

## Operating Agreement Work Group

September 11, 2020 Meeting Notes

Attending: Clara Bohrer, Diane Chen, Sophia Sotilleo, Miranda Bennett, Christine Dulaney, Clara Harmon, Wanda Brown, Peter Hepburn, Tammy Dillard Steels, Kara Malenfant, Kerry Ward, Lorelle Swader, Denise Moritz, Melissa Wailing, Kathi Kromer, Marsha Burgess, Keith Brown, and Maggie Farrell.

Discussion on Values. The Operating Agreement, section 2, defines values that underscore the Agreement. We will consider these values as the foundation for the Operating agreement. The Work Group discussed the following:

1. Do these values reflect the Core Values of ALA? Do these values support our ethics?

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/corevalues>

<http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/section2/40corevalues>

This section is about the spirit of how we work but it lends itself more to operational or business practices.

There is some confusion as we have library values so perhaps this section should be renamed – internal operations? Guiding principles?

Authority – stumbling on the term

Is Autonomy in conflict with unity?

2 sides to a coin – authority might take away from Divisions.

Autonomy – confusion as it sometimes appears to be 13 independent organizations.

It is not working well now – competition and lack of incentives.

What do we believe we should be?

Need guiding principles for day-to-day operations

Clarity of boundaries.

Why do these apply only to the operating agreement? Shouldn't these apply to the entire operation?

Lack of specificity.

Have to move away from the 1980's – this is not working.

2. Are there values that are missing?

Diversity does not mention inclusion and equity.

Innovation

Improvement

Sustainability

Responsiveness – service to members

Transparency

Accountability

Financial stability

Communication

Flexibility

3. Are these values still relevant?

As operating practices – yes

Need to be updated.

Not reflective of modern times

4. These values reflect Divisions – are there additional values that would reflect Roundtables?  
Roundtables should be included or another policy should be developed for roundtables.

### *Current Organizational Values of ALA*

This statement reflects the current organizational values of the American Library Association and was developed through reference to existing ALA documents.

1. *Unity*  
ALA is one association. It has a single set of administrative, financial, and personnel policies and procedures, as well as indivisible assets. All members of Divisions are members of ALA. Divisions and all other ALA units are inextricably interrelated in structure, personnel, resources, overall mission, and operations.
2. *Diversity*  
ALA has a stake in the work of each of its Divisions. Division activities and services are of value and importance to the Association. They provide for a rich and diverse program that gives opportunities to all segments of the profession for involvement, leadership, and participation in activities that carry out the mission, goals, and priorities of the Association.
3. *Authority*  
Recognizing the significant contribution, resources, and expertise of its Divisions, ALA delegates to each Division the authority and responsibility to represent the Association in designated areas. Each Division provides unique programs and services to its members, to all members of the Association, to the profession of librarianship, to the broader educational community, and to the public at large.
4. *Autonomy*  
ALA provides leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library service. ALA values the strength and effectiveness of its Divisions. Divisions are best able to carry out their missions when their members have the autonomy, independence, and freedom to pursue goals and objectives of particular concern to them, as well as to participate democratically in the Division's direction, governance, and financial decisions.
5. *Collaboration/Cooperation*  
ALA and its Divisions have opportunities through the Association's unique governance and administrative structure to stimulate and build on one another's strengths and resources to advance shared, as well as diverse, goals.

### **Next Meeting Preparation: Guiding Principles for Our Work**

As we consider the Operating Agreement, we should develop some guiding principles or assumptions. Below are the principles developed in 1988. We want to determine what principles should guide our work and revision of the Operating Agreement. When we are close to our final report, we will return to these principles and determine if our recommendations reflect these principles.

Questions to consider:

1. What additional assumptions or principles should we consider?

2. What principles might no longer apply?
3. Do these principles also apply to Roundtables?

From the 1988 COPES #9.1 Meeting Notes - Guiding Principles/Basic Assumptions

1. The Operating Agreement will be forged within the framework of the current Constitution and By-Laws and current organizational structure. (This means Divisions will continue to establish their own dues rates, will continue to retain and control all dues and other division-generated revenues, and will continue to be responsible for all direct costs. Staff will continue to be subject to ALA personnel policies and procedures.)
2. ALA, because it has delegated Association-wide and profession-wide responsibilities to divisions, should provide an equitable base of financial support to the divisions, to ensure that the divisions can carry out these responsibilities. (This base can then be determined in a number of ways and enhanced by formulas based on membership size or programmatic considerations.)
3. Membership dues are fundamental to ALA's programmatic and financial structure; thus, membership recruitment and retention should be encouraged and financial incentives provided for this activity.
4. ALA must provide a flexible way for the Association, including its divisions, to control direct and indirect costs.
5. Simple is better. While maintaining accountability and sound financial management, bureaucracy and amount of staff and member time devoted to financial issues should be kept to a minimum.
6. Division budget decisions should be made at the division level. This includes the use of support dollars regardless of source.
7. Long-range financial planning is necessary and annual budgets should be considered within a multi-year framework.