RUSA REVIEW Task Force Report

September 15, 2014

Committee Members:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The charge of the committee was to examine ways to create a streamlined, focused, proactive, responsive and sustainable organization within ALA. This charge stemmed from an interest in strengthening member recruitment, retention and engagement in light of declining membership numbers. ALA overall is also experiencing membership decline. Changing times and conditions mean RUSA cannot take membership for granted; it must adopt a more proactive posture, always searching for and offering opportunities.

Through a series of phone conferences, collaborative information gathering, interviewing of former and current officers, and a survey of membership, the committee gathered valuable insights. The following are major recommendations. The report presents a number of other recommendations and points of information as a basis for further action.

- Improve marketing and branding efforts. Since many RUSA members join first through the sections, sections need to step up marketing and membership recruitment with the help of the parent organization.
- Nurture new members, particularly through library science program students and new graduates; establish a mentor program for new members.
- Adopt more flexibility in adding members to committees at the time they express interest, not only at the annual appointment time.
- Place more emphasis on providing content for membership and less emphasis on administrative issues.
- Develop Interest Groups particularly for marketing, outreach, readers' advisory, assessment, library programming and space use and planning.
- Develop or expand programming and/or e-learning opportunities for interlibrary loan, instruction, data/big data, technology, and assessment.
- Focus more on activities members want to see in the future: webinars and educational opportunities, guideline development, networking opportunities, and RUSQ.
- Develop a high impact program for national visibility and prestige (modeled after ACRL).
- Develop some regional RUSA events or meet-ups to build brand, meet more local needs and to recruit new members.
- Provide a better balance of programming, discussions and activities of interest to public as well as academic librarians. The perception is that RUSA emphasizes the academic library interests over public libraries.
- Implement CEUs for attending programs and educational offerings. Public librarians often need CEUs.
- Improve efforts to nurture its sections and communicate with RUSA membership.
- Make RUSQ (online) more easily accessible; include more articles for public library audience.
- Make the Organization and Planning committee ad hoc, assigning the work to one or more ad hoc committees as appropriate.
- Consider making Standards and Guidelines an ad hoc committee.
- Move more committee work online between conferences.
- Use library science student interns to help RUSA internal office operations.
- Take up the issue of dues structure with ALA. Provide better incentives to join multiple divisions.

Note: the "Moving Forward" question on the survey did not list conference programming which rated highly on the list of things members value currently.

INTRODUCTION - The Charge of the Committee

The charge of the committee was to examine ways to create a streamlined, focused, proactive, responsive and sustainable organization within ALA. This charge stemmed from an interest in strengthening member recruitment, retention and engagement. Our Task Force undertook the following activities:

- Reviewed membership statistics for RUSA, RUSA sections, other ALA divisions, and ALA overall.
- Reviewed RUSA's strategic plan, past membership satisfaction survey, section reviews, and reports prepared by relevant ad hoc committees.
- Gathered informal data through having Task Force members "Ask 10 People" about why they belong or don't belong to RUSA.
- Conducted a Summer 2014 survey of our members.
- Task Force co-chairs conducted telephone interviews with RUSA leaders (current and recent past RUSA Presidents and section chairs).

This report addresses the committee charge containing multiple points for examination. It also brings together our findings about RUSA's strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities and threats.

RUSA competes in a different world today than when it was founded.

- Today we live in a world full of opportunities where much is free. Free webinars and learning events are a weekly occurrence. Members need to see value in joining ALA and RUSA now more than ever before.
- RUSA, which seeks to attract both public and academic librarians, competes with other ALA divisions, particularly ACRL and PLA. ALA members must choose among the divisions with no cost incentive to join two or more divisions. PLA and ACRL members typically will not pay to also join RUSA.
- Libraries are working with reduced budgets which impact travel funding. Even though ALA has encouraged virtual participation, librarians may be less likely to pay a hefty membership if they cannot get the full benefit from membership or only participate virtually in a limited way.
- Members of ALA and RUSA must perceive a value and benefit for their dues.
- RUSA needs to carve out its unique territory and create clear messages to members and non-members (see appendix E-3 for attributes that members felt made RUSA unique and for a list of other organizations from which RUSA members seek learning opportunities).
- RUSA, as a multi-layered organization, is confusing to members and non-members alike. Professional marketing would improve this situation. Better website design could improve peoples' overall understanding of the organization.
- ALA now has so many divisions and sections competing for program slots that the number of programs at Annual cannot begin to address all the varied interests and needs of its members. Librarians are being drawn to smaller, niche conferences that require no membership, no

committee involvement and offer two to three days of intensive, targeted professional development. It is hard for RUSA or ALA to compete with this in its current mode of operation. ALA is in danger of being too big and too "vanilla" to too many librarians.

