

# *Forward Together Analysis*

## **Committee on Organization/Constitution & Bylaws Committee**

### **Joint Report to ALA Executive Board**

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**May 4, 2020**

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# 1. Executive Summary

## Charge

The Committee on Organization was asked “To review and analyze the proposed changes in Forward Together in the context of ALA structure and organization, to determine what groups might be affected by the recommendations, and assess how and when the changes might be phased into the ALA structure.”

The Constitution and Bylaws Committee was asked “To review and analyze the proposed changes in Forward Together and how the constitution and bylaws will affect implementation, and to determine which rules or bylaws would need to change in order to further the proposed changes.”

The two committees met together at Midwinter in Philadelphia and decided to work together and to prepare an integrated report.

## Process

We formed six teams to work on the core recommendations of the Forward Together report: Board of Directors, Council, Board Committees and ALA Committees, Leadership Assemblies, Divisions, and Round Tables. Each team produced a report which examined the following five areas: presentation of the SCOE Recommendation, presentation of the current ALA organization in that area, discussion of the issues/concerns that have been raised, constitution and bylaws implications, and recommendations for next steps. The work of the teams is presented and summarized in this document.

## Recommendations

1. As there are significant constitution and bylaws implications in the areas of Board of Directors, Council, and Board and ALA/Council Committees, convene as early as feasible a constitutional convention to debate and advance these organizational and governance changes.
2. Set aside the current ALA constitution and bylaws, and develop a single and simpler set of bylaws only, which would govern the work of the entire Association, including divisions and round tables.
3. Create a process now to establish a new working relationship (not an operating agreement) between ALA and its divisions, establishing a uniform dues structure and maintaining opportunities for division member engagement.
4. Create a process now to establish a similar working relationship between ALA and its round tables.
5. Proceed now to establish and activate the proposed leadership assemblies, building on existing frameworks where possible.
6. Carry out a comprehensive review of all ALA and Council committees, identifying those where Association work needs to proceed, and detailing the relationship of the continuing committees to the Board.

7. Proceed to develop the charters of the proposed Board committees and identify where their proposed roles intersect with existing ALA committees and other groups.

### **Additional Perspective**

We want to bring to the Executive Board a significant concern. Given the current outrageous disruption without predictable closure and serious impact on the health of the Association, can we afford to work systematically over the next two to three years to process and implement the Forward Together recommendations when more urgent and dramatic transformation will be needed. Given today's and the prospective conditions, would we come forward with the same set of recommendations? We need to focus more on the needs of libraries and library workers who are going to continue to be battered by the continuing virus crisis and devastating budget reductions.

## **2. Reports of Subgroups**

### **2.1. Board of Directors**

#### ***SCOE Recommendations***

Future Composition of the Board of Directors of the American Library Association:

17 volunteer members and one staff member, including:

- Four elected by membership: president, president elect, immediate past president, treasurer
- Eight elected by membership: at-large members
- Five appointed by the Board for unique skills and perspectives not represented by elected members
- One staff (executive director, ex-officio, non-voting)
- Term Length: three years, staggered

Sub-committees of the Board: Executive and Board Effectiveness (Endowment Trustees discussed in Member Engagement Opportunities)

*Forward Together* envisions a diverse, responsive, and inclusive Board of Directors. Currently only four members of the Executive Board are directly elected by the full membership: the president, president elect, immediate past president, and treasurer. In *Forward Together*, the majority of board members, twelve, will be directly elected by the membership, and an additional five positions will be appointed by the Board of Directors with the help of the Nominating Committee and Leadership Development Committee. These appointments will be made to ensure a diverse and inclusive board that incorporates skills, library types, and backgrounds not represented by elected members. The Board of Directors will continue to receive funding from the association for Board-related activities, including travel to meetings and conferences, reducing economic barriers to participation. Direct election of the majority of Board members places accountability of elected leaders of the association in the hands of the many, rather than the current multi-step process that results in less than 200

members selecting the majority of the Executive Board. The current multi-step process includes the election of eight at-large Executive Board members by and from ALA Council, some of whom were elected by the full membership, some by round table membership, some by division membership, and some by chapter membership. A single governing body with direct accountability to members as is proposed in the Board of Directors will enable Board members to take a larger view of the association rather than represent and promote the interests of one particular area.

Accountability is paramount to the role of the Board of Directors. Members of the Board are accountable to the association's membership, regardless of whether they have been elected or voted onto the Board. This accountability to members requires Board members to listen to and create action on behalf of members and be able to articulate and explain their actions to members for transparency and trust.

This accountability and trust is also represented in the proposed name change from "Executive Board" to "Board of Directors." The name change is intended to reset expectations of the Board. The Board of Directors as envisioned here is accountable directly to the membership and will receive critical, ongoing input from general members and assemblies of leaders. Moreover, the name change denotes the Board's existing and increased accountability for legal, financial, and administrative responsibilities and direction given to the ALA executive director, whom the board is responsible for hiring. The new name also further distinguishes the Board of Directors from the Executive Committee, a five member subgroup of the Board made up of the ALA president, president elect, immediate past president, treasurer, and executive director.

Each Board member, as they do now, will have a direct liaison responsibility with a committee of the Board, leadership assembly, and area of the association (offices, divisions, round tables, etc.). These liaison roles are intended to provide direct input to the Board of Directors, and communication will be regular and timely. Board members will not only report out to their designated groups, they will bring back suggestions, requests, and expertise to inform and influence Board decisions. These two way relationships are intended to not only improve communication between the Board of Directors, member leaders, and members, but also to encourage accountability and allow for larger numbers of members to voice their support or opposition to association policy, legislative issues, and more.

### ***Current ALA Organization***

The Executive Board currently consists of 12 volunteer members and one staff member, including:

- Four elected by membership: president, president elect, immediate past president, treasurer
- Eight elected by Council from current Councilors\*
- One staff (executive director, ex officio, non-voting)
- Term Length: three years, staggered

Committees of the Board: Executive, Board Effectiveness, Finance and Audit, Endowment Trustees

*\*At-large members of Council are elected by ALA membership. Councilors representing a specific division or round table are elected by their members and Chapter Councilors are elected by their*

*chapter's members.*

### ***Discussion of the Issues/Concerns that have been Raised***

#### **Relevant feedback from ALA members during open sessions at MW2020 (copied directly from notes taken at meetings)**

- Having a 17 member group rather than one in the 100's is a good desire... if the communication improves and becomes a place where members feel ownership.
- I am curious about the process and safeguards for the appointed positions on the Executive Board and the other overarching committees (e.g., Nominating). I strongly appreciate the direct election of most of the members of these committees (especially if we can avoid run-arounds like what happened in SAA this year), but I am unclear on the mechanisms for selections of the 1/3 of appointed positions. I understand that the intention is that those spots will be filled by librarians who fill roles that are perceived to be underrepresented on the committees across demographic categories, but how will we ensure that they aren't replicating existing power imbalances (e.g., it's noted that more school librarians are needed on a committee, but then all white women are appointed). I'm especially concerned about this after hearing about how members of council have reinforced existing power imbalances in council spaces--when I discussed this with an ALA staff member today, their answer was that most people in the organization have good intentions and are good actors, but I don't feel like that is a sufficient response. I would appreciate hearing more about the processes and checks that you all are thinking about this to make sure that the appointed positions serve the role as intended.
- The work of SCOE has been necessary to address the successful future of ALA. Their work has been insightful and informative. In many areas, I agree with them. We need to be an effective, nimble, inclusive, member-driven American Library Association. The one issue where I disagree is the role of the Board of Directors to replace the Executive Board as the sole decision maker of this volunteer-driven organization. ALA founding documents (Article 6) created Council for a reason. In the spirit of feedback, this is what I have been thinking while at leadership meetings as well as while listening to and participating in SCOE events and presentations.

