

**TO: ALA Council**

**RE:** Establishment of a Council Committee on Sustainability; Discontinuance of the Library Education Assembly; Discontinuance of the Exhibits Round Table; and change of charge for the ALA Election Committee

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:**

Action requested from Councilors is to cast their vote to:

- (1) Establishment of a Council Committee on Sustainability
- (2) Discontinue the Library Education Assembly
- (3) Discontinue the Exhibits Round Table
- (4) Endorse the creation of the Exhibits Advisory Group
- (5) Change the charge of the ALA Election Committee

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:** 2020-2021 Committee on Organization

**CONTACT PERSON:** Jim Neal, [jneal0@columbia.edu](mailto:jneal0@columbia.edu), Chair of the Committee on Organization

***The Committee on Organization recommends to Council:***

*DRAFT OF MOTION 1 (see appendix 1):* To establish the Council Committee on Sustainability.

*DRAFT OF MOTION 2 (see appendix 2):* To discontinue the Library Education Assembly

*DRAFT OF MOTION 3 (see appendix 3):* To discontinue the Exhibits Round Table

*DRAFT OF MOTION 4 (see appendix 3):* To endorse the creation of the proposed Exhibits Advisory Group, including exhibitor and library members, as an informal body to advise Conference Services.

*DRAFT OF MOTION 5 (see appendix 5):* To change the charge of the ALA Election Committee

**DATE:** January 19, 2021

**BACKGROUND:** (see attached)

**APPENDIX 1:**

**Committee on Organization  
Action Request Form**

**Date:** Originally submitted 10.26.2020 for the COO meeting on 10.28.2020; *Revised with COO Input 10.28.2020*

**Re: Establishment of a Council Committee on Sustainability Action Request**

(See types of requests in COO Guidelines; Note: Informational only requests does not need COO approval, however, action request form is needed for documentation):

Establish

**Committee/Units Affected/Contact Name/Email:** N/A

**Background:**

In 2013 the American Library Association formed a Sustainability Round Table (SustainRT) and its first slate of SustainRT officers were elected in March 2014. At the 2015 ALA Annual Conference in San Francisco, California ALA Council passed their “ [Resolution on the Importance of Sustainable Libraries](#) .” The resolution notes that libraries play an important and unique role in wider community communications about resilience, climate change and a sustainable future. The resolution goes on to encourage ALA, its membership, library schools/iSchools and state associations to be proactive in their application of sustainable thinking in the areas of their facilities, operations, policy, technology, programming, partnerships and library school curricula. To that end, ALA Council formed the Special Task Force on Sustainability, which began meeting in October of 2017. The charge of the Task Force was to develop a white paper that describes areas of focus and recommendations for the ALA Executive Board to increase the adoption and implementation of sustainable practices by the Association, the profession, libraries and the communities they serve.

The task force was asked to focus on:

- How the Association may provide leadership and serve as a model for sustainability practices more broadly in the profession;
- How the Association may provide leadership in the adoption of sustainability practices in libraries; and,
- How libraries may provide leadership and serve as a model for sustainability in the communities they serve.

The work of the task force included a literature review, a membership perception survey and multiple focus groups with ALA membership. As a result, a [final report was issued](#) in June 2018 which included 52 recommendations to fulfill the vision of increasing the adoption and implementation of sustainable practices by the Association, the profession, libraries and the communities they serve.

As a result two actions were immediately addressed at the 2019 ALA Midwinter Meeting with the passage of the “[Resolution for the Adoption of Sustainability as a Core Value of Librarianship](#).” This resolution:

- Defined sustainability using the “triple bottom line” conceptual framework: “To be truly sustainable, an organization or community must embody practices that are environmentally sound AND economically feasible AND social equitable.”
- Adopted “sustainability,” as defined above, as a core value of librarianship.
- Directed that accreditation standards be evolved to ensure the topic of sustainability is an inherent element of library school curriculum.
- Directed that ALA members be provided with the necessary knowledge and resources to “inspire, cultivate and encourage active leadership in the application of the triple bottom line framework to guide decisions for the future of our society.”