1. **RUSA Structure as it Affects Member Engagement**

The RUSA mission says "RUSA is responsible for stimulating and supporting excellence in the delivery of general library services and materials, and the provision of reference and information services, collection development, readers' advisory, and resource sharing for all ages, in every type of library." The committee looked at the clarity of the mission.

- The mission is still appropriate in today's libraries; the vocabulary has shifted.
- The "Reference" function stands out in the title of the organization, and it is an evolving function. Some librarians reported they don't "do reference" any more and so have moved on from the organization. Many libraries have renamed their reference function. Yet there are others who still engage in reference activities. So while still valid, "reference" doesn't hold the same significance it once did.
- Libraries would not exist if not for customers. Libraries still actively engage and support user or customer services, so the concept is highly relevant. User services is so important today that this fact alone should fuel a vitally strong RUSA.
- Today's public libraries tend to use the term "customer service" as opposed to "user services." Again, terminology is a slight issue as public and academic libraries refer to user services differently.
- In the survey, 45% of members were fine with the Reference and User Services Association name, however it is hard to tell what the name says to non-members. Thirty-one percent offered no opinion about the name; 25% said it should be changed.
- ALA member numbers have declined rather significantly since 2004. Most divisions peaked around 2007, falling during the recession and never recovered their former strength (see appendix A). RUSA's membership has declined 29% since 2004.
- Although the survey sought out former members, it was hard to reach them. RUSA internal office has the actual names of members who have dropped. RUSA may wish to seek out individual members who have slipped away for more feedback.
- Past data collected by RUSA shows that RUSA serves a membership of wide interests with roughly 58% academic libraries and 25% public libraries. (RUSA Member Satisfaction Survey, 2011) Because RUSA has a heavily academic membership, public library interests sometimes get limited consideration.
- If RUSA Sections could give more attention to the public library environment, it would help retention of the public librarians.

RUSA is comprised of six Sections (members may belong to more than one section):

Acronym	Description of Section	Memberships (September 2014)
RSS	Reference Services	1346
MARS	Emerging Technologies in Reference	1241
CODES	Collection Development and Evaluation	1127
BRASS	Business Reference and Services	753
History	History	661
STARS	Sharing and Transforming Access to Resources	648
TOTAL		5776

Four of the six Sections represent functional areas of libraries and two reflect specific subject areas.
- One of RUSA's problems is the lack of commonality among its six Sections. The exception is the synergy found between RSS and MARS.
- The two subject-based Sections found a home in RUSA because business and history are strong service points in both academic and public libraries, and PLA does not include these. ACRL does not compete for business librarians; SLA attracts many business librarians some of whom also join BRASS.
- Some RUSA members feel the subject-based sections do not belong in RUSA, yet these sections seem to thrive. Peeling them off at this point would only reduce RUSA's numbers further.
- The CODES focus on collections overlaps, to some extent, with sections found in ALCTS. More joint programming should be pursued.
- MARS and RSS already collaborate, and further collaborations should be pursued. The extent and character of future collaborations will give these two sections some additional information about whether to discuss a merger or whether to maintain their separate identities.
- Technology supports the content of all RUSA sections. There is potential for MARS to collaborate with every section and still remain independent.
- BRASS and RSS also have a joint committee on jobs and careers.
- STARS has little competition with other organizations.
- The RUSA Member Satisfaction survey taken in 2011 indicated that members are satisfied overall with their Sections. There was little variation by Section.

The committee solicited section feedback from officers and former officers.
- Sections often feel like silos with little interaction or commonality. It has been suggested there is some degree of competition among the sections.
- One respondent thought that sections seem outdated; members have so many other concerns beyond what the sections address. Librarians associate themselves with smaller activities.
- Most officers and former officers stated communication between the parent organization and the sections could be much better.
- Feedback indicated that RUSA could do a better job nurturing the sections. On the other hand, sections enjoy a high degree of autonomy. The parent organization needs to both nurture and support, knowing when to let the sections take the reins. Due to the annual and biannual changing of committee memberships in the organization, this will need continual effort.
- RUSA At Large officers should be given more to do.

