

TO: ALA Council

FROM: Mary Moore, Chair, Committee on Education

DATE: 18 May 2001

RE: Certification Proposal

At the Midwinter Meeting, 2001, in Washington DC, the ALA Council expressed support for the concept of post-MLS certification. At the same time, Council requested additional information and clarification. The attached outline responds to questions raised by Council and outlines possible next steps. It brings together work completed to date by the ALA Committee on Education, the ALA Office for Human Resource Development and Recruitment, by the CPLA Committee and by the staff, boards and members of PLA, LAMA and ASCLA.

**POST-MASTERS CERTIFICATION:
A PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH
*THE ALA INSTITUTE FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE***

1. Why Certification? Why Now?

Certification is an essential tool, used by a broad spectrum of professions, for maintaining high professional standards. To the public, to employers and to peers it shows that the certified individual has mastered a body of knowledge and has made a commitment to remain abreast of developments in that field of knowledge.

The proposed certification program has three specific goals:

- (1) To improve professional practice in librarianship through the establishment of continuing professional development goals;
- (2) To identify a body of knowledge and skills necessary to the practice of librarianship and/or to a specific specialization within librarianship; and,
- (3) To recognize those individuals who have demonstrated both mastery of a body of knowledge and skills and continuing commitment to ongoing professional development.

The Executive Boards of three of ALA's divisions have voted to establish a pilot post-masters certification program – the Certified Public Library Administrator program (1996). Broad-based member groups, representing all three divisions, have since been involved in the detailed development of criteria and in development of continuing education programs to assist potential candidates in gaining such certification. At the request of the ALA Executive Board, the ALA Committee on Education, a standing committee of the ALA Council, has developed a recommended framework for such a program – a framework capable of accommodating both the specific CPLA proposal and other specialist proposals that may come forward in the future. The ALA Council, at the 2001 Midwinter Meeting, expressed conceptual support for a certification program.

2. Overall Program Assumptions

- The proposal is for voluntary, post-masters certification. The candidate for certification must possess an ALA-recognized degree in library and information studies. [ALA Policy 54.2, 54.2.1, 54.2.2, 56.1] Three kinds of credentials are recognized in ALA policy:
 - (1) A master's degree from a program accredited by the American Library Association.

- (2) A master's level program in library and information studies accredited or recognized by the appropriate national body of another country.
 - (3) A master's degree with a specialty in school library media from an educational unit accredited by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (for school library media specialists only).
- Standards for professional practice (e.g. the body of knowledge, required experience) in a specialty will be established by the appropriate ALA division, as authorized by the ALA Council [ALA Bylaws Article VI] or, where no divisional jurisdiction exists, by the ALA Council. These standards for professional practice would be adopted, as standards for certification, by the ALA Institute for Professional Practice.
 - A candidate for first-time certification must have a minimum of three years experience in professional practice. [Note: The CPLA program would require three years of supervisory experience.]
 - Broad participation in the certification program will be encouraged. Continuing education programs and other ancillary products (e.g. study guides) may be provided by the ALA and its divisions and/or by other professional organizations (e.g. ALA Chapters, AASL Affiliates, LIS programs, other university programs, independent trainers or other organizations).
 - Initial certification will be based on (a) demonstrated commitment to ongoing professional development and (b) successful completion of a professionally validated examination covering the particular specialization. The examination process will be accessible in geographically dispersed locations.
 - Certification will be for a three-year period, with re-certification based on demonstrated continuing professional development (e.g. continuing education courses), not re-examination. Applications for re-certification will be made to the ALA/Institute for Professional Practice.
 - Certification, unlike licensure, would not be a statutory requirement for a particular job. It would, however, provide valuable information which the employer could use in determining the relative qualification of a candidate.
 - Both ALA members and non-members may participate in the certification program. Membership in ALA or any specific organization could not be required as a condition for certification.
 - Statistics would be gathered as part of the application and certification process and used in program assessment.

3. Organization

ALA, a 501(c)3 educational association, cannot itself be an instrument for certification of librarians at either the entry point or any subsequent point in professional development. The IRS considers certification (unlike accreditation of programs of education) to be a proper activity for a Section 501(c)6 – professional – organization.

Establishment of an affiliated professional organization is proposed for the purpose of administering a certification program for librarians. Such an organization would be legally tied to ALA through an interlocking board. Indeed, it is proposed that the executive board of the ALA Institute for Professional Practice consist entirely of officers and members of the ALA Executive Board, elected by members or by the ALA Council, according to the present ALA Constitution and Bylaws. This is a common strategy of associations establishing allied associations – e.g. of 501(c)3 educational associations establishing allied 501(c)6 professional associations, or of 501(c)6 professional associations establishing 501(c)3 educational foundations. It is a strategy that (a) ensures shared philosophy and values between the allied organizations and (b) minimizes additional governance cost and complexity. Based on Council’s approval of such a governance structure, ALA legal counsel will be asked to draft bylaws including the following provisions and terms, outlined in section 4 of this document.

