

ALA Annual Conference and ALA Midwinter Meeting: Current Status

Annual Conference

Although Annual Conference revenues are strong, in recent years attendance has become more sensitive to the local availability of drive-in audience. This shows in Las Vegas, Orlando and New Orleans numbers, for instance. It impacts both paid and complimentary attendance. Exhibitors have begun to recognize this and have tightened up their budgets for exhibit space and marketing opportunities like the program book and COGNOTES advertising. Recent mergers have also impacted exhibit space sales and the numbers of new and first-time exhibitors is shrinking throughout the industry (including other library conferences, BookExpo, etc).

Staff continues to closely monitor both exhibitor and attendee participation and reduce expenses where appropriate in the months leading up to conference. The goal is to control these variable expenses while not putting the attendee experience at risk. In addition, the continued shrinking of the campus will allow for reduced expenses, while keeping attendees in fewer facilities to maximize their learning and networking experience. In 2018, in the first year of the new process for creating the overall schedule and assigning meeting space, we reduced the number of meeting facilities to five: the convention center, headquarter hotel and three hotels. Many new feature areas have been added to the exhibitor floor to maintain traffic levels and to increase attendee engagement with participating exhibitors. Stages, product pavilions and interactive areas like "The Playground", introduced in 2017, have supported ALA's intent of making the exhibit floor a part of the learning opportunities presented at conference.

The Annual Conference locations for the next five years (2019-2022: DC, Chicago, Chicago, DC, Chicago) should act to grow conference attendance, exhibit sales and increase overall revenues. Although both cities are high cost cities and union facilities, net revenue should strengthen and increase.

Midwinter Meeting

Attendance at Midwinter has had a dramatic decline of almost 10%/year each of the last three years. Many factors have impacted this: location, regional membership, competition for reduced travel time and budgets, and lack of focus among sessions. Total revenue has been relatively flat, due to price increases, while expense for a basic level of services has increased. Exhibitors, in reaction to the decline in attendance and noticeable lack of traffic on the exhibit floor, have reduced space and have now begun to decline the opportunity to exhibit. Midwinter continues to return overhead to the association, but that is declining and net revenue is trending negative. Left alone, these trends will continue to diminish Midwinter's contribution, both financially and as a valuable interactive experience for participants.

Conference Services, in conjunction with the ALA Conference Committee, has undertaken a research program over the past nine months to measure participants' assessment of Midwinter and their needs

for a future event. Research has identified many problems at Midwinter from potential attendee understanding of session offerings to lack of value for exhibitors. The next step in the process will be to review potential options and models for the future. Some of the options under review include:

1. Keep the structure and scope of Midwinter while continuing to reorganize and focus the educational opportunities. This must also include the inclusion of no conflict time for the exhibit floor. It is clear without an appropriate amount of no conflict time, the exhibit floor will continue to shrink at a faster pace.

The proposed FY2019 skeleton schedule incorporates “no-conflict” exhibits time on both Saturday and Sunday afternoons, in addition to continuation of the Friday night exhibits opening.

This are other modest changes to the current ALA Midwinter Meeting may slow the decline. Additional changes – notably centralization of time and space assignment, similar to the Annual Conference strategy – may result in further improvement.

The meeting would be essentially a break-even meeting, contributing \$650-750,000 in overhead recovery to support the ALA General Fund.

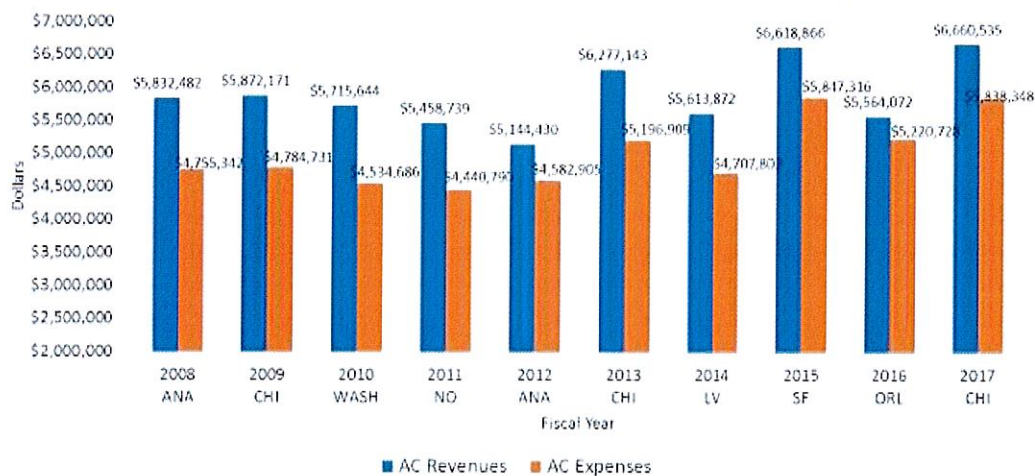
2. Eliminate Midwinter. This will eliminate the overhead contribution made by the event, but will maintain many expenses associated with fulfilling events dictated by policy, such as Council Meetings. This would free up staff time and allow the association to focus on the production of the Annual Conference, potentially improving the educational opportunities and financial performance of the Annual Conference.
3. Eliminate and replace the ALA Midwinter Meeting. The new ALA X Meeting <final name TBD> would have three “legs” -- joined by a shared exhibit space:
 - a. Governance & Leadership Development: While continuing the trend to shift regular “business” meetings to digital platforms, this track would embed core governance meetings – e.g., Council, Boards and other groups dealing with complex and often contentious issues – within a track including leadership briefings, leadership development (including thought leader sessions) and networking. This would support the work of sustaining cohort groups from leadership development programs across ALA, including Emerging Leaders, Spectrum and others.
 - b. Media and Services: This builds on the success of the Youth Media Awards, the Carnegie Medal and other book awards, with a particularly strong (though not exclusive) focus on Youth Media. Discussions with publishers indicate a desire for continued dialogue between publishers, editors and librarians. Authors and book signings would continue to be a strong emphasis.
 - c. Creating the Future: This builds on the success of programming and curation by the Center for the Future of Libraries. It would draw thought leaders from the host city into innovation-focused sessions.