- Section officers (and former officers) suggested RUSA should do more leadership training.
- RUSA internal office could keep a shared calendar for the sections listing deadlines for various activities and contact information. This would reduce many emails for information. The internal office should also provide more alerts to the sections to keep them on track. The internal office is the constant. Presidents come and go putting a lot of pressure on them hold the volunteer side of the organization together and on track.
- Some webinar proposals from the sections have been questioned by RUSA which has incurred some irritation. Sections feel they know what their members will respond to.

2. Who are Our Members? What are Their Interests? Is RUSA Addressing Those Interests? What do Members Find Unique about RUSA?

RUSA is comprised of approximately 58% academic librarians, 25% public librarians and 17% other types of librarians such as archivists, government, medical, corporate, museum, genealogical, historical society, LIS faculty. It is apparent many different types of librarians have identified RUSA as their affinity group. (RUSA Member Satisfaction Survey, 2011)

To strengthen engagement it is important to understand the current professional interests of members. The very positive response to the addition of Interest Groups is an indicator that there are interests not being fully met. Over time, successful Interest Groups may be able to replace various committees and discussion groups. RUSA should exercise some oversight with this.

The survey had two questions that addressed this point.

- The first of the two questions asked for a response to initiating Interest Groups (IGs); what areas of interest?
    - 88% of respondents replied "yes" to interest groups
- The second question asked respondents to list their preferred areas of interest. Responses show there are new areas of interest that could be explored. The top ideas were (see appendix E-1 for full list):

    - Marketing
    - Outreach
    - Readers' advisory
    - Assessment
    - Library programming
    - Space planning

Another way to gauge member interest in topics is to see what professional development conferences and learning opportunities they have pursued outside of RUSA (see appendix E-2 for full list). Top responses were:
    - Interlibrary loan
    - Instruction
    - Data/Big Data

- Technology
- Assessment
- Management/Leadership
- Marketing
- Social Media

A number of ALA Divisions have Interest Groups (IG): LITA, ALCTS, ACRL. Interest Groups would bring new "interest" to RUSA with the possibility of attracting new members with a need or affinity for the area of interest. Some survey respondents voiced concern about adding IGs in addition to sections. There is **c**oncern that RUSA is already section and committee-heavy.

Concerns. While it may attract new members, it may discourage others. Adding additional layers of activity doesn't help the organization attain higher efficiency. On the contrary, it will add complexity. RUSA should be very clear about the types of activities committees and interest groups involve themselves in.

- ALA Policy Manual on Interest Groups: "An interest group is a sub-body established to facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences that may sponsor formal conference programs, institutes, and seminars, or prepare publications." See ALA Policy Manual A.4.3.13
- ALA Policy Manual on Discussion Groups: "A discussion group is an informal group that allows discussion of topics of common interest during the Annual Conference and Midwinter Meeting. Results of discussion may be prepared by the group for distribution to the relevant parent body. A leader may be chosen by the group to coordinate discussion." See ALA Policy Manual A.4.3.10
- Interest Groups are authorized by ALA to be higher functioning than discussion groups (of which RUSA has many).
- Some Divisions define Interest Groups as concerned with emerging areas. (See ACRL)

How to add Interest Groups to RUSA. The RUSA Review Committee envisions the place for Interest Groups residing over the section level of the association or outside the Sections. RUSA would need to create an Interest Group Coordinator position. The RUSA Review Committee feels Interest Groups should not be heavily laden with hierarchy and committees, but rather stay lean. The benefits of IGs:

- They could potentially create larger audiences for the IG.
- IGs would encourage more cross-sectional interplay and exchange which would be beneficial to RUSA possibly helping to break down silos.

Sections should be encouraged to examine their discussion groups to see if some might be broadened to appeal to a wider association audience and become Interest Groups. Some may, some may not. Transforming some Discussion Groups to higher level Interest Groups would help contain the number of total groups. The addition of Interest Groups will present some logistical issues.

- The ALA structure of the Annual Conference in recent years has scaled back conference sessions. This "downsizing" does not encourage additional programming and interaction. There may need to be some juggling of section forums, discussion groups and programming to accommodate new Interest Group program slots.

- Or Interest Group activity may need to become an online activity that occurs between annual conferences. The size and strength of the Interest Group may determine its ability to command a program slot at Annual compared to other programs.
- It may be possible for Midwinter to host more Interest Group activity also. Although Midwinter has scaled back, it does not appear ready to die.
- See the ALCTS structure to see how that Division has created an online learning area. Interest Groups could operate in e-forum and webinar formats. CODES has developed successful CODES Conversations, a good model.

