



**PLA Board of Directors Meeting  
Virtual Meeting – 12:00-2:00pm Central, December 15, 2021**

Zoom Logistics

- Please use this link to join the meeting:  
<https://ala-events.zoom.us/j/94738584603?pwd=dGpFd1lwZiR3V3cyVysyRXRURDJqUT09>  
Additional login instructions appear below.
- Use Zoom in gallery view.
- Mute by default except the speaker.
- PLA President Melanie Huggins will call on people so that people don't speak over one another.
- Feel free to use chat; staff will keep an eye on the chat and bring those questions into the discussion when appropriate.
- Use the yes-no-raised hand options.
- We will use screen sharing where appropriate. Be sure to have your board docs accessible too!
- We will take multiple breaks during our virtual board meeting.

**Revised Agenda**

Note: The item highlighted in **yellow** below was updated December 14, 2021.

1. **Welcome and Introductions**, *Melanie Huggins, PLA President*
2. **EDISJ work**, *Maria McCauley, PLA President-elect*
3. **Action Item:** Adoption of the agenda  
Additional items may be added to the agenda prior to the adoption of the agenda. Items may also be removed from the consent agenda and moved to a discussion item. The PLA Board's adoption of the consent agenda constitutes approval of those items on consent that have not been removed for discussion. PLA policies related to Board service, the strategic plan and Board roster have been included in ALA Connect as reference materials. These are not agenda items.

**Consent Agenda**

**Document Number**

1. *Organizational Excellence and Governance*
  - a. Draft October 2021 Board Minutes ..... 2022.16

<b>Action/Discussion/Decision Items</b>	<b>Document Number</b>
2. PLA President Update, <i>Melanie Huggins</i> .....	no document
3. PLA President-elect Update, <i>Maria McCauley</i> .....	no document
4. PLA Liaison to ALA Executive Board Update, <i>Larry Neal</i> .....	no document
5. PLA Executive Director Report, <i>Mary Davis Fournier</i> .....	no document
6. PLA 2022 Update and Discussion, <i>Melissa Johnson, all</i> .....	2022.17
a. Action: Affirm Conference Format and Schedule	
7. Advocacy and Intellectual Freedom Update, <i>Larra Clark and Megan Cusick</i> ...	no document
8. New Business, <i>all</i> .....	no document

**Zoom Instructions**

PLA Meetings is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: PLA Board Virtual Meeting - PLA 2022 Conference Discussion

Time: Dec 15, 2021 12:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://ala-events.zoom.us/j/94738584603?pwd=dGpFd1lwZjR3V3cyVysyRXRURDJqUT09>

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**PLA Board of Directors Meeting  
Virtual Meeting – 1:00-4:00pm Central, October 22, 2021**

**Present:** Melanie Huggins, President; Michelle Jeske, Past President; Dr. Maria Taesil Hudson McCauley, President-elect; Directors-at-large: Amita, Lonial, Erica Freudenberger, Toby Greenwalt, Candice Wing-ye Mack, Brandy McNeil, Dara Schmidt; ALA Division Councilor: Stephanie Chase

**Absent:** Clara Bohrer, Fiscal Officer:

**Guests:** Larry Neal, ALA Executive Board; Melissa Walling, ALA Membership Manager, Miranda Bennett, Chair, ALA Committee on Membership

**PLA Staff:** Mary Davis Fournier, Executive Director; Larra Clark, Deputy Director; Lian Drago, Meetings Manager; Sara Goek, Program Manager; Mary Hirsh, Deputy Director; Samantha Lopez, Manager, Marketing and Membership; Megan Stewart, Program Coordinator; Steven Hofmann, Manager, Web Communications; Angela Maycock, Manager, Continuing Education; Kathleen Hughes, Manager, Publications; Melissa Johnson, Conference Manager

1. Welcome, *Huggins*.
2. By consent, the board approved the adoption of the meeting agenda.
3. By consent, approved the consent agenda as presented.