#### **Relevant Feedback from Past-Presidents (copied directly from notes taken at meeting)**

- The effect of moving policy decisions to a 17-member board will be to concentrate policy-making authority and decision making into the hands of very few people
- Direct election by members presents a high danger of the election becoming a popularity contest, perhaps largely based on name recognition from social media use. Members will really have no opportunity to see how the nominees perform in a governance situation or how well the nominees demonstrate that they have a broad perspective on the Association and library issues.
- Appointing people to fill in gaps in diversity that emerged from the election is well intended, but there are serious questions about that approach:
  - Decisions must be made about categories of diversity. Who is determining the categories? Based on what criteria?

- Who is making these appointments? Isn't that too much influence wielded by a small group? I assume that the existing Board is not appointing new Board members to fill the diversity slots – that's dangerous.
- If the categories represent visible diversity (e.g., ethnicity, gender, type of library), how will the appointers know about invisible diversity, like diversity of thought or philosophy?
- Just because someone visibly fits into a category, that does not mean that that person thinks like everyone in that category or everyone in that category thinks the same.
- If people are appointed based on a perceived gap in diversity, would they feel pressure to make decisions with a focus on that point of view, rather than approaching Board membership as a member of the whole with a responsibility for the whole association, not just one niche?
- If the nominating committee takes diversity and representation into account in finding candidates and building a slate, isn't it undercutting the nominating committee's work and general membership's wishes to then appoint people to the Board and committees who were not elected? Isn't that saying the nominating committee did not do a good enough job or the membership at large didn't take diversity into account in their votes?
- Direct election of the Board further marginalizes chapters from having a say in the Board membership. Right now, chapter representatives on Council are explicitly named as candidates for Executive Board and every chapter representative has an equal vote in electing the EB members. With direct election, there is not a guarantee of chapter representation and states with large librarian membership populations have a much better (and unequal) chance to elect their candidates of choice.

### ***Constitution/Bylaws Implications***

#### **Constitution:**

- Executive Board will need to be changed to “Board of Directors” throughout the document.
- In Article VII, Section 1, change the composition of the Executive Board to reflect the *Forward Together* recommendations
- In Article VII, Section 3, remove references to Council. Consider replacing “Council” with “ALA membership.”
- In Article VIII, Section 1, indicate that the *Forward Together* recommendations call for an Executive Committee, a five member subgroup of the Board made up of the ALA president, president elect, immediate past president, treasurer, and executive director.

#### **Bylaws:**

- Executive Board will need to be changed to “Board of Directors” throughout the document.

- Council will need to be removed and replaced with “Board of Directors” or “Membership”

**2.2. Council**

***SCOE Recommendations***

Forward Together page 6-7 states that the ALA of the future must:

- Enable consistent, strategic, and effective member engagement;
- Enable organizational-wide planning focused on a common mission and vision for library workers, library supporters, and libraries;
- Be financially stable;
- Enable sustainable, long-term change (including evaluation of progress and more frequent future adjustments);
- Allow stakeholders to have confidence in decisions made when they are not in the room;
- Deliver high-value support and impact for members;
- Pursue environmental sustainability, in its activities; and,
- Center equity, diversity, and inclusion

Replace ALA Council (Council) with the following:

- Expanded Executive Board (EB) of twelve (12) into a Board of Directors (BoD) of seventeen (17) members – see table page 7 of “Forward Together” – also see Executive Board/Board of Director’s section of this report
- Currently ALA Council elects two-thirds (8 of 12 members) of the Executive Board
- ALA Council consists of 186 members of which 100 Councilors at Large are elected directly by the membership
- Creation of four (4) Leadership Assemblies: - see table p. 11 of “Forward Together”

**Leadership Assemblies**

Future Leadership Assemblies	Current leadership assemblies	Comments
	<p>There is no currently direct correlation for the proposed leadership assemblies, but they seek to be direct, open lines of influence to the Board of Directors. Leadership Assemblies maintain the functions and strengths of several existing groups such as ALA Council, the Chapter Leaders Forum,</p>	<p>First, the statement that “there is no currently direct correlation” is contradicted by the statement “maintain the functions and strengths of the several existing groups”</p> <p>The statement “open lines of influence to the Board of Directors” is interesting since the Leadership Assemblies</p>

	and the Round Table Coordinating Assembly	will have not direct role in appointing or electing members of the BoD; unlike the current arrangement whereby ALA Council elects eight (8) members of the Executive Board.
Chapter Leadership Assembly (50-80 members)	Chapter Leaders Forum	
Round Table Leadership Assembly (21 members)	Round Table Coordinating Assembly	Currently only 10 roundtables + small roundtables councilor have representation on council
Division Leadership Assembly (9 members)		
Affiliates Leadership Assembly (30)		Who are ALA Affiliates

- 1) Chapter Leadership Assembly (50-80 members)**
- 2) Roundtable Leadership Assembly (21 members)**
- 3) Division Leadership Assembly (9 members)**
- 4) Affiliates Leadership Assembly (30 members)**

Who are ALA's affiliates?

- American Association of Law Libraries
- American Indian Library Association
- Association for Information Science and Technology
- American Theological Library Association
- Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA)
- Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association
- Association for Library and Information Science Education
- Association for Rural and Small Libraries
- Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services
- Association of Jewish Libraries
- Association of Research Libraries
- Beta Phi Mu
- Black Caucus of ALA
- Catholic Library Association
- Chinese American Librarians
- The Joint Council of Librarians of Color

- Latino Literacy Now
- Library and Information Association of new Zealand Aotearoa
- Medical Library Association
- Music Library Association
- National Storytelling Network
- Online Audiovisual Catalogers
- Patent and Trademark Resource Center Association
- ProLiteracy Worldwide
- REFORMA
- Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials
- Theatre Library Association

The function of these leadership assemblies build upon the strengths of current groups like ALA Council, the Chapter Leaders Forum, the Round table Coordinating Assembly by maintaining a place for discussion and influence, by opening membership to wider representation, and by creating a direct path to recommend change. The groups of each assembly, while directly participating in ALA's governance, also can facilitate information sharing, partnership building, and networking between each other, and ultimately, between the assemblies themselves. The open nature of these assemblies to be shaped by the groups represented allows for unique cultures of each to set the agenda and topics for discussion while coming together to strengthen the association.

<b>Proposed Committees of the Board of Directors</b>	<b>Current ALA Council Committees</b>
Finance and Audit	Budget Analysis & Review; Publishing
Nominating	Committee on Committees
Leadership and Development	Diversity; Education; Status of Women in Librarianship; Council Orientation
Association Policy	Intellectual Freedom; International Relations; Organization; Policy Monitoring; Professional Ethics; Resolutions
Public Policy and Advocacy	Intellectual Freedom; International Relations; Legislation; Public Awareness
Social Justice	

### ***Current ALA Organization***

ALA Council currently consists of 186 members:

100 at-large councilors elected directly by the membership

53 chapter councilors

11 Division councilors (soon to be 9?)

12 members of the Executive Board (8 elected by council; President-elect, President, Past-President, and Treasurer)

10 Roundtable Representatives – currently roundtables must have personal memberships of at least 1% to elect a councilor

Council also has the following committees:

### **Budget Analysis & Review**

To review the proposed budget, as forwarded by the ALA executive board, in the context of the ALA strategic plan, annual priorities and budget assumptions; to review the financial performance of the association and the budget impact of potential actions of ALA council; to make budget recommendations to the ALA executive board and to report to council regarding budget analysis and process.

