



Governance Procedures of the Distance Learning Section

June, 2014

A. Name

The name of the organization shall be the Distance Learning Section (DLS) of the Association of College and Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association, hereinafter referred to as the Section.

B. Purpose

ACRL sections are established for the purpose of building communities of learning and providing professional development and networking opportunities for their members. A Section's name, purpose, and mission are by the Section and approved by the ACRL Board. The ACRL Board ascertains that overlaps between the mandates of various sections are minimized.

The primary objectives of the Section will be to advance distance learning librarianship and to foster and share information on distance library services. It shall be the further purpose of this Section to contribute to library service and librarianship through programs, lectures, and publications and to represent distance librarians.

C. Membership

Any member of the Association of College and Research Libraries may elect to be a member in this Section. Every current member of the Section has the right to vote and is eligible to hold office.

The number of "community of practice" affiliations included in the basic ACRL dues is determined by the ACRL Board. The dues for additional affiliations are also set by the ACRL Board.

D. Relationship to ACRL Board

The Board shall be authorized to establish Communities of Practice (including sections), to monitor their activities, and determine their continuance in consultation with the respective groups. The Board shall also be entitled to establish policies to govern the activities of Communities of Practice. (ACRL Bylaws, Article XV)

The Board liaison role provides a critical connection between membership structures and the ACRL Board of Directors. This liaison role can be particularly helpful in providing perspective, guidance, and insight regarding ACRL policies, procedures, and initiatives; soliciting feedback from Communities of Practice regarding proposed Board actions; and providing helpful advice regarding Action Plan Proposals and Board Action Forms which community of practice leaders will need to submit for official ACRL Board and ACRL Executive Committee action/decisions.

The liaison relationship is meant to enhance communication; it is not an advocacy role and for that reason Board members are asked to liaison with communities in which they have not been active. (Tip Sheet for Board Responsibilities)

The Board of Directors is the voice for the association. Sections, committees, and other established units are not authorized to speak for the association except through the Board. This is to say that unit leaders should refrain from issuing statements, taking positions, or endorsing any statements or positions except with Board approval. (ACRL Guide to Policies and Procedures, Chapter 5.12.8, Use of ACRL's Name)

E. Meetings

The Section shall hold an annual Executive Meeting at the time and place of the Annual Conference of the American Library Association. Other Executive Meetings may be called at the discretion of the Executive Committee. All meetings are conducted in accordance with the policies of ACRL and ALA.

Other meetings of the Section may be called by the chair with the approval of the Executive Committee. The Section, with the approval of the Board of Directors of ACRL, may hold closed meetings or joint meetings with other sections. Special meetings may be called at the discretion of the chair, and any special meetings that are called are scheduled by the chair.

A majority of the voting members of the Executive Committee at ALA Annual or a virtual meeting shall constitute a quorum of the Executive Committee.

ACRL units are encouraged to work outside of Midwinter and/or Annual Conference to increase group participation, efficiency, and productivity. Electronic meetings are conducted within the environment of ALA/ACRL bylaws and policies. In all cases these requirements must be adhered to, although they may have to be adopted to fit the virtual environment.

The *ALA Policy Manual* 7.4.1 defines a meeting as “an official assembly, for any length of time following a designated starting time, of the members of any board, committee task force, commission, etc., during which the members do not separate except for a recess and in which the assembly has the capacity to formalize decisions.” Conference calls, Internet chat sessions (and their equivalents), and in-person meetings are recognized as meetings subject to the open meetings policy (ALA Policy 7.4.4). The chair will announce face-to-face or virtual open meetings at least one week in advance and efforts will be made to announce the time and location or modality using appropriate communication channels.

There is a distinction between carrying on work of a committee electronically and conducting an electronic meeting. Asynchronous electronic discussions by electronic mail or other asynchronous communication methods do not constitute meetings because they are not an official assembly with a designated starting time (*ALA Policy Manual* 7.4.1).

The *Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure* (Alice Sturgis) applies to meetings of the Section to the extent that it is applicable, upholds the integrity of the voting processes, helps facilitate progress, and ensures equality, fairness, and common sense.

F: Officers

The officers of the Section shall be chair, vice-chair/chair-elect, immediate past chair, secretary/archivist-elect, and archivist. The vice-chair will serve successively for one year as vice-chair, chair, and immediate past chair. The secretary/archivist-elect will serve successively

for one year as secretary/archivist-elect and archivist. All terms of office shall begin at the adjournment of the Annual Conference.

