions:

*Example 1*: “Moved that the RUSA Board approve the following policy on (identify topic) as stated in RUSA Board Document B2004.”

*Example 2*: “Move that all unbudgeted expenditures for travel require prior approval by the RUSA Board or the RUSA Executive Committee.”

**Board Reading and Reports:**

Reports: Board members are expected to read all available section reports, liaison reports, and standing committee reports before the board meeting. All reports will be posted to the board Connect group when possible within two weeks before the conference. If a committee meets for the first time at the Midwinter conference, or significant activities take place at Midwinter and require reporting, these reports may be posted by the RUSA Executive Director to the board Connect group.
workspace after the conference. There is also another Connect group to see past and current reports here: http://connect.ala.org/node/207988.

**Reading:** Whenever possible, all board documents will be posted to the board Connect workspace for board members to review and read well in advance of the board meeting. Questions, requests for clarification and comments arising from review of any of the documents may be posted to the board Connect workspace in advance of the board meetings.

### Rights and Responsibilities of Board Members:

1. We will request any needed clarification on board documents prior to the meeting.
2. We reserve the right to pull any item from the consent agenda for discussion.
3. We will arrive informed and prepared before the meeting.
4. We will take the initiative to ask questions and pose solutions.
5. We will make no assumption of motivation or “hidden agenda” on the part of a colleague.
6. We acknowledge the responsibility, and accountability to us, of the Executive Committee and the executive director for policy implementation and goal attainment.
7. We affirm that the association should be focused, fast, flexible and friendly and we will model these behaviors.
8. We acknowledge that silence is consent.
9. We will discuss ideas and issues without taking things personally.

- Be aware of RUSA and ALA policies. Committee chairs should examine the *RUSA Guide to Policies and Procedures* ([http://www.ala.org/rusa/about/policies](http://www.ala.org/rusa/about/policies)) available online on the RUSA web site. RUSA sections must comply with all divisional policies, and chairs should familiarize themselves with the *Guide*. Policies may change over time. If you have questions or wish to confirm a policy, consult with the RUSA Executive Committee and/or RUSA Executive Director. You may also find the *ALA Policy Manual* helpful.

### Director-at-Large Committee Liaisons

Selected RUSA committees have a board member liaison who is available to answer any questions throughout the year and will also maintain awareness of the committee’s goals and activities.

The following chart lists the current committee chairs and RUSA board liaisons:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Committee Chair</th>
<th>RUSA Board Liaison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to Information</td>
<td>Janet O’Keefe</td>
<td>Jennifer Boettcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards Coordinating</td>
<td>Anne Charlotte Behler</td>
<td>Margaret W. Ellingson (new)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Program Coordinating Committee</td>
<td>Denise Forro</td>
<td>Doris Ann Sweet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>Jeffrey Kempe</td>
<td>Celia Ross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization and Planning Committee</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Mary Pagliero Popp (new)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>Jeannette Pierce</td>
<td>Cynthia Robin Levine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications Committee</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Louise Feldmann (new)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards and Guidelines Committee</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Patrick Wall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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## 2013-2014 Board Calendar (FY2014)

### 2013:

| Sept through Dec: | Make requests to add action items to board agenda for virtual board meetings – DUE 24 hours before board meeting. See Action Item form here: [http://connect.ala.org/node/183787](http://connect.ala.org/node/183787). |
| Sept through Dec: | Attend and participate in scheduled virtual RUSA board meetings, and vote in board polls. |

### 2014:

| Jan through Jul: | Make requests to add action items to board agenda for virtual board meetings – DUE 24 hours before board meeting. See Action Item form here: [http://connect.ala.org/node/203971](http://connect.ala.org/node/203971). |
| Jan: | Make requests to add action items to board agenda for Midwinter conference board meetings – DUE 24 hours before board meeting. See Action Item form here: [http://connect.ala.org/node/203971](http://connect.ala.org/node/203971). |
| Jan 10 – Feb 7: | Liaison, committee and section reports due to the RUSA Office within two weeks before or after each board meeting. Reports will be posted publicly to the RUSA board Connect workspace. |
| Jan 24-28: | Attend RUSA board meetings at conference. All board members, section and committee chairs should attend signature RUSA events whenever possible (see list above). |
| Feb 1: | RUSA President-Elect and Section Vice-Chairs begin appointment process |
| May 1: | New RUSA initiative proposals requiring funding DUE to RUSA office. |
| June: | Make requests to add action items to board agenda for Annual conference board meetings – DUE 24 hours before board meeting. See Action Item form here: |
| **June 26-Jul 1:** | Attend RUSA board meetings. All board members, section and committee chairs should attend signature RUSA events (see list above). |
| **Jun 12-Jul 10:** | Liaison, committee and section reports due to the RUSA within two weeks before or after each board meeting. Reports will be posted publicly to the RUSA board Connect workspace. |
RUSA Board Roster, 2013-2014 (FY2014)

The information in this list may change occasionally. The most current list of board members and their contact information may be found here: http://www.ala.org/rusa/contact/rosters/rusa/rus-bd.

