Reference and User Services Association Strategic Plan 2008-2011

Mission Statement:
The Reference and User Services Association is responsible for stimulating and supporting excellence in the delivery of general library services and materials to adults, and the provision of reference and information services, collection development, readers' advisory, and resource sharing for all ages, in every type of library.

Vision:
RUSA is the foremost organization of reference and information professionals who make the connections between people and the information sources, services, and collection materials they need.

Values:

- We believe in universal access to information.
- We believe that reading is fundamental to quality of life and value all activities that promote it.
- We value collections and information sources of the highest possible quality.
- We value the provision of innovative services and programs that meet the changing information needs of diverse populations.
- We value continuous evaluation and improvement in the management and delivery of materials and services to users.
- We value the professional growth and development of librarians and library staff.
- We value the role of librarians and library staff as educators in creating lifelong learners and critical thinkers.
- We value the unique contributions that librarians and library staff bring to the process of connecting users with the information they need.

Foundational Approach:
RUSA's strategic plan focuses on objectives and strategies that are achievable into the short-range future (next 3 years). The plan is reviewed and revised annually to insure it is focused and relevant and to measure progress. The review process allows RUSA leaders the opportunity to adjust the plan according to changes in priorities and the environment. Underlying the plan is a foundation of practice that guides decision making by providing structure and an agreed upon process. Like the strategic plan, these core practices guide decision-making. Unlike the strategic plan, they are not revised with any frequency. Rather, they are givens in the process. It is understood that:

- New ideas are welcomed. Innovation is key to RUSA's viability. New projects that move the association closer to its strategic vision will result in a stronger, dynamic and ultimately more successful organization. New initiatives will be considered within the framework of the overall organization and the external environment, the strategic plan and association resources. There is a process for developing and bringing initiatives forward. The process will be followed in

order for ideas to be considered and evaluated.

- Through the strategic planning and decision-making process, RUSA leaders and members move the association forward in key areas such as governance, education, awards, publications, networking, guidelines, and more. As part of that process, it is understood that RUSA members cannot legally enter into contracts or commit RUSA financially in any way. Prior to contacting a potential sponsor, members should inform the Executive Director. Likewise, any planned expenditure of Association funds must be discussed with the Executive Director in advance and, unless time sensitive, must receive both Board and Budget and Finance committee approval. Time sensitive funding can be approved by the Executive Director

Objectives and Strategies

Objective 1: Provide leadership and opportunities in professional development for reference, user technology, readers' advisory, access, and computer-based research librarians and staff.

2008-2009 Strategies:

- Establish a clearinghouse to put forward the expertise of RUSA and help our members and the profession with issues and interest in the profession and related fields. *(Communications and Publications committee and its section liaisons to lead)*
- Establish protocol to post more RUSA program content on the website *(Section web managers, Section chairs, section committee chairs putting on programming, and the Communications and Publications committee and its section liaisons to lead)*

Objective 2: Work towards equity of access

2008-2009 Strategies:

- Create RUSA statement on Access *(Access to Information Committee to lead, RUSA Councilor to consult)*

Objective 3: Seek ways to improve participation in RUSA by reference, user technology, readers' advisory, access, and computer-based research fields librarians and library staff.

2008-2009 Strategies:

- Revamp and redesign RUSA Update *(RUSA Update Editor and committee from the sections to lead via task force)*
- Create STARS Web CE class *(STARS, Professional Development committee, and RUSA staff to lead)*
- Transfer current Web CE classes to Moodle platform *(course developers and Chris Cieslak to lead)*

Objective 4: Ensure the effectiveness of RUSA in meeting its and ALA's mission.

2008-2009 Strategies:

- Survey RUSA technology and create technology plan *(Michael Stephens and task force to lead)*
- Introduce General Membership Meeting at Midwinter and Annual *(Neal Wyatt to lead)*
- Revamp Publications and Communications committee *(committee and RUSA staff to lead)*
- Broaden Budget and Finance committee process *(committee to lead)*
- Create new focus for Organization committee *(committee to lead)*
- Strengthen role of liaisons to RUSA committees *(RUSA committee chairs, section chairs, and section liaisons to lead)*
- Change relation of RUSA chairs to board and each other to develop better communication and cross-pollination *(Board members and RUSA committee chairs to lead)*
- Focus Board on "Big Think" issues *(Board to lead)*
- Trim Board meetings and move work either online or over the phone *(Board to lead)*
- Examine Five-Year Review process *(Organization committee to lead)*
- Survey membership to determine member needs/wants with a goal to make RUSA membership highly valued (*Staff develops membership survey in consultation with leaders)*
- Revamp committee review process to tie-in to strategic plan so that a year-in-review document is developed and used to allow committees to add their contributions/plans/products to the strategic plan. Committee output and relevance will be highlighted. (*Staff develops draft document in consultation with RUSA leaders)*

Objective 5: Increase the visibility of RUSA in the profession and promote the professional skills and services RUSA members offer to society at large.

2008-2009 Strategies:

- Re-vamp and increase visibility of Midwinter book announcement as RUSA-wide event *(Liz Markel to lead)*
- Continue change of Annual awards celebration *(Liz Markel to lead)*
- Create RA Forum *(Neal Wyatt to lead)*
- Create Zora Neale Hurston Award *(Debe Costa and CODES to lead)*