

COUNCIL FORUM I - NOTES

Tuesday, January 18, 2022

6:00-8:00 PM Central (7:00 Eastern, 5:00 Mountain, 4:00 Pacific)

Facilitators: Rhonda Gould, Jacquelyn Bryant, Gail Tobin

Notetaker: Gail Tobin

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Amy Lappin - Transforming ALA Governance Task Force

- Amy reviewed what TAG is and why we are here. Gave an overview of the history leading up to the potential motions. The goal is a stronger, more modern, efficient, and inclusive organization.
- Nothing is set in stone. These are conceptual recommendations. The idea is to choose a path and then start the work. TAG has a recommendation, but it doesn't have to be decided now.
- TAG is presenting two options, but they endorse the Advisory Council option.
- There are three parts: motion 1 is functional, motion 2 is cultural and motion 3 is organizational structure.
- Councilors expressed concerns that they don't believe councilors policy making role should be removed. Don't think the ALA bylaws should be thrown out and would like to see three choices for moving forward, not just two. Desire to see an option to have Council remain the policy making body.
- The three sections can be voted on separately so people can vote on the parts they like. Councilors can also offer different options through amendments. Voting for #1 and #2 doesn't mean you have to vote for #3.
- Concerns with the proposed Board of Directors being the policy making body instead of Council around democratic issues. Council represents more people - Divisions, Round Tables, etc. and it works with Robert's Rules. Can a smaller board take over that function? Worry about "group think" with a smaller board of directors. Worried people won't volunteer for Advisory Board if it is not deciding the future of the Association.
- We are stuck in a circular motion. Too much time is being spent hashing out things for later. Need to move the process forward and choose a path. Council is stuck on procedural issues. Council needs to vote on a simple motion that determines if council supports dissolution of council as governing body of ALA. Once that is established other elements of organizational change can proceed.
- Need Representation from School Librarians and other voices not heard or well represented. Concern that we will lose more of that perspective.
- Who is the Board of Directors accountable to? The Board is a representative board from different areas of the organization. If it goes rogue it won't get voted back in. the Advisory Board needs to pay attention to what the Board is doing.
- Recommendation for an option for the Advisory Council to have overriding authority over the Board of Directors if they don't take advice from them. It was noted membership can currently overturn votes per the bylaws. The procedure needs to be spelled out in the bylaws at the concept stage to see what makes sense.

- There should be an oversight review board so the Advisory board can have “teeth”
- Current Council size gives more opportunities for front-line staff to get involved. Need to make all Council meetings virtual to eliminate barriers – financial, physical, and social accessibility barriers.
- Concern with the agenda setting role – will member driven issues be forced forward as happens now?
- Action item #3 directs a professional advisor skilled in writing by laws be brought in. What are the costs to the association? Other costs to the association? Thought the reason for review of ALA governance was cost overruns.
- Will moving to virtual really make more people able to participate? Need data on impact on participation, not assumptions.
- At this point it is difficult to remember what the problems with the current structure are. Caution not to “throw out the baby with the bathwater” with a massive reorganization that will cause unanticipated problems and instead look at issues one by one.
- How are we improving member engagement with the TAG proposals? Don’t confuse member engagement with governance.
- Have technical/virtual options over the last few years addressed financial concerns? Increased member engagement? Made timely decisions faster and easier to make?

Aaron Dobbs – Resolutions

- Reviewed the resolutions up for consideration.
- Please provide feedback on them in the ALA CONECT space.
- Resolutions must be available at least 48 hours before the council meeting.

Jennifer Boettcher -

Draft Resolutions related to Structure, Composition, and Purpose

- Request that this resolution be withdrawn and that the spirit of this resolution can be accomplished in the TAG motion process instead of arguing it separately.
- Jennifer noted if you want to choose a path and all the discussion to be over you need to vote for my resolution, but it doesn’t come to council until after the TAG resolution.
- Expensive council is not the issue and lots of people want to participate.
- If approved we won’t need the constitutional amendments and bylaw changes.
- We can adjust the member-at-large number and number of meetings, virtual meetings, etc. to move the association forward.
- Believes policy making should be in a bigger demographic than the proposed Board of Directors, with the many different perspectives/opinions the council brings.
- Invites councilors to edit the resolution document
- Aaron Dobbs, Resolutions Comm – some of the whereas clauses directing bylaws changes need to be changed to direct the Bylaws committee to investigate changes.
- Suggest that we pause this until after the TAG discussions or change the amendments.
- May have more effective ways get the points in this resolution in without a separate resolution – refer to TAG to include?
- Don’t need to fully govern by resolutions – look for other options.
- Eli Mina – procedurally we can integrate Jennifer’s proposals in TAB proposals. The boss is not TAG, the boss is Council.

- Concern with giving policy making responsibility to the Board of Directors.
- Don't want to minimize what has already been done or the value of TAG's work, but technology has changed where we were then and where we are now. Look at the big picture and recognize the things that are different. Technology and the pandemic have changed everything.
- Current Executive board members are elected from Council who have learned about and really understand ALA through their experience on Council. Worried if Board is elected from members, they won't really understand the organization.

Recommendation to attend the BARC meeting discussing the operating agreement.