

American Library Association
2017 Nominating Committee
Post- ALA Report

July 25, 2016

Submitted by Steven J. Bell, chair

Members: Steven Bell (chair); Jose Aguinaga; Theresa S. Byrd; Gail Dickinson; Vicki Morris Emery; Carl A. Harvey II; Rachel Rubin; Felton Thomas; Sandy Wee; JoAnne Kempf (ALA Staff Liaison)

Activity/Accomplishments

The Nominating Committee first met at the ALA meeting in Boston on Saturday, January 9, 2016. After an initial orientation to the work of the committee, the distribution of the Nominating Committee materials and a discussion of member availability for monthly meetings, we heard from Larry Neal, past chair of the Nominating Committee. Neal discussed how the 2016 Committee managed the process. This was helpful to the current Committee in making decisions about how to approach its work.

To maintain the confidentiality of all Committee communications there was a commitment to use only the ALA Connect space for the sharing of information between members.

After identifying the 3rd Monday of each month at 1:00 pm as an agreed upon time for virtual Committee meetings, the Committee organized itself to begin the work of reaching out to potential nominees for president-elect. It was decided to focus Committee energy on the president-elect and to wait to address Council nominees. To begin its work of identifying president-elect nominees, the Committee divided up the names on the spreadsheet with individuals who had been contacted by previous Committees or had indicated an interest in the nomination at some point.

With assistance from JoAnne Kempf we decided to update the spreadsheet by asking all those we called to update their status. Did they want to stay on the list? Did they want to be contacted again at some future date? This was a valuable exercise that should be completed by the Committee every other year so as to keep the potential candidate spreadsheet and pool relatively up-to-date. It is not a good use of time to contact individuals who no longer have any interest in the nomination. Committee members also identified those national and state librarian associations to which they would re-distribute the call for nominations announcement.

The Committee had its first virtual meeting on Monday, March 21. The Committee reviewed the Nominations announcement and the status of the submission database. We also spent time reviewing the attributes for president-elect and counselors. Having this information available in the Committee notes was extremely helpful to Committee members, as well as a suggested script for communicating with potential nominees. This provided a reminder to inform all those contacted about the highly confidential nature of the election process. In addition to reviewing the process for contacting

individuals about the nominations, the Committee set up a strategy for sharing the names of new individuals who may have been interested. This was accomplished using the Committee Connect space.

At its April meeting on April 16, 2016 Committee members began to share information about individuals who had been contacted, what the results of those contacts were and this was used to update the nominations spreadsheet. Since this was also a month after the first announcement of the nomination process being opened we began to have reviews of the database to see if there were new nominations. While there were no nominations for president-elect, we did begin to have nominations for councilor.

During May and June, prior to the Committee meeting at ALA Annual on June 25, 2016 the Committee members continued to identify potential candidates for president-elect and then identify members who would follow up by contacting those individuals. In most cases the potential candidates were honored to be asked but for any number of reasons declined to be nominated. In addition we had a smaller number of interested individuals who were undecided and asked for more time. Also during this time we continued to monitor the slow but steadily growing number of individuals who were self-nominating for the ALA Council election. With assistance from our ALA liaison, JoAnne Kempf, we had regularly updated spreadsheets to track our progress.

When the Committee met at ALA on June 25th we did a review of our president-elect candidates. Given that we still had a few undecided candidates and several new individuals to consider we decided to extend the closing date of the candidate nominations database to July 29, 2016. We also saw ALA as an opportunity to do some face-to-face solicitation of candidates. Committee members were asked to perform networking activity to either identify potential candidates or to ask colleagues to share names of potential candidates. Future committees, if their work is not done by ALA Annual, should target it as an opportunity to increase the number of potential candidates. The Committee also reviewed the Council candidates and determined that a fair number had started but not yet complete the biographical information form and statement. Committee members divided up those individuals and agreed to follow up with them after the conference. Finally the Committee determined that a new announcement would go out to the ALA membership with information about the extension of the deadline.

Looking ahead to July and August, the Committee is confident that it will have president-elect candidates to review and vet in order to develop and finalize the election slate. We appear to be well on our way to having a sufficient number of candidates for the ALA Council election.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven J. Bell