**TO:** PLA Board of Directors

**FROM:** Melissa Faubel Johnson, Conference Manager

**RE:** PLA 2020 Conference Preliminary Report

**DATE:** April 13, 2020

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

## **OVERVIEW**

With the hard work and support of the Conference Committee, Program and Local subcommittees, along with the PLA Board of Directors and staff, the PLA 2020 Conference was a huge success and allowed us to achieve our goal to lift up equity, diversity, inclusion and social justice in Nashville. This report will address final registration numbers, preliminary financials and some evaluation results. A final report will be available at the next PLA Board meeting.

**KEY CURRENT ACTIVITIES/METRICS**

**Registration**

In Nashville, 8,694 librarians, exhibitors, speakers, guests and others attended PLA 2020. This compares to 7,873 at the 2018 conference in Philadelphia. There was an increase in overall attendee registration (6,598 in 2020 vs. 5,942 in 2018) and an increase in overall exhibitor representatives (2,096 in 2020 vs. 1,931 in 2018). PLA continues to draw the highest attendance of any of the ALA divisional conferences.

**Preconferences & Programs**

The PLA 2020 Conference offered an impressive array of educational programming, giving attendees the opportunity to choose from 9 preconferences and 127 programs. A total of 596 registrants signed up for 3 full day and 6 half day preconferences, compared to 739 preconference registrants across 9 preconferences for PLA 2018. Concurrent program sessions were offered during 10 time slots, an increase from the 8 time slots offered at PLA 2018 and PLA 2016. Only 8 out of the 127 programs had attendance that reached or exceeded their room capacity, indicating that over 95% of programs were assigned to rooms that were an excellent fit for their audience size. Full analysis of program and preconference evaluation data will be completed soon and shared with the Board.

**Virtual Conference**

Once again, PLA offered two days of living programming—including five 60-minute programs each day, plus author interviews and opportunities for networking—especially for a virtual audience. Programs were chosen from among the highest rated in PLA’s session preference survey. We saw a significant increase in registration for this Virtual Conference: 103 individuals and 68 groups, for a total of 171; versus 63 individuals and 46 groups, for a total of 109, in 2018. We used a new virtual conference platform provider this year, CommPartners, and were very pleased with both the platform itself and staff support throughout the planning and production process.

**BUDGET**

**Preliminary Financials**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **2020 Registration Revenues as of April** | **2020 Registration Revenues (Budget)** |
| $1,965,746 | $1,679,365 |
| **2020 Exhibit Revenues**  **as of April** | **2020 Exhibit Revenues (Budget)** |
| $1,735,525 | $1,703,000 |
| 2020 Preconference Revenues as of April | **2020 Preconference Revenues (Budget)** |
| $150,525 | $120,000 |

**ASSESSMENT**

### **Evaluation Results**

PLA invited over 9,100 attendees to complete the post-conference survey and received 2,651 responses, with a 28% response rate. It again used the nationally recognized net promoter score as a key indicator to understand how successful the conference was overall and received a rating of 65.1. A rating of “excellent” is a score of 50 and a rating of “world class” 70.  By comparison, in 2018 PLA received a score of 52. The 2nd most important indicator was to ask libraries to identify a change they planned to implement upon return home based on something they learned at the conference. The breakdown by order of frequency is list as follows:

* **Operational/policy/staffing change (602):** such as improving onboarding and staff training processes; reducing silos; reconsider hiring/interview structure to increase diversity hiring opportunities; bring in social work interns; re-approach customer service approach to be more patron-oriented/addressing difficult patrons; going fine free
* **New programming (442):** such as teen-focused programming or volunteer opportunities; more senior programming; curbside pick-up; podcasts; more diversity in the approach to design
* **EDISJ/Accessibility (359):**  such as improving library approach (general) to improving to diversity and accessibility; providing better support for patrons facing homelessness and/or mental health issues; creating a more diverse collection

**PLA STRATEGIC GOAL LINK (check all that apply)**

TRANSFORMATION  LEADERSHIP  ADV. & AWARENESS  E.D.I.S.J.  ORG. EXCELLENCE