

OLA's new scholarship model – WeLead

(*We are developing new name for the program but will use “WeLead” as a placeholder)

Overview

The OLA Scholarship Taskforce is creating a new vision for how OLA provides scholarships to library professionals and students. The goal now is to provide funds for professional development while building leadership interest and involvement in OLA. The following describes the general parameters of the new program.

The WeLead program will connect Emerging Librarians with scholarships for both educational use and leadership opportunities in OLA. The term “Emerging Librarians” describes a range of MLS students, library support staff, librarians new to Oregon, and possibly other groups to be defined at a later stage of the program. For now, however, the taskforce is shaping the initial pilot program to include MLS students and library support staff. Many of the details of the program have yet to be determined. The taskforce is not ready to bring a final proposal to the board. However, it would like board input before going further, particularly with the funding pieces, as described further in the **Funding** section.

In general the scholarships will include the following:

- Funding specifically for professional development. So, for example, if the recipient is a MLS student, the funds would go towards tuition. If the recipient is a library support staff, the funds could be used to receive support staff certification training.
- Membership to OLA for one year.
- OLA Conference registration.
- A requirement that the recipients participate in the WeLead leadership development cycle. This means that 1) they will choose an OLA unit to actively participate in, 2) they will receive a mentor who will mentor them specifically in OLA participation. This mentor will come from the new Leadership Committee (still in development), and 3) they will actively participate in some element of the OLA Conference as a volunteer or in another role.

The taskforce also proposes that the proposed Leadership Committee (yet to be approved by the OLA membership) oversee this program, in addition to the other leadership development trainings that it will manage.

Funding

Currently, OLA has a scholarship fund of approximately \$25,000. This has been built throughout the years from donations specifically earmarked for scholarships. We propose to use a portion of this fund for the pilot program. Again, the taskforce is still developing the specific criteria and award amounts for these scholarships. Our purpose is to use a portion of the fund for the pilot program while simultaneously building a more sustainable funding foundation for the future.

How will we build this sustainable funding for scholarships? During the summer of 2014, a generous donation of \$5,000 was offered as seed money to build a sustainable fundraising effort. This effort was not deemed sustainable by the OLA Board. Instead, the board decided to revamp the scholarship program and determine a more viable way to provide sustainable funding. The Scholarship Taskforce

would like the board's input on this issue. We are considering involving the same donor but altering our approach to a fundraising effort. Discussion and input is welcome from the board here.

OLA Board

The taskforce's main purpose in approaching the board at this point is to update and provide the opportunity for discussion before it moves ahead. With further direction from the board, it will continue to shape the specifics of the program and bring the final product to the board for approval before implementing anything, of course.

For a visual layout of the WeLead program, please refer to the below diagram. Note that one of the goals is to create a sustained leadership pattern for OLA.

