

TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: ALA Executive Board Liaison Program

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:

Background information for Board discussion regarding the Executive Board Liaison Program

ACTION REQUESTED BY:

Information Only

CONTACT PERSON:

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DRAFT OF MOTION:

N/A

DATE: October 18, 2017

BACKGROUND:

The Executive Board liaison program dates back to 1984 when the Board had just two liaisons: Publishing Committee and Freedom to Read Foundation. In 1986, the Chapter Relations Committee was added. This structure remained the same until 1995 when the Publishing Committee was replaced with the Exhibits Round Table.

In 1996, Executive Board Member Jim Neal proposed expanding and formalizing the liaison program, and at the 1997 Midwinter Meeting the Board adopted the program that is in place today.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Executive Board liaison program was to facilitate communication with ALA membership units and external organizations; to help identify issues and concerns; to provide a single board “contact point” for membership units and external organizations; and to make the Board members more accessible, available, and visible to their constituents.

Structure:

The liaison structure established liaison relationships with ALA committees, ALA divisions, ALA round tables, and external organizations, including chapters and affiliates. Initially, liaisons were assigned to the eight elected Board members with two Board members being assigned to

each of these categories. Each pair of Executive Board members were expected to decide how to share the assignments.

Liaison Responsibilities:

- Communicate to the chairs/heads of these units/agencies information from the Executive Board
- Communicate to the Executive Board information from the chairs/heads of these units/agencies
- Review and monitor minutes, reports and other relevant documents and electronic lists of these units/agencies
- Attend as possible meetings of the ALA units and agencies, particularly at Midwinter and Annual Conferences
- Bring to the Executive Board analysis and reports of developments of interest and actions recommended

A discussion took place at the 1997 Spring Executive Board Meeting, with Board members noting the following:

- Difficulty juggling their conference schedules
- The value of the liaison role was not to attend all meetings, but to communicate between conferences to relay hot issues and concerns or to facilitate potential issues.
- The liaison role is not to solve problems, but to act on a more strategic level in terms of areas where involvement is needed in order to advance the Association.

Further discussion was held at the 2002 Fall Executive Board meeting with the following comments:

- What is the baseline expectation of Executive Board liaisons? This might be different depending on the assignment.
- Not using electronic communication effectively/not preparing for a face-to-face meeting
- Face-to-face meetings are difficult with everything else going on at conference.
- There is an inconsistency among Executive Board liaisons in what is communicated/offered to the unit/agency
- Difficult to find contact information for committee chairs, division leaders, etc.
- Staff liaisons need to be involved; Board liaisons should be added to various listservs so they can be kept abreast of activities within their liaison groups
- Need to clarify the roles of Executive Board members and staff members

Note that Executive Board members are now provided with a document containing the contact information for all of the liaison assignments, including committee chairs, division presidents, round table presidents/chairs, presidents/chairs of the external organizations, as well as the staff liaisons for each of these groups. This document is updated each year and sent to the Board members in late summer. The staff liaisons are notified of their Board liaisons and asked to add them to any discussion/distribution lists.

In 2008, Executive Board members Teri [Kirk] Grief and Larry Romans took it upon themselves to craft a “Tips and Tricks for a Successful Liaison” document (Attachment A). This document is part of the packet of materials given to newly-elected Executive Board members.

Assignments:

The president-elect makes the liaison assignments in the spring. This generally begins with a review of the assignments held by the Board members whose terms will be expiring at the end of the upcoming Annual Conference. The continuing Board members are then asked if they wish to maintain their current assignments or take on one of the soon-to-be open assignments. Finally, the incoming Board members are asked their liaison preferences. Oftentimes the incoming Board members simply take over the assignments of the outgoing members.

Growth of the Program:

In 1997 when the current program was formalized, Board members were assigned to the following liaison groups: 32 committees, 11 divisions, 19 round tables, 4 external organizations. A review of the *ALA Handbook of Organization* through the years provides an overview of the ebb and flow of the liaison assignments as shown in Attachment B. In most cases there is nothing reflected in meeting minutes or notes to indicate why assignments were added or removed.

