

Transforming ALA Governance Task Force Report Annual Conference 2022

Introduction

Task Force Members

- Amy Lappin, Chair
- Meg Delaney
- Liana Juliano
- Eldon (Ray) James
- Oscar Lanza-Galindo
- LeRoy LaFleur
- Kathy Carroll
- Patty Wong, Board Liaison
- Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada, Board Liaison

Staff Liaisons

- Tracie Hall, Executive Director
- Sheryl Reyes, Director of Governance
- Raymond Garcia, Special Assistant to the ED
- Marsha Burgess, Council Secretariat

Original Charge

The Transforming ALA Governance Task Force (TAG) was appointed by the Executive Board in July 2021 with the charge a) indicate and operationalize the culture changing principles of the Avenue M report, SCOE recommendations, the Forward Together work, and a new governance landscape, b) establish a regular governance review process, and c) assess the large projects that need to be addressed and create a plan to address them.

Additional Direction from Council for TAG from ALA CD#35b Part C, Revised

Arrange to have virtual Council Meetings scheduled for March, April and May 2022, with the purpose of continuing the discussion of the TAG Task Force's recommendations;

Direct, That, in preparation for the virtual Council meetings, the TAG Task Force develop and present for Council's consideration its proposed composition of a reduced size ALA Council, functioning as an advisory body, and that the TAG Task Force also present options for the proposed composition of the new ALA Executive Board;

Direct, That, in preparation for the virtual Council meetings, the TAG Task Force prepare, for Council's consideration, ideas to advance the implementation of the 'Taking ALA Pulse' (TAP) concept, as a method of bringing feedback and issues from ALA Members, Units and Affiliates for Council's consideration in its potentially added role as a Body of Knowledge;

Direct, That, in preparation for the virtual Council meetings, the TAG Taskforce present, for Council's consideration, measures that could promote the culture for the effective functioning of ALA Council, with such measures including, but not limited to, improvements to the Council agenda development process, Council evaluation tools, Exit interviews, and more.

PROCESS

The TAG Task Force has continued to meet weekly since their charge was modified and extended by Council at LibLearnX in January/March 2022. While individual members took the lead on different aspects of the work, we functioned mostly as a unit with decisions regarding TAG's recommendations being made in the weekly meetings. The task force spent time looking at the reports and recommendations of committees and working groups involved in the work starting in 2018. TAG also held meetings with Council and consulted with other committees and units including the Committee on Organization, the Constitution & Bylaws Committee, Budget Analysis & Review Committee, and Division leadership for feedback.

BACKGROUND

As the process evolves, it can be difficult to remember how we got to where we are today. Some of today's Councilors were not on Council when the process began. In that interest, the task force thought it might be helpful to review some of the key work and reports that have happened up to this point.

FALL 2017 President Jim Neal sent out [a call to action](#) and invited members to begin thinking about the future of the Association and examine ways to create a more member engaged and modern organization firmly rooted in our core values.

ALA Executive Board authorized an exploratory subcommittee with Executive Board members Andrew Pace, Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada, and Patty Wong, and ALA Executive Director, Mary Ghikas.

JANUARY 2018 Between their appointment in 2017 and during the 2018 ALA Midwinter Meeting, the subcommittee examined over 300 documents from Council and the Planning & Budget Assembly (PBA) discussions, held kitchen table meetings, and facilitated conversations with Council and other association leaders.

SPRING 2018 ALA contracted with Avenue M Group, a market research firm, to conduct a [communications and membership study](#) with the goal of improving services to members.

JUNE 2018 The [ALA Executive Board Working Group on Governance and Organizational Effectiveness report](#) at ALA Annual in New Orleans offered an 18-month plan to be followed by an implementation phase. ALA President Jim Neal appointed a 23-member Steering Committee for Organizational Effectiveness (SCOE) chaired by Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada.

SCOE's work included holding 8 in-person public input sessions, 7 virtual webinars and feedback sessions, 11 ALA staff focus groups, meetings with over 40 groups across ALA, and an online discussion forum with over 400 members.

OCTOBER 2019 [SCOE report to ALA Executive Board introduces Forward Together](#) and makes "recommendations for a reimagined ALA governance model."

