

**Minutes of the DC/SLA Board Meeting
September 8, 2011**

Attendees:

Executive Board

Hannah Sommers
James King
Mary Talley
Gretchen Sauvey
Victor Monte*
Lois Ireland*
Chris Vestal*

Committee Chairs and Others

Lorraine Bell – Dow Jones
Kathy Kelly – Government Information Division Liaison*
Diane Schnurpusch – Awards Committee*
Lisa Pogue – Chapter Notes
Rick Davis – Dine Arounds Committee

*Attended via conference call and WebEx web conference.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by Mary Talley.

Hannah Sommers moved to approve the agenda. James King seconded. Motion approved.

Gretchen Sauvey moved to approve the August minutes. Hannah Sommers seconded. Motion approved.

Discussion of Loyalty Project

Report from Mary Talley and James King about the Loyalty Project

The first meeting with James Kane was held September 1st. The project is about building relationship with community and his approach is to make us work immediately rather than doing big reports. He has met with several chapters and asked everyone the same question: if SLA didn't exist would it make a difference to you in your professional life? He told us we're the only unit where we said it would make a difference, the others mostly said no. He also talked about building relationship with members and what organization will look like in the future. Kane is focused on community building, for example he pointed out that the baseball caucus is the most viable group in SLA, it's very vibrant and engaged even without formal structure and bureaucracy. Chapters have a different potential than divisions – chapters can bring people together while divisions are more about building best practices. He found it interesting and symptomatic that past presidents, both of the chapters and of SLA as a whole, are often no longer engaged.

Kane focuses on three components of a community – value, relevance, and identity. He has assigned a project to each chapter. The results will be shared at the Leadership Summit in January 2012 . The overall goal is to increase membership retention by 5%.

- Rocky Mountain will be focusing on their core group of members, working on a database of the members, which they'll share with other chapters. Their goal is to get to know their members as individuals, including their interests and needs from the chapter.
- Minnesota is focusing on leadership, looking at positions, term lengths and limits, how meetings are run, committee lists – what are they, do we need them? And asking how to keep from burning out our leaders and encouraging new leaders.
- DC is focusing on a procedure for vendor and sponsor relationships, since many chapters don't do it well or at all. We're pulling together best practices, tips, etc. Maryland is partnering with us to work on this as well. We have sponsors directly involved and have a pretty good handle on how to engage them but we want to learn to do better ourselves. There's a lot more that we can do to build a strong relationship with the vendors. For example, how do you ensure that the relationships survive different boards? Giving vendors time to speak at a meeting is one example of what we could do. Our vendors are our members so we're looking at how we build on and institutionalize what we've got.
- Southern California is focusing on community by looking at relationships with other associations and business groups (i.e. Chamber of Commerce - there's a natural connection with SLA which has the list of who's who of corporations in our membership). They're looking at how you can build a program in SLA but broaden the interest so other people come and engage and also learn about what we do.
- Florida/Caribbean chapter is focusing on remote locations since a lot of chapters are geographically diverse (Maryland also partnering on this one as well). They've discussed making the chapters smaller, having a little local ownership and targeting the smaller groups in those locations. This will question whether you should have large chapters, or whether they can only exist in urban areas where people can get together physically. One idea would be to have cell groups i.e. a mid-Atlantic chapter but with local groups under that umbrella. They're looking at chapters differently since the benefit of them is the meet and greet aspect. When you look at membership there are some obvious holes around major library schools because the chapter is headquartered elsewhere in the region.

This is a time for us to set aside preconceived notions and experiment to better engage membership

Kane says that the precise structure and activity of the board isn't important to our members, what is key is engaging them in a variety of ways. This got us to thinking about the board positions and whether they're necessary. Kane was also surprised that we don't know who our members are, since SLA doesn't have a good contact relations management system. The Rocky Mountain chapter will be calling all its members. He sees a four-step transition in levels of loyalty: antagonistic > transactional > predisposed > loyal. For people in the transactional stage it's about value but a sense of belonging is key to moving people from step 3 to step 4, value and relevance are less

important than the community belonging piece. It's important for members to know that they're a part of something larger than themselves that is meaningful. In SLA the breakdown is 6-8% antagonistic, 12-13% loyal, and the middle two groups are around 40% each. Ideally the loyal group should be about 20%. We're skewed in the wrong direction, and are developing factions around those who want growth and those who want to shrink to a core set of people. We do need to increase our membership for the health of the organization. The quantity of events we do probably isn't necessary to prove value but each event should be more relevant to the goals and broader to reach different interests.

