LLAMA President's Message

Anne Cooper Moore

Congratulations to the members of LLAMA, ALCTS, and LITA who voted in March to form a new ALA Division called Core: Leadership, Infrastructure, Futures! The voting results were unequivocal:

- ALCTS: 91% yes
- LITA: 96% yes
- LLAMA: 96% yes

We are not finished with the approval process yet as ALA Council and the ALA Executive Board have to approve the formation of Core at meetings the last week in June. If they approve, Core will launch on September 1, 2020. A transitional board will lead Core from July 1 until the election of a new president and other board members in September.

In the meantime, we are excited about developing a new, adaptable division to integrate our separate organizations. Now the details need to be worked out by working groups that pull together active members of existing committees, sections, and interest groups. The current leadership team (might be named the Core Implementation Task Force) that is following the Core Steering Committee and is composed of the past, current, and future presidents of ALCTS, LITA, and LLAMA and the ALA Staff of the three current divisions has developed a list of working groups to propose how to integrate activities from the three divisions in these broad areas:

- Awards, Grants, and Scholarships Working Group
- Committees Working Group
- Communications Working Group
- Conference Programming Working Group
- Continuing Education Working Group
- Fundraising and Sponsorships Working Group
- Interest Groups Working Group
- Member Engagement Working Group
- Publications Working Group
- Standards Working Group

A facilitator from the Core Implementation Task Force has been assigned to lead each Working Group and to populate it with a membership of 10-12 people that is representative of our existing divisions. To find members of the working groups, we will draw on members of existing committees and groups in the three divisions and the over 60 members who have already volunteered to join the work of Core through the form at the "Get Involved" section (https://core.ala.org/get-involved/) of the Core website (https://core.ala.org). There will be plenty of opportunities for everyone to contribute their expertise to make Core the best it can be.

The Core Transition Committee (or temporary leadership team) is discussing which functions should be performed at the division level as opposed to the section level and some functions that might be coordinated at the division level, but have more focused committees at the section level.

Core's initial sections will be:

- Access and Equity
- Assessment
- Leadership
- Metadata and Collections
- Operations and Buildings
- Technology

The current presidents of LLAMA, ALCTS, and LITA are planning joint communications for the three divisions in June and July to prepare our members for working and learning together in Core. We are planning multiple events, so keep on the lookout for announcements on ALA Connect and via email.

With the shift of ALA Annual to a virtual format with fewer programs and no committee meetings, we will shift some of the programs to the Core Forum in November (see below) and provide more virtual membership activities over the course of the coming months. Committees and groups will continue their work virtually throughout the year as we transition to our new Core world.

By the time this column is published, LLAMA, ALCTS, and LITA will have hosted our first joint event, The Exchange, on May 4, 6, and 8. Hopefully, we will have seen the synergy of our current divisions working together to provide an exceptional continuing education and networking event on the theme of "Building the Future Together." The programming on leadership, change management, continuity, sustainability, and collaborations and the three-day spacing across a full week gave us a look at the emerging world of virtual conferences, programming, and continuing education in the COVID-19 world. In early May, the planning committee decided to move our other upcoming conference, the Core Forum, online as well. The Core Forum will be held virtually during November (maybe on the originally planned dates of November 19-21) with the theme of Intention and Serendipity: Exploration of Ideas through Purposeful and Chance Connections. We will have programming on the intersection of technology, collections, preservation, assessment, metadata, and leadership. We hope to hold the subsequent Core Forum in a physical form in November 2021 in Baltimore.

Speaking of virtual, COVID-19 has transformed our world and libraries are no exception. With schools and public libraries closed and academic libraries operating mostly virtually to support online students, we are beginning to think about what the future will hold for our

collections, services, and operations. We all responded quickly to the parameters we were directed to adhere to at the inception of stay-at-home orders. How to keep people whose work revolves around the building, such as shelvers, facilities, custodial, event coordinators, catalogers, digitization specialists, hourly workers, and student assistants, working remotely has been a challenge. How to get physical materials without online counterparts to those who need them has been another challenge. How to get materials and equipment back from graduating students demanded creativity on the part of many libraries that had waived fines and extended due dates. Some academic libraries worked with Residence Life to let students drop off library books and equipment at the dorms as they moved out, coordinated pick-ups at remote locations, and sent mailing labels a la Amazon to ensure students had ample opportunity to return items, so they could graduate and obtain transcripts.

Now we need to figure out how to re-open gradually and under changed circumstances. How to obtain scarce resources such as masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, cleaning products, and sneeze guards is consuming time and resources. Interpreting the rapidly evolving and conflicting plans of jurisdictions above the library who directly influence and sometimes control what we can and cannot do. I cannot recall how many types of plans I've created in the last two months and each one continues to evolve on a daily basis. I observe closely what they do in grocery stores, Walmart, Costco, and hospitals to see what we should do in my own library. It looks like wearing face coverings and social distancing are here to stay for the near future. How to get people in and out, how to direct traffic within the building, how to social distance computers with network jacks only in specific locations, how do deal with moving people in multi-story libraries that rely on elevators for transportation in the building, how to serve people safely at public service desks, how much signage is effective, how much staff is needed to handle an unpredictable number of patrons, and how to disinfect facilities, equipment, and collections are all consuming our head-space as we plan for the stages of re-opening. But libraries continue to be as resilient and adaptable as always, placing an emphasis on high quality customer service that safely helps the public get accurate information and resources to learn, grow, and fulfill their responsibilities.

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