<b>Consent Agenda</b>	<b>Document Number</b>
Organizational Excellence and Governance	
Draft September 2021 Board Minutes.....	2022.7
PLA Committee Chair Reports.....	2022.8
Combined Initiatives Reports.....	2022.9
Combined Operations Reports.....	2022.10
Continuing Education Report.....	2022.11
Strategic Plan Activities Report.....	2022.12
Upcoming Board Meeting Dates.....	2022.13

4. **EDISJ work, Maria McCauley, PLA President-elect**  
Huggins has asked McCauley to lead EDISJ work of board, making it front and center at every meeting. The group had a discussion about where they are and how they are approaching this work. Feeling uncomfortable is healthy and an important part of this work.

The next board meeting will include a discussion of the PLA EDISJ statement and where we might focus our activities

### Action/Discussion/Decision Items

5. PLA President Update, *Melanie Huggins*, no document  
Huggins continues to do interviews, especially around going fine free since NYPL and LAPL have recently moved to fine free. There was a nice piece in Publishers Weekly about upcoming PLA Conference. Huggins and McCauley attended a legislative info session last week, hosted by PPA
6. PLA President-elect Update, *Maria McCauley*  
McCauley left the meeting earlier and will provide an update at the December meeting
7. PLA Liaison to ALA Executive Board Update, *Larry Neal*, no document  
Neal was absent for last executive board meeting and will forward monthly talking points when they become available. Fall executive board meeting is Oct 29-31, at the ALA offices. Finance and audit meetings also coming up. Anticipates having more information to share in December following fall meetings. Per Chase's question, Neal will be sure to ask about financial impact of moving LLX to virtual at upcoming BARC/F&A meetings
8. ALA Membership Model Preview, *Melissa Walling, Miranda Bennett* 2022.13a  
A new membership model will be presented to the executive board at the fall meeting. This conversation has a long history, from 2018 Avenue M membership report which suggested simplifying the membership model, and making it more adaptable. Current work is the first of two anticipated phases. Designed to address a mismatch between cost of joining and perceived value of membership. Bennett and Walling are unable discuss proposed pricing until the executive board review model. Membership committee is recommending consolidating 11 membership categories into 4 categories: 2 membership categories divided by income levels; student membership; supporters for people not directly employed in library profession. Phase two will address value of membership. Member interest in having division or roundtable membership come with ALA membership. May also be ways to boost continuing education opportunities built into membership. All involve considerable back-end IT work. The work of the membership committee is informed by SCOE, Forward Together, and Pivot Plan goals.

Once ALA executive board reviews and approved member model, will go to council, then ultimately to an all member vote. Will be a lot of socialization and member engagement in process.

Chase asked about process of actual numbers. The executive board needs to discuss dues structure first. Once approved, will be presented to council as public action describing consolidated types and related proposed dues structure.

Chase asked about comparison to other trade organizations. Are we looking to a consistent set of peer organizations? Membership looked at state associations and chapters, NALCO, other library associations. 60% of members are also in division or roundtable, so it is hard to draw to direct comparisons. Conducted limited pricing survey to help inform decision.

9. PLA 2022 Update and Discussion, *Melissa Faubel Johnson, all*  
PLA 2022 Conference Update 2022.14  
Action: Adopt Conference Format Policy 2022.15

Conference registration opened two weeks ago. 443 full conference registrants, 115 exhibitors to date. Percentages of registrants to total budget per week is tracking along with past conferences. Anticipate most registration will come in right before early bird deadline in January as people wait to see how landscape shifts. Within event industry, face to face conference are back. Do not see a lot of wavering within the industry. PLA will continue to monitor a list of factors, described in the document, between now and December. PLA board will meet in December to reaffirm our decision to conference in person. PLA staff do not anticipate changes to in-person meeting plan.

Chase indicated Portland had issues with how recent conference talked about safety in Portland. Melissa has been on site visits, has never felt unsafe. Staff has been talking about this for over a year and how we sell Portland as the site we know and love. Intend to connect with local service organizations as we did in Nashville.