SCOE released a bold detailed plan, entitled "Forward Together", recommending, among other changes, a governance structure with an expanded Executive Board and the elimination of Council replacing it with four Advisory Leadership Assemblies and six standing committees.

SCOE's recommendations included:

- Changes to the board and committees for a more direct election and input by members
- Providing multiple avenues for year round engagement by all members rather than twice a year for a select few
- Creating institutionalized intentionality and diversity in our governing bodies and structures

MAY 2020 The Committee on Organization and the Constitution & Bylaws Committee issued a [joint report](#) to the ALA Executive Board offering an analysis of Forward Together Recommendations.

JUNE 2020 Forward Together Working Group is created by the Executive Board to lead SCOE's Forward Together recommendations through a multi-step process to test and assess the Forward Together recommendations. Consisting of 13 volunteers and co-chaired by Joslyn Bowling-Dixon and Steven Yates, the FTWG was charged to gather Council feedback and synthesize that information into a report. No decisions were to be made by the working group.

President Wanda K. Brown appointed the 8-member Forward Together Fiscal Analysis Working Group (FR-FAWG) to "conduct a comprehensive fiscal analysis of the amended Forward Together recommendations.

JUL-DEC 2020 The Forward Together Working Group facilitated six virtual information sessions with Council and sent a survey to all Council members.

DEC 2020 The 23-member Forward Together Resolutions Working Group is created. Jack Martin and Christina Rodrigues served as co-chairs. The charge of the FTRWG was defined in *ALA CD 52 Draft Revised-FT-Timeline Dec. 2020*:

"The newly appointed working group will develop resolutions based on the FTWG report that provided an analysis of the SCOE recommendations. The resolutions will include parameters of the proposed new structure at a conceptual (i.e.: non-Bylaws) level. Council will debate on the various components via the resolution and will continue to work in the development of the resolutions with the goal to bring forward for vote at subsequent Council meetings."

The FTRWG worked over six months to create and present a series of Resolutions related to a new governance structure for Council's consideration at the 2021 ALA Virtual Annual Conference.

JAN 2021 The Forward Together Working Group delivered the [Forward Together Working Group Report: Snapshot of Work Performed between July 2020 and January 2021](#)

The report offered a detailed summary of the meetings held with Council and represented the varying opinions expressed in the sessions.

A few key takeaways of the Forward Together Working Group Report regarding Governance:

- 85% of 107 FTWG survey respondents favored some change to Council, but what those changes might look like varied widely. There was support for a reduced Council size and fewer at-large Councilors
- 81% of respondents supported representative positions on the Executive Board
- Councilors wanted to consider ways the Executive Board could have greater member representation including some Executive Board members being directly elected by membership rather than Council
- ALA's governance structure is too complex

The FTWG identified essential areas for future groups working on the ALA governance structure to consider including:

- More frequent and virtual Council meetings
- Schedule in depth and regular reviews of ALA policies, by-laws, and governance structure (every 5 years)
- Council term limits
- Reduction of the size of Council (25%) and the number of at-large Council members
- Definition of the Responsibilities of Council
- Identification of the scope of Council
- Eliminate requirements for in-person meetings

JUNE 2021 [The Forward Together Resolutions Working Group Resolutions Overview & Final Report, ALA CD#46.1](#), is presented to Council. Council passed CD#46.1, Item 1, *Resolution on the ALA Core Values of Librarianship* and CD#46.1, Item 2, *Resolution on ALA Roundtables*. The remaining resolutions were not voted on.

Additionally in **JUNE 2021**, [The Forward Together Fiscal Analysis Report ALA CD#37.1](#) was provided to the Council.

On June 27, 2021, President [Patty Wong](#) announced a pause in the resolutions process to provide more time to create a plan to operationalize the data, information, and opinions that had been gathered, researched and expressed to that point. The Transforming ALA Governance Task Force was created in July 2021 to complete this work.

The Transforming ALA Governance Task Force (TAG) was appointed by the Executive Board with the charge to *a) indicate and operationalize the culture changing principles of the Avenue M report, SCOE recommendations, the Forward Together work, and a new governance landscape, b) establish a regular governance review process, and c) assess the large projects that need to be addressed and create a plan to address them.*

DECEMBER 2021 TAG provided Council with a narrative and two potential governance models endorsing the idea of a smaller one body Advisory Council and a more representative Executive Board solely responsible for governance functions. These are included in TAG's report to Council below.

