

ALA Annual Report
June 22-26, 2018
New Orleans, LA

Megan Hodge, ALA Councilor at Large
Virginia Commonwealth University

All Annual Council documents (marked 'AC'): <http://www.ala.org/aboutala/node/3868/>

ALA Annual attendance: 17,599, which includes 5,176 exhibitors

A major focus for ALA leadership this conference was ALA's organizational effectiveness and structure, continuing a conversation on this topic that began several years ago with several years of 'kitchen table conversations' at Midwinter and that [was a major focus at Midwinter 2018](#). Recognizing that ALA is so large that it can be overwhelming for new members to navigate, that its size likely results in inefficiencies, and that the association must be relevant to all library workers--not just librarians, President Jim Neal [announced](#), just before the conference, the formation of a steering committee to investigate alternative structures and member engagement strategies over the next 18 months. The timeline for the steering committee notes that implementation of the steering committee's action plan begin with the spring 2020 ALA election. Major changes, such as the merging of divisions (ACRL, ALCTS, etc.), and major initiatives, such as stronger integration with state library associations, are all on the table. In the meantime, the steering committee is actively seeking member feedback, which included facilitated conversations at Annual. Virtual options for providing feedback will soon be made available as well.

ALA's budgetary ceiling for FY19, approved by Council at this conference, includes strategic investments in development (fundraising); advocacy for libraries, including in the federal budget; and information technology to upgrade ALA's website. A potential funding source that elicited controversy is the possible sale of 50 E. Huron Street, the ALA headquarters building in Chicago. ALA is looking into whether an alternate location in Chicago would be more cost-effective.

Council unanimously passed a resolution honoring African Americans who fought library segregation, calling out ALA for its complicity in this segregation and directing it to publicly apologize to African Americans for 'wrongs committed against them.' The resolution will be published in a forthcoming issue of *American Libraries* and is worth a read; you can do so [here](#).

Council also adopted a resolution directing ALA to work with the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table (GLBTRT) to ensure a "sufficient number" of gender neutral bathrooms in convention centers at ALA conferences (including those hosted by divisions, such as ACRL). While ALA has for a number of years stipulated a certain number of gender neutral bathrooms in its contracts with convention centers, the resolution notes that number has been

insufficient, signage has been inadequate, and there has been insufficient advertisement of the bathrooms on conference maps. The resolution directs ALA to resolve these issues at future conferences in concert with the GLBTRT.

Additionally, the Special Task Force on Sustainability shared its [report](#) with recommendations for how ALA and libraries can be economically feasible, environmentally sound, and socially equitable; ALA's Washington Office has been [using your membership dollars to good effect](#), including preparations for the 2020 Census (the first to offer an online option); and the Freedom to Read Foundation continues to do [marvelous work](#) fighting censorship and protecting free speech in various court cases.

Interested in running for Council (or ALA President or Treasurer) yourself? The nomination deadline has been extended to August 3rd. Fill out the form [here](#).