- Nine members – treasurer; two Executive Board Members; six ALA members (elected by Council)

### **Committee on Committees**

shall nominate annually candidates for three members of the executive board for three-year terms, and every third year two members of the executive board for three-year terms for election by the council from among the members of the council.\* article viii, sec. 2 (b): sec. 2 (b) committees of council. (i) Appointments to the committees of the council will be made by the council committee on committees

- Five members – president-elect + four members

### **Council Orientation**

To develop and carry out a mentoring and orientation program for new and continuing councilors and to manage the council suite or lounge at the Midwinter Meeting and at the Annual Conference.

- Seven or eight members (at discretion of Committee on Committees)

### **Diversity**

To provide a forum to research, monitor, discuss, and address national diversity issues and trends. To analyze and address the impact of diversity issues and trend on the profession, and the relevance and effectiveness of library leadership, library organizations and library services to an increasingly diverse society. To provide to council and ALA membership information, needed for the establishment of ALA policies, actions and initiatives related to national diversity issues and trends. To encourage and facilitate diversity in ALA membership and the recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce in the profession as a whole. To encourage and facilitate diversity in ALA leadership and leadership development. To facilitate a broad awareness of how and why diversity is unequivocally linked to all ALA areas of concern such as intellectual freedom, education and continual learning, literary and equity of access. To work collaboratively with the ALA president, ALA council, ALA divisions, ALA offices and units, ALA round tables, ALA committees, and ALA affiliates. To serve in an advisory capacity to the director of the office for diversity to (1) support the role of the office for diversity as the clearinghouse for ALA's diversity resources, contacts, and information exchange, (2) monitor the implementation, progress and ongoing evaluation of ALA national diversity initiatives and programs, and (3) plan, support and encourage conference programs, activities and special events.

- Fourteen members + two associates + one staff liaison

### **Education**

To have responsibility for developing and recommending the association's policies related to the full spectrum of education for all library and information studies personnel. To assure that the association actively solicits from its members information about the condition, currency, relevance, and type of education necessary to improve current and future library and information services. This information will be shared with the ALA committee on accreditation, the ALA membership and its units, and allied professional organizations. To coordinate recommendations and policies concerning education promulgated by ALA divisions, round tables, and other units to eliminate conflict or unnecessary duplication and to work closely with these units through the education assembly. To maintain communication and rapport nationally and internationally, as appropriate, with other organizations concerned with library and information studies. To represent the association nationally and internationally to organizations and agencies outside the field of library and information studies that are concerned with professional education and staff preparation. To identify needed education initiatives in library and information studies and to help promote their accomplishments. To identify needed research concerning education for library and information studies and to help promote its accomplishment. To act as a clearinghouse of information on all aspects of education for library and information studies, for the profession and the public-at-large.

- Ten members, four representatives, two liaisons, one board liaison, one staff liaison

### **Intellectual Freedom**

To recommend such steps as may be necessary to safeguard the rights of library users, libraries, and librarians, in accordance with the first amendment to the United States Constitution and the Library Bill of Rights as adopted by the ALA Council. To work closely with the Office for Intellectual Freedom and with other units and officers of the association in matters touching intellectual freedom and censorship.

- Eleven members + fifteen associates, liaisons, or representatives + three staff liaisons

### **International Relations**

To have full responsibility for the association's international relations programs and initiatives; to work with the international relations round table, division international relations committees, and other units of the association in promoting the exchange of professional information, techniques and knowledge, as well as personnel and literature between and among libraries and individuals throughout the world; to advocate the recognition of the international aspects of the library profession and its priority within ALA; to recommend international relations policy for council approval and to take the necessary steps for implementation; to make recommendations to the ALA executive board for appointments or nominations to international organizations (IFLA, etc.) And other agencies concerned with international library and information services (IREX, etc.); to administer programs of the association focused on international relations (awards, recognition, exchanges); to promote program and publication activities on international relations by the association and its divisions and committees; to maintain communication, when appropriate, with other library and information service organizations concerned with international relations; to represent the association's view to organizations and agencies outside the ALA that are concerned with international relations of libraries; to encourage active participation by U.S. librarians in the work of international organizations.

- Twelve members + one committee associate + one intern + EB liaison + two staff liaison

### **Legislation**

The ALA Council Committee on Legislation (COL) is charged with the responsibility for the association's legislative agenda. Specifically, to:

- Identify, for the Washington Office, the association's strategic priorities.
  - Recommend, annually, based on consultation with the Washington Office, a legislative and public policy agenda.
  - Review and advise on, any policy statements and/or resolutions that have an impact on federal legislation, policy, or regulations.
  - Provide a forum within ALA to share information and legislative analysis of current and impending federal laws and regulations to keep ALA units apprised of current issues affecting libraries.
  - Be available to consult, collaborate and offer assistance to state and local library entities when federal legislation has implications at the state and local level.
- Fourteen members + one intern + one associate + one board liaison + eleven staff

### **Organization**

To advise and assist regarding structural and organizational concerns in ALA. To recommend to council the establishment or discontinuance of divisions, round tables, membership initiative groups, ALA committees, assemblies and joint committees, as the needs of the association may require. To define the functions of these units, subject to the approval of council. To recommend to council the establishment, including the name and size, of other standing committees to consider matters of the association that require continuity of attention by the members. To recommend to executive board the appropriate unit to appoint official representatives to outside organizations. To receive notification of the formation of interdivisional committees.

- Thirteen members + one intern + one associate + one staff

### **Policy Monitoring**

To monitor the accurate documentation and codification of ALA policy, as determined by formal action of council; to prepare additions or changes in the ALA policy manual following each Annual Conference and Midwinter Meeting, as may be required by motions and resolutions adopted by council; to review and advise on all unit organization policies to ensure that they are in compliance with council approved association-wide policies; to provide oversight by review prior to publication of the written text and policy manual numbers prepared by ALA staff and report to council the accomplishment of council's directives; to be responsible for keeping the policy manual accurate and up to date and to call council's attention to out-dated items to be retired from the manual or gaps in the presentation of policies. (See ALA policy 5.6.)

- Three members + one staff

### **Professional Ethics**

The council committee on professional ethics shall augment the Code of Ethics by explanatory interpretations and additional statements, prepared by this committee or elicited from other units of ALA. When units of the association develop statements dealing with ethical issues, a copy will be sent to the committee on professional ethics for review so that it may be compared to the existing ALA code of ethics in order to determine whether or not conflicts occur.

- Seven members + two associates + seven liaisons + two staff liaisons

### **Public Awareness**

To develop programs that promote libraries and library issues nationwide. To assist ALA members in promoting their libraries at the local, state and national levels. To work closely with the ALA Communications and Marketing Office and ALA officers, committees and units in developing and coordinating promotional and marketing programs and tools for libraries, librarians and ALA, including National Library Week and other national campaigns focused on the continuing support of libraries.