The task force evolved into an implementation team and has issued several reports to the ALA

***Executive Board on the COO Action Request Form 1 Form Updated: 09/2019***

progress being made on the recommendations in partnership with the ALA staff (60% of recommendations) and the Sustainability Round Table (40% of recommendations). In the June 2020 report, the team noted that ALA is facing unprecedented financial and organizational challenges. “*From an already dire financial outlook that has been, no doubt, compounded by the economic crisis caused by fallout from efforts to protect human lives and our healthcare system from COVID-19 to the milestone recommendations to overhaul the organizational structure of our association – ALA is at a crossroads.*” The team noted the opportunity that lies ahead for ALA to “*build on the best of what ALA is and can be. To reimagine the future and to set the leadership tone for what is so desperately needed out in the field – an approach that respects the core values of the profession while upholding the triple bottom line that results in libraries and communities that are economically feasible, socially equitable and respect the natural environment.*” “*An organizational commitment to the new core value of sustainability “from the inside out,” in conjunction with the already stellar work being done on the topics of equity, diversity, and inclusion, will aid in the finances of the organization as well as inspire members – existing members to renew their membership and new members to join.*”

As a result, ALA Executive Board took a new, formal step in the work to **infuse sustainability into the DNA of our association** with the passage of a resolution to direct the Committee on Organization to form a Sustainability Committee by Midwinter 2021.

This vision for this committee aligns with the current construct of the Intellectual Freedom Committee, respecting the role of the Sustainability Round Table as a community of practice within the association while having the Committee focus on policy, governance and strategic direction issues of the association. This committee would steward the integration of the core

value of sustainability through the Forward Together process and serve as advisors to stakeholders in the association to address the recommendations within the June 2020 report (EBD #10.10 2019-2020) and those remaining from the 2019 report (EBD #5.4 2017-2018) . It is notable that there could be a future intersection of this Committee and the work of the UN Sustainable Development Goals Task force given their charge includes the creation of a “... *multi-year strategic plan to increase awareness among all ALA members of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and how libraries and librarians and library workers around the world are key partners in their communities, societies, and countries in achieving the Goals.* ”

**Proposal:** Provide detailed information on proposed action requested.

A) **Committee Charge** - It is proposed that a Committee on Sustainability be formed with the following charge:

To provide the necessary leadership and monitoring of ALA strategic initiatives that will infuse the core value of sustainability throughout the policies, procedures, practices of our association and our professional activities, in collaboration with the ALA President, ALA Council, ALA divisions, ALA offices and units, ALA round tables, ALA committees, ALA affiliates and ALA staff so that our association and its members contribute to the development of sustainable and resilient communities. In particular, this committee will maintain a working relationship with the Public Policy & Advocacy Office, Public Programs Office and the Conference Committee; as well as with PLA, ACRL, AASL and other divisions, to work with their membership affect meaningful sustainability-related outcomes and model best practices for their memberships and institutions to help affect meaningful sustainability-related outcomes for the association that result in true change and model best practices for our membership.

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**B) Committee Membership**

- It is proposed that there be ten (10) members of the committee.
- It is suggested that there be required liaisons from:
  - i. Sustainability Round Table
  - ii. Committee on Legislation
  - iii. International Relations Round Table (IRRT) International Sustainable Library Development Interest Group

**C) Officer Structure**

- Chair (appointed annually by the ALA President-Elect)

**Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** Provide brief information on how your group, including this proposed action supports ALA’s values on EDI ( <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/diversity> ).

Through ALA’s adoption of the triple bottom line definition of sustainability, social equity is inherent and intrinsic to the topic. Specifically there are two intersections that particularly highlight the symbiotic nature of sustainability and EDI work:

- Sustainability and EDI go hand-in-hand. Much of the [research and recommendations](#) around building more resilient communities in the face of climate change point to the need for

communities to work together at the local level to develop grassroots solutions to the hyper-local issues they face. This work cannot be done without empathy, respect and understanding of one another coupled with a deep respect for diversity and the richness of various cultures and socio-economic backgrounds to fully develop reasonable solutions and the community buy-in for the necessary actions to combat climate change.

- Additionally, there is ample evidence that systemic racism has caused an imbalance of how people are, and will, be impacted by climate change resulting in calls for “climate justice.” From housing and banking policies that have relegated communities of color to geographies that are more vulnerable to flooding, air pollution, and blight to economic policies that have left people of color disproportionately forced to shelter in place during natural disasters, there is no doubt that EDI work is strongly tied to environmental sustainability.

