ALA Executive Board
Fall Board Meeting

TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: ALA Governance & Organization

ACTION REQUESTED: Discussion of possible strategies to engage ALA members and staff in a discussion of ALA governance and strategies to achieve ALA's mission in the 21st century.

REQUESTED BY: Jim Neal, ALA President; Mary Ghikas, ALA Interim Executive Director

DATE: 18 October 2017

The American Library Association has governance/member and administrative/staff organizational structures that have accumulated for more than fifty years (see attachment 3). The recent interviews – both those with executive director candidates and those with staff and members providing input to the search – have highlighted the strong interest in reviewing critically and revitalizing ALA's organizational effectiveness and agility for the demands of the 21st century.

A process of review must incorporate the perspectives, interests and contributions of a wide variety of stakeholders and affiliated groups. It must be mission-driven and embrace our core values. It must be focused on member development and engagement and on encompassing the complexity of voices which enrich ALA.

ALA's governance structure includes a web of groups: organizational leadership like Council and the ALA Executive Board; professional interests like intellectual freedom, international relations, diversity and legislation through ALA committees; type of library and type of work interests through Divisions; specialized interests through Round Tables; personal networking through discussion groups and assemblies; special task forces; and, chapters and affiliated organizations.

The ALA Constitution (http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/constitution/constitution), originally crafted in the late 19th century, lays out the basic structure of the Association, and the ALA Bylaws (http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/constitution/bylaws) describe how the Association functions. Over its long history, the Association has engaged in several reviews of its structure and operations -- varying widely in breadth of focus, and in results.

A comprehensive review of ALA's governance/member organization is proposed: a constitutional convention. This review would be carried out over a twelve to eighteen-month period and involve wide participation and input. The Association needs to address rapidly changing technology, which is enabling new means of operation and engagement; changing approaches to work and community driven both by

technology and by demographic change, including generational change; and, at the same time, new demands for sustained advocacy and leadership.

The need for change and, particularly, the need for simplification or reduction of organizational complexity developed over a long period of time is a recurring theme. It surfaced in the input provided to the executive director search (see Attachment 4). It is echoed by the directors of ALA Divisions, Offices and business units who see excessive complexity as the number one barrier to effective organizational performance. It manifests itself in the issues (and costs) facing ALA in IT planning and implementation.
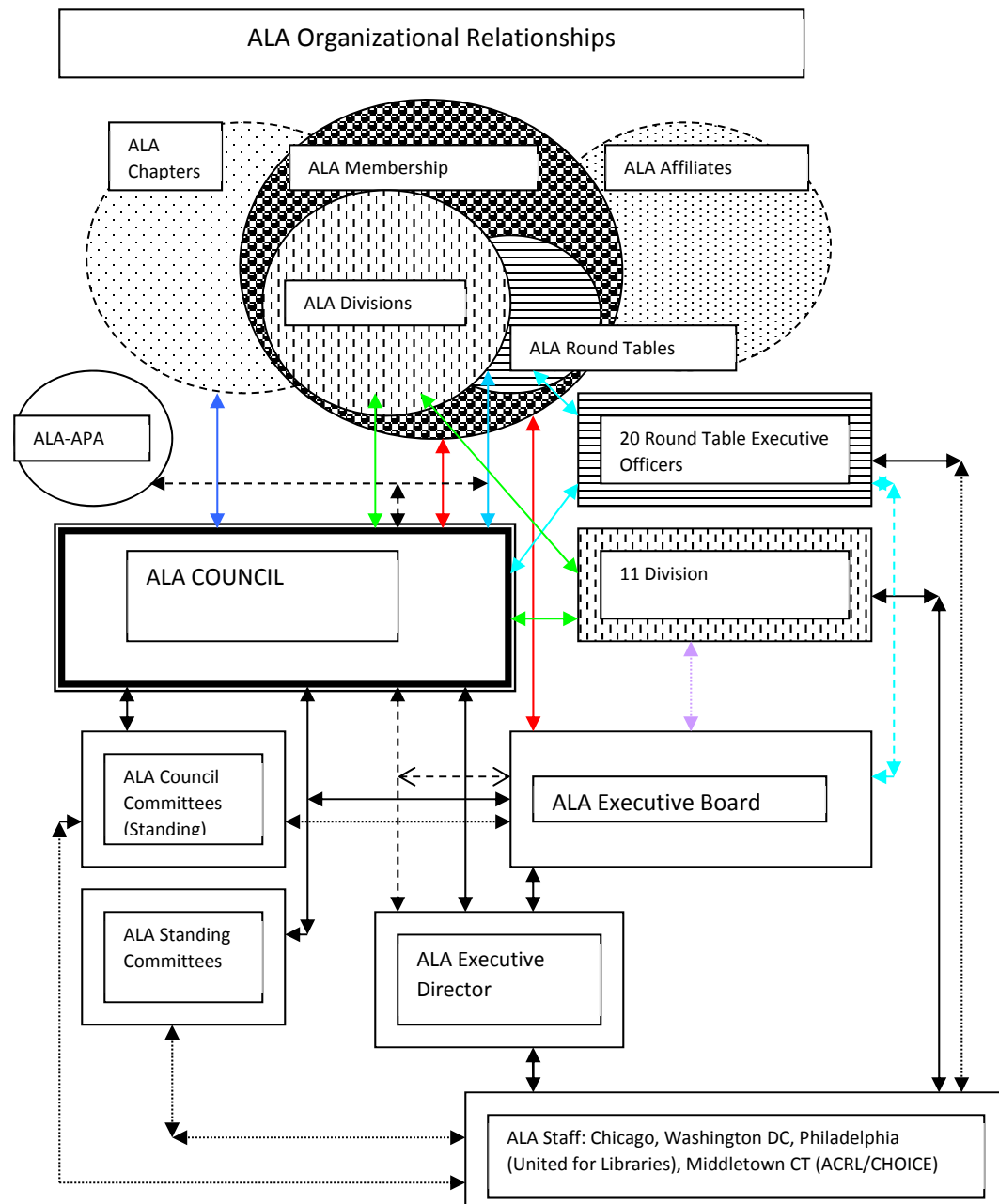
The Board is asked to discuss and make recommendations on potential approaches to such a review, as well as its potential scope. The fundamental question proposed for the review is: How might the Association organize itself to effectively fulfill its mission in the 21st century?