G. Executive Committee

There shall be an Executive Committee consisting of the following voting members: officers of the Section, two elected members-at-large, and the chairs/co-chairs of the standing committees. The chair of the Section shall serve as chair of the Executive Committee.

The Section Executive Committee is responsible for the stewardship of the Section and the coordination of its activities, provided that it operates within the Section mandate and budget as determined by membership level (ACRL Guide to Policy and Procedure, Basic Services, 4.3.2).

The Section's Executive Committee may establish and appoint standing or ad-hoc committees to assist it in fulfilling the Section's mandate.

The elected members-at-large serve for two years with one new member elected each year. The responsibilities of the members-at-large are assigned at the discretion of the chair.

If a committee chair is elected to an Executive Committee position, the chair must resign as chair of the committee but may continue to serve on the committee.

H. Committees

Committees of the Section shall be established or discontinued by action of the Executive Committee.

Standing committees may be established to consider matters of the Section that require continuity of attention by the members. When such a committee is established, its charge, name, and size shall be determined. Unless otherwise approved by the Executive Committee, members of standing committees shall be appointed for two years and may be reappointed for a second term. In no case shall a person serve on a committee for more than four consecutive years. Appointments shall be made in such a manner as to provide continuity in membership and allow for broad representation from the membership.

Special or ad hoc committees may be created at any time by the chair, with the approval of the Executive Committee, for the performance of a particular assignment. Special and ad hoc committees may not be continued beyond three years without a review and reapproval by the Executive Committee.

I. Nominations and Elections

In order to be nominated, elected, and serve on the Section's Executive Committee, a person must be a current member of the Section (with ALA, ACRL, and Section dues—if applicable—paid).

The vice-chair/chair elect of the Section shall appoint no less than three members who will serve for one year on a Nominating Committee, designating one member as chair. The committee shall choose, in accordance with the deadlines prescribed by the Executive Director of ACRL, a slate of two nominees each year for each of the offices of Section vice-chair/chair-elect, Section secretary/archivist-elect, and one Section member-at-large. The two members-at-large run for alternative two-year terms. All nominees must be current members of the Section and have consented to their candidacy.

To assist the Section membership in making informed voting choices, each candidate will provide a brief statement of objectives for the Section in time for the statement to be published prior to balloting.

Additional nominations may be made by petition signed by at least ten members of the Section. Petitions must be filed with the secretary/archivist-elect of the Section and the Executive Director of ACRL at least three months prior to the date on which the ballots must be submitted. Any such nominees must be personal members of the Section and must consent to stand for election and provide a statement of objectives.

Elections shall be conducted by ballot. The candidate receiving the largest number of votes shall be elected, and the results shall be reported to the Executive Director of ACRL. In the case of a tie vote, the successful candidates shall be determined by lot.

J. Vacancies

If the offices of both the chair and vice-chair become vacant within the same year, the Executive Committee shall designate one of its members to act as chair until a chair is duly elected. At the next election, two candidates shall be elected, one to take the office of chair immediately and to serve for one year, the other to serve as vice-chair/chair elect.

If the office of secretary/archivist-elect becomes vacant, a secretary/archivist-elect shall be elected at the next election for a two-year term. A member of the Executive Council shall be appointed by the chair to serve as interim secretary/archivist-elect until the election takes place.

If the office of archivist becomes vacant, the current secretary will assume the responsibilities of the position.

If a member-at-large resigns, the chair, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee, shall appoint a successor to complete the unexpired term.

If there are vacancies on committees, the vice-chair/chair-elect of the Section shall appoint committee members to fill any vacancies due to occur during his/her term as chair. The vice-chair will name the chair of each committee. Special appointments to fill vacancies on committees may be made by the chair of the Section on the advice of the committee chair.

K. Amendments to Governance Procedures

Amendments to these Operating Procedures may be proposed by any committee of the Section or by petition signed by ten members of the Section in writing to the Section chair as long the proposed amendments are not in conflict with ALA/ACRL bylaws, policies, and procedures. Changes to these governance procedures do not require, and should not include, a ballot vote by the membership. The approval process is the responsibility of the Executive Committee. A current copy shall be provided to the Executive Director per ACRL Bylaws, Article XV, Section 3.