What do RUSA members find unique about RUSA (selected common responses):
- Specialties in reference, adult services, user services, readers' advisory and interlibrary loan.
- A welcoming association (despite comments to the contrary).
- The size of the association.
- Follows function, not form.
- Cross-section of public and academic librarians (although several comments noted public librarians felt their interests were less well recognized than academic's).
- Good resource for business librarians.

3. **Value and Benefit of RUSA to Members** (see appendix E-4 for more survey responses; questions varied slightly for current and future interests)

Survey results revealed these top five things that have retained members and which they have valued:

- Networking with people who share the same work activity 63%
- Conference programming 61.8%
- Guidelines for professional practice 56.1%
- Professional development opportunities 55.6%
- RUSQ 51.2%

Survey results also revealed membership's future priorities, RUSA members place value on (note that "conference programming" was worded differently on this part of the survey - "increase programming at conference" - so it did not fall into the top 5 as it probably should have):

- Educational webinars and other synchronous learning 74.6%
- Guidelines for professional practice 57.6%
- Networking with people who share the same work activity 54.1%
- Interest groups 51.28%
- Provide asynchronous educational opportunities 49.2%
- RUSQ 48.9%

RUSQ was valued by survey respondents although there were a number of comments reporting struggles with online access to the journal.

- RUSA should investigate the source of the problem and strive to make this very good journal more easily accessible.
- RUSA should continue listserv alerts for the latest RUSQ issue release; people complain they forget to seek it out now that it is electronic.
- RUSQ should strive for a balance in coverage of public and academic environments.
- Respondents expressed a lack of articles and studies for the public library environment. Library science educators and contributors could be asked to research the public library environment more often.

RUSA is perceived to be an easier association than ACRL for member involvement. Academic librarians clearly look for this for the purposes of promotion. RUSA is perceived as a friendly organization where one can find kindred spirits. Other points mentioned:

- Survey respondents valued the mix of public and academic librarians.
- Survey respondents mentioned the emphasis on "reference" and public services as valued.
- A significant number of respondents are drawn to RUSA because of a specific topic or section (such as interlibrary loan, genealogy, business, etc.)
- Readers' Advisory is highly valued.

4. **Areas for Improvement and Opportunity**

Areas for Improvement:
RUSA appears to suffer from a lack of visibility and a clear identity which points to marketing issues. The RUSA Review committee acknowledges RUSA will be conducting additional work on marketing, however the committee has these comments to offer.

Recommendations:

- The committee's observation is that many members join RUSA form the "back end," joining sections without my awareness of the larger RUSA organizations.
  - Knowing this, membership efforts at the section level need to ramp up.
  - Membership committees should remain; they have an important role to play.
- Publicity from RUSA and its sections must carry consistent RUSA branding, even informal digital announcements. Email publicity needs to be branded with "RUSA" in the subject line as opposed to following the name of internal staff whom no one recognizes.
- The RUSA Office needs to create a RUSA email address and all messages to members needs to come from this address.
- RUSA needs to create a better social media presence.
- RUSA seems overwhelming to some librarians. There are too many acronyms which are frustrating newer and potential members. RUSA should consider naming conventions that are more user friendly and self-evident.

- RUSA should facilitate better intra-section communication. Section chairs and programming chairs need to communicate more frequently throughout the year about activities, areas of interest and planned programming in order to look for opportunities for shared events. Communication should be more informal than the formal, official RUSA meetings. Perhaps the President or President-Elect of RUSA could assume this responsibility to see that communication occurs. Yearly turnover of section programming committees hampers attempts to find synergies and opportunities to collaborate.
- Long lead times for submitting annual programming combined with the committee turnovers contributes to missed opportunities for more collaborative programming.
  Sections would welcome a reduction in the lead time required for programming proposals. This would help sections develop topics of more current interest.

Areas with Opportunities:

- RUSA's student member numbers are low (71 in 2014). Graduating LIS students and new librarians need to be approached and courted. This is a job for Membership. Consider actions such as reaching out to library programs and faculty, special membership offers and enticements, a program to mentor these new grads, etc. Library school programs don't offer much in the way of training for things like interlibrary loan operations. A program or a few webinars might greatly enhance library student education and attract them as members. More focus on new entrants into the library field would help recruitment.
- RUSA could seek greater numbers of retirees and involve them to a greater extent. These members could be tapped for their leadership skills and service as mentors.
- PLA is putting less emphasis on "reference" work. RUSA should capitalize on this and expand to include research and liaison roles.
- RUSA would benefit from a greater presence at PLA through current RUSA members.