Attachments:
1	ALA Purpose and Mission
2	ALA Organization Relationships (a) and ALA Organizational Relationships Notes (b)
3	Selected ALA Organizational Milestones
4	Major Challenges and Opportunities facing the ALA and new Executive Director (from the Executive Director search)

ALA PURPOSE AND MISSION

ALA Constitution, Article II: The object of the American Library Association shall be to promote library service and librarianship.

Charter of 1879 (revised 1942): …"Be it know, that whereas Justin Winsor, C.A. Cutter, Samuel S. Green, James L. Whitney, Melvil Dui, Fred B. Perkins and Thomas W. Bicknell, have associated themselves with the intention of forming a corporation under the name of the American Library Association for the purpose of promoting [the] library interests [of the country] *throughout the world* by exchanging views, reaching conclusions, and inducing cooperation in all departments of bibliothecal science and economy; by disposing the public mind to the founding and improving of libraries; and by cultivating good will among its members, a*nd by such other means as may be authorized from time to time by the Executive Board or Council of the American Library Association*, and have complied with the provisions of the statutes of this Commonwealth in such case made and provided, as appears from the certificate of the President, Treasurer, and Executive Board of said corporation, duly approved by the Commissioner of Corporations, and recorded in this office...." NOTE: The word in [] was deleted and the italicized words were added in 1942, with modification approved by Henry E. Long, Commissioner of Corporations and Taxation of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, February 6, 1942.

Mission (ALA Policy A1.2): The mission of the American Library Association is to provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all.

Core Values of Librarianship (ALA Policy A40.1): The foundation of modern librarianship rests on an essential set of core values, which define, inform, and guide all professional practice. These values reflect the history and ongoing development of the profession and have been advanced, expanded, and refined by numerous policy statements of the American Library Association. Among these are:

Access
Confidentiality/Privacy
Democracy
Diversity
Education and Lifelong Learning
Intellectual Freedom
Preservation
The Public Good
Professionalism
Service
Social Responsibility

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to express our values more eloquently than ALA already has in the Freedom to Read statement, the Library Bill of Rights, the ALA Mission Statement, Libraries: an American Value, and other documents. They are interpreted, revised, or expanded when necessary. Over time, the values embodied in these statements have been embraced by the majority of librarians as the foundations of their practice. Adopted, 2004.

