

Frequently Asked Questions About the Proposed Bylaws Changes

CLA members will be asked to vote on changes to the CLA bylaws in the upcoming election.

Q. Why is CLA proposing that the membership change the bylaws?

A. The proposed governance changes are in response to feedback over several years from members who feel that CLA needs to be more nimble, flexible, flatter in structure, diverse and responsive. CLA leadership is proposing significant changes to the CLA governance structure. The proposed changes affect the bylaws of the organization and must be approved by a vote of the membership.

Q. What are the biggest changes in the CLA governance structure?

A. There are four major changes:

- The current Assembly and Executive Committee would become one Board of Directors composed of the elected officers and 6-10 at-large members elected by the membership for staggered terms.
- There would be 2 standing committees: Finance and Leadership Development. (Please refer to the draft bylaws to see the purposes and composition of these proposed committees.)
- Current sections, roundtables and all other formal groups would remain as interest groups with no requirements for officers. The ability to request for funds from CLA for workshops, conference programs etc. would remain.
- A new member category would be created to allow those interested to participate in CLA only through virtual means.

Q. When would these changes go into effect?

A. The new bylaws and structure changes would go into effect on July 1, 2009.

Q. Why were all these particular changes proposed?

A. Based on feedback from members requesting a simpler organization, a task force of CLA members examined the results of a survey of members, considered best practices in the association world, and then developed recommendations that were felt addressed the issues raised by the members.

Q. Who was on the task force and how was it formed?

A. The task force was appointed by then president Margaret Donnellan Todd and included Barbara Quarton (CSU San Bernardino); Barbara Roberts (Palm Springs Public Library); Cheryl Gould (Infopeople); Danis Kreimeier (Napa City County Library); Jan Sanders (Pasadena Public Library); Katherine Gould (Palos Verdes Library District); Margaret Miles (Plumas County Public Library); Melinda Cervantes (Santa Clara County Library); Monique le Conge (Richmond Public Library); Paymaneh Maghsoudi (Whittier Public Library); Penny Kastanis (retired school librarian); Susan Hildreth (Former CLA President) and Margaret Todd (LA County Public Library.) The task force meetings were facilitated by Paul Meyer, a consultant with Tecker Associates. CLA Executive Director Sue Negreen provided staff support.

Q. What will it cost to implement the new bylaws?

A. Many of the changes will save money by significantly reducing travel and meeting expenses. CLA was already planning to invest in more robust technology to enhance our virtual services.

Q. How will the new Interest Groups work?

A. The structure would be decided by each group and wouldn't require a chair or a formal election. Volunteer leaders would help in shaping discussions. The only requirement would be membership in CLA. If there is no activity in six months, the group would dissolve.

Q. What if an Interest Group needs money for an activity?

A. CLA's current active sections and round tables would keep the funds that are in their accounts on June 30, 2009, and may use that money for program activities. Additionally, CLA has set aside money in the annual budget for other activities. Interest groups would be able to quickly and easily apply for funds for projects.

More questions? Send an e-mail to Monique le Conge, CLA President at monique_leconge@ci.richmond.ca.us or to Sue Negreen, CLA Executive Director at snegreen@cla-net.org