The Board members currently manage a total of 75 liaison assignments (Attachment C).

Attachments: A – Tips and Tricks for a Successful Liaison
B – Table of Liaison Assignments 1988-2017
C – 2017-2018 Liaison Assignments

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LIAISON

Initial Contact

Contact the chair or president and the staff liaison of your committee, division, or round table as soon as possible. The Executive Board Secretariat should have distributed an up-to-date list of these folks. Give them your contact information and emphasize that you hope to have strong two-way communication.

E-Mail List

Ask if you can be part of their e-mail listserv so that you can keep up with their issues and concerns. Don't take it personally if they don't want to add you to their list. Sometimes they feel as if we are spying on them. This is more often true for divisions more than committees or round tables.

Planning Before Midwinter and Annual

1. Use a planner to schedule your activities. Put in your Executive Board and Council meetings first and plan around those events.
2. Write down all the meeting times that your group has and then see which ones you can add to your schedule. Consider location. You might be able to do two in one hour if the location is right and your schedule is tight.
3. After you schedule your time, contact the chair and the staff liaison to ask to be on the group's agenda at that time. If there is more than one time you are available, give them the option of when they'd like you to speak.
4. Let the chair know that you will have time to listen to their concerns and issues. If you have time, stay for at least part of the meeting after your report.
5. If the group says that its agenda is rather full, remind them how important it is for us to find out about their concerns, but accept a decision not to speak if they are not responsive. If you have time, you might sit in to observe their meetings anyway.

At the Conference

1. At the mutually agreed meeting, try to cover most of the talking points as quickly as possible. Tailor your report to the group. Leave out things on which they are expert or which are not within their concerns. Ask if they want to know more about any of the talking points you discuss.
2. Ask if they have any concerns and issues to share, especially if they have had problems getting ALA to respond to their concerns.
3. Be sure to limit the time you take. Members of the group may want to talk long after the chair needs to move on. Hand out your business cards to anyone who wants to talk to you.
4. If at all possible, meet personally with each group. If you miss talking to one group at one conference, e-mail them a copy of the talking points and make an extra effort to meet with them at the next conference.
5. Try to attend events that are sponsored by your groups so that they see you as supportive of their endeavors.

General Comments

Divisions already have more communication channels with ALA than most committees and round tables do. Divisions are also more likely to see themselves as self-sufficient and are more likely to have their members on the Executive Board and Council. Some are less responsive to their liaisons and you may feel less connected to them. Some of us spend less time with divisions. Divisions are so focused on doing lots of work in a limited time, so don't take this personally.

Liaisons need to be as flexible as possible in communicating and interacting with their groups.

EXECUTIVE BOARD LIAISONS 1998-2017

	Committees	Divisions	Round Tables	External Orgs	Total
1998-99	32	11	19	4	66
1999-00	28	11	Not listed	5	44+
2000-01	28	11	19	5	45
2001-02	29	11	1 (RTC)	5	46
2002-03	27	11	1	5	44
2003-04	24	11	1	5	41
2004-05	27	11	1	5	44
2005-06	29	11	1	5	46
2006-07	34	11	1	11 ¹	57
2007-08	33 ²	11	8 ³	11	63
2008-09	33	11	12	11	60
2009-10	33	11	8	8	60
2010-11	33	11	13	8	65
2011-12	33	11	13	8	65
2012-13	33	11	13	8	65
2013-14	33	11	13	8	65
2014-15	33	11	17	8	69
2015-16	33	11	17	8	69
2016-17	35 (+ 4 task forces, working groups, etc.)	11	17	9	76
2017-18	35 (+ 3 task forces, working groups, etc.)	11	17	9	75

¹ In 2006-07 the five ethnic affiliates were added.

² In 2007-08 the two ALA-APA committees were added.