ALA Organizational Relationships

ALA Chapters

ALA Membership

ALA Affiliates

ALA Divisions

ALA Round Tables

ALA-APA

20 Round Table Executive Officers

ALA COUNCIL

11 Division

ALA Council Committees (Standing)

ALA Executive Board

ALA Standing Committees

ALA Executive Director

ALA Staff: Chicago, Washington DC, Philadelphia (United for Libraries), Middletown CT (ACRL/CHOICE)

This organizational relationships diagram shows a top-level view of the Association and its components, with the ALA Council at the center. Members are elected to Council by ALA members, and from ALA divisions and round tables, whose members must first the ALA members. Councilors, who must be ALA members, are also elected by ALA Chapters, whose members are not required to be ALA members. ALA members also elect the president-elect and treasurer who, along with the ALA executive director and ALA president, are officers of the Association. The Executive Board includes the officers, the immediate past president and eight Board members elected by Council from its membership. The diagram illustrates the relationship between Council and the Executive Board, and between Council and the Division Boards of Directors. These are not the only relationships within ALA's complex association ecosystem; they are the top-level relationships most frequently encountered by ALA member leaders. See ALA Organizational Relationships – Notes.

ALA Organizational Relationships – Notes

ALA Membership: ALA membership is open to "any person, library, or other organization interested in library service and librarianship…upon payment of the dues provided for in the Bylaws." [ALA Constitution, Article III] Only personal members of the Association may vote, hold office or (with specific exceptions) be appointed to committees.

ALA Divisions: "The Council may authorize the organization as a division of any group of not less than 500 members of the Association who are interested in the same field of librarianship….The purpose of a division is to promote library service and librarianship within and for a particular type of library or as it relates to a particular type of library activity, and to cooperate in the promotion of general and joint enterprises within the Association and with other library groups….A division shall have authority to act for the ALA as a whole on any matter determined by Council to be the responsibility of the division….Only members of this Association may be members of a division…." [ALA Bylaws, Article VI] Each Division has "…a separate Board of Directors, elected by its members, and responsible to ALA Council." [ALA Policy A.4.3.4.1, previously 6.4.1]

ALA Round Tables: "The Council may authorize the organization as a round table of any group of not less than 100 members of the Association who are interested in the same field of librarianship not within the scope of any division…." [ALA Bylaws, Article VII] Round Tables are not authorized to speak for the association but may recommend policies to Council. [See also ALA Policy A.4.3.3, previously 6.3.

ALA Chapters: ALA Council may establish a chapter or any "legally constituted state, provincial, territorial, or regional library association may…be designated a chapter...provided the membership of the association applying for chapter status has expressed approval of the application; and providing a majority of the ALA members residing in the area involved voting on the issue is in favor of such action…." No more than one ALA chapter may exist in any state, region or province. "Each …chapter shall be the final authority within the [ALA] in respect to all programs and policies which concern only the area for which the chapter is responsible provided they are not inconsistent with any programs or policies established by the ALA Council…." [ALA Bylaws, Article V] [See also ALA Policy A.4.3.1, previously 6.1]

*ALA Council: "The Council of the American Library Association shall be the governing body of the Association…." [ALA Constitution, Article VI] Only ALA members may serve on Council, including representatives of chapters. All personal members of ALA are eligible for nomination to Council. The ALA president, president-elect and executive director serve as officers of Council; the executive director serves as its secretary. Each chapter is represented on Council; each division is represented on Council; each Round Table with a membership equal to or greater than 1% of ALA personal membership is represented on Council, with the remaining Round Tables represented (collectively) by one Councilor. There are 100 at-large Councilors elected by ALA members. See also ALA Bylaws Article IV and ALA Policy A.4.2, previously Policy 5.

*ALA Executive Board: "The Executive Board shall act for the Council in the Administration of established policies and programs. The Executive Board shall be the body which manages within this context the affairs of the Association, but shall delegate management of the day-to-day operation to the Association's Executive Director…." [ALA Constitution, Article VII] The ALA Executive Board consists of the officers of the Association, immediate past president and members selected by Council from among the members of Council. The officers of the Association are the president, president-elect, treasurer and executive director. All members of the Executive Board are automatically members of Council. [ALA Constitution, Article VIII] The ALA president-elect (president, immediate past president) and treasurer are elected by the ALA membership. See also ALA Policy A.4.1, previously 5.1.

