

## Report from the Council Forum Working Group (CFWG) ALA Annual Conference 2019 – Washington, DC

After the 2019 Midwinter Meeting in Seattle, WA, President Loida Garcia-Febo appointed a working group to look at the viability and continuation of ALA Council’s unofficial forum Meetings. Council forum grew as an organic offshoot of official Council proceedings. This informal gathering offered the opportunity for Councilors to ask questions about parliamentary procedure and for more information on issues brought before council. This gathering was initiated to “save the time” of council meetings in order to effectively expedite ALA business. While a great idea, this arrangement builds barriers to those unable to attend these meetings. The Council Forum Working Group (CFWG) asks, “In this era of electronically disseminating documents, resolutions, and the like, and the immediate feedback that can be provided by this type of communication, we wonder ‘Has council forum outlived its usefulness?’” If the answer to this question is “no,” what will we do instead? Can we fulfill the needs of councilors who want to get more information and have more fluid discussions with other councilors without the structure of Robert's Rules of Order?

### Questions to Consider:

What goal does it serve for council?

Are there other means to serve this purpose and achieve these goals?

Is it “too organic” as an unofficial meeting of council with no rules of decorum or communication structures in place?

Whatever is decided, the CFWG is committed to focusing on Openness, Inclusivity, Safety, and promoting full and equal participation.

### The charge of the CFWG is:

- To evaluate council forum for its continued use to further the goals of council Business.
- Identify ways to make it a safer space (including safeguards and consequences?).
- Structure consistent meeting times for scheduling purposes for council and ALA Conference Planning.
- Identify effective means to communicate issues that are discussed at forum for transparency and accessibility.

### Steps Accomplished:

- Set up an online discussion space for the working group.
- Started preliminary discussions on the charge.
- Shared/ reviewed comments made by Councilors from the past Forum survey.
- Work through the charge and questions to consider as a working group.
- Develop an avenue for feedback from current councilors – a new survey.

Next Steps:

- Analyze the data from the survey completed by 95 councilors.
- Provide some suggestions for moving forward based on feedback received by Fall 2019.

**Respectfully Submitted by the Council Forum Working Group:**

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