Portland generally draws a smaller attendance due to geography. Anticipating a 40% decrease in attendees from Nashville in 2020. PLA has booked the standard amount of space, for a smaller audience to enable social distancing. Important to communicate these plans to members so they feel confident in attending. The convention center requires proof of vaccination or negative test.

There will be a virtual component, made up of the highest-rated programs from the session preference survey. Trying to get keynotes included, but that is negotiated speaker by speaker. The virtual conference will not recreate the in-person experience. VC registration will open before the end of the year. Typically, in-person attendees get access to VC after the conference.

Johnson will talk to convention center on how they are handling food and meals when on her next site visit. Will have to look at different way to provide food at receptions, etc. Anticipates author lunches will have fewer people per table. Will rely on local committee for advice and best practice

Action: Adopt planning framework and indicators for affirming decision at Dec. 15 board meeting

Lonial Motioned to adopt, seconded by Chase

Johnson welcomes additional feedback as we work through details

**Motion passes**

10. PLA Executive Director Report, *Mary Davis Fournier* no document  
Davis Fournier continues to acclimate, listen, and learn. Staffing is major focus, down three staff since June. Working with Clark and Hirsh on 6-12 month plan to redistribute roles and responsibilities  
Do not plan to fill Allen's deputy position. Davis Fournier will cover budgeting and development functions.  
Hirsh will take on project management oversight. Clark will take on communication and marketing oversight. PLA staff is adaptable and picking up slack, but there will be slowdowns on some items. Focused on conference, benchmarks, and grant projects. Closing out FY21 financials, to be completed by mid-December in anticipation of January executive board meeting.
11. Strategic Planning Process Update, *Fournier, all* no document  
This work has slowed due to staff issues.  
Davis Fournier met with the presidential trio to discuss recommendations, and talk through implementations. Aligned on importance of EDISJ work and increasing partnerships. Still planning staff retreat before end of year. One of the new staff positions will be a coordinator to support membership.  
Davis Fournier is in regular conversations with to ODLOS executive director on how PLA and ODLOS might collaborate on leading EDISJ work across ALA. Including looking at budgetary framework that emphasizes equity and inclusion.  
Davis Fournier feels PLA has the components of next strategic plan form last year's refresh activity. Plans to bring new plan to board for approval in June 2022.
12. Committee Chair Orientation Update, *Huggins, Mary Hirsh* no document  
Committee chairs met October 15. First time doing committee chair orientation like this where staff and board shared about philosophy and programmatic priorities. Strategic plan refresh and pivot plan led to this, along with number of committees and limited staff. Opportunity to network with peers. Some results: create committee chair space in Connect to continue discussion. Advocacy & Strategic Partnership committee met and she saw movement already. Lonial and Tamara King, EDISJ co-chairs, presented on EDISJ work and position. Huggins encouraged the EDISJ to consider developing a framework or lens for other committees to adopt. McNeil attended in role as Digital Literacy Committee chair and found it to be a good meeting that helped to show clear connections between board and committees
13. New PLA Benchmarks Briefing, *Larra Clark, Sara Goek* no document  
Sara Goek has led this important work, in alignment with both PLA strategic plan and pivot plan. Clark is proud of process and product  
  
New benchmark tool is live today [librarybenchmark.org](https://librarybenchmark.org). Joint project between PLA and ACRL to support data driven planning and advocacy. Extends PLA's commitment to make data and visualizations for all libraries, no matter skill or expertise.

Two tiers of access. Free basic login will allow users to see a few key charts and library responses to past surveys. Full value requires subscription. Interactive dashboards, reports, and custom peer comparisons.

Also includes external data, like census, and past PLDS responses. Visualization designed to facilitate benchmarking and peer comparisons across 63 statistically valid peer groups. All charts are interactive. Also providing additional resources.

For libraries, subscription is \$400/year. Other discounts and rates available based on structure and incentives for participating in surveys.

Opening Staff Diversity Survey on Monday. Developed with MEAC and ODLOS. Every library in US is invited to participate, will do weighting on the back end. Data collection will close before holidays.

Affirmed chart colors and designs are ADA accessible.

