

COUNCIL FORUM II - Notes

Wednesday, January 19, 2022

6:30-8:30 PM Central (7:30 Eastern, 5:30 Mountain, 4:30 Pacific)

Facilitators: Rhonda Gould, Jacquelyn Bryant, Jules Shore, Gail Tobin

Notetaker: Gail Tobin

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Discussion Items:

CD 25: C&B Action Items

- Aaron Dobbs reviewed the action items - #1 to make Round Table membership 150 and what to do if they fall below that number. Currently there are none under 150, those that are will be merged.
- #2 to standardize Round Table dues. They felt this was not their purview and will recommend the Membership Committee recommend standard dues structure.
- There was discussion around the process to create a Round Table by petition and that can be done electronically. Also, how to dissolve a no longer useful Round Table conforms to current language. COO would bring recommendations to disband to Council.
- The Bylaws Committee supports this

CD 27: COO Action Items (partial) - Aaron Dobbs

- Staff Organizations Round Table (SORT) and Library Support Staff Interests Round Table (LSSIRT) are both staff-focused Round Tables and voted to merge in 2017. This never happened so they want to move forward with this action initiated by them to create a Round Table with the new name of the Library Support Staff Round Table.

CD 51: Resolution to Support School and Youth Services Librarians Facing Increased Intellectual Freedom Challenges

- Punctuation issues have been fixed.
- Correction to the endorsement section to list Freedom to Read to list the individual endorsers names. Aaron Dobbs requested the corrected names be sent to him to make the change.

TAG Part C

- Amy Lapin, confirmed #3 in Part C has been removed. This was the part about bringing in a professional advisor skilled in writing bylaws.
- Interest in thoughts on whether or not Council is going to give away policy making to a smaller board as proposed.
- Several Councilors said they do not support giving policy making power to a smaller group, even though we trust them. Many said we need to vote no and make changes to the existing Council.

- Concern that giving up power will not sit well with many members. People are still concerned over financial issues a few years ago. Trying to convince other librarians that the Executive Board doesn't have the power to "run amok"
- Concern that a direct vote by the membership to the Board of Directors will elect well-known names, but not necessarily people who are knowledgeable about ALA governance.
- Members think the "elephant in the room" should be voted on – Council or a small Board of Directors. We have to settle the question so we can focus on implementation.
- Even if we vote #3 down that doesn't mean reforms can't go through.
- Concern that voting for Part C will dissolve Council and will pretty much decide on a governing board of directors. But there is good stuff in there as well. Preference for a democratic council. It can be confusing, but you get out what you put in.
- Change wording to "Governing Body" in part C to be consistent with changes in Part A and B.
- What is stopping groups from getting together now and advising Council?
- How do members use ALA? They love toolkits, Intellectual Freedom Policy Handbooks – they want tangible things. Are they really "in the weeds" with governance? People are involved as leaders working on taskforces, etc.
- Seems like the real push has been to shrink Council to a manageable size, not move policy making to the Executive Board. Why can't we leave policy making to Council?
- Likes the Council as the policy-making body, but recognizes membership wants it to be simplified and clarified. Sees it as a PR problem - we need to do a better job explaining to membership how council does its work and being transparent. Council should continue to meet virtually and invite members to attend. Yes, we go down rabbit holes but that is part of the process. What is member engagement? Maybe in this case member understanding and getting the word out about meetings.
- Councilors have many different opinions/perspectives and we are making progress on the issues members want to see us work on. There is room for super-sticky issues to have time to "air out" and they don't have to be decided right now.
- Recommendation to do a non-binding poll at council to see where people stand. A straw poll would be helpful because there are many vocal councilors, but would like a sense of where the group is leaning.
- Eli Mina answered some procedural issues raised: What if Board becomes the policy making body and ignores recommendations? The procedure should be written in the bylaws as well as who should be the policy maker. More than 90% of the time only one body makes policy and that is the Board. Regarding how the Board gets elected and only three from membership – maybe it can be elected by Council instead. Non-binding polls can be taken to define problems and trouble spots so they can be dealt with.
- Will there be a Bylaws Committee in the new model?
- School library representation is needed on the Executive Board. We need to be sure that representation is there and make it required.
- All types of librarians need representation at the table.
- We are getting into the weeds of concept. The member survey said people didn't know who was their representative. Body of Knowledge can be divided by type. How big is

that group? The question is, do we all agree we need a change and where do we go from here to do it?

- Concern that representation tends to be from the same type in a smaller body.
- Concern that this is not a good look for ALA. Not comfortable with agreeing in concept to things after the financial problems. If we limit the number it will be people who network and know others who get elected. Why concentrate power to a small group?
- Concern that we have lost focus on why we are talking about this. The first council discussion she remembers was we are running out of money and Council is too big – consider shrinking it to save money and now the focus is on member engagement. There are other ways to address these concerns – virtual meetings, etc.
- The focus moved from financial crisis to do something with council, but council wasn't the issue. We never solved the problem we were asked to solve – who is spending all this money? It's not council. We pay for our own travel, etc. Need to get back to the original charge of getting our financial house in order. Feels like it's a "bait and switch." The working group can be disbanded by council.
- The financials have been taken forward by leaps and bounds by Executive Director Hall.
- SCOE preceded the financial crisis, but getting rid of council used as a carrot to get people to buy into the getting rid of council by some appointed SCOE members.
- Do not think we need to get rid of Council. Sees ALA like our government. We are there for everyone who needs help – like Congress, and we need to be as representative as we can get it. We have good bones and need some tweaks. The engagement piece can be incorporated. Assemblies can be advisors to Council.
- Supports the advisory committee to Council which could be early career librarians and students we are trying to get active/engaged in ALA. Early career librarians don't want to lose the ability to vote and eliminating Council will lose the voice of newer librarians.
- Resolution on changes to council will come before us on Monday. Jennifer Boettcher requests people contact/email her and let her know what they think about term limits.
- What is the process to take tonight's discussion and move forward to save time? Discuss on the floor and make amendments.
- Brief discussion on in-person meetings, hybrid vs virtual meetings. Councilors expressed that we need to continue offering hybrid going forward.