Are there opportunities for consolidation, for changes in committee structure?
Consolidation proves to be difficult, unless the organization completely restructures, but that carries the risk of alienating and disorienting too many members. The committee offers these recommendation:

- RUSA should move to more short-term project based committees and task forces, both at the division and section levels. This change would address members' preference for meaningful work requiring a shorter time commitment. The only potential drawback is keeping everyone on the same page as task forces come and go.
- There is interest in placing people on committees at any time of the year, and to do so when they express the interest, rather than making them wait months for the "enrollment period." This is not a suggestion to disband the normal yearly, volunteer solicitation, but to enhance it.
- RUSA committees should expedite work by meeting virtually throughout the year. Some committees have accomplished this, others have not.
- The number of RUSA meetings held at Midwinter Meeting and the ALA Annual Conference should be further reduced in order to give members more time to attend forums, discussion groups, programming and networking.

- RUSA should move away from appointing a section representative to each RUSA level committee. This current practice leads to unwieldy committees and internetworking. It would be more efficient to create smaller sized committees consisting of members who have a genuine interest in the work of a particular committee.
- In order to streamline committees at the RUSA level, the RUSA Organization and Planning Committee should be made ad hoc and convened as necessary for section reviews.
- The RUSA Standards & Guidelines Committee could possibly be made ad hoc since there are often significant periods of time when there are no documents to be reviewed. If this committee were to be run on an ad hoc basis, we recommend that RUSA maintain a checklist of criteria for evaluating new guidelines so any new committee could assume responsibility with confidence in understanding the process. Former committee members could be asked to serve on this ad hoc committee as needed. These criteria should be shared with all sections wishing to develop new guidelines. However, guidelines were important to survey takers, so this decision should be thoughtfully made.
- The RUSA Publications and Communications committee should have a larger focus on marketing and branding in addition to publications. Section-level publications and communications committees should also be reconfigured in this way. RUSA, however, needs to "lead the charge" with marketing and branding, but work in concert with the sections.

5. **Identify gaps in service**

Are new members made to feel welcome?
- Many survey comments remarked on the friendliness of RUSA. Other responses indicate that some new members don't feel particularly welcomed into the association compared to NMRT, for example.
- RUSA needs to identify new members and develop a system or process to make sure it isn't losing members from neglect.
- RUSA should develop a better "Welcome package" for new members.
- Not all sections appear to have membership committees. This contributes to RUSA's inability to maximize its membership potential. Although membership committees inflate the association committee structure, membership committees ought to be actively recruiting and helping to retain members. RUSA membership committee cannot do this alone. RUSA Membership should be coordinating with section membership committees to share and develop recruitment and retention ideas.
- There were also comments about committee members being neglected by uncommunicative committee chairs. RUSA should work more closely with section chairs, encouraging them to stay on committee chairs to make sure this doesn't happen. Section chairs should be trained to be accessible and communicative with all its section's committee members.
- RUSA must ensure that virtual members and committee members have as rich an experience as possible. Section and committee chairs must be on board with working and serving virtual members.

- Opportunities for virtual membership and committee work could boost recruitment and retention. RUSA needs better promotion for virtual involvement. Reduced travel budgets give RUSA a prime opportunity to attract new members this way.
- Survey responses indicated that it was difficult to figure out what volunteer opportunities were available. RUSA's new website redesign must consider this its redesign process.
- RUSA should consider the occasional use of listservs other than its own to reach the library community and potential members.

6. **Making RUSA more responsive to future user and committee needs** (see survey results in appendix E-5)
   Below are recommendations addressing the needs of both general membership and RUSA committees.

   - RUSA needs to concentrate on being more content rich and less involved in administrative issues. The implication is that RUSA should be more member focused supplying members with high quality education and conference programming.
   - RUSA needs to develop more high impact toolkits, guides, deliverables of value.
   - Members value networking opportunities, although not particularly through social events (see survey results).
   - Survey results indicated that 56% of members value guidelines and standards (see RUSA Guidelines). This indicates RUSA should maintain an emphasis on this activity and may conflict with a move to make the committee ad hoc.
   - RUSA should explore developing CEUs for programs and professional development offerings to attract librarians from public libraries.
   - RUSA should develop a high impact program bring visibility. Feedback noted that ACRL has a number of high impact programs such as its Information Literacy Immersion Program.
   - The survey confirmed an enthusiasm from the membership in Interest Groups with a number of possible areas of interest (as stated earlier) (see appendix E-1).
   - User needs include section and sections' committee needs.
     - There is some frustration with the tight control over the website. Sections would like to have more than just one person empowered to work on the section websites. Limiting to one person puts too much burden on that volunteer and slows workflow.
     - Officers expressed that RUSA focuses too much on its own website and should help the sections more with their websites.
     - Some officers and former officers felt RUSA should not compete for Annual programming with the sections, but rather choose one of the section programs as the President's program. There is too much competition for limited programming time.
     - Limited programming time is a major issue for ALA overall. Members require a substantial amount of programming to justify the expense of traveling to ALA. Over the past several years ALA has cut back on programming in an attempt to confine the conference to one convention location. If there is a major difference between ALA and the niche conferences, this is it.