³ In 2007-08 round tables that qualify for a Councilor were added. (Round tables whose personal membership is equal to or greater than 1% of the total ALA membership, thus resulting in a fluctuating number of round tables eligible for liaisons.)

**ALA Executive Board Member Committee & Liaison Assignments
2017-2018**

Executive Board Committees:

Executive Committee

Jim Neal (2019)
Loida Garcia-Febo (2020)
Julie Todaro (2018)
Susan Hildreth (2019)
Mary Ghikas, Interim Executive Director

Board Effectiveness Committee

Julie Todaro, chair (2018)
Julius C. Jefferson, Jr. (2018)
Andrew Pace (2019)

Finance & Audit Committee

Susan Hildreth, Chair (2019)
Rhea Lawson, BARC Chair (2018)
Loida Garcia-Febo (2018)
Andrew Pace (2019)
Julius Jefferson (2018)

Council Committees with Board Representatives:

BARC

Rhea Lawson (2018)
Susan Hildreth (2019)
Mike Marlin (2018)
Karen Downing (2019)

Conference Committee

Patty Wong – 2019

Liaison Assignments:

ALA & Council Committees

Trevor Dawes: *Training, Orientation & Leadership Development; Website Advisory*
Karen Downing: *Education; International Relations; Publishing*
Loida Garcia-Febo: *Advocacy; Elections*
Susan Hildreth: *Accreditation; Membership; Policy Monitoring; Rural, Native & Tribal Libraries of all Kinds*
Julius C. Jefferson, Jr.: *Awards; Constitution & Bylaws; Center for the Future of Libraries*
Mike Marlin: *COO; Diversity; OITA Advisory; Research & Statistics*
Andrew Pace: *American Libraries Advisory; Literacy*
Lessa Pelayo-Lozada: *Membership Meetings; ODLOS Advisory; Professional Ethics; Public Awareness; Scholarships & Study Grants; Status of Women in Librarianship*
Gina Persichini**: *Council Orientation; HRDR Advisory Committee*
Patty Wong: *Chapter Relations; Intellectual Freedom; Legislation; Public & Cultural Programs Advisory; Resolutions*

ALA-APA Committees

Julius C. Jefferson, Jr.: *Certification*
Gina Persichini**: *Salaries and Status of Library Workers*

** Gina Persichini will remain on the Board through 2018 Midwinter Meeting until a replacement is elected to complete Loida Garcia-Febo's unexpired term. Loida was elected 2017-18 ALA president-elect in the 2017 election.

Joint Committees

Trevor Dawes: *ALA-SAA-AAM Committee on Archives, Libraries and Museums*

ALA Divisions

Trevor Dawes: *ALCTS; LITA*
Karen Downing: *AASL; ACRL*
Loida Garcia-Febo: *LLAMA*
Julius Jefferson: *PLA*
Mike Marlin: *ASCLA; RUSA*
Andrew Pace: *ALSC*
Julie Todaro: *United for Libraries; YALSA*

ALA Round Tables

Trevor Dawes: *FAFLRT; GLBTRT; IFRT*
Karen Downing:
Loida Garcia-Febo: *IRRT; EMIERT*
Julius C. Jefferson, Jr.: *LSSRT*
Mike Marlin: *LIRT; SRRT*
Andrew Pace: *ERT; GODORT; VRT; NMRT*
Lessa Pelayo-Lozada: *SustainRT*
Gina Persichini**: *GAMERT; LEARNRT*
Patty Wong: *RMRT*
Julie Todaro: *Round Table Coordinating Assembly (Immediate Past President is liaison)*

Affiliates and External Organizations

AILA: Susan Hildreth
ALISE: Patty Wong
APALA: Mike Marlin
BCALA: Julius C. Jefferson, Jr.
CALA: Karen Downing
COSLA: Mary Ghikas
Freedom to Read Foundation (FTRF): Julius C. Jefferson, Jr.
JCLC: Julius C. Jefferson, Jr.
REFORMA: Loida Garcia-Febo

Council Initiatives (Prompt Book): Karen Downing

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