- Nine members + two associates + two staff

### **Publishing**

To set the framework within which ALA publishing operates by overseeing the publishing activities in all formats (print, electronic, etc.) of ALA and its publishing services department by establishing liaisons with the publishing activities of all committees and units of the association, by educating these committees and units regarding ALA publishing policies and the use of the ALA imprint, and by mediating conflicting publishing policies among these committees and units. To provide budgetary oversight to the ALA publishing services department and make recommendations to appropriate association budget and planning committees. To recommend policies on publishing products and services for the approval of council. The ALA publishing committee has the responsibility for control of the ALA imprint. To implement this charge, the publishing committee will: set the framework within which ALA publishing operates; recommend policies on publishing products and services, including the use of the ALA imprint, for the approval of council; advise and assist all committees and units of the association in their publishing activities. Provide budgetary oversight and make recommendations to appropriate association budget and planning committees. The Publishing Committee administers the [Carnegie-Whitney Grant](#). More information about the grant is available at [Carnegie Whitney Grant Guidelines](#).

- Ten members + two associates + two staff

### **Resolutions**

To provide an advisory and channeling function for all resolutions presented for Council's consideration, reviewing all resolutions submitted to Council pursuant to the criteria established by Council. To advise the makers on how to bring their resolutions into compliance with the guidelines adopted by Council. All resolutions shall go to Council with a notation that the resolution has been processed through the committee. To determine the policy or non-policy nature of all resolutions to be presented to Council and transmit the resolutions with the appropriate indication. To review all resolutions passed by Membership to determine those that are clearly policy matters and therefore should be forwarded to

Council for action. Any challenge to the determination of the committee shall be voted on by councilors present at the meeting.

- Twelve members + one staff

### **Status of Women in Librarianship**

To officially represent the diversity of women's interest within ALA and to ensure that the association considers the rights of the majority (women) in the library field. To promote and initiate the collection, analysis, dissemination, and coordination of information on the status of women in librarianship. To coordinate the activities of ALA units that consider questions having special relevance for women. To identify lags, gaps, and possible discrimination in resources and programs relating to women. To help develop evaluative tools, guidelines, and programs in cooperation with other ALA units designed to enhance the opportunities and the image of women in the library profession, thus raising the level of consciousness concerning women. To establish contacts with committees on women within other professional groups and to officially represent ALA concerns at interdisciplinary meetings on women's equality. To provide council and membership with reports needed for the establishment of policies and actions related to the status of women in librarianship, and monitor ALA units to ensure consideration of the rights of women.

- Eleven members + one associate + one liaison + two staff liaison

### ***Discussion of the Issues/Concerns that have been Raised***

#### **From ALA Past Presidents (copied directly from notes taken at meeting)**

ALA Council is important for ALA's democratic process. Certainly, council can be restructured and its agenda can be more deliberative and substantive, but council is important for a number of reasons:

- Leadership development
- Involvement of chapter representatives in decision making, rather than just advising which they would do through the chapter leadership assembly
- Opportunities for deliberative discussion of library issues involving a diverse and broad spectrum of the Association, not divided into affinity groups like the assemblies
- At-large membership of council (100 of 186 or 53.76%) plays an essential role in weighing in the pro/cons/costs/consequences/tradeoffs (deliberative actions) of common concerns of the association. The structure appears to elevate the role of the differentiated components of the association and diminishes the role of the integrated aspects (core value area like intellectual freedom, international relations, ethics, policy diversity, literacy, and public programs). The strength of our organization is to find common ground on broader issues like democracy, free expression, equity.
- The two-year term and allowance of only two terms in a lifetime may present real problems, it takes years to build expertise in public policy. Limitation of participation might result in an ad hoc approach to library and Association issues.

#### **January 2020 Feedback – Includes only items related to Council (copied directly from notes taken at meetings)**

What part of Forward Together do you find to be most beneficial? Is there a change or recommendation you find favorable?

- Having a seventeen member group rather than one in the 100's is a good desire...if the communication improves and becomes a place where members feel ownership

What questions do you have about the recommendations in Forward Together?

- What power will the council and Chapter have in the future. At this point that web of the conversation seems to be diminished, and in some ways effectively nullified?
- Trust wanes among the number of Chapter and Council leaders. How can this trust be supported as something well placed; and a voice be brought to the table from the elected groups that form State Level leadership?

Please share any additional comments or input you might have

- My greatest concern is the already existing disconnect with Chapters such as mine in ... Much of the rest of the word from ALA simply gets lost. Without Chapter voice, and Council voice, this will exacerbate.
- ALA founding documents (Article 6) created Council for a reason. In the spirit of feedback, this what I have been thinking while at leadership meetings as well as listening to and participating in SCOE events and presentations.

Role of Council:

- I agree with SCOE that we need to meet more often but this can be done virtually, allowing for electronic voting and year-round engagement. Meeting online will address these barriers to participation and influence, including cost, ability to travel and institutional support. While in council I hear robust discussions that I do not hear in meetings of my more focused divisions and committees. Those discussions inform my opinions on my professional duties and role as a librarian. Without Council's dialogs and only Standing Committees and Assemblies in which to air ideas, I believe that silo thinking would be reinforced and broader professional issues ignored. With all disputes being settled by a small insular group, there will be no environment to hear the ideas that come from diverse members. Council can receive critical, ongoing input from general members and leaders on an ongoing basis if given a chance. To increase the level of discussions beyond ALA Unit operations, I think both the policy and operation manuals should be reviewed periodically so that the goals, values, and operations of ALA may be affirmed, rejuvenated or retired. Review of the operating agreement is a must. ... If we only have Units and Assemblies, then we would lose the cross-pollination of ideas and innovations that Council provides. The parent ALA entices members by advocating for our priorities, providing a beacon for our profession and a voice of shared values. High-level discussions and decision making to assist the members and society should be the work of Council.

### ***Constitution/By-Laws Implications***

- Dissolution would require the vote of the membership. To place the bylaws change on the ballot Council would have to vote twice to place the item on the ballot for the membership. Since Council, per Article VI of the constitution is the "governing body" it would more than likely be prudent to reserve council's dissolution as the last step of the process.

## 2.3. Board Committees and ALA Committees

### *SCOE Recommendations*

Standing Committees of the Board of Directors Future Standing Committees of the ALA Board of Directors:

- 6 committees
- Finance and Audit
- Nominating
- Leadership Development
- Association Policy
- Public Policy and Advocacy
- Social Justice

15 members per committee, 10 elected by ALA members, 5 appointed by the Board, one of which is a Board member and acts as the Board liaison to the committee

Current ALA comparison:

There is no direct correlation to current ALA structure. The future standing committees are comparable to:

- some of the Committees of Council such as Policy Monitoring and Committee on Committees;
- some of the Committees of the Association such as Nominating, Appointments, and Constitution and Bylaws;
- some of the functions of ALA Council such as policy development.

Six standing committees will accomplish the core functions of the association. These committees will be supported by advisory groups, working groups, and communities of interest, each of which will provide greater opportunities for member participation than the current structure. These standing committees will also work closely with divisions and round tables to seek recommendations, input, and expertise from their areas.

To have broad member input and increase democratic participation from the few to the many, committees will also hold membership meetings focused around their charge. The membership meetings will be both in-person and virtual, providing opportunities for all interested ALA members to supply input, feedback, and recommendations to the committee for consideration. These focused membership meetings will be in addition to regular general membership meetings which will be held in-person and virtually to give a view of the entire association. Only the Nominating Committee will not hold membership meetings because of the confidential nature of its work. To promote transparency, the committee will put out open calls for nominations from members and may hold open online meetings to share their process.