The proposal makes the following assumptions: (1) Eliminate Midwinter and cancel/renew all or most current contracts. Current exposure is approximately \$250,000. but will increase after January 2019. (2) Assume a smaller footprint (fewer sessions, less exhibit space, fewer room nights). (3) Re-site, as appropriate/necessary to both maximize regional reach and decrease overall participation cost (particular hotel rates). Some decrease in implementation costs are assumed (exhibit floor costs, hotel AV) but increased costs in other areas (leadership development and other content areas). A combination of overhead and net revenue, with initial return similar to current levels but enhanced year-to-year growth. The proposal builds on the strengths of units across the Association, increases focus and avoids becoming a "2nd Annual."

Attachments: ALA Annual Conference and ALA Midwinter Meeting Charts



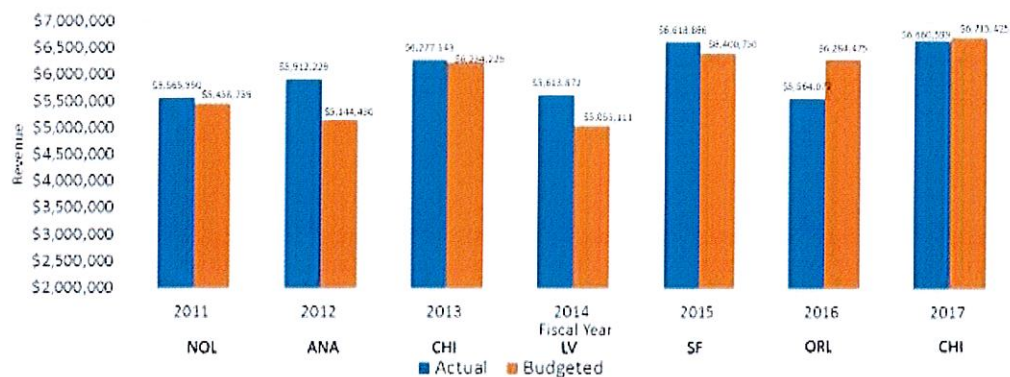
ALA Annual Conference Revenue & Expenses