*ALA Executive Director: The executive director shall be appointed by the Executive Board , and shall hold office at its pleasure….The executive director shall be in charge of headquarters and its personnel; shall carry out the activities provided for in the budget; and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to the office." [ALA Constitution, Article VIII] "All ALA personnel are responsible to the ALA Executive Director, and through the Executive Director to the entire membership. Unlike other ALA personnel, Division Executive Directors are also

responsible to Division Boards and through those Boards to the membership of their respective Divisions." [ALA Policy A.4.3.4.8, previously 6.4.1 VII]

*ALA-APA. To enable activities not possible or not possible to any significant extent within ALA's specific [501(c)(3)] tax-exempt category, ALA established a separately-incorporated professional association, the ALA-Allied Professional Association or ALA-APA. ALA-APA is governed by a Council and Board of Directors, whose members are those individuals concurrently serving as members of the ALA Council and ALA Executive Board. The Executive Director of ALA serves concurrently as the Executive Director of ALA-APA.

ALA Committees: "Standing committees may be committees of the Association or committees of Council…." [ALA Bylaws, Article VIII] differing primarily in the method of appointment. "Only personal members of the Association shall be appointed to committees except by authorization of the Executive Board." [ALA Constitution, Article VIII]

Affiliated Organizations: "The Council may by vote affiliate with the American Library Association or with any subdivision thereof upon its request, any national or international organization having purposes similar to those of the Association or its subdivision....[ALA Constitution, Article X] See also ALA Policy A.10, previously Policy 9. ALA Affiliates are not represented on the ALA Council.

Selected ALA Organizational Milestones

1853   Initial organizing meeting, New York

1876   ALA founded in Philadelphia
  - Original Constitution: Members elected a Board of five, which had authority to select others and elect officers.

1879   ALA incorporated in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (see Charter, Attachment 1)
  - 1942-- Charter revised (see Charter, Attachment 1)

1889   College and reference librarians formed first special section within ALA and held first separate meeting apart from the general Association.

1890   The trustees formed a special section.

1892   ALA Constitution revised
  - ALA Council added – initially 10 members, elected by membership.

1900   The catalogers formed a special section.

1909   ALA Constitution revised
  - ALA Executive Board members added to Council.
  - All ex-presidents of the Association added to Council.
  - 50 additional members added to Council – half chosen by Council, half chosen by membership.
  - Direct election of officers instituted.
  - Council approved policy; Executive Board entrusted with "business affairs" of ALA.*

    Note: This timeline does not include a comprehensive list of constitutional revisions. The distribution of power between Council and the Executive Board continued to shift from time to time. The composition of both groups continued to shift.

1928   ALA Council approved recommendation for "periodic scrutiny of Association activities within three years and not less frequently than every third year thereafter, by a committee appointed by the president…" Four such committees were appointed over the next two decades.
  - 1st Activities Committee (12/1930) covered library extension, adult education, education for librarianship, foundation projects, financing, publishing,, membership, personnel practices and ALA headquarters
  - 2nd Activities Committee (12/1934) noted that ALA Executive Board had tended to systematically review operations, and recommended less frequent appointment of review committees (6 years).
  - 3rd Activities Committee (1939) called for more democratic organization, including a revised, completely elected, Council, based on specific interests and on geography. Also recommended

giving more authority to Sections within ALA – and calling them Divisions; it also recommended allotment of 20% of member dues paid by their members to ALA.
- 4th Activities Committee (1949) noted fiscal concerns and called for dues increase (approved by mail vote of membership in 1951).

1952   Grants were made to Divisions from ALA endowment capital to enable them to have executive secretaries, which would enable them to develop/maintain more effective programs for their members and the overall Association. Resulting membership gains were intended to fund Division staff following expiration of grants.

1954   ALA Executive Board retained management consulting firm Cresap, McCormick and Paget; their final report was based on review of ALA membership organization, headquarters organization, fiscal policies and practices. Approved in 1955.
- Established Divisions by type of library and type of activity.
- Assigned greater responsibility to Council and called for closer relationship between Council and Executive Board.
- Called for appointment of Division executive secretaries by the ALA executive secretary, with approval of the Division concerned.
- Called for simplification of the dues structure.
  - Recommended that ALA dues include one type-of -library division and one type-of activity division, with dues allotment (previously 60/40) proportional to number of members.
  - This round of reorganization resulted in formation of twelve divisions and six round tables.

