American Library Association
Committee Information Update

Report for Annual 2014

Name of Committee: ALA-APA Certification Program Committee

Committee Chair: Bede Mitchell

Committee Members Present: Catherine Hakala-Ausperk
Shali Zhang

Committee Members Absent: Linda Lillard

Others Present: Lorelle Swader, ALA-APA Director
Ian Lashbrook, ALA-APA Research Associate
John Moorman, ALA Executive Board Liaison
Chuck Gibson, Incoming Committee Member
Michael Golrick, State Library of Louisiana

Accomplishments [at this meeting], a concise account:
At its 2014 Spring Meeting, the ALA-APA Board of Directors approved our recommended conflict of interest policy for members of certification review committees.

Lorelle Swader and Ian Lashbrook provided updates on the CPLA and LSSC programs. There are 459 LSSC enrollees currently (this has been a fairly steady number), and there are now 90 graduates (twice as many as last year). CPLA has 249 enrollees and 76 graduates.

We need another CPLA content provider, which Lorelle proposes might be ALA. The Office of Human Resource Development and Recruitment (HRDR) could work with independent instructors and organizations to design needed courses and obtain qualification through the CPLA certification review committee. The pilot for this approach is a professor from a previous content provider who has been teaching a management & technology course for CPLA that was discontinued when the professor’s institution shut down its continuing education division. The professor and HRDR are submitting the course for review, to ensure it meets required standards and does not overlap with course content being offered by our current content provider. This new model for getting content providers would enable us to contract for specific needed courses, without the proposed provider having to develop courses for the entire curriculum that are already being offered by other providers.

Michael Golrick, State Library of Louisiana (one of our content providers), reported that his organization had not been informed about recent changes in the program competencies, which is a major oversight. He also urged us to have public hearings on future proposed changes to the competencies. Golrick pointed out as an example of his
concerns about the LSSC revisions that some seem to be aimed at library directors who lack an MLS but need certification, whereas the LSSC minimum qualifications for acceptance into the program are a high school diploma plus one year experience in a library. Few, if any, library directors are so minimally qualified, even those who lack the MLS, which reminds us that the LSSC program was originally aimed at certifying library paraprofessionals, not administrators. The new competencies are far too advanced for parapros. Golrick also expressed concern that the increasing reliance on webinars by content providers (including his own organization) is problematic for many support staff. This is an area where ensuring better communication among content providers would facilitate the sharing of viable alternatives. In response to these excellent points, Lorelle and Ian will send committee members the current protocols and documents related to how we develop competencies, and try to ensure adequate participation and input from relevant parties. We as a committee will review the policies and protocols, and consider what steps to take in making improvements. Next year is when the current competencies are due for their next review, so we will aim to implement improved policies and procedures in time for use in those reviews.

Lorelle and Ian reported the final total of proceeds from our fund raising party at ALA Midwinter in Philadelphia was $2,200.

John Moorman shared a written report from the Board regarding conference registration, and the next stage of association strategic planning.

Planned activities for upcoming year, a concise account:
Consider increasing the marketing of LSSC and CPLA through PLA and state library association conferences. Encourage graduates to spread the word at those venues.

Devote Midwinter meeting agenda time to a discussion of the new ALA Strategic Framework Initiatives: Advocacy, Information Policy, Professional and Leadership Development. Where does our committee’s mission fit in?

Committee members should review the following documents and post feedback by September 1: ALA-APA Certification of Completion Form; CPLA Candidate letters; LSSC candidate letters.

There will be a fund raiser again in Chicago, $50 per ticket. If anyone can suggest a possible sponsor for part of the costs, please contact Ian or Lorelle.

Other comments/information you believe will help the Association in its work: None at this time

Submitted by: Bede Mitchell, Chair, July 11, 2014