

**Ohio Library Council  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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ITEM NO.: **5.A**

MEETING DATE: **July 18, 2025**

SUBJECT: **ALA Councilor Report**

SUBMITTED BY: **Nick Tepe**

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**REPORT FOR INFORMATION**

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Council Actions at Annual Conference

Council held three remarkably productive sessions at annual conference, covering a wide variety of topics that are central to the work of the organization and continue to work on the hard changes that are necessary to ensure ALA's future. While many of these actions are primarily focused on ALA, there were several actions that will affect Chapters or that call on Chapters to take actions in support of the profession.

On the structure of ALA, Council approved a complete update of the Policy Manual to align it with the new Bylaws approved two years ago. This was a long, detailed process that resulted in a much cleaner, easier to understand document outlining how ALA policies are implemented. Council also approved the elimination of the Committee Associate program and the Planning & Budget Assembly, both of which no longer served the purposes for which they were created. However, the most significant change to the structure of ALA was the approval of to reunify the Association for Library Services to Children and the Young Adult Library Services Association. These divisions were split several decades ago, but in the current fiscal environment it no longer made sense to maintain two separate divisions for these interest groups. The two divisions will now begin a process that will last for at least a year to determine how to merge the functions and infrastructure of the two divisions. This will be a challenging, detailed process, but the model of the Core division being formed out of the merger of several divisions should provide a good roadmap for the divisions to follow.

Council approved new interpretations of the ALA Core Values. This was requested following the approval of the new Core Values last year in response to concerns about several values that were not included from previous versions. The intent of these interpretations is to make clear how our core values support our work and lead to the outcomes that we want to see from our profession. Council also completed the approval of new interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights in preparation for the publication of the eleventh edition of the Intellectual Freedom Manual this Fall. Since last September, the members and liaisons of the Intellectual Freedom Committee have been reviewing the current interpretations, and in October the committee formed working groups to revise the interpretations deemed to be in most need of review and revision. The goal of these revisions is to ensure that the Intellectual Freedom Manual is written in plain language that is accessible to any librarian at any size library who finds themselves on the receiving end of challenges and in need of assistance navigating their response. Council previously held one special meeting to approve the first round of revisions.

Finally, there were two actions of Council that I believe will have a direct effect on OLC's work. First, Council approved ALA's new Strategic Plan for the next three years (attached). Last fall, the ALA Executive Board initiated a strategic planning process by engaging expert consultants to develop the next comprehensive strategic plan for the organization. This

**5.A: ALA Councilor Report**

plan was built from robust data analysis, focus groups, interviews, and member surveys, and centers the voices of members while charting a purposeful course forward. At the core of this plan is an updated mission: *Empowering and advocating for libraries and library workers to ensure equitable access to information for all*. It is anchored by a bold vision: *Libraries thrive so everyone can succeed*.

While the most important elements of the plan focus on taking steps to ensure ALA's future fiscal stability and streamlining the organization to respond more nimbly to the challenges facing the profession, there are a number of objectives under the "advocacy" domain that Chapters will be involved with and benefit from. In particular I believe we should pay attention to the objective to "launch a national public awareness campaign highlighting intellectual freedom, access to information, and the societal value of libraries in democracy and education." As we continue to face false narratives about what libraries do and what libraries stand for, this sort of public awareness campaign is much needed to help turn the tide of anti-library actions. I hope that this will result in a campaign that is comparable to the very successful "Libraries Transform" campaign of several years ago.

Council also approved a resolution calling on all Chapters, Divisions, Round Tables, and other units of ALA and affiliated organizations to increase awareness of and support for the Merritt Fund. The Merritt Fund provides support for library workers who are facing employment challenges based on their identity or for defending intellectual freedom. While the Fund has existed for decades, in the current environment it is facing unprecedented requests for support, and not enough donations to meet that demand. I recommend that OLC consider ways to make our members aware of the fund for any challenges they may face, and encourage library supporters in Ohio to support the fund as well.