Source: ALA Audited Financial Statements

15

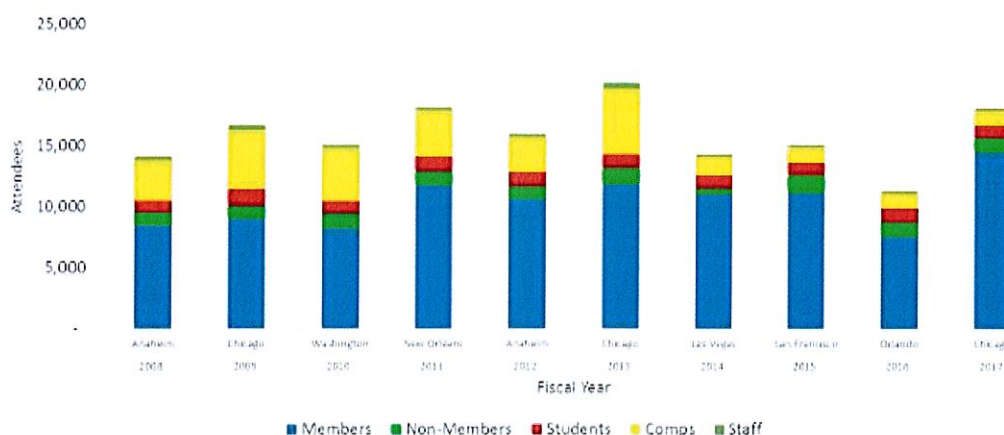
ALA Annual Conference Revenues



Source: ALA Audited Financial Statements and the ALA Budget System

16

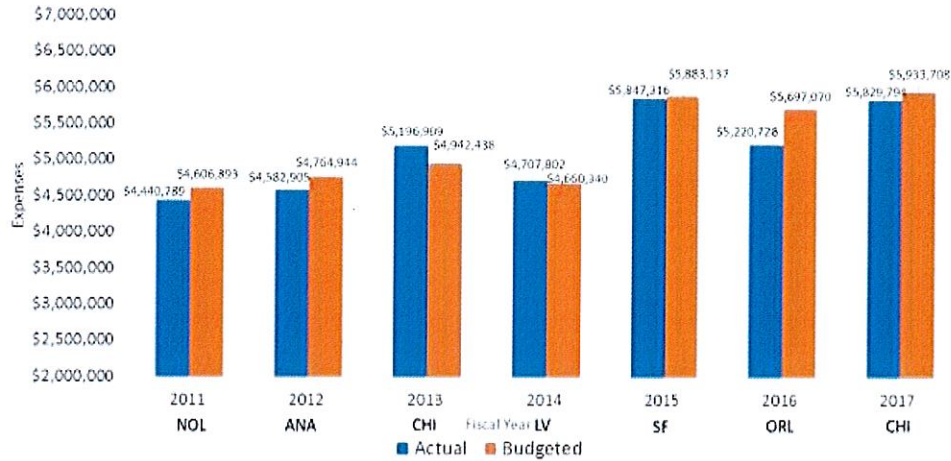
ALA Annual Conference Attendance



Source: Annual Conference Registration Reports

17

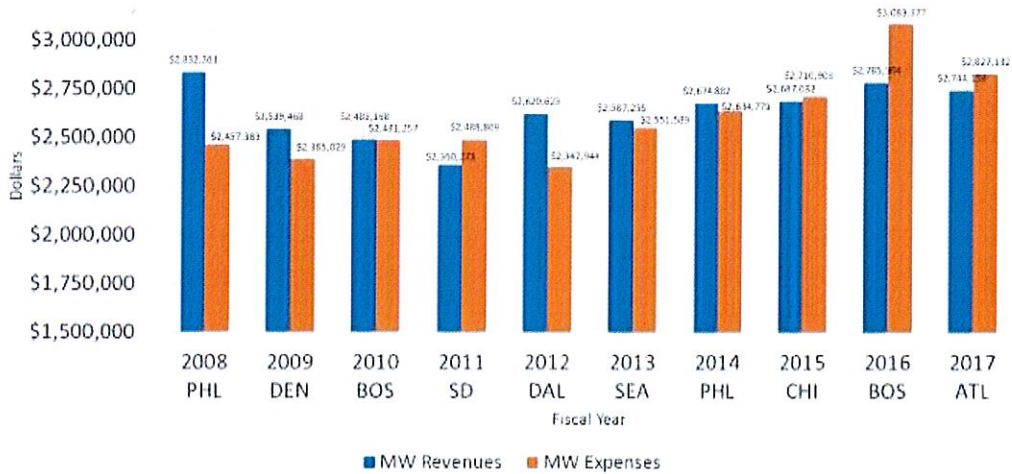
ALA Annual Conference Expenses



Source: ALA Audited Financial Statements, ALA Budget System

18

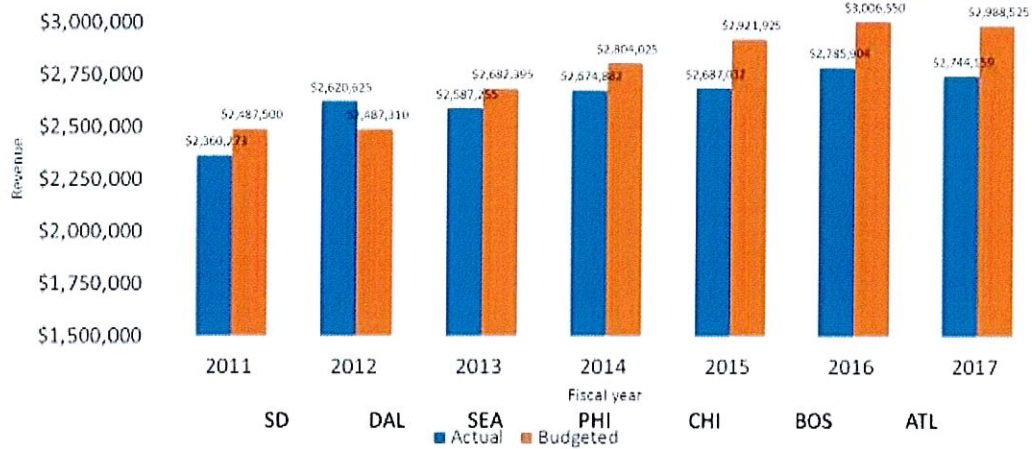
ALA Midwinter Meeting Revenue & Expenses



