**TO:** PLA Board of Directors

**RE:** SCOE strategies for Midwinter and beyond

**DATE:** December 9, 2019

## Background

At its fall meeting, the PLA board reviewed the SCOE report “[Forward Together](https://higherlogicdownload.s3-external-1.amazonaws.com/ALA/Forward%20Together%20Nov%2020192.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAVRDO7IEREB57R7MT&Expires=1576090863&Signature=9Iuv8vnIvNxed6XRF4oxew96Bvo%3D).” The board was concerned about the report’s lack of clarity related to future division structure, roles, and level of independence. Specifically, SCOE (page 20, italics added for emphasis) recommends:

“A review of the “Operating Agreement” in relationship to the Forward Together recommendations. This review may include ***but is not limited*** to a review of bylaws, dues, and dues structures. Within this larger umbrella of the Operating Agreement are several recommendations:

○ Replace individual division bylaws with a shared policies and procedures document. This will help define the relationship and fiscal responsibility of divisions, helping members understand the symbiotic relationship between divisions and the rest of ALA.

○ With assistance from the Membership Office and the Membership Committee, align dues and dues structures across the divisions. This makes the process easier for members to join divisions and helps members understand how dues are spent. It is recommended to explore the rate of $70 for each division from the preliminary fiscal analysis models. This would have the least fiscal impact overall and is only a recommendation for the Membership Office and Committee to further explore and test this model.

○ Schedule a regular review of the Operating Agreement.

○ ***A process and timeline for the above recommendations is to be determined in consultation with the divisions and the executive director.”***

The [ALA Operating Agreement](http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/Section%20A%20New%20Policy%20Manual-1%20%28final%2011-17-2017%29%20with%20TOC%29_2.pdf), (pages 23-37) defines division governance structure and programmatic and financial relationships with ALA; the essence and very nature of divisions are contained in its terms.

## PLA Response

Leaving open the scope, timeline, and parties who will participate in the OA review challenge PLA’s ability to support SCOE’s recommendations. The Board discussed a response to SCOE and timing of the response. It also discussed whether other divisions might want to join PLA in a cross-divisional statement, since such a statement could have significantly more impact on getting the OA reviewed in a timely manner. A PLA statement could include the following points:

* thank SCOE for its hard and thoughtful work on a complex issue
* agree that change is needed, that ALA is not nimble, and that the association can seem confusing to some (Note: while ALA’s complexity has always been a key driver of SCOE, SCOE recommendations increase the number of working groups, at least in the short term.)
* state that it is challenging for PLA to recommend to its members to vote in the affirmative on SCOE when changes to the very nature of divisions are unclear
* state that PLA members cannot be informed voters if the work on the OA is not completed before Council and membership votes and that a clear timeline and process must be developed
* recognize that PLA wants to help address how to update the OA and that PLA members should have a seat at the table
* recognize that there are several factors contributing to member confusion and uncertainty, e.g., the “new” Midwinter; lengthy hiring timeline for a new ALA ED; subpar IT and business rules that do not allow for targeted communication and accessible platforms for member engagement
* recognize that since ALA will announce a new ED in January, there should be time allocated for the ED to review, assess, and support changes
* state that PLA can take no position on SCOE until these issues have been resolved

## Questions for the Board’s Consideration

1. Is the board still in favor of a response? Anything to add/edit to the response above?
2. Agree that inviting other divisions to join our response makes sense?
3. When should the response be sent? How critical is it that SCOE and the ALA board hear PLA (and other division) concerns by Midwinter? Should those who are attending Midwinter share these concerns at SCOE and other meetings, get feedback and then issue a statement? Will a strong response be better later on in the process? Should we wait to officially respond until the new ED is on staff?
4. Does our PLA Councilor have enough information to speak for PLA on this issue at Council meetings at Midwinter?
5. Should these concerns be discussed at [the Council breakfast](https://www.eventscribe.com/2020/ALA-Midwinter/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=665088)? How shall we frame discussion at that meeting? We have one hour.