- While RUSA Awards are a "hallmark" to many, awards ranked very low on the member survey. RUSA might wish to reexamine the time and effort it puts into awards if the membership isn't valuing awards that highly.
- RUSA should attempt to record more conference programs and sessions to increase visibility and value. Other conferences do this very well. See ER&L as an example.
- RUSA needs to offer more free webinars and other online activities to members. Non-members should be charged a reasonable amount, or their participation should be free if they join RUSA. Professional development needs to be advertised more widely.
- Sections express irritation over the tight control of membership lists. If these are available, the internal office needs to be more proactive in letting sections know. It seems every year new committees spend too much time reinventing the wheel finding out information like how to get member lists. Section need to know who their members are in order to better serve them.
- As travel budgets are reduced, RUSA could respond by finding more opportunities for travel awards for members.
- Former officers suggest spending less time and effort with ALA Connect. Logging in is a barrier to free-flowing communication. It is difficult to find items in Connect without knowing the precise URL. Searches are difficult.
- There is a sense among several former officers that the RUSA office needs more staff, especially during times of the year when staff are preparing for the Midwinter Meeting and the Annual Conference. Sections also need assistance at these peak times. Perhaps a library school intern or practicum position could be created. Often these are unpaid positions.
- There needs to be better documentation about what the RUSA staff can do for sections. There seems to be a lack of understanding about the functions and services of the RUSA office. The RUSA website should list the name of each RUSA staff member and clearly identify the responsibilities of each individual. New RUSA staff should be introduced to section officers and committee chairs.
- RUSA's Executive Director has to juggle the needs of RUSA and ASCLA. Since RUSA has limited resources, the RUSA Executive Committee and the RUSA Board should help set priorities for the RUSA office.
- RUSA should consider implementing a 360 evaluation review process for RUSA staff in order to identify other areas where services could be improved.
- Feedback suggests that the RUSA internal office often works too independently of the RUSA volunteer organization. While the working relationship of the RUSA President and Board with the internal staff may be highly functioning, officers outside that circle feel out of the loop with little communication.

7. **Overlap with other groups – Identifying Affinity Groups – Working Together**

- Both ALCTS and RUSA have collection Sections. RUSA CODES emphasizes collection development, readers' advisory, and publishing. ALCTS focuses more on technical services aspects of collections. A merger of RUSA and ALCTS would bring together all the functional areas of a library – public / user services and technical services, thus creating an association double the size which might bring economies of scale.

- LITA has obvious commonalities with MARS. There are opportunities for joint programming. A RUSA officer was recently approached by LITA to talk about some joint programming.
- ASCLA has an interest in service to users with disabilities. ASCLA could be a partner for this important area of user services.
- If more joint programming is a goal, RUSA needs to communicate this more often and at the appropriate time of year to move sections in this direction.

