**TO:** PLA Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Larry Deutsch, Communications Manager, [ldeutsch@ala.org](mailto:ldeutsch@ala.org)  
**RE:** Communications Report  
**DATE:** January 4, 2019

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:** Report

**OVERVIEW**  
As the association pursues new partnership and programming opportunities, PLA’s communications must rise to the task of keeping members and other key audiences informed about our rapidly growing work imprint. In response, the communications manager continues to create and adjust policies, procedures and practices to maximize the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and reach of PLA’s communications.

**KEY CURRENT ACTIVITIES/METRICS**

The following activities related to this project have been completed to date:

* Staff created and began implementation of a comprehensive plan for member communications related to the 2019 ballot measure, which proposes adding a Fiscal Officer position to the PLA board of directors. To date, FAQs have been created, a detailed explanation of the ballot measure has been posted [here](http://www.ala.org/pla/about/people/election#measure) on the PLA website, a press release has been issued, an email announcement has been sent to all PLA members, and articles have appeared in *Public Libraries* magazine and *PLA e-News* about the proposal.
* The communications manager has developed and begun implementation of a plan to ensure more consistent and comprehensive coverage – on social media and in general member communications – of PLA’s presence at the many events we sponsor, speak at, or participate in, throughout the year. By first leveraging PLA staff, and perhaps later, volunteers, as “field reporters” PLA can capture the necessary communication assets which may include photos, speaker/participant quotes, and key event details. After presenting the concept to PLA staff on Jan. 3, the communications manager is now creating the necessary materials and structures to train and deploy his colleagues as field reporters later this winter.
* To keep PLA members as informed as possible about ALA decisions affecting our organization, PLA staff is closely monitoring several developing situations and providing regular updates to members through our communication channels. These include the search for ALA’s next executive director, key decisions by ALA Council, and news about potential reorganization and the ALA Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness. Articles on each of these topics have appeared in recent editions of *PLA e-News*.
* Staff is also developing a plan to increase awareness of PLA’s work, and the division’s value to ALA, particularly among the public librarians who sit on the ALA Council. Through consistent, targeted outreach, we intend to also advocate for PLA’s stances and perspectives on key issues being deliberated by the Council.
* Staff is preparing the 2018 PLA Year In Review, a summary report of the organization’s work during the past year. As was done in 2016 and 2017, the report will be made available both in plain text and as an Adobe Spark Story that contains images and graphics. It is expected to be published in late January.
* In November, PLA purchased a seat, at the rate of $75/month, in ALA’s master account on the social media management platform Sprout Social. Sprout Social affords numerous benefits to PLA’s social media program, including more robust and accessible metrics, greater ability to monitor trends and pursue opportunities for engagement, the ability to automate and calendarize posts, and access to a shared library of ALA-wide social media assets (images, videos, message templates, etc.). Please see the Assessment section of this report for a summary report of social media metrics from 2018.
* Staff have also created a plan to increase activity and engagement in PLA’s [eight interest groups](https://connect.ala.org/pla/communities/pla-interest-groups) on the ALA Connect online community platform. Beginning with the November edition of *PLA e-News*, a different discussion taking place in one of the interest groups will be featured each month in an article encouraging readers to join the conversation by joining that particular group on ALA Connect.

**BUDGET**Funds for staff time and resources were spent to accomplish this work and we are on-budget for these. At a total cost of $720, PLA’s subscription to Sprout Social was paid from Nov. 13, 2018, through Aug. 28, 2019.

**ASSESSMENT**Since its last report to the PLA board, submitted on Oct. 11, 2018, PLA has issued 10 press releases, six electronic newsletters, 20 email blasts, and numerous other communication pieces. Areas of primary focus have included the Fostering Creative Community Connections project and National Short Fiction Contest, PLA’s Consumer Health Initiative and Affordable Care Act enrollment (Libraries Connecting You to Coverage), PLA’s programming at the 2019 ALA Midwinter Meeting, and Opioid Crisis Response project (with OCLC).

PLA continues to grow and improve its presence on social media. In 2018, PLA’s main Twitter account (@ALA\_PLA) gained 176 followers, ending the year with a total of follower base of 19,742. Four hundred ninety-three Tweets were posted in that time period, resulting in 75,887 organic impressions – an average of 207.9 per day. Our posts were retweeted 903 times with 59 including additional comments. Followers of the PLA Facebook account (@PLA.org) grew by 1,657 (almost 12%) in 2018, ending the year at 15,914. Over the course of the year, our organic posts reached of 313,735 Facebook users and paid posts reached 802,077. Paid items included several boosted posts related to the PLA 2020 Conference and ads to increase awareness of the Fostering Creative Community Connections Short Fiction Contest. Although not as consistently seeded with content, PLA’s Instagram account (@ALA\_PLA) grew marginally in followership, finishing the year at 1,170 followers. Joining Sprout Social will facilitate our ability to post content on Instagram far more regularly in 2019.

**PLA STRATEGIC GOAL LINK (check all that apply)**

TRANSFORMATION  LEADERSHIP  ADV. & AWARENESS  E.D.I.S.J.  ORG. EXCELLENCE