The members of all standing committees will be selected by a hybrid process just as the Board of Directors. Out of the fifteen members of each committee, ten members will be directly elected by members and five members will be appointed by the Board of Directors. Appointments will ensure a diverse and inclusive board that includes perspectives, skills, library types, and backgrounds not

represented by elected members. The process for appointing and identifying potential members will include working with the ALA Leadership Committee, ALA staff, and other entities of the organization that may wish to provide input. One of these appointments will be a Board member who also acts as the committee's liaison. Members will serve two-year staggered terms and may serve up to two non-consecutive terms in their lifetime. Nominating Committee members will serve one-year, once in a lifetime terms. Each committee will also have a committed ALA Staff Member to support their work.

The proposed ALA Standing Committees are:

1. Finance and Audit 2. Nominating 3. Leadership Development 4. Association Policy 5. Public Policy and Advocacy 6. Social Justice

### **Finance and Audit Committee**

The Finance and Audit Committee's charge will include reviewing ALA's proposed budget within the context of the association's strategic plan and strategic priorities, reviewing the financial impact of actions taken by the Board of Directors, and making budget recommendations to the Board of Directors. This committee will also work with the endowment trustees, review financial projections, and perform other fiscal duties as necessary. This committee will be chaired by the ALA treasurer.

### **Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee's charge will include nominating the election slate for ALA officers and committees, overseeing the petition process for those members who wish to run as petition candidates for a position, and nominating chairs for the six standing committees of the Board of Directors. Nominations for committee chairs will be given to the Board of Directors for appointment. The Nominating Committee might opt to form sub-committees to help oversee appointments to advisory groups or working groups or to manage the Volunteer Clearinghouse, a new entity described in further detail later in this report under "Additional Recommendations." The Nominating Committee will also identify and nominate members and conveners for advisory groups and working groups. These nominations will be given to the Board of Directors for appointment. The Nominating Committee will work closely with the Leadership Development Committee to identify candidates and will encourage a self-nomination process. This committee is intended to be highly inclusive and provide more members the opportunity to participate. The Nominating Committee will be chaired by the President-Elect.

### **Leadership Development Committee**

The Leadership Development Committee's charge will be to identify, cultivate, develop, and grow potential member leaders within the association. This committee will focus on ensuring members from underrepresented backgrounds have opportunities to serve within the association and will have strong staff support to ensure continuity and priority. Leadership development programs such as Emerging Leaders and Spectrum Scholars would work closely with this committee. The Leadership Development Committee would also work closely with the Nominating Committee to identify potential candidates. These two committees would also work together to identify potential candidates and member leaders who may need more support and guidance in running successfully for office, chairing a committee, or serving the association in another capacity, and to identify resources and support for these members. The Leadership Development Committee will also recommend and solicit names to and from the Volunteer Clearinghouse. The Leadership and Development Committee will be chaired by the past president.

### **Association Policy Committee**

The Association Policy Committee's charge will focus on issues and topics of internal association governance and policy as related to the work of ALA. This committee will work closely with all facets

of the Association to regularly review and ensure best practices and policies that create an equitable, diverse, and inclusive association. This committee will also be charged with identifying and recommending members for honorary membership in the association. The Association Policy Committee will be chaired by an appointed member as recommended by the Nominating Committee.

### **Public Policy and Advocacy Committee**

The Public Policy and Advocacy Committee's charge will include focusing on issues and topics of importance to libraries, especially in the areas of public policy and advocacy. Members will seek input and expertise from librarians across the association, and its actions may include recommendations for the creation of advisory committees, working groups, and communities of practice. The Public Policy and Advocacy Committee will be chaired by an appointed member as recommended by the Nominating Committee.

### **Social Justice Committee**

The Social Justice Committee's charge will focus on issues and topics of importance to libraries and the association in the context of social justice and equity, diversity, and inclusion. Members will seek input and expertise from librarians across the association, and its actions may include recommendations for the creation of advisory groups, working groups, and communities of practice. The Social Justice Committee will be chaired by an appointed member as recommended by the Nominating Committee.

## ***Current ALA Organization***

### **Executive**

Consists of the president of the Association (who serves as chair), the president-elect, the immediate past president, the treasurer, and (ex officio) the executive director. The committee carries out administrative functions on behalf of the Association and the Board; reviews and discusses administrative and policy issues that need to be brought to the attention of the full Board; approves Board agendas, meeting times, and dates; reviews and brings to the full Board for approval the dates, sites, and schedules for ALA conferences; performs ceremonial activities as representatives of ALA; handles administrative communications of the organization and the Board; recommends ALA's relationships with external organizations and individuals; brings recommendations regarding nominations and appointments to the full Board for approval; reviews and approves calls for votes between meetings; performs other duties as required.

### **Finance and Audit**

Consists of the treasurer (who serves as chair), three other Board members, and the chair of BARC (ex officio). The committee suggests measures to build the Association's financial resources; provides the Executive Board with interpretation of financial data needed for administrative decisions; serves as liaison to the endowment trustees; oversees the audit review; reviews the treasurer's report; reviews and interprets reports from the Endowment trustees and BARC; reviews financial projections; considers other matters related to accounting standards, finances, and budget; makes recommendations to the Executive Board regarding the fiscal management of the Association; performs other general fiscal duties of the Executive Board as necessary.

### **Board Effectiveness**

Consists of no more than four members, to include an officer and two or three members of the Board. Board members must serve at least one full year on the Board before being appointed to the Board

Effectiveness Committee and serve on the Committee for two years. The committee monitors and reviews Board effectiveness and makes and implements recommendations and activities to that end.

### **ALA and Council Committees**

Committees created by the Executive Board, Council, and the president are designated as committees of the Association and committees of the Council. Most of the following committees are standing committees of either ALA or Council.

**Committees of the Association:** Appointments to committees of the Association are made by the ALA president-elect, who chairs and acts on the advice of the [Committee on Appointments](#).

[Accreditation](#)

[American Libraries Advisory](#)

[Appointments](#)

[Awards](#)

[Chapter Relations](#)

[Conference](#)

[Constitution & Bylaws](#)

[Diversity, Literacy & Outreach Services Advisory](#) (*Office for*)

[Elections](#)

[Human Resource Development & Recruitment Advisory](#) (*Office for*)

[Information Technology Advisory](#)

[Information Technology Policy Advisory](#) (*Office for*)

[Literacy](#)

[Membership](#)

[Membership Meetings](#)

[Nominating](#)

[Public & Cultural Programs Advisory](#)

[Research & Statistics](#)

[Rural, Native & Tribal Libraries of All Kinds](#)

[Scholarship & Study Grants](#)

[Training, Orientation & Leadership Development](#)

**Committees of Council:** Appointments to committees of Council are made by the ALA president-elect, who chairs and acts on the advice of the [Committee on Committees](#).

[Budget Analysis & Review Committee](#)

[Committee on Committees](#)

[Committee on Diversity](#)

[Committee on Education](#)

[Committee on Legislation](#)

[Committee on Library Advocacy](#)

[Committee on Organization](#)

[Committee on Professional Ethics](#)

[Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship](#)  
[Council Orientation Committee](#)  
[Intellectual Freedom Committee](#)  
[International Relations Committee](#)  
[Policy Monitoring Committee](#)  
[Public Awareness Committee](#)  
[Publishing Committee](#)  
[Resolutions Committee](#)

***Discussion of the Issues/Concerns that have been Raised (copied directly from notes taken at meetings)***

A review of documents, webinars, and Connect discussions did not yield many concerns raised specifically about Executive Board Committees/Board of Directors Committees. During a webinar dated February 13, 2020 Lessa Pelayo-Lozada mentions several times that some details are yet to be worked out for some of the plans. With that in consideration, and with the research done, there are some possible questions that will require clarification:

Will the 10 elected committee members, as well as the 5 appointed by the board, for each committee be voted on from the membership at large or from the council members as it exists?

