

LLAMA President's Message



Jeff Steely

I don't know if my LLAMA experience is typical, but I think it is quite common. As an early career professional, I tried to figure out where I fit in with ALA. As a manager of a small team, and seeing a need to provide leadership for my team and within my institution, I "crashed" a couple LLAMA committee meetings. These groups welcomed me enthusiastically. The next thing I knew, I was chairing program planning committees and putting together a pre-conference! From my perspective, the Library Leadership and Management Association is a welcoming place. With the recent addition of the New Professionals Section, I feel like LLAMA is more welcoming than ever before. And yet, we have a lot of room for improvement. I am excited about the direction we set at our most recent LLAMA Board meetings, and anticipate some meaningful changes in the next couple years.

The LLAMA Board adopted a brief, one-year strategic directions document in San Francisco. We also decided to establish a task force to review our organizational structure and propose new directions for our association, with a goal of engaging more effectively with all members. We aim to provide leadership and management development training accessible to everyone, and opportunities for members to contribute to the work of the organization beyond traditional committee service and conference attendance. I welcome your ideas for making your membership in LLAMA more valuable.

The 2015 ALA Annual Conference concluded with an announcement by incoming ALA President Sari Feldman of a new public relations campaign with the theme "Libraries Transform" (librariestransform.org). The campaign utilizes provocative statements which challenge conventional images of the library and point to the ways libraries transform their schools, colleges, universities, and communities. LLAMA members, as professionals seeking to provide leadership in these changing organizations, have a special role to play in making sure our libraries live up to the promise of the Libraries Transform message. Regardless of the positions we hold, we all have the opportunity, and I would argue the obligation, to provide transformative leadership.

Toward that end, my emphasis for the year, in these messages and beyond, will be a focus on leadership through effective communication. My greatest failures as a leader have been when I have fallen short in this area: when I have said the wrong thing; when I have failed to say what needed to be said; when I have been unclear; when I have stated exactly what I meant to say, but failed to repeat it often enough. On the other hand, the work I am most proud of has been accomplished with clear, frequent, and honest communication. I look forward to exploring this theme in the months ahead. For now, know that I want to hear from you as we work to build a better LLAMA.

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