Submit form and accompanying document(s) to: Marsha P. Burgess ( [mburgess@ala.org](mailto:mburgess@ala.org) ) and Sheryl Reyes ( [sreyes@ala.org](mailto:sreyes@ala.org) ), ALA COO Staff Liaison

COO Action Request Form 3  
Form Updated: 09/2019

**APPENDIX 2:**

**Committee On Organization**

**Action Request Form**

**Date:** 12/1/2020

**Re:** Library Education Assembly request to discontinue

**Action Request** (See types of requests in COO Guidelines; Note: Informational only requests does not need COO approval, however, action request form is needed for documentation):

Establish (e.g. *new MIG*)       **Discontinue** (e.g. *end of MIG*)       Renew (e.g. *renewal of MIG*)

Name Change (e.g. *changing name of Round Table*; Note: Informational Only)

Define/Change/Clarify (e.g. *function, committee structure, etc.*)

Request to Move (e.g. *moving from MIG to Round Table*)

**Committee/Units Affected/Contact Name/Email:**

The ALA Committee on Education has unanimously voted to request that COO disband the Library Education Assembly. Action requested by the ALA Committee on Education (COE), Karen Downing (Chair) - [kdown@umich.edu](mailto:kdown@umich.edu), cc Staff Liaison Gwendolyn Prellwitz (Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services) [gprellwitz@ala.org](mailto:gprellwitz@ala.org)

**Background:** Provide any background information on program/issue under consideration, including why is this action necessary.

- The ALA Committee on Education was established by ALA Council in June, 1977, to become effective February 1, 1978, upon dissolution of the Library Education Division. Renamed Committee on Education at the 1995 Midwinter Meeting. The Library Education Assembly creation is less clear but it appears to have been established very shortly (6-12 months) after the COE was established. It seems possible that there were couple of disparate groups who brought similar proposals to COO/Council upon the dissolution of the Division, and in response to the separate proposals the current structure of nesting the assembly under the COE was established to reduce duplication.
- There is not a clear history of how the Assembly was to function outside of providing a larger forum at face-to-face conferences. Additionally, all mention in the ALA Archives to the Assembly from its first decade of existence indicate the Assembly did not convene.

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- The Assembly includes all of the members of the COE and representatives from Divisions and “education groups”. Some of the groups with an Assembly rep already have a representative on the Committee on Education – ACRL and AASL have reps both on the COE and the Assembly and there is little clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the two different reps. LEARN has a rep on the committee but not on the Assembly. Historically ALCTS, LITA and RUSA have been the most consistent in appointing reps to the Assembly (they do not have any on the committee) but this has fallen off in recent years.
- The current structure and purpose of the Assembly, especially as groups work virtually and face to face convening does not ensure full representation, and does not necessitate a separate body outside of the COE.

**Proposal:** Provide detailed information on proposed action requested.

The Committee on Education requests that COO disband the Library Education Assembly.

**Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** Provide brief information on how your group, including this proposed action supports ALA’s values on EDI (<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/diversity>).

The Library Education Assembly was charged to provide within ALA an opportunity for broad representation of the membership and for affiliated groups to exchange information, share ideas, and express concerns pertaining to education for library service with a view toward assisting the COE in carrying out its charge, however, this charge significantly overlaps with the COE.

In its current structure, association representation is limited to select groups and the Assembly’s activities have been limited to the occasional convening at ALA Conferences. This format has never promoted broad representation of membership and has caused confusion between the roles of COE and the Assembly. Rather, the Committee on Education proposes to engage stakeholders broadly through consultation with ALA Divisions and Affiliates, including those not represented on the Committee/Assembly through convening virtual forums to engage membership more directly.

Submit form and accompanying document(s) to: Marsha P. Burgess ([mburgess@ala.org](mailto:mburgess@ala.org)) and Sheryl Reyes ([sreyes@ala.org](mailto:sreyes@ala.org)), ALA COO Staff Liaison

**APPENDIX 3:**

**Committee On Organization  
Action Request Form**

**Date:** 12/9/2020

**Re: Exhibits Round Table**

**Action Request** (See types of requests in COO Guidelines; Note: Informational only requests does not need COO approval, however, action request form is needed for documentation):

- Establish (e.g. *new MIG*)       Discontinue (e.g. *end of MIG*)       Renew (e.g. *renewal of MIG*)
- Name Change (e.g. *changing name of Round Table*; Note: Informational Only)
- Define/Change/Clarify (e.g. *function, committee structure, etc.*)
- Request to Move (e.g. *moving from MIG to Round Table*)

**Committee/Units Affected/Contact Name/Email:**

Exhibits Round Table, David Lysinger, Chair, [dlysinger@recordedbooks.com](mailto:dlysinger@recordedbooks.com); Conference Services, Earla Jones, Director [ejones@ala.org](mailto:ejones@ala.org)

**Background:** Provide any background information on program/issue under consideration, including why is this action necessary.

