

## LLAMA President's Message

Anne Cooper Moore



LLAMA members have the opportunity to vote from March 9 – April 1, 2020, on replacing our by-laws with those of Core, the proposed new ALA section to replace LLAMA, ALCTS, and LITA. Volunteers from the three divisions have been toiling behind the scenes for two years to imagine a framework for a new organization that would provide library employees in technical services, technology, leadership, and management professional development and networking opportunities throughout their careers. Now it is up to the members to decide if they are willing to work together to flesh out the details of Core to make it their own source for the activities they have enjoyed and more to be developed. Core is envisioned as a flexible, open organization that will be what the members make of it – much as LLAMA reinvented itself to be over the past few years. Dues will be a bit higher than what we paid before at \$70, but we will be getting far more member services since our staff will be able to specialize and focus. Here are the benefits of Core to current members as expressed on the [core.ala.org](http://core.ala.org) website:

- Core will continue to support the groups in which members currently find their professional homes while also creating new opportunities to work across traditional division lines.
- Core will strengthen and expand our existing member engagement efforts and provide additional career-support services.
- Core will reduce organizational overlap and complexity allowing staff to be more focused on member services and to specialize.
- Core will be a model for ALA's future reorganization.

As LLAMA achieved with its reorganization into communities of practice, we have gained the support of ALA and Council for the creation of Core. With the news from ALA of its financial troubles, the move by LLAMA, ALCTS, and LITA to form Core is a perfect example of how important it is for libraries and organizations to conduct “forward thinking,” one of LLAMA's 14 Foundational Competencies for Library Leaders and Managers. Thinking through the possible scenarios and preparing approaches is crucial for leaders and organizations to be successful. The leadership of the three divisions read the tea leaves of declining membership, declining conference attendance, changing publishing and marketing trends, and changing needs of the membership just in time to prepare a transition plan that will serve our members for many years to come and may become the model for other divisions/sections of ALA.

While ALA is one of the oldest and largest non-profit professional associations in the U.S., its current problems demonstrate how challenging it is to manage change in all organizations and especially in older organizations, and in this case, one that has been member-directed. ALA added new, innovative programs frequently over the years, but had difficulty stewarding the integrating, de-duplicating, and right-sizing that is required over the decades. It was tough to say no to member initiatives. Sound familiar in your library and institution? In libraries, we have traditionally added new services, but rarely stopped doing anything. It is difficult to take away a service patrons value and come to expect. But we must stay within our means and “forward thinking” and knowledge management can help us be prepared for the future. So in your library or even in your position try to anticipate the threats and changes that are on the horizon and how you might adapt to turn them into opportunities for creating a better future. That is what we strive to do with Core.

Here are the benefits of Core for members of all three existing benefits:

- Increased member engagement staff to develop the courses, workshops, programs, and opportunities you want.
- Increased member advocacy staff that can focus on increasing awareness of the value of library work.
- Responsive organizational design meant to empower communities to build what they need.
- An extended network that supports an increasingly mobile library workforce that communicates more virtually.
- Equitable access and less complexity that supports more meaningful volunteer work.
- A stronger voice in ALA’s future.

Here are the benefits of Core specifically for LLAMA members:

- Many people are members of LITA and/or ALCTS as well as LLAMA, and joining the groups will lower costs and allow people to be active in all aspects of the combined groups.
- Mentoring opportunities will expand, both for potential mentors and mentees.
- Professional development and programming will increase and will allow for cross training and elimination of redundant topics.
- Librarians will be able to share knowledge with each other. Access to the technical expertise of ALCTS and LITA members will help LLAMA members be better supervisors, managers, and leaders of staff in these areas.
- A synergy will form between members who have similar interests, and there is a possibility of forming new groups or cohorts.
- There will be opportunities to take what works very well for one group and apply it to the whole. For example, the LLAMA Mentoring Program and the LLAMA New Professionals Community are models of best practices that can be explored and expanded to the other groups.

Just a reminder of the exciting collaborative programming that is coming in 2020 whether or not the Core vote passes. LLAMA members will benefit from having both an online conference (The Exchange, May 4, 6, and 8, 2020) and an in-person conference (Core Forum, Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel, November 19-21, 2020). The Exchange is a 3-

afternoon (Noon-4 p.m. EST) online program with the theme “Building the Future Together.” The themes are leadership, change management, continuity, sustainability, and collaborations.

The LITA/ALCTS/LLAMA Forum is a 3-day, hands-on, interactive conference focused on the intersection of technology, collections, preservation, assessment, metadata, and leadership. The theme of the Forum is Intention and Serendipity: Exploration of Ideas through Purposeful and Chance Connections. The call for proposals ends March 30, 2020.

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