

Executive Director's report

By Annette DeFaveri.

The new BCLA Board met on July 4th for the first time this year. As part of the Executive Director's report to the Board I talked about some of the changes that the Association has experienced in the past two years. I'd like to share some of that information now with you.

The year ahead will include consolidation and assessment of many of the changes we have been making at BCLA. Some practices and processes need to be regularized while others need to be further communicated to members. The purpose is to deepen our practices and processes ensuring the Association's long-term sustainability.

Over the past two years the Association has written a Strategic Plan, as well as Mission, Vision and Values statements. We have endeavoured to improve communication with members by launching a website re-design that includes BCLA's main site, the BC Library Conference site, and the Partnership Job Board site. Last year the Board defined the role of Board Directors and created portfolios for elected members that mirrored the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan.

Financial Health of the Association

A balanced budget over the past years is the result of careful financial planning and identifying the core activities of the Association. Our goal for 2015 is to maintain a balanced budget and to continue updating our financial practices.

In 2015 we will articulate an Areas of Interest funding model as the guide to raising funds for the Association and to identify key areas needing additional resources.

To ensure a balanced budget we have moved to a cost recovery model for our programs and services. This helps us all understand how to plan and execute programs within a defined budget.

Those of you who attended the AGM this year know that the Association has hired new Auditors to help us with any new financial practices we may need.

Advocacy

The Association has become a better advocate for issues that affect libraries and for the principles that are at the core of libraries and library services.

BCLA letters and overall communications are signed by the BCLA President as the representative of the collective view of the Association. The content of our communication is worked on by those who are experts in the area. We have been extremely fortunate to have people such as Myron Groover, Carla Graebner, Barbra Jo May, Gwen Bird, Beth Davies, Devon Grayson, Lisa Nathan, and Eric Meyers (to name just a few) helping us with advocacy issues this past year. Their work builds on the work of past contributors such as Brian Campbell, Ann Curry, Heather Morrison, Miriam Moses, Maryanne Epp, Nancy Hannum and Sybil Harrison (to name just a few).

This year we hope to develop a template for Position Paper that, when written, will help us articulate the Association's position on key issues. At the same time we see a need for resources that support core library principles such as Intellectual Freedom, Information Policy and open access to information

The BC Library Conference (BCLC)

The BCLC is the single most important revenue generating event mounted by BCLA. At the same time it is BCLA's most important opportunity to support individual members and the BC library community. The Conference is meant to focus on new ideas and current issues that affect libraries. For many members what they know about BCLA comes through the conference participation.

We have made significant changes to the BCLC in the past two years as we modernize the conference model and work toward an intentional process for building conference sessions. The current iteration of the conference model includes:

- Adding 45 min sessions. This changes the delivery and focus of some session and lets delegates sample a wider range of sessions.
- Curating about 30% of our sessions. This lets us act on conference feedback ensuring that current issues and interests are discussed in a timely

manner. At the same time this approach lets us invite speakers whose area of expertise may not be directly linked to libraries, but whose expertise intersects with library issues. This approach helps us learn from the experiences of others.

- Working to be more inclusive of and responsive to the needs of our academic members by prioritizing sessions that are of special interest to these members. Ideally we want sessions with an overarching appeal to a broad base of members.
- Moving the conference to three days, all weekdays. Before making this decision we also looked at conference attendance and noted that Saturday attendance is consistently the lowest of the conference. Member feedback in 2013 was overwhelmingly positive about this change.
- Adding more networking opportunities. Some opportunities worked well, for example the wine and cheese gathering, while other attempts need to be rethought to ensure that people are on site to participate.
- Moving toward a paperless environment. 2014 was our first year without a paper schedule. We thought we had inundated members with this information and the alternatives for accessing the schedule, but realize that we need to get better at providing alternatives to paper in coming years.
- Moving the AGM away from the Conference. This allowed for more conference sessions thus giving better value to delegates.

Having tried new things at the Conference we now need to work on building the foundations to support the changes in future conferences. In 2013 the

evolution of the Conference was led by Christina de Castell, Conference Chair, and Debbie Schachter, Session Selection Chair. In 2014 Baharak Yousefi was Conference Chair and Shirley Lew and Tara Robertson co-Chaired the Session Selection Committee. Without their time and commitment the BCLC could not have made the positive changes needed to keep the conference relevant and interesting to members.

There are other areas where noteworthy work is being done to support the Association. Daphne Wood, Sarah Stang, and Jessica Tivy all worked to mount last spring's membership drive that focused on individuals whose membership had lapsed in the past 2 to 5 years. Sylvia Nurse is working with the Continuing Education Committee to aggregate professional development opportunities for members. The Reader's Advisory Interest Group continues to mount their very successful "RA in half a Day." Karen Sharkey is preparing to reinvigorate the Libraries across Borders Interest Group as the new Chair. And Cynthia Ford continues to guide and evolve the BC Summer Reading Club.

It's been an exciting year that has generated new and strong directions for the future. My goal as the Executive Director is to continue to work with the Board and Members to strengthen the Association by making it relevant and responsive to members.

Annette DeFaveri is BCLA's Executive Director.