We're presenting at the leadership institute in Atlanta in January about the results of our work, and will need to tell the broader chapter what's going on via Chapter Notes and the blog.

Brainstorming and Discussion about the Loyalty Project

The Board and those present at the meeting conducted an extensive discussion of the points raised by James Kane's presentation. Highlights and key points:

- There was some agreement that SLA is not absolutely necessary for peoples' careers, the question is what could we do that would help? What about career development or assistance to help people find future jobs?
- DC/SLA does provide networking, and the listserv is a forum to put out a question or a request for resources that allows you to be effective for clients and makes you realize that you're not alone in a problem that you have. It gives you a place to interact with similar people and get ideas about serving the public.
- Some people reported greater affinity with SLA over other groups while others have particular job issues that are not currently addressed by the SLA community but might be addressed by another group.
- The need for SLA to open itself up to a wider membership audience was discussed as a way for people to interact with others who are more likely to share their work experience, even if those people aren't called librarians.
- Several people mentioned the influence of library school professors on their decision to join SLA.
- More organic, grassroots level activities are one way to involve new people, possibly via Meetup.com or something similar. Ad hoc groups can also be formed to answer immediate or temporary needs. The specific examples of I Need a Library Job, the New Feds group, and the unconference method were all discussed.
- This sub-grouping has been done as committees, but if we can facilitate building mini communities within the larger group, there'd be a benefit for the administrative stuff to be handled by DC/SLA and the small groups could contribute to broaden the reach of the organization and identify the expertise of our members. How do we allow naturally existing affinity groups to flourish?
- If we were re-forming from scratch today, what would the organization look like? We have permission now to experiment and try different things, so let's throw out the sacred cows and try different things. Operational choices that were needed have grown into institutionalized things, but we may not need all the committees

- or board positions or we may not have to compete all the board positions (we're one of the last chapters that actively does that for every position).
- The VP has always done the programming by themselves, but we could spread that out and possibly create a mechanism for a member to have an idea for a program and make it happen in a reasonable time frame. One of the challenges is finding space to do things, but Lois has been working on that. We need to make sure committee chairs and group leaders get information on how to run a program.

Mary Talley – President's Report

- Presentation of plaque to outgoing president James King in recognition of service.
- The elections will be opened on Monday, Lisa Pogue has everything she needs for the special issue of chapter notes presenting the candidates.
- Year end reports: I am asking board members to start thinking about these and do them by the end of October, I have to have it in to SLA by December.

Officer Reports:

James King – Immediate Past President

The new website is out, I'm experimenting with a module to post to twitter when you add a blog post. I'm also exploring doing a better job with the minutes, and putting the committee reports up on the website. I want to make sure that members know they can keep tabs on us and what we're doing.

Lois Ireland – First Vice President

Looking ahead to the annual meeting, one idea proposed was a collection drive and we thought that would be a way to add a little extra purpose. The consensus was that a food drive would be the easiest to accomplish, we wanted to get feedback from people on that. The plan is for a short business meeting and lots of socializing. It will be at the Carnegie Endowment for Peace, we'll have hors d'oeuvres, dessert, and drinks, and we will start advertising in October.

Chris Vestal – Communications Secretary

We've sponsored a week's worth of posts on the Future Ready 365 blog, the week of October 24. We need a few more volunteers to write pieces.

Committee Reports

Diane Schnurpusch – Awards Committee

We're looking for recommendations for both chapter awards and SLA association awards. We will put call for names on the listserv and the blog, as well as in chapter notes. People can make their own individual recommendations as well. Sept. 23 is the deadline so that a decision can be made by the committee before the October 6th board meeting. The committee will meet the last week of September on the chapter awards. October 14th is the SLA awards recommendation deadline for the committee, and the

SLA deadline is December 1, which is sooner than previous years. We'll present those at the November 3rd board meeting.

James King moved to adjourn the meeting. Hannah Sommers seconded. Motion approved.

Meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.