

## **Executive Board Updates for the PLA Board**

### **March 2024**

With the PLA conference fast approaching and a very full agenda for your meeting Thursday, I'm including some notes for your packet rather than coming in person to share updates. I'm looking forward to seeing you all and cheering you all on in Columbus!

Stephanie Chase

ALA Executive Board; Board Liaison to PLA

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### **ALA Town Hall**

In large part due to the ongoing conversation in some states around the work of ALA, President Drabinski, the Executive Board, and Interim Executive Director Leslie Burger are holding a town hall on Tuesday, March 19 at 1pm Central to answer member questions about the state of the association. You may have seen this announcement when it went broadly to all members. Please do consider registering:

[https://ala-events.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_35XdgDykSCmBiuXLofJwaQ](https://ala-events.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_35XdgDykSCmBiuXLofJwaQ) and submitting your questions via [this form](#) (questions are due by Friday, March 15).

### **LLX 2026 Decision**

As you may have seen from Monday's press release, the Executive Board has made the decision to end the LibLearnX pilot project after the 2025 conference in Phoenix, and not hold the proposed 2026 conference. The board's decision was based on a deep and thoughtful analysis of financial and other critical factors.

It is a top priority of the Board to ensure the awards presentations and the MLK celebration continue, and work is underway to find the best path forward for these events. The Board is also looking at ways to expand volunteer opportunities, modeled so well by PLA, since ALA Gives Back has been so popular at LLX.

## Highlights from the January and February Executive Board Meetings

- As ALA approaches the end of the timeline of the Pivot Plan, the Executive Board will be looking to undertake the development of a Strategic Plan in 2026 under the presidency of Cindy Hohl.
- Treasurer Peter Hepburn reported the FY23 financial year-end results, which were reported as positive with an operating surplus of \$1.8 million. The audit for the year was approved. On the plate for discussion with FY25 are the net asset balances and transferring into the endowment — please keep me updated on your perspectives for this conversation!
- President Drabinski has secured additional funding for a videographer to attend some of her outreach and library visits between now and the end of her term. She will be visiting several public libraries in the Southwest as part of the tour leading up to Annual, and will be visiting the O'Brien Memorial Library in Blue River, OR with me, where we are talking to the volunteers about how they are keeping the spirit of this rural library alive following the town's devastation due to wildfire. There is the plan to have teaser footage from the visits, which will be forming a documentary, at ALA Annual. (As a side note, as part of President Drabinski's visit to Oregon in early May, we will be visiting the Eugene Public Library, talking with the staff at the Crook County Library in Prineville, which had one of Oregon's most significant book censorship issues, and visiting the Grant County Library to learn more about their role in the partnership to bring broadband access to that rural county.)
- I was part of the working group to make recommendations for improvement to ALA Honorary Membership, clarifying the criteria and benefits. This included aligning the criteria with ALA Core Values to best emphasize the impact the nominee has had on libraries and library work. Because the benefits of the Honorary Membership seem most valuable to ALA members and less likely to be of value to public figures, we have asked the Awards working group to find alternative options for giving recognition to public figures.
- Interim Executive Director Leslie Berger spoke about hiring, providing the following updates:
  - There is a need to accelerate the hiring process, but there is already a strong practice of temp-to-hire in the organization that has worked well.

- Moving ahead with filling key strategic positions, including Development Director and some gaps with *American Libraries* and AL Direct
- Looking at staffing requests as part of the budget process
- Looking at open list of positions:
  - Associate PPA Director
  - Gearing up Development Office for 150th campaign

Interim Executive Director Berger has said she will provide a ranked list for current open positions.

- President-Elect Cindy Hohl and Interim Executive Director Berger attended the ASAE conference, which had an emphasis on building relationships between directors and boards. Of interest was learning ALA is one of the few large associations still using Robert's Rules of Order.
- The Conference Committee reported on their continued work to meet two resolutions passed by Council: one, for ALA conferences to become net zero or neutral by 2025, and the other, to explore options for Annual Conference dates that do not conflict with Pride celebrations. We anticipate an update to Council at Annual.

### **Women's History Month Webinar**

In celebration of Women's History Month, the ALA Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship (COSWL), the Association of College & Research Libraries' Women & Gender Studies Section (ACRL - WGSS), and the Social Responsibilities Round Table's Feminist Task Force (SRRT - FTF) will jointly host *Bridging the Gap: In Support of Women in Librarianship – A conversation with ALA Presidents* on March 25, 2024, at 1pm Central. Dr. Nicole Cooke will be in conversation with ALA Presidents Pelayo-Lozada, Drabinski, and Hohl about how to intentionally support women in librarianship, the harassment of women in librarianship, efforts to negate their professional experiences, and a way forward for the profession. Register at [https://ala-events.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_l8xg1e\\_KTkK8uFoN6a8jfw](https://ala-events.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_l8xg1e_KTkK8uFoN6a8jfw).