M. Kathleen Kern (RUSA President, July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014) - katkern@illinois.edu
Work Phone: (217) 244-3604
Fax: (217) 333-1116
University of Illinois
1408 W Gregory Dr
Urbana, IL 61801-3607

Joseph A. Thompson, Jr (RUSA President-Elect, July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014) - jthompson@washcolibrary.org
Work Phone: (301) 739-3250 Ext 140
Western Maryland Regional Library
100 S. Potomac St.
Hagerstown, MD 21740-5180

Erin Rushton (Secretary, July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2015) - erushton@binghamton.edu
Work Phone: (607) 777-2706
Binghamton University
PO Box 6012
Binghamton, NY 13902-6012

Mary Pagliero Popp (RUSA Past President, July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014) - popp@indiana.edu
Work Phone: (812) 855-8170
Fax: (812) 856-2062
Indiana University-Bloomington Libraries
Discovery & Research Services Dept.
Wells Library W501, 1320 E. 10th St
Bloomington, IN 47405-3907

Margaret W. Ellingson (Director-at-Large, July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2016) - libmgw@emory.edu
Work Phone: (404) 727-6893
Fax: (404) 727-0052
Emory University
ILL/woodruff Library
540 Asbury Cir
Atlanta, GA 30322-2870
Louise M. Feldmann (Director-at-Large, July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2016) - louise.feldmann@colostate.edu
Work Phone: (970) 491-4262
Fax: (970) 491-5817
Colorado State University
William E. Morgan Library
Colorado State University
148 Morgan Library
Fort Collins, CO 80523-1019

Cynthia Robin Levine (Director-at-Large, July 1, 2012, to June 30, 2015) - cindy_levine@ncsu.edu
Work Phone: (919) 515-2915
Fax: (919) 515-8264
North Carolina State Univ
D.H. Hill Library RISD
1070 Partners Way
Raleigh, NC 27695-0001

Celia A. Ross (Director-at-Large, July 1, 2012, to June 30, 2015) - caross@umich.edu
Work Phone: (734) 763-5452
University of Michigan, Kresge Business Adm. Library
701 Tappan Ave Rm K3330
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1234

Doris Ann Sweet (Director-at-Large, July 1, 2011, to June 30, 2014) - dasweet@assumption.edu
Work Phone: (508) 767-7272
Fax: (508) 767-7374
Assumption College Library
500 Salisbury St
Worcester, MA 01609-1265

Patrick J. Wall (Director-at-Large, July 1, 2011, to June 30, 2014) - pjwall@ucpl.lib.mo.us
Work Phone: (314) 727-3150
Fax: (314) 727-6005
University City Public Library
6701 Delmar Blvd
University City, MO 63130-3199

Jennifer C. Boettcher (RUSA Division Councilor, July 1, 2012, to June 30, 2015) - boettcher@georgetown.edu
Work Phone: (202) 687-7495
Fax: (202) 687-7503
Georgetown University
Michelle M. Baildon (RUSA HS Representative, July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014) - baildon@mit.edu
Work Phone: (617) 253-9352
Fax: (617) 253-2464
MIT Libraries
77 Massachusetts Ave # 14S-200
Cambridge, MA 02139-4301

Ann K. G. Brown (RUSA RSS Representative, July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014) - agbrown@email.gwu.edu
Work Phone: (202) 994-1351
Fax: (202) 994-4855
George Washington University, Gelman Library
2130 H St Nw
Gelman Library
Washington, DC 20052-0081

Ms. Nora E. Dethloff (RUSA STARS Representative, July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014) - ndethloff@uh.edu
Work Phone: (713) 743-9747
Fax: (713) 743-9725
University of Houston Libraries
114 University Libraries
Houston, TX 77204-2000

Asia E. Gross (RUSA CODES Representative, July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014) - agross@stchlibrary.org
Work Phone: (636) 441-6454
St. Charles City - County Library DistrictMcClay Branch Library
2760 Mcclay Road
St. Charles, MO 63376

Andy Spackman (RUSA BRASS Representative, July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014) - andy_spackman@byu.edu
Work Phone: (801) 422-3924
Brigham Young University
PO Box 26889
Provo, UT 84602-6889

Samuel Rutherford Stormont (RUSA MARS Representative, July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014) - srstormont@widener.edu
Work Phone: (610) 499-4080
Elizabeth Stephan (Ex-Officio Member, July 1, 2012, to June 30, 2015) - Elizabeth.Stephan@wwu.edu
Work Phone: (360) 650-2061
Western Washington University
516 High St
Mailstop 9103
Bellingham, WA 98225-5996

Barry Trott (Ex-Officio Member, July 1, 2012, to June 30, 2015) - btrott@wrl.org
Work Phone: (757) 259-7747
Fax: (757) 259-7798
Williamsburg Regional Library
7770 Croaker Rd
Williamsburg, VA 23188-7064

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