JANUARY 2022 TAG's [report to Council](#) included potential governance models. Council deliberated on [CD 35b with three action items](#). Council voted for TAG Motion Part A (ALA Governance: Functions): CD#35B and TAG Motion Part B (Body of Knowledge: Culture): CD#35B

MARCH 2022 At the Mar 10, 2022 Virtual Council meeting, Council voted affirmatively on the action item in [CD#35b, Part C, Revised](#) which directed the work of the TAG Task Force be extended until Council deems it is complete and directed the task force to take the following actions:

Arrange to have a virtual Council Meetings scheduled for March, April and May 2022, with the purpose of continuing the discussion of the TAG Task Force's recommendations;

That, in preparation for the virtual Council meetings, the TAG Task Force develop and present for Council's consideration its proposed composition of a reduced size ALA Council, functioning as an advisory body, and that the TAG Task Force also present options for the proposed composition of the new ALA Executive Board;

That, in preparation for the virtual Council meetings, the TAG Task Force prepare, for Council's consideration, ideas to advance the implementation of the 'Taking ALA Pulse' (TAP) concept, as a method of bringing feedback and issues from ALA Members, Units and Affiliates for Council's consideration in its potentially added role as a Body of Knowledge; and

That, in preparation for the virtual Council meetings, the TAG Taskforce present, for Council's consideration, measures that could promote the culture for the effective functioning of ALA Council, with such measures including, but not limited to, improvements to the Council agenda development process, Council evaluation tools, Exit interviews, and more.

Council also directed that the Committee on Organization (COO) review the standing Committee structure and charges in light of the new ALA Governance function, culture, and structure. As TAG finalized their own tasks, they also noted where COO's assistance will be crucial to identifying future Committee needs.

MARCH 2022 TAG convened a [meeting with Council focusing on the size and composition of Council](#)

APRIL 2022 TAG convened a [meeting with Council focusing on Taking ALA's Pulse \(TAP\) and oversight](#)

MAY 2022 TAG convened a [meeting with Council focusing on effectiveness](#)

RECENT UPDATES

Throughout the process, the TAG Task Force has welcomed questions, debate and feedback from association members, staff, councilors, and committee members and received insight into how the implementation of the TAG recommendations might work for various groups. The three meetings that were held between LibLearnX and June 2022 were invaluable in terms of hearing from Councilors. Other committee meetings attended during that time have led to other modifications to the recommendations Council had seen previously from TAG.

Among the recommendations, please note: TAG is now recommending that a total of 3 Division Councilors be included on the Executive Board. The decisions made by the Executive Board often

have a direct, and financial, impact on the Divisions. One of the Division Executive Board seats would be dedicated to a member of the American Association of School Librarians who, it has been noted, have been underrepresented in Executive Board and Council participation.

Another change to the recommendations is that with the exception of the Officers who are elected by the membership, Executive Board members will be elected for 3 year staggered terms by Council from Councilors selected by the Committee on Committees or through the self-nomination process. This change to earlier TAG recommendations makes the election path to the Executive Board clearer than earlier TAG models and provides direct input from Council which is important if the Executive Board is to be the policy making body.

Regarding TAG's Council recommendations, TAG is now recommending only 53 Chapter Councilors. While we think there is value in adding seats for the regional chapters, TAG heard compelling arguments that if the goal is to shrink the size of Council, should we be adding Councilors to a structure that already has representation for those areas? TAG's recommendation for Council seats for regional chapters has been removed.

The Transforming ALA Governance Task Force continues to strongly recommend that the Council become an Advisory Council.

To help with Council's decision making process, a spreadsheet that was shared with Council earlier this year listing some of the most recent [Actions Taken by Council](#) may be helpful. The question becomes, does Council currently act as a policy making body, or is it more often approving the actions of other groups and committees? Would Council's time be better spent as an advisory body engaging in more relevant and meaningful discussions to advance the association's work?

TAG continues to recommend the creation of an [Oversight Review Board](#), an Agenda Committee, and a [mechanism for Taking ALA's Pulse](#). The form these committees will take is yet to be determined. Do new committees need to be created or are there existing structures within ALA which are well-suited to do this work? TAG Action Items 1.4 and 1.5 direct the Committee on Organization to examine and make recommendations to Council on these issues.