**Council’s approval of the following ALA policy is requested:

Toward fulfillment of its declared mission to provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of the profession of librarianship, the American Library Association will establish an allied professional association to certify individual librarians in areas of specialization beyond the ALA-recognized masters degree.

** Council’s approval of the following Bylaws Outline is requested. (section 4, following)

4. **Governance: Bylaws Outline**

Name:

ALA Institute for Professional Practice

Purpose:

The ALA Institute for Professional Practice shall exist to serve the public and the field of librarianship through the establishment and maintenance of criteria and procedures for certification.

Limitations:

ALA/IPP is a private, nonprofit, tax-exempt, voluntary credentialing board. No part of its net earnings shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its Directors, Officers, or other private persons, except that the Board shall be authorized to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of its purpose (above).

Board of Directors:

□ **Selection**

The ALA/IPP Board of Directors will include all officers and members of the ALA Executive Board, elected by ALA membership or ALA Council, according to the ALA Constitution and Bylaws. No additional Directors may be elected or appointed by the ALA/IPP. Vacancies and resignations will be handled consistent with the ALA Constitution and Bylaws.

□ **Duties and Functions of the ALA/IPP Board**

The Board will have full authority to establish rules, regulations and requirements for the certification program. The Board shall establish and maintain fee structures. The Board shall direct the establishment and implementation of certification criteria and procedures for certification. The Board shall carry out any other lawful activities necessary to further the objectives of the ALA/IPP, consistent with the Bylaws.

□ **Meetings of the Board of Directors**

The Board of the ALA/IPP will meet not less than once annually, at a time and place designated by the Board and advertised to the membership of the American Library Association.

□ **Quorum**

A majority of the Board shall constitute a quorum.

Officers:

The officers of the ALA/IPP will be: president, president-elect, past-president, treasurer.

Committees:

The Board may establish committees and prescribe their purpose and composition. Committees may include persons not on the Board of the ALA/IP. A majority of members of any committee must be members of the American Library Association.

The Board will establish a Certification Review Committee, of three to five members, for each proposed certification specialty program. Each Certification Review Committee will include active practitioners and LIS educators. The primary purpose of a Certification Review Committee will be to oversee development and administration of a validated testing instrument, based on the subject standards for professional practice, licensed from the American Library Association. Appointments to a Certification Review Committee will be for four years, non-renewable. Initial appointments will be staggered. The Certification Review Committee will report to the ALA/IPP Board of Directors.

Fiscal Year:

The accounting (fiscal) year will be consistent with that of ALA (September 1 – August 31).

Amendments:

These Bylaws may be adopted or amended by a two-thirds vote of the Board at any legally constituted meeting, provided that proper notice of a proposed Bylaws change be given to each member of the Board and advertised to the American Library Association not less than ninety days prior to the meeting.

Dissolution:

Upon dissolution of the ALA/IPP, the Board shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all liabilities, pay over any remaining assets to the American Library Association.

5. Ongoing Standards & Policy Guidance

The ALA Committee on Education, a standing committee of the ALA Council, in concert with ALA's eleven divisions, to which Council has delegated broad authority to speak for the Association within their areas of specialization, has a significant, continuing role in bringing the initial and all future specialty certification proposals forward:

- ❑ to ensure that the proposals include a consistent and adequate articulation of specialized competencies and requirements and that ALA members are informed about new standards for professional practice (e.g. knowledge base, specific experience);
- ❑ to work with staff to ensure that new standards for professional practice become accessible to the ALA/IPP;
- ❑ and, to report regularly to the ALA Council on standards development and certification activities.

While these functions fall within the existing, sizable charge of the ALA Committee on Education, the effective fulfillment of these obligations will require that members of the ALA COE be familiar with issues related to standards for professional practice and with the relationship between those standards and the certification process. In other situations of comparable complexity (e.g. the ALA Committee on Accreditation, the Budget Analysis and Review Committee), the ALA Council has recognized both the "learning curve" and the value of continuity by approving a four-year, non-renewable term and by ensuring a balanced membership representing key constituencies (e.g. educators, practitioners, the public on COA, trainers on COE).

**Council is asked to refer to the ALA Committee on Organization a request to (1) change the term for membership on COE to a four-year term, without possibility of reappointment; (2) require that membership on COE include both practitioners and educators, and (3) create specific liaison relationships between COE and each division which has developed or is developing a *standard for professional practice* to be used for voluntary certification of its practitioners.

6. Funding

ALA is a 501(c)3 and may not, therefore, legally give money to a 501(c)6 organization, or to establish a 501(c)6 organization. It may make a fair market loan to establish a 501(c)6 organization. All costs (e.g. program administration, marketing the certification program) directly associated with the certification program itself must be assumed by the 501(c)6. This does not, however, include the expenses, or revenues, associated with continuing education courses which may prepare candidates for such certification; such courses may be offered by ALA, ALA divisions or other organizations, regardless of tax-exempt status.

