

Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE)
President's Report 2014

Last year when I assumed the presidency, I outlined some of the initiatives we hoped to launch during 2013. I was told by one colleague that it was an ambitious platform. I found that he was correct. While we have not accomplished everything, as you will learn, we have accomplished a lot.

The most important word in the previous sentence is “we.” It takes a village to get things done and in the case of ALISE, that includes the elected members of the Board, the Executive Director and Management Services Team, committee volunteers, and the conference planning committee team.

I will begin by reporting on those accomplishments that relate directly to ALISE Strategic Directions. Then I will discuss one other important initiative. Lastly, I will address briefly some achievements at the Annual Conference.

Before talking about the Board accomplishments, I would like to acknowledge the ALISE Board of Directors who served during 2013-2014 with me:

Vice President/President Elect: Clara Chu (UNC Greensboro)

Past President: Melissa Gross (FSU)

Secretary/Treasurer: Steven MacCall (Alabama)

Director for Special Interest Groups: Don Latham (FSU)

Director for Membership Services: Laurie Bonnici (Alabama)

Director for External Relations: Louise Spiteri (Dalhousie)

This was the last year of our strategic plan “*Expanding our Horizons: ALISE Strategic Directions, 2011-2014.*” While we have many ongoing initiatives related to our four strategic directions, for this report, I will only highlight new initiatives.

Strategic Direction 1: *consolidating and expanding the membership base by positioning the Association as an organization of members.*

At our annual business meeting last year in Seattle, the members approved a Board proposal to create a new membership category, *New Professionals*. This membership category is intended to provide a lower membership rate for the transition from doctoral student to faculty member or professional for a maximum of three years. In addition, the student rate is available now for a maximum of six years. We continue to offer our part-time/retired membership category. Overall, our membership categories reflect the needs of different member groups. Stephen McCall took the lead on this initiative.

In order to be member-centric, we knew that we needed to engage our members more. To this end, Laurie Bonnici created our hot topic polls. The first poll solicited feedback on the timing and affiliation the ALISE Annual Conference. Of the 134 respondents to our June poll, 48% voted to retain the conference in conjunction with ALA; 33% voted to hold the conference in conjunction with ASIS; 11% voted to affiliate with the iConference; and 7.5% voted to hold the conference independently. These results were considered during Board discussions of the matter. The Board decided to continue to hold the ALISE annual conference in January with venues selected for the next two meetings. Due to the interest in affiliation with ASIST, the Board will move forward with the implementation of some of the collaborations with ASIST that have been identified.

The second hot topic poll focused on strategic directions for ALISE. We had 60 respondents to the September poll. The top desired benefits of membership were: an online journal (63%); webinars for continuing education (55%); and conference tracks and streams (40%). I am pleased to inform you that we have made substantial progress on the top two suggestions, the introduction of an online journal and webinars for continuing education. I will describe these briefly under the related strategic direction.

Don Latham assisted in the establishment of two new Special Interest Groups: The Development and Fundraising SIG was approved as a formal SIG and the Student Services SIG was given provisional approval based on their petition. The Student Services SIG was off to a strong start with plans for its first program here at ALISE 2014; unfortunately, the weather intervened.

Unfortunately, we did not make much progress on the revision of the ALISE classification. The good news is that we have a plan, thanks to Laurie Bonnici. We know that we want to have a broader focus both in terms of research areas and geographic coverage (meaning that we have a classification that reflects international interests). We are planning to use a crowd sourcing approach so the classification will come from our members.

Strategic Direction 2: *enhancing collaboration and extending ALISE members to scholars in cognate disciplines and affiliated organizations, nationally and internationally.*

Last January, the Board approved a reciprocal agreement with the Medical Library Association that provides the respective discounted member rates to attend each other's annual meetings. At a later meeting, the Board expanded this concept by approving that we approach various organizations to suggest reciprocal agreements. Letters will be sent to the Special Libraries Association (SLA), the Society of American Archivists, the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), REFORMA, the Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA), the American Indian Library Association (AILA), the Asian Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA), and Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA), the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), and Association for Information Systems (AIS). We welcome additional suggestions from members.

ACRL recently established the Library and Information Science (LIS) Education Division-level Interest Group. Deborah Turner (Drexel) is serving as the ALISE Liaison. A joint meeting was

held earlier today to discuss strategies to promote collaborations that will help meet the evolving needs of the academic library workplace. Don Latham facilitated this collaboration.

