

ALA F&A/BARC - ALA FY20 Plan By Department

Date 6/11/2019

DEPARTMENT: Conferences

FY20 Strategic and Operational Priorities

What are your strategic and operational priorities in light of the prior three years' (FY17-FY19) operational and financial results?

For the past 2 years, there has been much discussion and research exploring the future direction of the ALA Midwinter Meeting. The finding revealed a steady decline in financial performance due to inconsistent registration trends (attendee and exhibits), increased expenses from the meeting space requirements, ALA overhead recovery and overall production costs. The initial recommendation of the ALA Conference Committee was for the last Midwinter Meeting to take place in January 2020 with a new event will launching in January 2021. After presenting the proposal and discussions internally with ALA Unit Managers, the recommendation has been made to hold the last Midwinter Meeting in January 2021 and launch a new event in January 2022.

FY20 Key Initiatives and Desired Outcomes

What are the top initiatives that your department plans to undertake in light of those priorities? What outcomes constitute success?

There are 2 initiatives that Conference Services will focus on in the next fiscal year. The first initiative is the design and launch of a new event that will be conservative in expectations for the first year with the potential for growth and reach to new sectors of ALA constituencies. The second initiative is hiring a Conference Content Manager on staff, which had been identified as a resource gap in the unit. This position will be instrumental in building the education program for the new event as well as the continuous assessment of the the juring process for the annual conference. The listing posted in June 2019 with the hopes to have someone onboarding by the beginning of the fiscal year.

Key Assumptions/Risks/Opportunities

What assumptions are inherent in your plan? What risks are you watching in light of those assumptions? What additional opportunities do you anticipate may appear that may impact your plan?

A SWOT analysis was conducted in May with ALA Unit Managers to assess the opportunities and vulnerabilities around creating and launching a new event. After much discussion, there were several areas that the group had a clear consensus, particularly regarding the new event launch taking place in January 2022 versus the proposed January 2021. With five years generating a significant loss in net revenue, there has been a critical need to reassess the current Midwinter Meeting. While some research has been done for exhibitors, neither a market analysis or a member needs assessment has been conducted. Also, a full evaluation of various financial models has not been performed. There is an understanding that the Youth Media awards need to happen in January and publishers need an early year event to announce Spring titles.