1959   ALA Council adopted the first ALA Goals for Action

1968-69   Various movements for change: "Congress for Change," "Librarians for 321.8," "Libraries to the People"
- Activities Committee on New Directions for ALA (ACONDA) appointed and charged to "recognize the changes in the interests of ALA members" and provide "leadership and activities relevant to those interests," to reinterpret/restate "the philosophy of ALA to provide a meaningful foundation capable of supporting a structure and program which reflects the beliefs and priorities of the profession." It was also charged to reexamine priorities and organizational structure.
- ACONDA's final report (1970) suggested an array of changes, including changes to Council composition and the nominating process, Association communications, the number and type of Divisions, and ALA organizational structure. The membership meeting where the final recommendations were discussed lasted 15 hours – and didn't cover all the recommendations.
- The first three recommendations were approved in July 1970:
  - ALA's "overarching objective" would remain improvement of library service and librarianship.
  - An Office for Social Responsibility (which then became the Office for Library Service to the Disadvantaged and is now ODLOS) was formed.
  - The Office for Intellectual Freedom was expanded.
- To help articulate the rest of the recommendations an Ad Hoc Council Committee (later called ANACONDA) was formed, to work with ACONDA.

- o ACONDA/ANACONDA repeated the recommendation for restructuring, noting overlapping interests and duplication of efforts.
- o 1971-1972 new bylaws provisions for Council were implemented. ALA past presidents were no longer automatically on Council.
- o A Planning Committee (standing) was formed. (This function was later moved to the Executive Board following the work of the Official Self-Study Committee.)

1976   The Dues Schedule Transition Document was approved by Council, moving ALA to funding divisions from income derived from division dues and other division activities – and ending inclusion of division membership within basic ALA dues.

1979   Formation of Member Initiative Groups within ALA authorized

1981   The Special Committee to Review Program Assessment Processes and Procedures (SCRPAPP), chaired by Edward G. Holley, was formed (usually referred to as the Holley Committee)

- The Holley Committee identified Association needs in planning/budgeting; clearly-understood common purpose; clear set of goals; balance between overall Association interests and Division interests, more effective use of resources (both staff time and member time, as well as dollars), resource allocation based on priorities; process for ongoing planning and evaluation.
- The Holley Committee recommended that the Executive Board assume responsibility for overall financial planning and control. (Recommendation also made in Part I of the Organizational Self-Study Committee.)

1982   The original Operating Agreement between ALA and its membership divisions was approved by Council, calling for revision in not more than five years.

1989   Current "Policies of the American Library Association in Relation to Its Membership Divisions" was approved by Council and implemented through a series of "management practices."

1986   ALA Council approved the current mission statement

1992   President-elect Marilyn Miller appointed the ALA Self-Study Committee, with Council approval

- Phase I was a management study, conducted by Consensus Management Group, focused on roles and responsibilities of ALA Council, ALA Executive Board and ALA Executive Director.
- Phase II (January 1995) contained recommendations relating to governance and management of ALA.
  - o Provision for membership ballot initiatives (implemented)
  - o Increase in number of members (1% of membership) required to petition for mail vote to overturn Council action (implemented)
  - o Elimination of the ALA Planning Committee, with responsibility shifted to the ALA Executive Board (implemented)
  - o Restructuring of the fiscal oversight process – Committee on Program Evaluation and Support (COPES) became Budget Analysis and Review Committee (BARC), with significant representation from the ALA Executive Board (implemented)

- o Decrease in Council and Board terms from four years to three (excluding the ALA Treasurer, which changed to three years in 2003) (Implemented)
- o Term limits for Council (Not Implemented)
- o Made controversial structural recommendations based on responses to 1994 "concept paper": (Not Implemented)
  - Expand networks with state/regional groups
  - Implement "sunrise" (sunset) policy
  - Consolidating/regrouping/clustering/replacing existing units
  - Create "policy council" groupings

1995   Ad Hoc Task Force on Structure Revision (SRTF), chaired by Sarah M. Pritchard was established, as a result of heated discussions (ALA Membership Meeting, ALA Council) related to OSSC Phase II structural recommendations.
- SRTF report issued.
  - o 6 Round Tables representatives added to ALA Council.