Chase asked about pricing structure for smaller libraries. This is very challenging to implement, out of scope for vendor. Instead, looking at incentivizing: participate in a survey, get a big discount. Also have and state library and consortia pricing model allowing for group access.

Chase and Freudenberger encouraged staff to consider how to expand access even further

14. New Business, *all* no document  
A skeleton schedule for conference was requested.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:35pm central

To: PLA Board of Directors  
From: Melissa Johnson, CMP  
Re: PLA 2022 Conference Update/Decision  
Date: December 13, 2021

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

**DRAFT OF MOTION:**

The PLA Board votes to reaffirm plans to host the PLA 2022 Conference in-person, along with a virtual conference option.

**Background**

The PLA Conference is the premier event for public library professionals. Like the institutions they support, the role of the public library worker is ever-changing. The COVID-19 crisis magnified this more than any of us could have imagined, but public libraries responded swiftly and creatively to meet their communities' evolving needs. The PLA 2022 Conference will provide public library professionals the opportunity to reconnect with one another, recreate the services they provide, and revitalize the passion for the work they do every day.

Primary Factors for Recommendation

- Federal and State Guidelines
- Host City and Venue Conditions
- Safety and Security of Attendees and Staff
- Attendees Ability to Participate

In addition to compliance with state mask requirements, the Oregon Convention Center (OCC) requires proof of full vaccination or a negative COVID-19 PCR or Rapid test result within 72 hours of the first day of an event for people 5 years of age or older. The OCC is committed to the health and safety of its patrons as the venue provides a place for people to come together. PLA will follow the OCC requirements to create a safe and welcoming environment for attendees. Should the OCC requirements evolve, PLA will alert attendees and update the website to reflect the relevant information.

During the week of December 6 site visit to Portland, the PLA conference team saw encouraging improvements to downtown Portland and the surrounding areas. Staff strategized with the local arrangements committee and Travel Portland on highlighting all that Portland has to offer our visitors. PLA will continue working closely with the city and the local arrangements committee to prepare the best experience for PLA attendees.

PLA is aware that people may choose not to travel or not be able to travel due to library policies. To enable participation, PLA will offer a more robust virtual conference, including live streaming the opening and closing speaker. Virtual Conference registration will open in January.



## **Fiscal Impact**

### Registration & Exhibit Update (as of Tuesday, December 13, 2021)

The 2020 Nashville Conference saw the highest registration in many years. Even before COVID, PLA did not anticipate a similar sized event in Portland. Therefore, the budget was reduced by 30% with a 30% reduction in anticipated attendance, and across the board. When looking at percentages of registrations (vs. raw numbers), PLA 2022 is tracking fairly close to budget for exhibits and lagging in registration.

The number of exhibiting companies stands at 156 compared to 246 exhibiting companies at the same time two years ago, which is 27% less than two years ago. PLA exhibitors have reserved 405 booths, compared to 615 booths for the 2020 PLA Conference, which is 24% less than the same point for 2020. These statistics & percentages are considerably better than what our exhibit management team has seen with trade shows in several industries held this past summer and fall. In addition, there are 38 companies that have placed 109 PLA booths on hold, awaiting payment.

PLA has a significant financial obligation to the Portland hotel community and other vendors. PLA could face over \$1,000,000 in penalties if the in-person conference was canceled. In the current environment, hotels are no longer treating COVID-related cancellations as reason to exit a contract without penalty. Face-to-face meetings are moving forward, with masks and proper precautions as the new normal.

There are currently 1,343 full conference attendees registered for the conference. This compares to about 2,700 full conference attendees registered at the same time for the 2020 Conference in Nashville. The early bird deadline for Nashville was December 17, 2019. The early bird deadline for Portland is January 7, 2022, and the advance registration deadline is February 18, 2022. Based on all we are seeing now, we anticipate that the conference will, at minimum, break even.

## **Conclusion**

After much consideration of the primary factors for recommendation, and close monitoring of health and hospitality regulations, the PLA staff, along with the 2022 Conference Committee Chairs, recommend that the PLA Board reaffirm plans to meet in person, March 23-25, 2022, in Portland, OR.