Will ALA membership be required to be on a committee or just employment in a library? The possibility of membership levels changing (particularly with the 2020 COVID-19 event) in the future could affect the number of qualified candidates for these committees.

Is there a plan for term limits or lengths and training specific to these committees?

***Constitution/By-Laws Implications***

Constitution Article VIII, Officers and Committees: This section could potentially elaborate on the Standing Committees of the Board of Directors or mention their existence and defer to the bylaws for further definition; alternately, there could be a separate Article that defines those committees.

Bylaws Article VII, Committees: This would become Standing Committees, Working Groups and Advisory Group. "Special committees" are not part of the FT recommendations.; 2.1- Change to Standing Committees of the Board of Directors.; 2.1 Replace with details about standing committees of the board from the FT recommendations; 2.2 Remove; 3 FT doesn't recommend "Special committees." Replace with details about Working Groups, Advisory Groups, and Communities of Interest.; 4 and 5- remove; 7.2 Remove all references to Committees of Council.

**2.4. Leadership Assemblies**

***SCOE Recommendations***

Future leadership assemblies:

1. Chapter Leadership Assembly (50-80 members)
2. Round Table Leadership Assembly (21 members)

3. Division Leadership Assembly (9 members)
4. Affiliates Leadership Assembly (30 members)

**Current leadership assemblies:**

There is currently no direct correlation for the proposed leadership assemblies, but they seek to be direct, open lines of influence to the Board of Directors. Leadership assemblies maintain the functions and strengths of several existing groups such as ALA Council, the Chapter Leaders Forum and the Round Table Coordinating Assembly

**Summary of Recommendation:**

Four leadership assemblies with representation from four areas of the association will be convened both in-person and virtually multiple times throughout the year. Leadership assemblies have a hand in ALA's governance and are direct, open lines of influence to the Board of Directors. Members of the leadership assemblies will share information, influence priority setting, and make recommendation to the Board of Directors.

Recommendations may include the creation and appointment of working groups or advisory groups or focus on a strategic area. Convenings of the leadership assemblies will be open to all interested ALA members, and agendas will be set and determined by core members.

The four leadership assemblies and their members are identified below. Member numbers are determined as of October 2019 except for the divisions which assumes a successful merger of LLAMA, LITA, and ALCTS into CORE: Leadership, Infrastructure, Futures.

1. Chapter Leadership Assembly: Approximately 80 members. All ALA chapters (including of regional chapters), AASL affiliates, and ACRL chapters would have a representative.
2. Round Table Leadership Assembly: All 21 round tables would have a representative.
3. Division Leadership Assembly: All 9 divisions would have a representative.
4. Affiliates: Up to 30 representatives, including all ALA affiliates.

Each leadership assembly will be led by two co-conveners with staggered year terms. These co-conveners are selected by their members and formally appointed by the Board of Directors upon receipt of the recommended appointments. Members will determine the process of appointment or election of the conveners. This may include an election, rotating appointment, or another mechanism. The process for appointment recommendations are intentionally left up to members of the leadership assemblies because each one functions uniquely and their needs and relationships with each other vary. In-person participation would not be required for meetings convened at conferences and members would be able to designate who their representative is for each meeting. Members may select one or a few individuals to represent their interests. Each leadership assembly will have a liaison from the Board of Directors and ALA staff.

The functions of these leadership assemblies build upon the strengths of current groups like ALA Council, the Chapter Leaders Forum, and the Round Table Coordinating Assembly by maintaining a place for discussion and influence, by opening membership to wider representation, and by creating a direct path to recommending change. The groups of each assembly, while directly participating in ALA's governance, also can facilitate information sharing, partnership building, and networking between each other, and, ultimately, between the assemblies themselves. The open nature of these assemblies to be shaped by the groups represented allows for the unique cultures of each to set the agenda and topics for discussion while coming together to strengthen the association.

### ***Current ALA Organization***

- As noted in the recommendations, there is not a direct correlation to the Leadership Assemblies within current ALA governance.
- Current ALA Advisory Committees (i.e. ODLOS Advisory Committee) could serve as a basic framework for Leadership Assemblies; The idea is similar in which members consist of representatives from different groups in the organization.
- Under ALA Policy Manual Section A.4.3.11: The definition of assemblies are as follows - An assembly is a body of individuals or representatives from ALA units and committees that shares information or acts as a resource to an ALA Committee. There are different types of assemblies: Assemblies to Council Committees, that act in an advisory capacity, reviewing documents and issues, representing unit and committee interests and reporting back to units and committees; and Assemblies to Standing Committees, that provide a forum for sharing information, coordinate activities and promote awareness.
- Some standing committees established "Assemblies" as means to share information and coordinate potential projects. These assemblies include Accessibility Assembly, Legislation Assembly, Library Education Assembly, Literacy Assembly, Planning and Budget Assembly, Recruitment Assembly, and Round Table Coordinating Assembly. They can be found here: <http://www.ala.org/aboutala/mcoms/assemblies>

### ***Discussion of the Issues/Concerns that have been Raised***

#### **Relevant Feedback from MW2020 Conversations (copied directly from notes taken at meetings)**

- There is a concern over chapters having just an advisory role and not having a vote.
- With assemblies, chapters have a voice and there is flexibility. But do chapters still get a vote?
- Assemblies need more "teeth" in them; Budgets are tight and states may not send someone to conference if chapters lose their voice.

- Round Tables have begun to virtualize and streamline things.

**Relevant Feedback from Past-Presidents (copied directly from notes taken at meeting)**

- The assemblies as proposed would give clear voice to roundtables, chapters, and divisions. The way Council is currently structured, though, is with more than half the membership constituted by at-large representatives. These “generalists” play an essential role weighing the pros/cons/consequences/tradeoffs (deliberative actions) of common concerns across the association. The new structure appears to elevate the role of the differentiated components (divisions, roundtables, chapters, affiliates) of the association and to diminish the role of the integrated aspects (core value areas like Intellectual Freedom, International Relations, Ethics, Policy, Diversity, Literacy, Public Programs, etc). Yet, the strength of our organization is its ability to find common ground on broader issues, like democracy, free expression, equity, etc.—the core values that attract membership and drive national and international leadership as an important voice for libraries and library users in the broader policy discourse.
- Leadership Assemblies
  - Will these be conducted in person? Online? How can they foster ongoing and substantive discussions, especially if online?
  - Who really leads, beyond the conveners? How are leaders developed? How will members know enough to be able to select a convener every year?
  - Do we really expect widespread participation beyond core members? How will noncore members feel that they have a voice?
  - How will leadership assemblies do real work, beyond just gathering input?
  - Are the assemblies designed to enable chapters, round tables, divisions, and affiliates to do deeper work about their area? They seem to drive members to focus on one perspective (e.g., a division), rather than bringing the different perspectives to bear on association-wide issues. For example, chapter assemblies would focus on chapter issues
  - rather than intellectual freedom issues that might be occurring in every chapter and how that issue plays out differently in every state.
  - Would it work to have additional assemblies on values and issues (e.g., privacy) and the membership would be made of representatives from chapters, round tables, divisions, and affiliates? This might be an additional structure that would bring us all together to think about and address our values and larger issues.
  - How will the work of the assemblies be sustained from year to year so that they offer more than ad hoc conversations?
  - How will the recommendations of the assemblies be finalized and the substance of the debate as well as the final decisions be communicated to the Board? What is the timing on this? Will the recommendations go directly to the Board, rather than an appropriate standing committee (if there is one)? Is there a danger of bypassing and undercutting the

committees? Will the recommendations have to be prepared before Board face-to-face meetings to allow them to be considered, which means that the assemblies will have to do their work largely online? How is it possible to conduct deep and useful discussions that result in recommended actions/policy in the online environment?

