

## Transforming ALA Governance—Tips and talking points from PLA leaders

### Some helpful tips

- Your voice, ideas, and questions are important to the conversation – and the future of the association.
- As you know—there are no stupid questions! And you are almost certainly not the only person with the question(s) you have. Please don't be afraid to ask, even if you think it is silly. You are likely speaking for more than yourself by doing so—not only other Councilors, but the members that you all represent.
- It is okay to get in line to speak before your thoughts are fully formed. In fact, long-time Council members recommend it to ensure your voice is included before the discussion ends. Use your wait time at the mic to refine your talking points.
- Be clear, concise, and confident.

### Key Messages

- I appreciate the opportunity to speak to these vital ALA governance questions and to recognize the hard work of the Transforming ALA Governance Task Force. Thank you.
- After years of conversation and thoughtful proposals, *now* is the time to reduce complexity and improve agility for the ALA to best serve its members, the library profession, and the communities and campuses library workers serve.
- I vote in favor of direct elections to the ALA Board of Directors and shifting ALA Council to an advisory body with a smaller membership. I am in favor of a larger and more representative ALA Board of Directors setting policy with consistent communications and advice from the ALA Advisory Group. ((NOTE: add specific reference to action item numbers/titles, as needed))
- I support these important changes because they will improve equity and diverse member engagement, including virtual participation; streamline processes; reduce financial impacts; and improve ALA's ability to act quickly and effectively in a time of great change.
- It is critical that the ALA Governing Board set priorities with input from members and affiliate units and regularly report back on its work and progress. And the Advisory Group, in turn, is responsible for ensuring a place for transparent discussion of complex issues. Working together, and with direct elections of the Governing Board, ALA governance will be more accountable and in stronger position to lead.
- ALA needs a forum for discussion and deliberation (via Advisory Group) to inform and engage with the board of directors as they set policy. The TAG recommendations will help to create the functional structure and processes needed for a vibrant 21<sup>st</sup> century membership body.

### Draft script

RECOGNIZE PRESIDING MEMBER, LIKELY ALA PRESIDENT WONG.

My name is **NAME**, and I am the Councilor for **GROUP NAME** (e.g., state, round table, or I am an At-Large Councilor). I rarely speak at Council meetings, but I want to speak today in favor of accepting TAG's recommendations. We know significant change is needed for ALA to grow and best serve the field. TAG, SCOE and the Forward Together working groups before it have all worked diligently to listen and

synthesize what they hear from ALA members like me, and now is the time to act. I support direct elections to the ALA Board of Directors and shifting ALA Council to an advisory body with a smaller membership. I am in favor of a larger and more representative ALA Board of Directors setting policy with consistent communications and advice from the ALA Advisory Group. These changes will improve equity and diverse member engagement, including virtual participation; streamline processes; reduce financial impacts; and improve ALA's ability to act quickly and effectively in a time of great change.

#### **Possible open-ended questions to help clarify proposals**

- What are the fiscal implications of this proposal?
- How does this proposal simplify processes to improve member participation and transparency?
- How does this proposal improve flexibility and agility for the association to best serve the profession in a rapidly changing world?

#### **Background/context**

- Transforming ALA Governance (TAG) discussion and action are scheduled for Council I, June 25. Background on Forward Together is here: <https://forwardtogether.ala.org/>
- The PLA Board seeks your support for:
  - Direct elections to Board of Directors
  - Council becomes a smaller body that advises, instead of setting policy
  - Fosters two-way communication to tap broad expertise
  - Has responsible fiscal impact
- Operating Agreement Working Group (OAWG) report is scheduled for Council III, June 27. No action is expected. More information on OAWG is here: <https://operatingagreement.ala.org/>
- For both TAG and the OAWG, PLA holds the following change process values and asks all public library members to weigh decisions and seek resolution with these guideposts:
  - Streamline and simplify
    - Enable engagement opportunities
    - Clarify processes and procedures
  - Transparency
    - Financial impacts and decisions
  - Equity
    - Participation
    - Authority and autonomy
  - Accountability