8. **Other Issues Identified**

- It has been noted that RUSA, unlike PLA and ACRL, does not have its own conference. RUSA is not nearly as large as the other two either. However, RUSA could encourage smaller, regional conferences and meet-ups to help sustain loyalty to RUSA.
  - For example, for the last two years, a BRASS member pulled together all the business librarians in her metro area for a meet-up. Several memberships to BRASS occurred because of this get-together. Sharing of work environments helped attendees to learn about each other's operations. These kinds of meet-ups could be organized and encouraged under the RUSA brand.
- RUSA needs to pursue an ALA discount to encourage people to join several divisions and associations. Too many librarians find it too costly to join two or more divisions.
  - Special Libraries Association grants one free division membership with the organization membership.
- In addition to exploring joint membership, RUSA should urge ALA to revisit the idea of tiered membership (which could be based on income and/or conference attendance). Librarians earning $27,000 pay the same base ALA dues as veteran librarians earning $75,000. Lower paid librarians find little financial incentive to join.
- RUSA must encourage more virtual programming across all sections. It is not reasonable to expect the majority of RUSA members to attend two conferences a year. In addition to having less travel money, some librarians (especially public librarians) have a hard time getting release time.
- RUSA should explore sponsoring free or inexpensive tours/events for members attending conferences. Although conference attendance is declining, those who do attend want a conference that is engaging and fun.
- Only about 6 % of RUSA members are currently engaged in committee work. Perhaps it is not realistic to increase this participation rate to more than 10 % given members' time and budget constraints. RUSA leadership should instead focus its efforts on ensuring that those who are involved in committees have meaningful work to do, and that those who choose not to be involved have ample opportunities for professional development.
- If membership continues to decline, RUSA must seriously consider its financial viability.
  - RUSA could consider a merger with another division such as ALCTS which shares an interest in collections. This would double the size of RUSA and enable it to realize economies of scale.
  - RUSA's various sections share similar interests with ACRL, ALCTS, LITA and PLA.
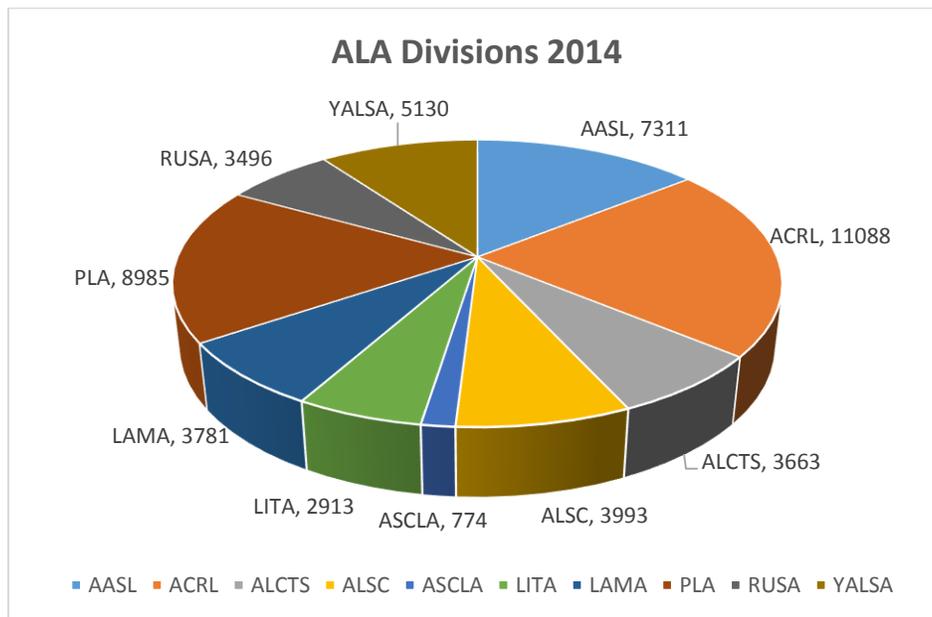
9. **Appendix**

- A - ALA Division Membership Numbers (see below)
- B – RUSA Section Memberships *in* ALA Statistics Monthly Report (attachment)
- C - Survey Data Summary (see EXCEL attachment)
- D – RUSA Committee structure (see EXCEL attachment)
- E – Complete Survey Results 405 responses [386 from RUSA members; remainder from recent members as best as we can determine] (see EXCEL attachment)
  - E-1-Responses about Interest Groups
  - E-2-Responses about other conference attendance
  - E-3-Responses about the uniqueness of RUSA
  - E-4-Responses about offerings that retain members
  - E-5-Responses about RUSA focus for the future
  - E-6-Responses about the RUSA name
  - E-7-Responses about miscellaneous comments

Appendix A

ALA Division Memberships

ALA DIVISION MEMBERSHIP, 2004-2014 (YTD)											
Year	AASL	ACRL	ALCTS	ALSC	ASCLA	LITA	LAMA	PLA	RUSA	YALSA	
2004	9825	12190	4758	3779	917	4414	4852	10481	4947	4263	
2005	10159	13118	4826	3926	1009	4054	4929	9987	5121	4734	
2006	9676	12976	4883	4052	945	4106	5109	11548	5283	5260	
2007	9453	13411	5151	4213	1009	4338	5426	10935	5468	5622	
2008	8717	12538	4664	4109	882	3916	4991	11622	4856	5517	
2009	8614	12473	4309	4068	837	3587	4646	10123	4523	5417	
2010	8259	12126	4149	4001	813	3412	4346	10408	4265	5296	
2011	8000	12478	4178	3886	775	3444	4080	9053	4135	5309	
2012	7392	11829	3920	3883	715	3258	4086	9616	3898	5167	
2013	7362	11944	3826	3894	796	3116	4022	8488	3740	5092	
2014	7311	11088	3663	3993	774	2913	3781	8985	3496	5130	51134