While not in the action item, TAG also recognizes that as the details of a new governance structure are worked out, a plan for reviewing the new structure, possibly once three years after full implementation and then regularly every ten years, will need to be addressed.

With the spirit of moving forward together, the Transforming ALA Governance Task Force offers the following Action Item for Council's discussion and deliberation:

ACTION ITEM 1: Moved, That the Council of the American Library Association:

1. Endorse, making the new ALA Executive Board the ALA's Governing Body, with its composition as follows:
 - a. President of the American Library Association
 - b. President- Elect of ALA
 - c. Immediate Past President of ALA

- d. Treasurer
- e. Executive Director of the American Library Association (non voting)
- f. 2 Division Members, elected for 3 year terms by Council
- g. Round Table Member, elected for a 3 year term by Council
- h. NALCo Member, elected for a 3 year term by Council
- i. Chapter Member, elected for a 3 year term by Council
- j. American Association of School Librarians Member, elected for a 3 year term by Council
- k. 3 At-large Members, elected for 3 year terms by Council

All Executive Board members must be active members of the American Library Association. The Executive Board members, who are elected by Council, must be both current Councilors and current members of the Chapter, Division, NALCo, or Round Table they are representing. The 3 year terms should be staggered.

2. Endorse, the establishment of an Advisory Council which would debate, deliberate, and make recommendations to the Executive Board on topics relevant and important to the Membership of the American Library Association, with a size and its composition as follows:
 - a. A Chapter Councilor from each of the ALA Chapters elected for three year terms by the Chapters (Currently 53)
 - b. A Councilor from each of the ALA Divisions, elected for three year terms by each of the Divisions (Currently 8)
 - c. A Councilor from each of the National Associations of Librarians of Color which includes the American Indian Library Association, the Asian Pacific American Library Association, the Black Caucus of the American Library Association, the Chinese American Library Association, and REFORMA The National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking elected for three year terms by each of the NALCOs (Currently 5)
 - d. A Councilor from each of the Round Tables with personal membership equal or greater than 1% of ALA's personal membership plus 1 Councilor for the remaining Round Tables (Currently 12)
 - e. 18 Councilors At-large, elected for three year terms directly by the ALA Membership

Additionally, the Officers of the Association and the Executive Board, including the immediate past president and treasurer, are members of the Council as provided in current Bylaw Article III, Sec. 6(c) and IV, Sec. 2(e). The Officers of Council are the President, the President-Elect and the Executive Director.

All Councilors must be active members of the American Library Association. The 3 year terms should be staggered. All Council terms will begin immediately following the American Library Association's Annual meeting.

3. Direct, the ALA Constitution and Bylaws Committee, in consultation with ALA's Parliamentarian, to rewrite the ALA Constitution and Bylaws reflecting the changes to the ALA governance structure and consider revising the ALA Constitution and Bylaws to create one core governing document to represent a flexible and modern association. The draft should be

available to Council by October 1, 2022 for comment, review, and reflection with discussion and a vote on the new Constitution and Bylaws to be taken at LibLearnX 2023.

4. Direct, the ALA Committee on Organization to evaluate the proposed new structure of the Council and Executive Board, providing recommendations for additions, revisions, or deletions to the current ALA committee structure by October 1, 2022 in preparation for Council's approval of a new Constitution and Bylaws at LibLearnX in January 2023.
5. Direct, the ALA Committee on Organization to review whether the recommendations of the Transforming ALA Governance Task Force and the actions approved by Council in *ALA CD#35 b* including the creation of an Agenda Review Committee, a mechanism for regular membership input (Taking ALA's Pulse), and an Oversight Review Board require the creation of new committees or might already fall in the charge of existing committees.
6. Direct, the ALA Executive Board and the ALA Membership Committee to consider and recommend ways to make the ALA Membership meetings more meaningful and relevant to all members of the ALA including a mechanism for recommending the issues presented by membership be discussed by Council in an effective manner.

On behalf of the Transforming ALA Governance Task Force, it has been an honor to participate in the re-imagining and re-structuring of the governance of the Association. Thank you to all of the people who have given their time and energy throughout the process. We hope we have been of service in moving this work forward.

Respectfully submitted,

[Amy Lappin](#)

Transforming ALA Governance, Chair