Fall Executive Committee Meeting
October 26-27, 2012, Chicago

Topic: **Virtual Selection Committee Manual Draft**

Background: **At the June 2012 Board Meeting, the Board voted to pilot one award
                   and one selection committee as virtual committees, and directed the
                   President to appoint a taskforce to develop a manual that would assist
                   the Committee Chairs in managing these committees in a virtual
                   environment. The Taskforce has provided an initial draft below. The
                   Executive Committee will want to review it and provide feedback as
                   to its content and completeness to the Taskforce so that they can
                   refine the document and submit it to the Board for approval by
                   Midwinter 2013.**

Action Required: **Discussion**

As the interactions with your committee will be constrained by the virtual world, you will need
to figure out which virtual resources work best for you and your committee. As with any form of
communication, there are best practices that can be used while working on those resources.
  Email will be the main source of communication with any committee.   From the outset, you
need to set some ground rules about what is acceptable.

While we all use email on a regular basis what is acceptable in different areas is not acceptable in
all areas. It would be good to send out basic rules for virtual communication. Such rules as:

1. Do not type in capitals as it is seen as yelling.
2. Email responses are typically done within 48 hours.
3. Do not read intent into emails, as tone of voice is not applicable in email.
4. State what you mean in emails, as sarcasm cannot be read from them.
5. If you are on a conference call, state who is speaking before you begin so everyone
    knows who is speaking.

Make sure that your expectations for the committee are clear. Send an email or have a video
chat so that each committee member knows exactly what is expected of them. That way if
problems do occur, you have a clear understanding of where a committee member may be
failing.

While a committee going virtual will create its own set of problems, many of these will be the
same problems that occur in any non-virtual committee, as much of the work is done between in-
person meetings. Beyond that, having a virtual committee allows a chair to embrace more
opportunities for interaction than non-virtual committees typically do. As the chair, you will
need to decide how often and how your committee communicates.

As a chair, you will need to keep your committee motivated and moving at pace. You will also need to stop issues before they become problems. Any issue that comes up should be discussed with the committee members first. Sometimes a simple email can work to open up the lines of communication. If email does not work, you can set up a phone call or video chat. If you, as the chair, are sensing some issues with a particular member, having a voice or video chat may be the best way to take care of issues as you might be able to read inflections or body language that you will miss in an email.

If there is a problem that you need input on or a problem that does not seem to be getting any better no matter what you have tried, it is time to talk to your liaison. The liaison for you committee is an excellent resource that you can use to not only come up with new ideas on how to handle issues, but will be the place you need to go if a problem is beyond your control.

Some problems that can come up are: a committee member may have to resign due to outside circumstances, or you may have a committee member that is not working with the committee or maybe confrontational. If any of these occur your first step will be your liaison.

Ideas on how to use virtual resources to enable committee work

#1
Use Google drive to set up a document with an agenda of what will be done, and a presentation of titles that will be discussed. Set up a video call through Oovoo where all committee members can be seen and heard. Throughout the meeting, update the notes on the word document in real time.

In this way, the chair can see how people are reacting to titles and information and judge level of participation. The committee can all have the same information (both agenda, notes and presentation) so that everyone can be on the same page.

#2

Use Goodreads to set up a private discussion group and set up discussion threads on specific books. Giving each book a preset time that it will be available for discussion.   Discussions will be available to view throughout the committee time.

Chairs can keep track of if books have been read and participation level of committee. It also allows the committee to log on at convenient and different times. Book discussions can either be opened with the person nominating an item or in anyway the chair sees fit.

#3

Use ALA connect to upload all the documents that the committee uses from Word documents to a PowerPoint presentation and have a discussion set up for committee members to comment on. This allows all the information for the committee to be in one place, for ease of use.

#4
So that you get to know your committee, set up individual chat times with each participant using either the one on one-chat options or one of the group options. By having a one on one time, that may only need to last a few moments you will be able to understand how to best work with each committee member.

#5

Use Survey Monkey to send out a survey of where everyone stands on reading titles; by making it anonymous committee members are more likely to be honest. Using Doodle set up a virtual meeting time to discuss the titles that have been read. During the virtual meeting you can encourage further focus on titles that are not being read and find out about any issues that are going on.

ALA Connect

ALA Connect is a collaborative online tool that can be used by committee members to meeting virtually and share information. Create an ALA work group to have a centralized space to keep all documents the committee is working on.

Each member of the committee can log on to ALA Connect using his or her own ALA username and password. Once logged in, committee members can access the committee they are associated with by using the drop down menu "My ALA Groups" near the top of the page.

Users can customize their own profile with contact information, a picture and other personal information.

Capabilities of ALA Connect
ALA Connect can be used in many ways to keep a virtual committee on the same page and working together.

Discussion: Members can post discussion questions to engage others in conversation and get feedback on ideas such as whether or not a title is strong enough to nominate.

Online docs: Utilize this tool to create collaborative documents. This function of ALA Connect allows members to edit and change documents without having to download a file, edit, and upload for others to see. Use this function for such tasks as allowing members to chime in on the nominations they have read or completed. It is possible to track the changes made on documents.

Files: The chair can upload a PDF, Word document or Excel Spreadsheet to a centralized location, for example nominations lists or meeting agendas for members to refer to and print at their leisure.

Polls: The chair can create polls to gain group consensus on discussion topics. The chair is able to create surveys with single questions and multiple-choice answers. There are no fill in the blank or ranking options. Results can be viewed as graphs showing how each person voted. This feature could be used for straw polls and voting for book lists.