Strategic Direction 3: *focusing on the scholarship of teaching and learning and the promotion of outstanding research*

The Journal of Education for Library & Information Science (JELIS) is our best mechanism for focusing on scholarship and promoting outstanding research. We have had a formal changing of the guard in 2014. Thanks to Michelle M. Kazmer and Kathleen Burnette (FSU) for their excellent work on JELIS. They produced 20 issues, beginning with volume 50 number 1 and ending with volume 54:4 in December 2013. They created a fully online manuscript submission and raised the quality of the content through a double-blind peer review process. We also thank them for helping to ensure a smooth transition. On March 20, 2013, we welcomed Peta Wellstead as editor-designate. She began her formal responsibilities with volume 55 issue 1 and has been very busy exploring options for an online journal, discussing a centennial issue, appointing an international editorial board, and more. Louise Spiteri has been working closely with Peta on all of the activities related to JELIS as has Trudi Bellardo Hahn (Drexel), Chair of the Publications Committee. With this transition, we have had to change the JELIS website and obtain a new backend system. Kathleen Combs, our Executive Director, worked with the editors to transfer content to the ALISE website. She also obtained a proposal for a back end system from DEStech Publications, Inc. which the Board approved in December. Because of a publication backlog, the Board also approved adding at least one article to issues 2, 3 and 4 in 2014 if needed. We reviewed a proposal from DEStech for an online journal at our Board Meeting earlier this week and we seem to be on track for launching the online journal with volume 56 number 1 in January 2015. As I noted when I talked about the Hot Topics Polls, an online journal has been identified as an important member benefit. Despite the progress we have made, we still have a lot of work to do related to JELIS.

While we had hoped to have made more progress on an ALISE conference proceeding, we were unable to accomplish that this year. The new online JELIS might offer more flexibility in dedicating an issue to the conference in the form of conference proceedings.

We are pleased to announce the establishment of two new awards, to be awarded for the first time at ALISE 2015. The ALISE / Connie Van Fleet Award for Research Excellence in Public Library Services to Adults will recognize outstanding research contributions in the field of public library services to adults. This award was created in memory of Dr. Van Fleet. The second award is the ALISE Diversity Travel Award to the ALISE Conference. This award is complementary to the ALA Spectrum Travel Award to the ALISE Conference. Both awards are described in a handout that was given at the Business Meeting.

Strategic Direction 4: *providing sound fiscal management, fostering administrative best practice, and advancing effective communication strategies for ALISE and its members.*

We have been busy with many activities related to this strategic direction.

I would like to start with our efforts to implement improved communication strategies, because that was a priority for the Board. Louise Spiteri led the way on various initiatives. We have enhanced our presence on social media and have posted a General Disclaimer for Use on ALISE Social Media Site(s) on our website. By far our most popular tool is Linked-In with 1,338 members at last count this month. We also launched the ALISE Community, a new discussion board that currently has 150 members. We continue to use Twitter and plan to tweet more often. For this conference, we began tweeting last year using the #ALISE 2014. There has been quite a bit of tweeting at this conference!

Following the usability study conducted last year, Kathleen Combs oversaw the implementation of some changes to the website, including a redesign with less scrolling, a cleaner look to the page, a photo gallery of award winners, a feedback button to report issues with the website, and the installation of Google Analytics to monitor usage of the website. We realize that this is just the beginning. The Board has recommended that the Publications Committee take over the web development.

We have discussed the need to store ALISE's electronic documents and data for quite some time. The Board approved entering into a contract with Amazon3S for cloud storage.

Melissa Gross and the members of the Governance Committee, past presidents Linda Smith, Lorna Peterson, and Lynne Howarth, completed the review and editing of the Policy and Procedures Manual (PPM). While this may not seem very exciting to you, the Board members are thrilled to have the updated PPM as it is very important for running the organization.

On the financial front, you will soon learn more about our finances during the Financial Report from the Secretary-Treasurer. One initiative of note is the initiation of the 3-stage membership rate increase that was approved at the annual meeting last year. Steven MacCall is responsible for this initiative and he also worked with Kathleen Combs and Elizabeth Aversa, Chair of the Centennial Celebration Campaign, to create The Centennial Fund for Excellence.

To achieve all that we have accomplished has required a lot of time and energy. In addition to our face-to-face board meetings in January, April, and October, the Board held monthly board meetings virtually. Since we were interested in launching a Webinar series, we experimented with different tools for this purpose. Thanks to Don Latham for spearheading this initiative. The end result is an Adobe Connect subscription that will be used for virtual Board Meetings, SIG-sponsored Webinars, and Board-led discussions. Don Latham and Clara Chu pulled a plan together. You will soon learn more about the Board-led discussions from Clara and we hope that you will participate.

Other initiatives

In addition to progress with the strategic directions discussed above, we have one very important initiative, the ALISE Statistics, which falls under the category of other initiatives. The progress that has been made this past year was behind the scenes with a new team from the University of Alabama. A system is under development that will provide online data collection and a fully interactive reporting system that will facilitate both the collection and dissemination of ALISE and ALA Accreditation statistics. An alpha version prototype of the data collection components of the full ALISE statistical survey is complete and has been shown to the Board earlier this week. It is ready for initial evaluation and testing with users. The most recent data gathering effort for 2013 data effort utilized the system that has been in place for a few years. During the 2013 data gathering effort, a survey was sent to the participating programs to obtain feedback on the clarity of the questions and the use of the data being gathered. This was done to inform the development of the new system. Thanks to Stephen Bajjaly (Wayne State) for taking the lead on the survey on behalf of the Council of Deans, Directors, and Program Chairs.

