I. September 22, 2021
II. President
III. N/A
IV. Board Action Required (none)
V. Brief Summary of Activities

It has been a very active summer of MLA board activity and most of us have returned to our libraries (if we ever left), and reopened to a new fall that sees us not yet out of the pandemic.

The board voted to accept the Administrative Officers Task Force recommendation to create two new special officer positions. These will divide the duties that currently reside with the AO team and move the large chunk of membership-related duties to a new team, called Membership Management Officer and Assistant Membership Management Officer (both non-board positions with 4-year terms, and honorarium for the MMO). This team will manage the extensive membership maintenance system, administrative structure, and other membership-related tasks. The current AO and AAO will be renamed Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Assistant Chief Financial Officer (ACFO) and retain fiscal duties as the names convey. The renaming of AO team to CFO team does require changes to the text of our Constitution and Bylaws, which necessitates a vote of the membership (during the coming months).

Paul Cary is chairing the search for ACFO and Janelle West is chairing the MMO team search. Thanks are due for the efforts of that original task force including (in addition to Paula): Elizabeth Hille Cribbs, Mark McKnight, Tracey Rudnick, Pat Wall, Janelle West, and Jim Zychowicz.

Speaking of searches, I have continued to process appointments and spent a good portion of the summer and early fall forming search committees. In addition to the two just mentioned, we’ll have a number of editor and special officer searches this fall, for appointment by our annual meeting in 2022. These include Publicity and Outreach Officer, chaired by Ray Heigemeir. Editor searches include the Basic Manual Series, chaired by Carla Williams; Index and Bibliography Series (chair selection pending); and Open Access Editor, chaired by Anne Shelley.

It has been my pleasure to serve (ex officio) on the MLA 2022 Annual Meeting Task Force, chaired by Peter Shirts (Program Committee Chair) and Andrew Justice (Convention Manager). Andrew shared a summary report of this task force’s recommendations with the full membership on September 7, 2021. We are planning an in-person conference in Salt Lake City with a robust streaming component (and
asynchronous recording access to most sessions). Committees and interest groups will meet virtually (largely before and after the conference programming). Social events may offer virtual components (coordinated by smaller groups). We plan all of this with the knowledge that we may need to pivot to all-virtual (again) if the pandemic developments warrant it. I share the desire of many of us to meet in person but know that we will make the most responsible and fiscally sound decisions in the coming months for the health of our members and our fellowship.

Strategic Planning Task Force, chaired by Holling Smith-Borne held three shared values sessions “threshing” sessions throughout the summer, attended by the membership (who contributed valuable ideas to be melded into the forthcoming report and plans for 2022-2030). We hired DeEtta Jones and Associates to consult and host the sessions. DeEtta Jones and her team are deeply experienced in organizational, cultural change, and we are proud and happy to work with a talented, diversity-focused team. The task force and board will have a shared retreat on October 7.

Currently, the nominating committee is recruiting for a student representative, as the third and last year of our Student/Early Career representative pilot. The first two years yielded two early-career representatives. A student board member will need even more flexibility in meeting scheduling than we’ve had in the past, and we’re already moving toward increased email business. We are moving away from the traditional model of travelling to longer meetings three times a year, and toward more frequent, shorter, virtual meetings. Most importantly, a student member will bring vital perspective to the board and broaden our responsiveness to diverse member concerns.

During the IAML virtual meeting in July (their 70th anniversary), IAML-US teamed up with CAML to coordinate two programs: “North American Libraries in the Time of Post-COVID” (with Mallory Sajewski) and “Three RISM Initiatives in North America” (with CAML past president, Houman Behzadi). I submitted the IAML-US annual report and attended the forum for national representatives (where we shared concerns about falling memberships and the need for outreach and partnerships).

Respectfully submitted,
Liza Vick, President