Source: ALA Audited Financial Statements and the Prophix Financial system

19

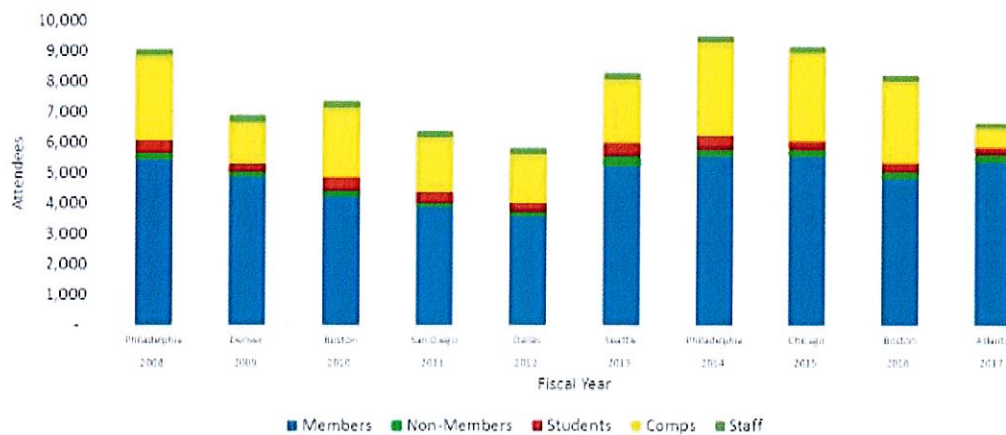
ALA Midwinter Meeting Revenues – Actual vs Budget



Source: ALA Audited Financial Statements, ALA Budget System

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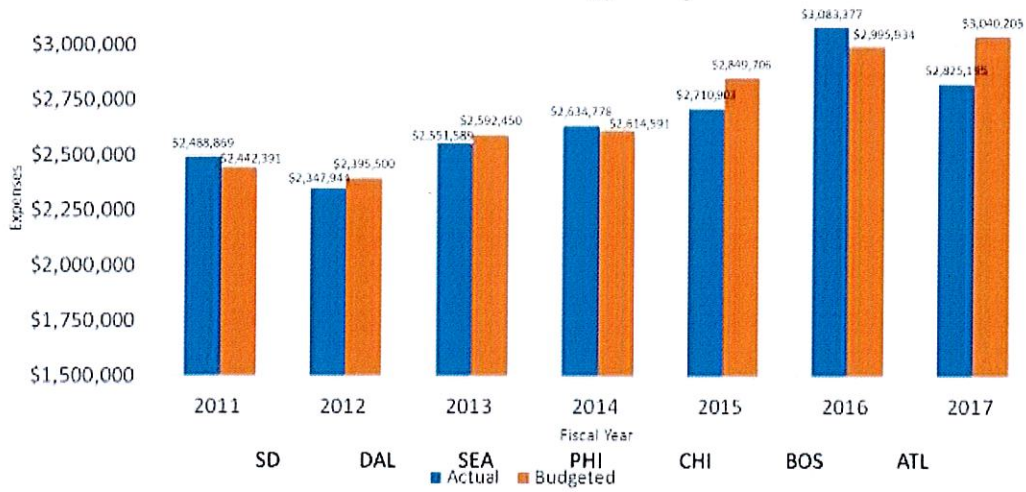
ALA Midwinter Meeting Attendance



Source: Conference Services Registration Reports

21

ALA Midwinter Meeting Expenses



Source: ALA Audited Financial Statements and the ALA Budget System

22

Library X Conference3 tracks

Library of the Future

Youth Media

Leadership Development

Thursday

8 - 5 Booth set-up

Friday

Registration, Exhibit Set up

Pre-conferences

Friday 4:30-6 – Opening Ceremony and Keynote

Friday 6-8 – Networking Reception

Saturday/Sunday – Exhibits

Morning 7:30 – 9 – Exhibitor Breakfasts

4 concurrent sessions 10-11:15, 1:30 – 2:45

Exhibits 9-5 - Pavilions: Mobile Apps, Foreign language, Independent/Small Presses, Zine, Graphic Novel

Book Buzz Theater, PopTop Stage, Graphic Novel, Chapter One

Saturday night: Diversity Reception

Sunday Night: Mingle with the Authors Reception

Monday:

8-10 Awards

10 – Noon Exhibit Hall Shopping spree

Noon - Done/Move Out