ALISE 2014

Of course, I have to talk briefly about the annual conference -- ALISE 2014 Educational Entrepreneurship. I would like to thank the Conference Planning Committee Co-Chairs Howard Rosenbaum (Indiana) and Linda Lillard (Clarion) for dedicating a lot of time and effort over the past year to make this conference a success. The Conference would not have been possible without the generous support provided by our sponsors. As was noted earlier in the Business Meeting, the sponsors are listed on page 25 of the Conference Program.

The conference theme, *Educational Entrepreneurship*, fully supports our mission: “ALISE promotes innovation and excellence in research, teaching, and service for educators and scholars in Library and Information Science and cognate disciplines internationally through leadership, collaboration, advocacy, and dissemination of research.” The conference also supports all of our strategic directions. The weather put us to the test and I’m happy to say that we rose to the occasion with a “can do” attitude when presenters and moderators were delayed.

The annual conference began with the WISE Pedagogy Pre-Conference Workshop, which focused on “Designing Online Courses for Diverse Communities of Learners.” This was followed by an entrepreneurial academy entitled *MOOCs, Venture Creation and Education: Educational Entrepreneurship and the LIS Educator*. Thanks to ALISE Academy Co-Chairs Trudi Hahn and Denise Agosto (Drexel). The H.W. Wilson Foundation sponsored both the face-to-face and virtual ALISE Academy and we thank them for their generosity and support.

The Conference kicked off with an excellent Works in Progress session thanks to Chair Pnina Fichman (Indiana). The Works in Progress is an excellent way for our attendees to share their research. The posters were included in the virtual conference to supplement the face-to-face experience and to allow remote attendees to display their posters or view the Works in Progress.

Our keynote speaker, Edward B. Rock, the Saul A. Fox Distinguished Professor of Business Law at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, talked to us about "*Open Learning and the Future of the Residential University*." This topic is at the heart of the issues we face in higher education today. The keynote was made available through the virtual conference the same day it was delivered.

The conference had many great submissions for both paper proposals and panels. Linda C. Smith (Illinois) chaired the Juried Paper Proposal submissions which had a 50% acceptance rate. Three papers were selected at featured papers based on review scores. Claudia Gollop (UNC) was the chair of the panel submissions which accepted 40% of the panel submissions. Sixteen of the twenty-one special interest groups (SIGs), including one provisional SIG, have sessions at the conference. (minus the cancellation due to the weater).

The ALISE Jean Tague-Sutcliffe Doctoral Poster Competition is always a highlight at our annual conference. Many thanks to Susan Davis (Drexel) and Athena Salaba (Kent State) for their hard work. Keeping with the entrepreneurial spirit, Susan and Athena incorporated the virtual conference into the judging experience. Judges were able to view the posters in the virtual conference space in advance, which helped to speed up the judging.

One of the great services provided to our attendees who are looking for preparing to look for positions is our Curricula Vitae and Portfolio Review. Marie Radford (Rutgers) took on that important responsibility this year.

Immediately following the business meeting, your new president, Clara Chu, will lead a Town Hall meeting to discuss the *ALISE Strategic Directions, 2014-2017, Setting in Motion a New Century of Leadership*. Then, this evening, at our Awards Reception, in addition to honoring our ALISE award winners, we will also recognize Dr. Eugene Garfield for his long time support to LIS education. Following the award ceremony, we will be entertained by The Professors, with our own Marie Radford. Friday morning, please plan to attend the President's Session "Shush No More: An activist Agenda for LIS Scholars and Educators" with organizers and moderators Mary Cavanaugh (Ottawa) and Lynne C. Howarth (Toronto).

The introduction of the virtual conference seems very fitting with this year's conference theme. It did, however, present some challenges by adding a layer of complexity to the overall conference planning. Special thanks to Kathleen Combs who worked diligently to make this initiative a reality.

You may have noticed our healthy snack options during our breaks. This idea came from Joanne Marshall (UNC), who suggested that we include healthy snack options at the annual conference last year. Again, Kathleen Combs added this to her conference planning.

Concluding Remarks

I hope that you will agree that we have had a productive year and have helped to move ALISE forward. I urge you to get involved. We need to work together so that we have a secure future. These are challenging and exciting times for higher education, and for library and information

science education specifically. In the spirit of the conference, I encourage you to be entrepreneurial and innovative. Being entrepreneurial involves taking risks and sometimes we will experience failures. We will learn from both our triumphs and failures to move successfully into the future. It is fitting to focus on the future of ALISE, as we prepare for our centennial celebration in 2015.

It has been an honor to serve as the President of ALISE over the past year. I look forward to working with the Board in 2014 as we strive to achieve our new strategic directions under the leadership of incoming President, Clara Chu.

Eileen G. Abels
ALISE President, 2013-2014