- Welcome and Introductions
  - Katie Sundstrom
  - Julia Carlis
  - Jen Newberg
  - Rebekah Vrabel
  - Hannah Buckland
  - Jim Weygand is a member but was absent

- Purpose and Goals of the Committee: (According to MLA Policies)
  - Develop and Implement an annual plan of action to recruit and retain membership
  - Recruit members at conferences and other association activities
  - Host “new members and first-time attendees” activities at conferences
  - Welcome new MLA members to the association
  - We’re starting late this year, so our goal is to develop a plan to implement next year

- Membership Research Review
  - Our Questions:
    - Is 10% market saturation normal? Or are we abnormally low compared to other state library associations?
  - Our Points of Note:
    - Only 55% of Library Directors are members, which seems really low.
      - We’d expect the Directors to see value and become members first, before we’d expect their employees to do the same thing.
      - Perhaps we should try to target them as a starting point.
    - We have hardly any MLA Friends, Supporters, or Trustees anymore.
      - This group was probably large in the past, since they’re a division, but only 24 people now.
      - Do we want to find ways to bring them back into the organization?
      - Should we recommend local networks bring them in? For example, Library Directors speak to their Library Boards and Friends Groups about the association, rather than the association approaching them directly.
        - To take this approach, we should probably provide an advertising toolkit that members could use to reach out to others.

- Community Conversations Feedback
  - Most common reasons for not being a member:
    - COST! (top reason)
    - Time commitment
    - Perceived lack of value in membership
      - Can’t attend conferences, and doesn’t see other benefits
      - Limited benefits for Academic librarians (any non-public librarian, really)
Brainstorming Action Steps

Communication

- Review Current Messaging
  - Content
    - How can we stress our value?
    - Maybe we can incorporate achievements of the past year?
  - Timing
    - More frequent emails?
    - More follow-up emails?
    - Send regular update emails throughout the year?

- Personalizing the Messaging
  - Targeted Introductions from ARLD, PLD, etc. These emails will be more personal, explain information/events specifically relating to that group, and will seek feedback for targeted growth in each division.
  - Personal Outreach for expiring members from either the division leader or someone in the division who is a personal acquaintance.
  - Having messaging come from a personal acquaintance is more likely to matter to the individual; it is more caring.
  - Splitting out into personalized messaging (even beyond division chair messaging) may be too complex though; we’ll need to look into it more.

Advertising

- Advertising Toolkit
  - Create an infographic that can be widely shared and posted
    - Explain what MLA does (show that we’re important to all libraries!)
    - Stress the sliding scale for membership dues, making it more affordable
    - Highlight that there are different levels of involvement, from zero time commitment (still an important member!) right on up to officer levels
    - Make sure that Academic Libraries, School Libraries, Special Libraries, etc. are included as well. Too much focus in the past has been on public libraries, making these other groups feel left out.
  - Teaching tool for how to use/maximize your membership
    - Ideas included: pre-recorded video, slideshow, live Q&A
    - Perhaps a few tools; one for general membership, another for each division, and a third specifically highlighting the different ways to engage
  - Create a cohesive advertising campaign in general
    - Advertising materials are created and readily available
    - Advertising materials are updated on a yearly schedule (don’t forget to keep it all current!)

Retainment-specific Strategies

- Highlight years of continuous membership on a member’s profile page
- Unlock badges for years of continuous membership on a member’s profile page
- Create MLA Member badges for use in social media profiles, like LinkedIn
• Build a culture where those MLA badges are valued
• Have a shout-out to members who’ve reached special anniversary years. (We already have “welcome new members” in each newsletter; why not “congratulations on 10 years of membership!” messages too?)
  o Adding Value
    ▪ Improve Networking Opportunities
      • Opt-in listservs that allow members to ask questions of other members whenever they need to
    ▪ Greater MN Outreach
      • Provide more virtual possibilities for involvement with MLA
      • Provide more asynchronous possibilities for involvement with MLA
      • Look at moving more of MLA into a virtual format as a whole
    ▪ Turning more of a focus to including Academic/School/Special/etc. libraries
  o Conferences
    ▪ Design a program for new members / first-time conference attendees
    ▪ Host a virtual conference follow-up program about a month after the annual conference
      • Help re-connect members who have just started networking
      • Help members follow-up on what they learned from the conference and wanted to implement, but may need more support to follow through with
      • Opportunity to collect more feedback about the conference, which can be incorporated to further improve the conferences in future

• Other
  o Minnesota Library Foundation
    ▪ The Questions
      • What exactly is it?
      • How exactly does it relate to us?
      • Who exactly is in charge of it?
    ▪ Notes Regarding
      • Its website hasn’t been updated in 3 years; that needs fixing
      • Is this something we should be looking at as a potential other funding source for MLA? Should we be including a notice about it with our advertising for those who want to donate? Or is this something completely separate and we shouldn’t work to incorporate it with our membership drive?
  o Finances
    ▪ Cost is a big concern. Is it possible to have folks make a smaller monthly payment instead of one big annual sum? Transaction charges might be against us on this, but would it be possible to have the transaction charges tacked on to the member’s bill instead of taken from our own account? If we did direction from checking account instead of credit card, could we avoid those transaction charges? Are there other ways we could make this work?
    ▪ General Note: MLA is a 501c6, so we can’t accept donations. (Or, at least, they wouldn’t be tax deductible.) Therefore, we will not add any language about considering donating to MLA in any of our membership communications.
What groups have a say in budgets? As in, who should we be considering advertising to? (For example, who could build professional development funds into a budget, allowing the library’s budget to help cover the cost of employees’ membership?)

- Library Boards
- City Councils
- University Deans
- Regional Library Associations
- Unions
- School Boards

**Action Plan**

- **To be done immediately (Before next meeting)**
  - Current Communications Improvement:
    - Jen will send a Google Doc with the language we’re currently sending to members about welcomes, renewals, etc.
    - We will review this language and see if we can further improve it, adding more value-added language, etc.
  - Personalized Communications Beginning:
    - Jen will find a way for monthly New Member lists and Expiring Member lists to be divided by division(s) and to be sent to each division chair
    - Division chairs will draft the language they will use when communicating with New Members and Expiring Members
  - Brainstorming
    - Infographic – what would we want included?
    - Maximize Your Membership information – what would we want to say?
    - Conference Follow-Up – would we want to try to tackle this in 2020, or wait until 2021? If we want to tackle it in 2020, what would we want it to look like?

- **Short-Term (By end of 2020)**
  - Research the possibility of longevity notices/badges on member profiles
  - Research the possibility of anniversary shout-outs for renewing members in special years
  - Create MLA Member badges that can be used in Social Media channels
  - Research the possibility of ListServs
  - Finalize our Advertising Toolkit and have an advertising plan in place
  - Research the possibility of monthly payments instead of one annual membership payment

- **Mid-Term (Complete in 2021)**
  - Begin hosting a new members event at annual conferences
  - Begin hosting a follow-up event about a month after each annual conference
  - Actively run an awareness campaign about the value of MLA and stress the availability of our advertising toolkit

- **Long-Term**
  - Recommend moving more of MLA into a virtual format in general (Board Meetings, Division Meetings, Section Meetings, etc.)
  - Provide more offerings to increase organizational value (ex. The Community Conversations are popular)
  - More directly reach out to the budget-setters