In recent years, ERT has struggled to remain effective within the ALA structure. It has been difficult to maintain revenue targets and a challenge to fill board positions. Due to the nature of the majority of ERT's membership, the structure as described by ALA makes it difficult to maintain a minimum level of participation. The majority of members join through the Corporate Member program for the benefit of improved space selection.

**Proposal:** Provide detailed information on proposed action requested.

Dissolution of the Round Table. Conference Services plans to create an Exhibits Advisory Group to consult with Conference Services staff on topics including attendance promotion, exhibit operation rules



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and fostering the relationship between librarians and exhibitors. Freeing the group from ALA's governance and reporting structure will allow more exhibitors to participate.

**Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** Provide brief information on how your group, including this proposed action supports ALA's values on EDI (<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/diversity>).

Under the current structure, participation is limited to those with the corporate support for staff time and financial ability participate. A change to an advisory group will allow for broader participation from small under-represented segments of the exhibitor base and from a more diverse range of exhibitors.

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**APPENDIX 4:**

**Committee On Organization**

**Action Request Form**

**Date:** 12/14/2020

**Re:** Change of Charge for ALA Election Committee

**Action Request** (See types of requests in COO Guidelines; Note: Informational only requests does not need COO approval, however, action request form is needed for documentation):

Establish (e.g. *new MIG*)       Discontinue (e.g. *end of MIG*)       Renew (e.g. *renewal of MIG*)

Name Change (e.g. *changing name of Round Table*; Note: Informational Only)

Define/Change/Clarify (e.g. *function, committee structure, etc.*)

Request to Move (e.g. *moving from MIG to Round Table*)

**Committee/Units Affected/Contact Name/Email:**

ALA Election Committee/Matthew Cizek, Elections Committee Chair/mpc16@psu.edu

**Background:** Provide any background information on program/issue under consideration, including why is this action necessary.

The current charge for the ALA Election Committee includes the following sentence: "To consist of six ALA members who agree to travel to ALA headquarters at no cost to the association." Typically, members of the ALA Election Committee are expected to travel to the ALA Headquarters each April to certify the results of association elections, but due to the global coronavirus pandemic in 2020, the April 2020 ALA Elections Committee Meeting was held electronically for the first time. The meeting ran smoothly, and included Elections Committee members, ALA staff, and representatives from SBS Direct Vote, the vendor the association uses for its online election. At the November 2020 meeting of the Election Committee, we discussed at length removing the qualification that members of the committee would need to travel to ALA Headquarters to attend the meeting in person, and instead hold the

meeting electronically starting in April 2021. The Committee voted unanimously to submit a change of charge to the Committee on Organization to change the charge of the committee to remove the mandate to travel to ALA Headquarters for the meeting.

**Proposal:** Provide detailed information on proposed action requested.

We propose that the line “To consist of six ALA members who agree to travel to ALA headquarters at no cost to the association.” in the charge for the ALA Election Committee be changed to “To consist of six ALA members who commit to meeting electronically, or in person at ALA Headquarters, at no cost to the association.” This provides flexibility to committee members to attend the meeting either electronically or in person, opens up membership in the committee to those who may not have the means to travel to Chicago for the meeting or are not located in the Chicago area, and ensures the flexibility in the charge to hold an electronic only or electronic/in-person hybrid meeting as circumstances dictate. Finally, this change furthers the sustainability goals of the Association by limiting unnecessary travel for meetings that are easily accomplished through an electronic means.

**Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** Provide brief information on how your group, including this proposed action supports ALA’s values on EDI (<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/diversity>).

Removing the mandate that ALA Election Committee members must travel to Chicago with no cost to the Association would allow a more inclusive and diverse Election Committee to include members from all geographic regions, early-career professionals and retirees, and those who may not have the means to travel with their own funds. In addition, holding meetings electronically may allow those with disabilities the ability to participate fully in this important work.

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