

BCLA and strategic planning

By Annette DeFaveri and Christopher Kevlahan.

As many of you know BCLA is considering fund-raising opportunities in order to strengthen its financial base. A financially strong association ensures capacity to continue to effectively represent members and to continue to evolve in to a significant organization within the library landscape.

Key aspects of fund-raising include the ability to successfully describe the benefits and principles of the organization and to then link those benefits and principles to the vision of potential funders. This should result in mutually supportive relationships where both parties work toward shared goals and ideals.

The challenge for BCLA is to articulate the objectives and ideals of the Association in order to establish a starting point for fund-raising activities.

Normally a strategic plan expresses objectives and ideals and thus provides the foundation for fund-raising activities. Without a strategic plan for a roadmap the organization risks appearing unsure of its objectives instead of demonstrating a commitment to its goals.

The "catch 22" for BCLA is that a strategic plan is needed to support fund raising, and additional funds are needed to support a full-fledged strategic planning process.

To resolve this "catch 22" BCLA Board members were asked at the February meeting if they would support an *Interim* Strategic Planning process as long as there were no costs attached. The result would be a paired down plan that addressed those essential elements necessary to articulate the overarching objectives and ideals of the association.

The Board agreed to this approach but was very concerned about how to collect member input and feedback, usually a costly and time-consuming process. After much discussion and many suggestions it was agreed that the results of the recent member survey would be used as guiding information and input. Feedback could be solicited once a draft document was produced. The hope is that volunteers from Sections, Committees and Interest Groups will help collect and synthesize the feedback.

It was also decided that the President would call an extraordinary board meeting to craft the *Interim* Strategic Plan. Debbie Schachter volunteered to facilitate the process. The meeting, planned to be held at the end of April, will be kept to four hours with a well-developed agenda and clearly stated goals.

At this point then, BCLA has a plan for formulating a plan! Annette and Chris will collect information such as examples of other professional organization's strategic plans, and mission and vision statements, to assist board members during the planning meeting.

At the end of the interim strategic planning process BCLA will be better situated to seek funding opportunities, attract new members, and express our renewed purpose to current members. A draft of the *Interim* Strategic Plan will be circulated to members for feedback.

Many thanks to BCLA's committed board for taking this on!

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