



Core: Leadership, Infrastructure, Futures
a Division of the American Library Association
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Core Report to ALA Council

Lindsay Cronk, Core President 2021 - 2022

Core: Leadership, Infrastructure, Futures continued the meaningful work of defining and sustaining division culture and identity through the successful execution of our 2021-2022 Core Action Plan. While still a start-up, this year offered us proof of concept as we successfully articulated a critical feature of that division identity-- empowering member-driven creativity, called out in our Action Plan as Member-Initiated Programming. Members successfully prototyped and implemented a variety of signature programs that included development of Best Practices Documentation for Academic Library Interviews, Core Reading Club, Core's Open Access Week Fundraising, and the LIFT Awards Pilot. I am inspired by Core's community—intentional, curious, and open. The future of the Division is as bright and vibrant as the many talented individuals who are shaping it.

Core 2021 – 2022 Action Plan

Core's Action Plan provided a framework for concentrating specific efforts that advanced the mission of the division and meet the needs of our members. The plan was decidedly not a long-term strategic plan, nor did it communicate all the activities of the division—this was a key design feature. Rather, the plan communicated a focused, agile, and action-oriented agenda for the division as it undertook our first full year as a new organization.

Yes, we're still that new. It was a privilege and honor to figure out with the Core Board how best to undertake the design of a year-one take-off plan amid a global pandemic that severely limited our actions and our capacity.

The Core 2021-2022 Action Plan was titled "Members First," which reflected our centering of member experience, value for members, and member-driven design. Three key areas of focus were chosen to best ensure successful plan implementation: Membership and Engagement, Member Initiated Programming, and Advocacy Coordination.

Of these three areas, I choose to highlight accomplishments in the second—Member Initiated Programming. I do so because I know that this is the future of the Division—providing a meaningful platform for members to come together and solve problems. Serving members by empowering members. We will continue to expand a broader advocacy agenda based on the input and needs of Core membership.

Best Practices for Academic Library Interviews

Due in part to the sudden and impossibly disruptive forces of Covid-19, the library profession has seen radical change in people's thinking about all aspects of work and life and is coming to a crucible during what has been called a "Great Resignation. Libraries must also answer calls for social justice and

antiracism in our services and practices. In a necessary and rapid prototype, Core Members Xan Arch, Lori Birrell, Kristin Martin, and Renna Redd coalesced a massive group drafting process to bring forward updated [Best Practices for Academic Library Interviews](#).

The Best Practices Document was published open access via ALA's repository and is already being used in a variety of academic libraries ranging from small publics to ARLs. The

Core Reading Club

The Core Reading Club was another pandemic prototype, undertaken with the leadership and facilitation of Miranda Bennett, a Core member and Chair of the Finance Committee. A powerful membership benefit available only to Core members, each month, participants discuss a different book, article, or other materials of interest. Some months this happens asynchronously via email, while other times there might be a synchronous discussion in Zoom—this is the flexibility of being a Division born-digital due to the Pandemic.

The Reading Club is one of Core's most active and lively communities, and its low barriers to participation have allowed for us to practice inclusion even as we learn together. With egalitarian design and thoughtful discussion guides, The Reading Club is where it is at.

Open Access Week

Led by Tabby Farney, the Core Fundraising Committee successfully campaigned to raise funds to ensure all of Core's journal publications are Open Access. These high impact titles will never be behind a paywall again.

LIFT Awards

What if we valued maintenance as much as we valued moving or shaking? Grounded in Core's mission of cultivating and amplifying the collective expertise of library workers in core functions and its tagline, Libraries Infrastructure, and Futures, the LIFT award is designed to support information professionals whose passion, actions, and everyday work warrants recognition and celebration. The award consists of \$2,000 that individuals may use on professional development including, but not limited to, attending ALA Annual, the Core Forum, or take a continuing education class. Awards will be presented at an awards ceremony at the Core Forum and successful applicants will be featured on the Core website, ALA news, etc.

Reflection – Libraries are Radical, and So Are You!

I have had the unique privilege of serving as Core's first President during a tumultuous, dangerous, yet opportune time. To lead a start-up through a pandemic offered me lessons hard-won and sometimes just hard. I am unshaken in my confidence in the importance and value of Core, a space made by and for members with clarity and openness of design along with clarity of purpose. It has never been more important that ALA embrace and celebrate the workers who make knowledge accessible through description, technology, and spaces. Core members are the heart and future of libraries, and the inspiration for my campaign slogan which I gifted to Core.

Libraries are Radical and So Are You. Don't forget it.