- How will the assemblies be supported by the staff?
- How will average members participate in assemblies? How will they know when they are happening or what the agenda is? How can they offer input, especially if a large number of members are online for the assembly?
- If the affiliate assembly includes AASL affiliates, will AASL still be allowed to have its own Affiliate Assembly?

### ***Constitution/Bylaws Implications***

- There does not appear to be anything in the current constitution or bylaws documents that would prohibit immediate implementation of the Leadership Assemblies.
- Article VIII Section 4. of the Constitution states that the “Executive Board shall appoint all other officers and all committees of the Association not otherwise provided for,” indicating that the Leadership Assemblies could be formed as committees of the Executive Board. However, the definition of bylaws provided in the bylaws is likely to prove too restrictive for full implementation of the Forward Together recommendations on Leadership Assemblies
- Article VIII of the current bylaws provides significantly more detail on committee creation and appointment, and the process detailed here could be used to create Leadership Assemblies as either a Committees of the Association or Committees of Council. In the case of the Division Leadership Assembly and the Roundtable Leadership Assembly, a joint committee structure (see Article VIII. Section 3.2.5.) could be used. As noted above, the committee structure outlined in the bylaws would not allow for implementation of the Leadership Assemblies as imagined in Forward Together, but could be used as an inelegant temporary measure to test the Leadership Assembly concept.
- Article IV. of the current bylaws includes language about Council seats for chapters, divisions, and roundtables. Though there are superficial similarities between the current bylaws and the Leadership Assemblies, there are significant differences in intent and function and this section should either be eliminated or completely rewritten and not repurposed in its current form.
- Article V Section 1.4 of the current bylaws states that “no more than one chapter of the American Library Association shall exist in any state, province, or territory.” Forward Together takes the position that all chapters including regional chapters and AASL and ACRL affiliates would have a seat at the Chapter Leadership Assembly. This is a significant difference, and care will need to be taken to define or redefine what is meant by the “Chapter” designation.
- The Forward Together recommendations specifically mention the importance of the “open nature” of the assemblies, thus encouraging guidelines that err on the side of being less prescriptive. However, the bylaws will need to be revised or

rewritten to define their basic parameters, membership criteria, and means of influence on governance.

## 2.5. Divisions

### *SCOE Recommendations*

Forward Together encourages the divisions to work together to increase their strengths and lean on each other for support in areas of need. Divisions will have a direct line of communication and influence with the Board of Directors through the Division Leadership Assembly, which will foster communication and collaboration between the divisions and other facets of the association. It is also important to note that because division members are also association members, individuals elected or appointed to: the Board of Directors, standing committees, advisory groups, working groups, or communities of interest, will provide not only their individual perspective, but also their important perspective from membership in a division. It is through this lens that the recommendations for ALA's divisions are the following:

- A regular review of each division in consultation with the ALA executive director. Potential mergers within the divisions may occur, including one merger already underway between LLAMA, ALCTS, and LITA to create one new proposed division, CORE: Leadership, Infrastructure, Futures.
- A review of the “Operating Agreement” in relationship to the Forward Together recommendations. This review may include but is not limited to a review of bylaws, dues, and dues structures. Within this larger umbrella of the Operating Agreement are several recommendations:
  - Replace individual division bylaws with a shared policies and procedures document. This will help define the relationship and fiscal responsibility of divisions, helping members understand the symbiotic relationship between divisions and the rest of ALA.
  - With assistance from the Membership Office and the Membership Committee, align dues and dues structures across the divisions. This makes the process easier for members to join divisions and helps members understand how dues are spent. It is recommended to explore the rate of \$70 for each division from the preliminary fiscal analysis models. This would have the least fiscal impact overall and is only a recommendation for the Membership Office and Committee to further explore and test this model.
  - Schedule a regular review of the Operating Agreement.
  - A process and timeline for the above recommendations is to be determined in consultation with the divisions and the executive director.
- Align member engagement structures in the divisions and throughout ALA. Divisions may have, but are not required to have: advisory groups, working groups, and communities of interest. Sections can continue to exist in their current form, but it is strongly recommended that each Section consider whether they should instead be reconstituted as an advisory group, working group, or community of interest. Section elections will be administered through an online platform following best practices developed by ALA staff.
- Empower ALA staff to investigate and recommend best practices for efficient elections for divisions for positions such as division president.
- Charge divisions to develop an action plan to implement Forward Together recommendations within two years of the approval by members.

### ***Current ALA Organization***

- ALA Divisions provide a focal point for the important and unique issues facing different types of libraries and library work in addition to helping members find a natural home in the Association based on the uniqueness of their work place or work type and their expertise.
- ALA is home to eleven membership divisions, each with a type-of-library or type-of-library-function specialization. ALA divisions publish journals, books, newsletters, and other materials; provide continuing education in a variety of venues and formats; offer awards and scholarships; sponsor institutes and conferences; and maintain networks of affiliates, chapters, and other collaborative relationships.
- By policy, each division has a statement of responsibility developed by its members and approved by the ALA Council, a set of goals and objectives to drive its activities, an executive director and other personnel (as necessary), responsibility for generating revenue to carry out its programs, and a separate Board of Directors, elected by the members of the division. Each division is represented on the ALA Council and in the Planning and Budget Assembly.
- Members of ALA divisions must first be members of the American Library Association. A majority of ALA members belong to one or more division.
- Divisions pay overhead costs on non-dues revenue-generating activities to ALA, as defined by the Operating Agreement. [See more about the Operating Agreement and the relationship between ALA and the membership divisions.](#)

### ***Discussion of the Issues/Concerns that have been Raised***

#### **From “Forward Together MW 2020 Notes” (copied directly from notes taken at meetings)**

Divisions hope for more opportunities to speak as a group; the needs need to be heard.

Feedback from AASL

- a. Youth divisions need more representation, not less
  - b. There are fewer school librarians across the country; few of them are represented in ALA leadership (Council, EB, Committee Chairs)
  - c. Needs support across ALA for school librarian advocacy such as joint ventures in programming, speakers, unified programming on common themes.
- B. PLA and ACRL Statement
    - a. Vague language around divisions which is troublesome
    - b. Report does not acknowledge that the divisions will be at the table.
    - c. There are trust issues that need healing
  - C. Does SCOE have a sense of urgency?
  - D. Members need to know where we are financially - need transparency
  - E. Forward Together Report needs to be more thoughtful and considerate of divisions.
  - F. Overcommunication was encouraged
  - G. Member noted every division, round table, chapter needs to be touched.
  - H. There won't be a plan that everyone is going to like but it needs to be communicated well enough.
  - I. Appeared that SCOE was unable to make decisions
  - J. Feedback for next group
    - a. A lot of people identify with their divisions; Give leverage to the fact that people love their divisions; same thing goes for round tables.
    - b. SCOE and ALA Governance need to build trust and better communication
    - c. We need to focus on the changes we need to be relevant to the membership and not just our divisions. We wouldn't be here if we didn't have membership.