1995   ALA approved ALA Goal 2000
Washington Office expansion
Office for Information Technology policy begun

1998   ALA Council approved "key action areas" (basis for current Programmatic Priorities)

2002   ALA Council approved preliminary Bylaws for ALA-APA

MAJOR CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FACING THE ALA AND THE NEXT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The position of Executive Director of the American Library Association offers an extraordinary and exciting opportunity to champion, represent and support one of the most trusted and valuable institutions in American society. The next Executive Director will be able to leverage the organization's strong reputation and the passion and dedication of the Association's members, staff and elected leaders to build even stronger support for libraries, those who work in them, and the millions of citizens who benefit from them. To do this, the next Executive Director must tackle the following five crucial, and interrelated, challenges and opportunities:

● **Provide strategic leadership and vision to an organization with a strong brand, legacy and reputation which is also facing substantial uncertainties due to the changing political landscape, technological and demographic change, and economic constraints.**

By most objective measures, ALA is a powerful and successful organization. It is internationally renowned, has considerable intellectual and financial resources; it has a passionate staff, membership and elected leaders. It represents one of the most highly respected institutions in the Nation. However, the Association's size, history and traditional structure and culture are now limiting its ability to thrive and to reach higher levels of performance and impact. The Executive Director search affords the Association an opportunity to recruit new leadership, building on the past, and position the organization for the future. This will require vision, commitment to the mission, strong management skills, political diplomacy, and the capacity and courage to make hard decisions about priorities and resource allocation.

● **Take pro-active steps to ensure the ALA's long-term financial sustainability.**

ALA is in healthy financial shape, but, as the organization looks to the future, uncertainties and threats face each of its traditional major sources of revenue: *membership, conference registration fees and publications.* Other scholarly and professional organizations are facing similar uncertainties and threats. While the challenges seem clear, the solutions are not. The ALA needs to take proactive steps to both stabilize losses in traditional sources of revenue and to further diversify revenue streams. Such actions will require astute assessment of external trends and realistic and innovative ideas for action, including a more ambitious and better resourced fundraising and development program. In addition, the expense side cannot be ignored. Lower priority programs need to be identified and eliminated, including associated staffing and infrastructure. This will not be easy but will help to free up resources for priority initiatives and help to ensure the long-term sustainability of the organization.

● **Streamline and revitalize ALA's organizational and governance structures.**

There is widespread consensus that ALA's structure is unwieldy and limits the Association's agility, effectiveness and efficiency. This encompasses both the internal staff structure of offices and divisions, and the governing structure. Addressing organizational effectiveness must also integrate the perspectives and contributions of a variety of other stakeholders and affiliated groups. Resolving structural issues will be challenging but will also present opportunities for greater collaboration, innovation and impact. If the Association, as a whole, is to thrive, the parts must come together and figure out ways to balance the organization's core values with the need to be a vibrant and effective 21st century organization. The list of issues to be addressed should include, but not necessarily be limited to: creating an organizational culture that promotes collaboration as opposed to competition and silos; putting "sacred cows" on the

table for discussion; reducing redundancies; identifying and implementing best practices and systems improvements; and supporting a much stronger technology infrastructure throughout the organization.

● **Embrace changing membership demographics and the evolving needs of the profession.**

Membership represents both a challenge and opportunity for ALA. Declining membership is a challenge for many professional associations as information, networking and development resources proliferate and become highly specialized. Retaining members also challenges associations to strengthen their value proposition and to rethink and redefine their role and relevance. More segmented approaches to member engagement are needed as members have different needs and interests, are at different stages of their careers, and reflect shifting demographic realities. While equity, diversity and inclusion are central to ALA's core values and represent a recently-adopted strategic goal, diversity goals are far from being fully realized. Concrete actions, including the investment of resources, are needed to move this commitment forward in a meaningful way.

● **Raise the profile of the Association externally and enhance its legislative advocacy efforts at the federal, state and local policymaking levels.**

ALA is expected to fight for social justice, free speech, intellectual freedom, access to information, equity and literacy; to promote the value of libraries; and to champion funding for libraries. The need for vigilance, public outreach and increased action at all levels of government has been galvanized by an increasingly volatile political landscape in which such values are threatened and at risk. While a strong Washington DC office is crucial, it is not sufficient for increased legislative advocacy efforts organization-wide. These efforts need to be embraced by the entire organization with innovative advocacy strategies advanced on multiple levels, including building new alliances and partnerships to expand influence and impact.