

# OLA Parliamentary Practices

The Oregon Library Association has various bylaws, rules, and procedures to ensure smooth functioning of the Association. These rules address everything from how OLA is governed to how conferences are planned to how awards are given. The rules are compiled in the Procedures Manual, which is available to all OLA members on the OLA website. The below descriptions explain the different OLA units as well as the various types of rules that govern the units.

## The OLA units

**Individual members:** Individual members are the heartblood of the Association and the reason why it exists. Members ultimately determine the direction of the Association, what services it provides, and more. Because of its importance, only the membership can elect the officers of the Association (Vice-President/President-Elect [who later becomes President, then Past President], Secretary, Treasurer, and ALA Council Representative), create new Divisions, amend the Association's main Bylaws, and change membership dues. There is typically one meeting of the general membership per year, held during the annual conference.

**Executive Board:** The membership has empowered a group of officers and other individuals to conduct the basic governance and operations of the Association. That group is called the Executive Board. The Executive Board is responsible for establishing rules for the Association, determining its strategic direction, and managing the work of the other OLA units. There are 13 voting members of the Executive Board:

- President
- Vice President/President-Elect
- Past President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- ALA Council Representative
- Member-at-Large (appointed by the President)
- The Chair/President of the 6 Divisions

There are also three non-voting (*ex-officio*) members of the Executive Board. These members advise the Board and keep it abreast of matters in their area of expertise. These members include the following:

- Association Manager
- Parliamentarian
- State Librarian

While the above members are official members of the Executive Board, others are

encouraged to attend the Board's meetings including Round Tables Chairs, Committee Chairs, and any interested members.

**Divisions:** Divisions are OLA units that address more specific groups of interest to the profession, such as academic or public libraries. Divisions tend to be broad in scope. Divisions have their own bylaws and officers, and each Division has a vote on the Executive Board. Divisions may set dues. OLA currently has the following Divisions:

- Academic Division (ACRL-OR)
- Children's Services Division (CSD)
- Oregon Association of School Libraries (OASL)
- Oregon Young Adult Network (OYAN)
- Public Library Division (PLD)
- Support Staff Division (SSD)

**Round Tables:** Round Tables address more particular subject areas of interest to members, including outreach, assessment, legal librarianship, and more. They tend to be smaller and more informal than Divisions. All Round Tables share a common structure, so they tend to have fewer administrative requirements than Divisions. Like Divisions, Round Tables elect their own officers and may establish dues. Unlike Divisions, they do not have a vote on the Executive Board. Current Round Tables are as follows:

- Documents Interest Group of Oregon (DIGOR)
- International Relations (IRRRT)
- Legal Reference (LRRT)
- Library Assessment (LART)
- Library Instruction (LIRT)
- Library Preservation (LPRT)
- Library Technology (LibTech)
- New Member Round Table (NMRT)
- Northwest Central Round Table (NWC)
- Outreach (ORT)
- Past President's Round Table (PPRT)
- Reference (RRT)
- Social Responsibilities (SRRT)
- Technical Services (TSRT)

**Standing Committees:** Standing Committees are established in the main OLA Bylaws to conduct important business on behalf of the Association. They do everything from plan the annual conference to keep abreast of legislation and news affecting libraries to communicating about OLA happenings with members. Standing Committees exist permanently, unless the Bylaws are revised. Standing Committees report to the Executive Board, and their members are appointed by

the Board. Here are the Standing Committees currently established in the Bylaws:

- Communications
- Conference
- Finance/Investment
- Honors, Awards, and Scholarships (HAS)
- Intellectual Freedom
- Leadership
- Library Development and Legislation
- Membership
- Nominations
- Oregon Authors
- Oregon Reader's Choice Award (ORCA)
- Resource Sharing

**Special Committees:** Any of the OLA units may appoint special (AKA *ad hoc*) committees to look in to specific topics or issues that arise. Special committees typically are limited in duration. Their purpose, members, and requirements are laid out when they're created. To avoid confusion with committees established by the Bylaws or Executive Board, committees created by Divisions, Round Tables, or Standing Committees are referred to as subcommittees.

**Task Forces:** Sometimes, issues may arise of such breadth or import that the Executive Board establishes a particular type of special committee called a Task Force. Task Forces typically operate for longer than special committees and are mainly determined by scope: is the topic being addressed of particular importance to the Association or profession. Despite this, Task Forces are still temporary and dissolve once completing their charge. Task Forces have addressed things such as how OLA should invest its funds, how to promote advocacy among all library types, and the Association's vision for the each decade.

## **Types of rules**

The **OLA Bylaws** are the head honcho of OLA's rules; they establish the governing principles and structures of the Association. No other rules may contradict the Bylaws, including procedures or the bylaws of individual units. The Bylaws establish things like who is eligible for membership, how to create Divisions and Round Tables, the officers of the Association, the standing committees, and more. Due to their importance, only the OLA membership can amend the Bylaws, although the Executive Board often recommends changes.

The **Division Bylaws** establish the governance for individual Divisions (OYAN, ACRL-OR, etc.). They are functionally similar to the OLA Bylaws in that they set up membership eligibility, officers, etc., but they only apply to that individual Division. Revising Division Bylaws requires a vote in favor by the Division

membership and the Executive Board.

There is a unified set of **Round Table Bylaws**; in other words, all Round Tables use essentially the same set of rules and have the same structure, although some vary slightly. Round Tables have a unified set of bylaws because the units typically are more informal, and often smaller, than Divisions. Round Tables wishing to change the unified bylaws may present recommended changes to the Executive Board, which is authorized to revise them.

**Procedures** are more informal rules of the Association that nonetheless are important enough to codify. They include the specific responsibilities of officers, how and what Standing Committees do, what types of awards OLA has and how they're awarded, how conferences are organized, and more. Revisions to procedures are typically recommended to the Executive Board by the OLA unit chiefly responsible for those rules (often a Committee or Division). Changing procedures requires an affirmative vote by the Executive Board.

The **Parliamentary Authority** helps guide OLA and its units in situations not addressed by the Bylaws, Division or Round Table Bylaws, or procedures. OLA uses the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, a set of parliamentary rules used by many organizations across the nation. The parliamentary authority addresses everything from the mundane – how to run meetings and handle voting – to the unusual – what happens if an officer needs to be disciplined. When in doubt about how to deal with a particular situation, OLA refers to the parliamentary authority.

## **Other things to know**

The **Parliamentarian** is a position appointed annually by the OLA President to manage, explain, and arbitrate the Association's myriad rules. The position has no formal authority, but s/he advises all OLA units on what the rules are and how best to write them to ensure smooth operations. The Parliamentarian reviews all proposed rules changes and frequently writes the changes as recommended by individual units. S/he is here to help you better understand the Association, so feel free to contact him/her with questions.

OLA's rules are set out to make the Association operate as efficiently as possible while still maintaining a common structure and procedures. If some rule seems outdated, unnecessary, or unclear, they can be revised. If you have questions, comments, or concerns, please communicate them!

Last revised 8/4/2015 by Buzzy Nielsen