

LLAMA President's Message

Catherine Friedman



Is now the time for you to participate? LLAMA offers lots of opportunities to make a difference!

I am now a little more than half way through my year as LLAMA President. Reflecting back on why I chose to take on this very important responsibility I don't see my reasons to have changed. I continue to have a strong belief in LLAMA and its mission, and my interest in giving back to LLAMA and my fellow members in a meaningful way has not diminished. For me, it continues to be a great honor and privilege to have been chosen to lead LLAMA for this year.

I have just returned from the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia and want to report on some of what happened there.

The LLAMA Board of Directors, which is made up of LLAMA Executive Committee, the chairs of each of our Sections, and the New Leaders' Representative, meet twice during the meeting to conduct association business, but more importantly, to identify strategic initiatives LLAMA should pursue in response to the findings of a recent LLAMA membership survey and the "kitchen table" conversations currently underway all around ALA. For more about these association-wide conversations, see the column by ALA's Executive Director, Keith Michael Fiels, in the January/February 2014 issue of [American Libraries](#).

After discussing these findings, the Board discussed ways in which LLAMA could become a more welcoming, connected and increasingly participatory professional community while also providing the support and learning opportunities crucial to our members. So here are some of the things your association's leadership will be working on this spring:

- Developing and implementing a plan to provide consistent and targeted communications to new and continuing LLAMA members.
- Using social media to more actively engage with LLAMA members.
- Developing new ways to use [Library Leadership & Management](#) (LL&M) as a platform not only for publishing content, but also as a jumping off point for online discussions surrounding that content.

- Forming a task group to direct LLAMA's efforts to better meet the networking and professional development needs of library leaders working in the public library setting. One activity already planned is to hold a LLAMA networking "happy hour" at the upcoming Public Library Association conference. If you happen to be attending PLA, we hope to see you there.
- Planning for our own "kitchen table" conversations, first to be held at the annual conference in Las Vegas and then to be continued as a web-based conversation afterwards. Both of these events will be led by LLAMA Vice-President Diane Bruxvoort.
- Creating new ways to extend conference programming to last beyond conference, including implementing "Continue the Conversation..." sessions.

What we are trying to achieve with all of these and other activities, is to strengthen LLAMA's connections to its members, allow for greater interaction between LLAMA members, and to identify additional avenues for extending professional development beyond conferences. If you have other ideas and suggestions for how we might do this, please let me know.

And there were other happenings at Midwinter I would like to share:

The recently established New Professionals Section of LLAMA held its first meetings. This was exciting for those present and for the rest of us in LLAMA. This new section is intended to help new professionals and LIS students gain the leadership and management skills they need as they lead from where they are and as they move into influential roles. In order to allow the section to be more agile in responding to opportunities and to rapidly implement strategies, it will carry out its work through short-term project teams rather than through traditional committees. This approach should allow more LLAMA members to participate without the traditional terms of service required for committees. Initially the new section will focus on three things:

- Developing its online presence, perhaps a portal which will be easily accessible to those interested in researching and cultivating their leadership abilities,
- Building connections with LIS schools and Student Chapters, and
- Developing a conference "buddy" program - more along the lines of a peer, this buddy would serve as a short-term guide to a new professional.

If you are interested in knowing more about or participating in the work of this new section, please contact Tyler Dzuba <tdzuba@gmail.com>.

The LLAMA Leadership Development Committee held a seminar at Midwinter entitled: "Who do YOU think you are? Finding your leadership style." The seminar covered the subject of leadership styles and how different styles suit different situations. The two presenters were Steven Bell of Temple University and Rhea Blanken of Blanken Consulting/Results Technology, Inc. I was able to attend this seminar and came away with several things to think about. These included:

- In reflecting on who one views as role models and as great leaders, what are their fundamental characteristics and values?
- Are there ways that I could translate and use those values or characteristics in my day-to-day work?
- Should these become part of my leadership style?

And it was good to be reminded that we, regardless of the position we are in, serve as role models for others, especially in the work setting. And because of that, we need to be very attentive to the words and attitudes we portray. One thing that Ms. Blanken emphasized: because we build our own organizations, if you want to change your organization, you need to change your language. You should use language that reflects what you want your organization to become.

This last statement made me think of something I learned during an executive coaching program I participated in last year: when you are a leader, regardless of the level you work at within an organization, you must be attentive to the 3 V's: the Visual (your body language and the way you present yourself), the Vocal (the tone and inflection you use when saying things), and the Verbal (what you actually say). These are all very important because those around you are watching, listening, and learning from you. Your three V's will impact how those around you respond to you and react to what you have to say.

And lastly, at Midwinter, the members of LLAMA's various groups continued to plan both online and face-to-face continuing education activities, including those for the Annual Conference in Las Vegas. I encourage all of you to take advantage of the LLAMA webinars to be held this spring and, if you are planning to join us in Las Vegas, take advantage of all the great programming that will be happening there. A list of all the LLAMA activities at the Annual Conference will be sent out in advance so you can plan accordingly. And I personally invite you to attend the LLAMA President's Program which will feature Carrie Messina, Vice-President for Wynn & Encore. Ms. Messina's presentation will focus on: "Leaders as Followers: You Don't Have to be in Charge to be a Leader," and will take place on Saturday, June 28th, from 10:30-noon.

In closing, you will soon see a call for volunteers for service on our Division-level committees (Continuing Education, Financial Advancement, Leadership Competencies, Leadership Development, Membership, Mentoring, and Program), and on the committees of our Sections (Buildings and Equipment, Fund Raising and Financial Development, Human Resources, Library Organization and Management, Measurement, Assessment, and Evaluation, Public Relations and Marketing, and Systems and Services). As I mentioned above, the New Professionals Section will not have standing committees, but they will be seeking volunteers also. When you see this call, I hope that you will seriously consider contributing your time and talents to LLAMA. We need you to contribute to making our association work for us and your participation on our various committees is critical to this happening.

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