ALA Divisions 2014

YALSA, 5130
RUSA, 3496
PLA, 8985
LAMA, 3781
LITA, 2913
ASCLA, 774
ALSC, 3993
ALCTS, 3663
ACRL, 11088
AASL, 7311

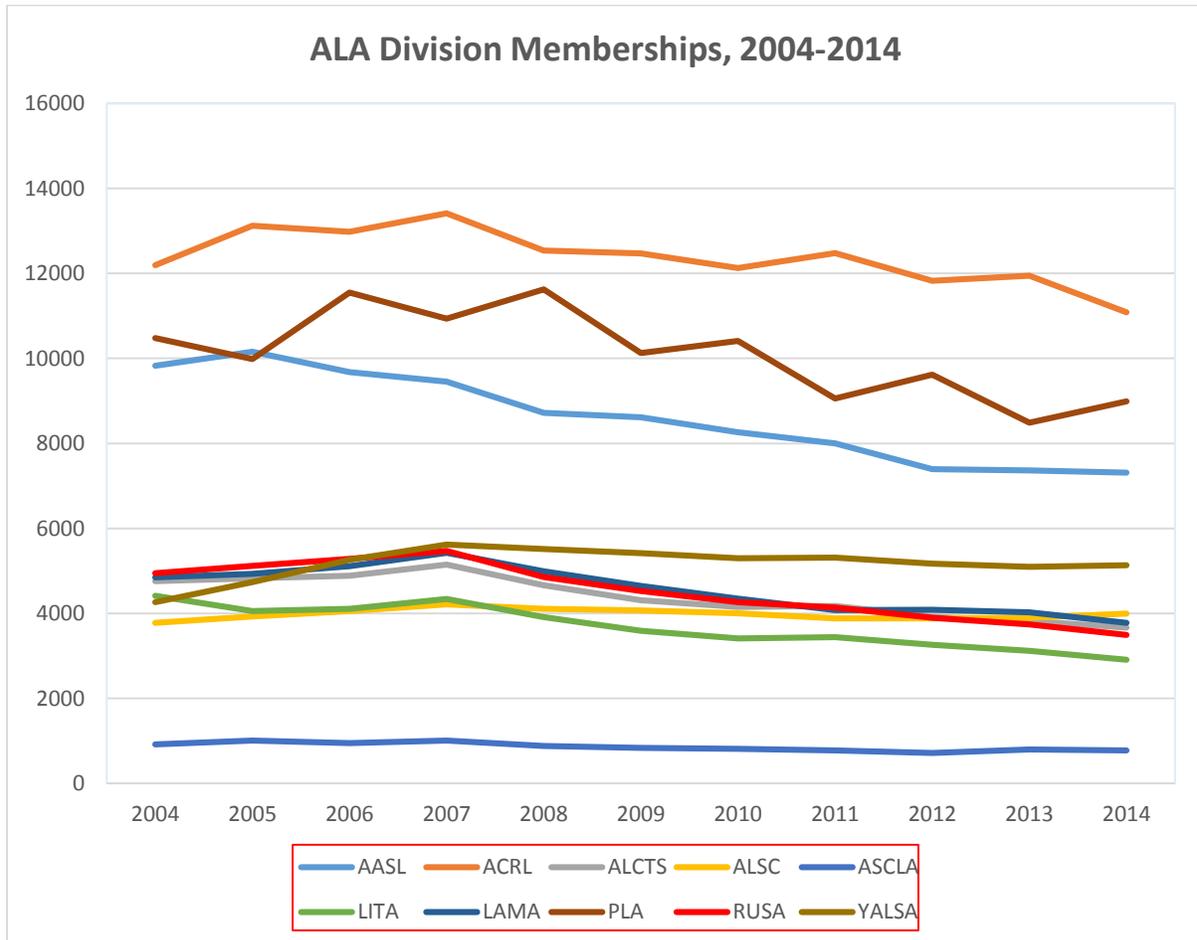AASL ACRL ALCTS ALSC ASCLA LITA LAMA PLA RUSA YALSA

Data from ALA Membership Statistics by Division, 2000-Present
http://www.ala.org/membership/membershipstats_files/divisionstats

Viewed 9/5/2014

Appendix B-1

ALA Division Memberships
September 2014, ytd

ALA Division Memberships, 2004-2014

Data from ALA Membership Statistics by Division, 2000-Present
http://www.ala.org/membership/membershipstats_files/divisionstats
viewed 9/5/2014