#### New Executive Director

ALA has selected Daniel J. Montgomery to be its next executive director. He will replace Interim Executive Director Leslie Burger. Montgomery has worked on behalf of public education and the rights of workers for more than two decades. He was elected to a three-year term as president of the 103,000-member Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) in October 2010 and has been unanimously reelected every three years since then. He will start at ALA on November 10.

The steering committee chose Montgomery because of his commitment to public institutions, his comfort working across diverse and difficult political situations, his service to both cities and rural areas, and his experience managing a complex, member-driven organization.

Montgomery holds a master's degree in education from the School of Education and Social Policy at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, and a bachelor's degree from University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Read the full press release [here](#).

#### IMLS Update

On June 6th, the federal judge overseeing the *ALA v. Sonderling* lawsuit declined to block the Trump administration's efforts to dismantle the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The ruling will allow the administration's cuts at the independent agency while the case proceeds. On May 6, a federal district court in Rhode Island issued a preliminary injunction in a separate case, prohibiting the agency from shutting down while that case is pending. That decision remains in effect. With this ruling, the IMLS may face

#### **5.A: ALA Councilor Report**

devastating cuts to grants and services that will make it impossible to operate as required by Congress. The case will now proceed on the merits in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. Read the full press release [here](#).

## ALA Strategic Plan

**Mission:** Empowering and advocating for libraries and library workers to ensure equitable access to information for all.

**Vision:** Libraries thrive so everyone can succeed.

**Values:** Access, Equity, Intellectual Freedom and Privacy, Public Good, Sustainability

Domain	A. Advocacy	B. Member Experience	C. Organizational Redesign	D. Financial Sustainability	E. Professional Development
Goal Statement	Champion libraries and empower advocates to support our core values	Deliver a personalized member experience that deepens engagement, strengthens retention, and reinforces ALA's value to the members at every stage of their careers.	Redesign and strengthen ALA's organizational structure to foster clarity, accountability, and collaborative leadership.	Optimize ALA's capacity for impact through disciplined financial stewardship, streamlined operations, and resource allocation into mission-aligned growth.	Offer educational and leadership opportunities that promote lifelong learning and career advancement.
	Strategic Objectives	Strategic Objectives	Strategic Objectives	Strategic Objectives	Strategic Objectives
Strategic Objectives	1. Develop a unified, proactive advocacy strategy centered on ALA's values of access, equity, and intellectual freedom.	1. Redesign the membership model to improve flexibility and demonstrate value.	1. Optimize programs and align organizational functions in accordance with ALA Forward recommendations.	1. End operating deficit spending, adhere to clear/realistic/reality sized budgeting practices.	1. Expand meaningful opportunities for engagement by providing a breadth of educational and informational resources such as virtual learning, networking, leadership and career pathways, mentoring, and certifications.
	2. Expand partnerships with aligned organizations to impact ALA's reach, credibility, public visibility, and policy influence	2. Improve all member-facing digital platforms.	2. Realign elements of the ALA governance structure to provide for more efficient decision-making.	2. Review programs/services to identify opportunities for consolidation, streamlining, or elimination.	2. Support library workers with a variety of skills and knowledge to support their learning and professional growth.
	3. Build an infrastructure to rapidly respond to opportunities and crises.	3. Reimagine the conference experience to engage more of the membership.	3. Advance the "Our ALA" model.	3. Centralize functions and operations to eliminate duplication and maximize efficiency.	3. Research and gather data to identify educational needs of library workers to develop opportunities in emerging and evolving trends.
	4. Empower advocates with toolkits, templates and legislative updates to amplify their voice at the local and state level.	4. Explore new ways of communicating and engaging with members.	4. Implement consistent onboarding, training and leadership development programs for Board members and staff in alignment with association and non profit management best practices.	4. Redesign or sunset low-performing, financially un-sustainable or outdated offerings.	4. Support and strengthen accreditation function of the association.
	5. Launch a national public awareness campaign highlighting intellectual freedom, access to information, and the societal value of libraries in democracy and education.			5. Create and invest operating surpluses to build a reserve fund to support the association's financial health.	

Notates: urgent priorities