- d. Budget transparency
  - e. What does the external world need vs the divisions? What will help youth survive?
  - f. Will the next group follow a management process and framework?
  - g. Sense of urgency needs to be carried on.
- K. Member noted divisions can do work on their own and try out their own ideas

### **Relevant Feedback from Past Presidents (copied directly from notes taken at meetings)**

- It's certainly okay to have consolidation of divisions if that's the choice of the members of those divisions.
- It's good to have alignment of dues and structure, but is the division structure limited to advisory groups, working groups, communities of interest, and sections? What about division boards of directors?
- How will a strong central ALA organization relate to the divisions? Will they continue to have separate boards, conferences, etc?

### ***Constitution/Bylaws Implications***

- If we do a wholesale re-write and combine bylaws and constitution into one bylaws document (as recommended by ALA Parliamentarian Eli Mina), we will need to consider how best to account for Divisions in the new document.
- ALA bylaws currently refer to separate bylaws for Divisions. Forward Together recommends that Divisions operate under ALA bylaws and not have separate governing docs.

## **2.6. Round Tables**

### ***SCOE Recommendations***

Summary: Forward Together recommends an “an effective, nimble, inclusive, member-driven American Library Association”--one that not only emphasizes financial stability, but also promotes greater cohesion within the organization (pg. 2). The central thrust of the report is that there should be greater uniformity, transparency, and efficiency across the ALA in order to engender a sense that all units are a part of the ALA, that members have a voice in how the organization carries out its mission, and that a more productive use of resources is essential for the health of the ALA. Implementation of the SCOE recommendations would mean more standardization, which would constitute a profound change for Round Tables; and the changes to dues structures across the organization would potentially offer savings to members, but the threshold membership minimum could also eventually eliminate small but important RTs. While there are relatively few recommendations in regards to Round Tables, they are significant since they would potentially have an impact on the RTs' ability to define themselves as unique, diverse, self-determined units.

- Replace individual Round Table Bylaws and create a shared policies and procedures document
- Align dues and dues structures across ALA--possibly \$20 in dues per RT
- 1% of dues paying membership minimum for Round tables; may offer greater financial stability for RTs
- Membership numbers averaged over a three year period. Current round tables would continue for three years from the time of adoption by ALA to ensure RTs have a chance to increase membership.
- RTs to recommend advisory groups and working groups to the Board of Directors
- 21 member Leadership Assembly (one representative for each RT) to be led by two co-conveners with staggered year terms--these are selected by the members

- Free up ALA staff from Administrative work associated with the RTs--more focused on mission-based tasks
- Round Table Effectiveness Committee to determine best and most efficient practices for RTs
- Improve efficiency and transparency by posting all documents to ALA Connect
- Conduct elections through ALA Connect in order to have greater participation in the process

### ***Current ALA Organization***

- Issues-based identity groups (programmatic); they can affiliate with regional, state, or local groups with similar interests
- RTs should have 100 or more members
- The Round Table Coordinating Assembly (RTCA) functions as a medium for sharing information and is made up of the Chair and Chair-elect of each RT; RTCA meets twice a year (at Annual and Midwinter meetings)
- Every RT has a staff liaison
- Each RT has its own Bylaws and may have its own procedure manual; if the RT Bylaws do not make specific provisions, RT organization and procedures should correspond to the ALA Constitution and Bylaws
- RTs elect their own officers
- RTs operate as pathways to member engagement
- RTs have flexibility in terms of organization, participation in studies and joint projects, and the issuing of publications. RTs can establish discussion groups and standing ad hoc committees; they can also amend committee description statements or discontinue any committees or discussion groups
- RTs can recommend activities or policies, but they cannot commit the ALA by a declaration of policy
- RTs can confer grants, scholarships, and awards
- RTs can incur expenses if there is sufficient money in the budget and the staff liaison receives written authorization and the executive officer or officers sign off on all documentation; RTs cannot sign any contracts or documents
- The Budget Analysis and Review Committee (BARC) appoints a liaison to each RT who reviews the RT's annual budget; BARC recommends approval of RT budgets to ALA's Executive Board
- Here is a list of current Round Tables:
  - Ethnic & Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table (EMIERT)
  - Exhibits Round Table (ERT)
  - Film and Media Round Table (FMRT)
  - Games and Gaming Round Table (GameRT)
  - Government Documents Round Table (GODORT)
  - Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table (GNCRT)
  - Intellectual Freedom (IFRT)
  - International Relations Round Table (IRRT)
  - Learning Round Table (LearnRT)
  - Library History Round Table (LHRT)
  - Library Instruction Round Table (LIRT)
  - Library Research Round Table (LRRT)
  - Library Support Staff Interests Round Table (LSSIRT)
  - Map and Geospatial Information (MAGIRT)
  - New Members Round Table (NMRT)
  - Rainbow Round Table (RRT)

- Retired Members Round Table (RMRT)
- Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT)
- Staff Organizations (SORT)
- Sustainability (SustainRT)

### ***Discussion of the Issues/Concerns that have been Raised***

- Many members expressed concerns about 1% of dues paying membership minimum for round tables, including questions about how SCOE got to the 1% figure--the 1% figure is a major sticking point
- Fear about the elimination of small RTs will eliminate an important avenue of engagement and professional development that a small group provides
- Some asked how to define “engagement”
- Worries about limiting the number and types of RTs
- Concern that focus on size loses track of the contributions of some RTs
- Questions over how will RTs be supported with minimal staff involvement
- Concern that there will be fewer opportunities for experimentation and customization to meet the unique needs to specific RTs
- RTs do not feel supported at ALA conferences
- Based on report from Midwinter, 7 RTs sent a letter to retain Council
- Real concerns about how disparate units can share Bylaws
- GODORT expressed concerns that members are demoralized since there are few members; they do not see a way forward
- There was a suggestion to increase the amount of overhead the RTs pay
- Members wonder how feedback is actually being incorporated and addressed and wonder if an organizational chart or map twould help
- There were calls for more support on how to use Connect
- Suggestions that ALA needs to give IT support and Zoom training so RTs can engage meaningfully online, and newer RTs need to learn to meet remotely
- Some members expressed concerns that there is a lot of time spent in email and in person on how to do things (procedures and processes), so there needs to be a set of simple bylaws
- There were questions about how to reduce overhead costs. Not use staff liaisons? Spend less time on election?
- The “ALA Past Presidents Response” voiced support for shared Bylaws and procedures and an aligned dues structure, but it expressed some apprehension in terms of setting a minimum number of members--noting that it undermines the purpose of RTs, which are focused on personal passion and interests and provide the “greatest opportunity for many members to engage in collaborative professional work and learning around specific issues” (pg. 5). It also points to a devaluation of member diversity and additional misgiving about how RTs will be supported if there is minimal staff involvement

### ***Constitution/Bylaws Implications***

- The adoption of a single set of Bylaws may be complicated given the diversity of the RTs and their position as issue-based programmatic groups; as some members have suggested, Bylaws may have to be very simply to cover all RTs

## **3. Constitution and Bylaws Analysis**