Events: Each committee has a space for their own calendar to keep track of deadlines or meetings. Members can download the events to their Outlook, Google or iCal-based calendar.

Pictures: Use this space to upload images into the gallery. This could be useful to discuss paperback book covers.

Chats: ALA Connect allows the ability for committees to meet virtually and hold meetings. There is nothing to download and no video equipment to worry about when using this synchronous chat tool. A chair can pick a designated time for committee members to sign on and join into the chat room by clicking on "Chats" on the right of the toolbar, typing their name into the Chat name box, and clicking on the "Create chat session" button.

Google Capabilities

Google Docs

Google Docs is a free, Web-based office software suite and data storage service offered by Google. Users are able to create and edit documents online while collaborating in real-time with other users. Google Docs offers software to create documents, spreadsheets, presentations drawings and forms. Documents can be shared, opened, and edited by multiple users at the same time. Users are also able to upload documents created in other word programs into Google Docs for collaboration. Currently individual users can store up to 10 GB of information in their Google Docs account.

A Gmail account is your login to the Google Docs software. Once you've logged into Gmail, select the "Drive" link at the top of the screen to access your Google Docs. To share a document, open the document. Pull down the "File" menu and select "Share" option. This will bring up the "Share Settings". At the bottom of this screen is the "Add people" field. Enter your committee members email addresses and set their access level. You can choose from "Can View", "Can Comment", and "Can edit". These shared setting will have to be set for each document.

Some things to keep in mind when using Google Docs, users cannot be notified of changes, but the application can notify users when a comment or discussion is made or replied to, assisting with collaboration. Currently, there is no way to highlight changes made by a particular editor in

real time during a writing session, or a way to jump to the changes made. However, an editor's current is represented with an editor-specific color/cursor, so if another editor happens to be viewing that part of the document they can see edits as they occur. Also, the revision history included in the service allows users to see the additions made to a document, with each author distinguished by color, but the entire document must be manually searched to find these changes.

Google Hangouts:
Hangouts (currently limited to 10 users) can be recorded or broadcasted, and users without a camera can participate via phone. Additionally, side conversations can occur via text chat.

Using your Gmail account you log into Google+ and click start a Google hangout. From there you will add people to your hangout and your chat experience can begin. For mobile devices you will need to add the free app.

Video and audio chats

Google Hangouts:
Hangouts (currently limited to 10 users) can be recorded or broadcasted, and users without a camera can participate via phone. Additionally, side conversations can occur via text chat.

Using your Gmail account you log into Google+ and click start a Google hangout. From there you will add people to your hangout and your chat experience can begin. For mobile devices you will need to add the free app.

Oovoo

Free video calls, up to 12 people. Can be used by PC and Mac as well as iPhone, iPad, Android phones and tablets and smart phones. Extreme ease of use makes this a good resource for virtual work. Signing in for video calls is as simple setting up an account and adding people to a call. Privacy settings allow you to control who can see the call.

Skype

Skype is a proprietary voice-over-Internet Protocol service and software application. This means that you can make phone calls over your Internet connection rather than using a landline or your cell phone. The service allows users to communicate with peers by voice, video, and instant messaging over the Internet. The free uses of Skype are Skype-to-Skype calls; One-to-one video calls, instant messaging

Face time

Apple's free one on one video chat interface for use on Mac, iPad, iPhone, and iPod touch. Users sign in with apple id and can video chat with anyone else on the apple network.

Ventrilo, TeamSpeak and Mumble

If audio-only contact in a conference environment is needed there are a number of Voice over Internet (VoIP) solutions that have sprung up over the past few years, mainly from the MMO community. The individual's users use a client program to connect to a server, which mediates the conference. Servers can be either rented for $3-$10US/month or month-equivalent, but each of the three major choices has at least one free server option. Ventrilo is the oldest of these, and emphasizes simplicity and ease of setup, as most of its user base comes from World of Warcraft

Free Ventrilo servers can be found at http://freevenriloservers.com. TeamSpeak has been around nearly as long as Ventrilo, and places its emphasis on a customizable user interface (UI). The TeamSpeak user base is the most diverse, and the TeamSpeak 3 client includes some features meant for business users. Hosting options for TeamSpeak can be found at http://hosting.teamspeakusa.com. The newest of the applications is Mumble, which has its roots in the First Person Shooter (FPS). As a result, it emphasized low latency and minimal resource footprint, which may make it helpful in situation where older computers or spotty Internet connections are the only option. Free mumble server space can be had at https://www.mymumble.com/free-mumble, though the free capacity level is lower than for TeamSpeak or Ventrilo.

Other resources

Goodreads

Goodreads allows "Secret groups" – groups that cannot be found in Goodreads except by their members. Titles can be added to the group and members can keep track of the titles that they have read and those that they should try to track down. Members of a secret group can engage in discussion about each title, and these discussions are not visible to non-members. Committee members should be aware, however, that their star ratings and reviews of nominated books would be visible to other Goodreads users.

Doodle

Doodle allows you to send out a link with options for meeting times. You will just need to sign in and create a poll that can then be sent out to committee members. You can track which committee members have and have not responded.

Survey Monkey

Survey Monkey allows users to create simple surveys to gather data anonymously. Can be used for a variety of polls. The creator of the survey is informed whenever a survey is filled out. You will sign in for a free account. You will then be given options for some basic survey. Once you have entered the questions you have an option having multiple choice or free text answers. Once answers have come in you will have options of looking at the individual surveys as well as having the results tallied.