The following budget assumes (a) one certification program during the initial five-year period (the CPLA program); (b) 980 initial certification candidates during the operating

period, with recertifications beginning in year four; (c) an initial loan of \$100,000 from the ALA to the ALA/IPP, with repayment of the loan built into the operating budget; and, (d) modest inflation after year one. Based on that set of assumptions, the ALA/IPP will require five years to become self-sustaining, with no expectation of significant net revenue.

Both expenses and revenues associated with development of the standard for professional practice, with development and implementation of continuing education courses, and with development and production of related publications will be budgeted by the involved ALA divisions, where there will be an expectation of net revenues. They are not part of the ALA/IPP budget.

Note that Year One is set as FY2003 – not FY2002. The final budget will go forward with the FY2003 proposed budget in spring 2002. Both BARC and the ALA Executive Board will review a final, detailed budget.

See Attachment A

7. Initial Implementation

The initial implementation strategy is aimed at (a) minimizing the startup time and cost, (b) acquiring technical expertise gained from working on other professional certification programs, and (c) preserving the broadest range of future options based on evaluation of the initial five-year period of operation.

For that reason, outsourcing of most of the technical aspects of the program is proposed. Those aspects include candidate record maintenance (enrollment, review, certification, re-certification), test administration (including scheduling, training of examination administrators, and marketing. Such initial outsourcing does not preclude the ALA/IPP from subsequently developing such operations internally should such a step be considered desirable as the certification program grows. Day-to-day oversight of the program, as well as liaison between ALA and ALA/IPP, would be handled by an ALA/IPP staff member, working at ALA Headquarters. The cost of the staff and related costs (e.g. space, telephone, etc.) must be accounted for and reimbursed to ALA.

8. Initial Certification Program

In January 1998, the PLA, LAMA and ASCLA Boards of Directors approved a proposal for a Certified Public Library Administrator program. The proposal was the result of work begun in 1991/92 when the LAMA/PLA Certification Task Force was created with the charge “to define and validate public library management competencies; to develop appropriate criteria and methods for recognizing the achievement of these competencies; to identify existing and potential opportunities which could lead to the achievement of these competencies; to propose a certification program based on the above to the Boards

of Directors of PLA and LAMA.” That task force was disbanded in 1994, having completed the work of identifying management-level competencies. Staff in PLA and LAMA were asked to develop the certification proposal, based on the work of that task force.

Applications for the Certified Public Library Administrator designation must demonstrate mastery of a body of knowledge encompassing the following nine areas:

- ❑ Organizational and Personnel Management: Organizational culture, structure and management; hiring, developing, rewarding and managing staff; leadership and change management; conflict resolution; diversity
- ❑ Budget and Finance: Budgeting; government accounting standards; tax authority structures; levies and bond issues; identifying national trends; developing and pricing/valuing information services
- ❑ Strategic Planning and Marketing: Evaluation; strategic planning; public and media relations; creating and implementing a marketing plan
- ❑ Technology: Current development; Implementation issues – funding, buildings, impact on library programs and services; staff training; planning for future technology
- ❑ Political Skills: Trustees, Boards of Directors and other governing bodies; coalitions and partnerships (community, business/industry, other information providers); lobbying; internal government relations
- ❑ Fundraising and Public Relations: Principles of creating a successful development campaign; mastering public and media relations; responding to intellectual freedom challenges
- ❑ Library Buildings: Planning and design (new, retrofit); reading architectural plans; wiring/lighting
- ❑ Library Safety and Security: Staff training; selecting equipment; developing a disaster plan
- ❑ Serving Diverse Populations: Surveying and defining user groups; collection development issues; consensus building techniques

Candidates for the Certified Public Library Administrator designation must have an ALA-recognized masters degree and three years supervisory experience in public libraries.

A joint Certified Public Library Administrator committee, representing ASCLA, LAMA and PLA, continues to develop materials and services, including continuing education programs and publications to be offered by these divisions, to support this standard. Continuing education courses and ancillary products (e.g. related publications) may also be developed and/or provided by other organizations (e.g. state associations, universities, independent trainers, state agencies).

9. Related Issues

- (A) Questions have been raised regarding the relationship between this proposed certification body and two other issues currently before Council or other ALA member groups.
- (1) The External Accreditation Task Force, created based on recommendations of the 1st Congress on Professional Education, is proposing establishment of an independent accreditation body, of which the American Library Association would be the largest member, joining other members, including the Medical Library Association, the American Association of Law Libraries, the Special Libraries Association, the Society of American Archivists, the American Society for Information Science and Technology, and (potentially) others. The resulting body would be similar, though smaller and less complex than, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, to which ALA currently belongs and would continue to belong. The proposed new body would be a 501(c)3 educational organization. There is no relationship between this proposal for post-masters certification and the proposal of the External Accreditation Task Force.
- (2) ALA President Nancy Kranich has appointed a presidential Task Force on the Status of Librarians. That task force has been charged to articulate issues related to the status of librarians and make recommendations concerning (a) what ALA, as opposed to other stakeholders, should do and (b) what the policy, financial and legal implications of taking the recommended action(s) would be. One of several possible recommendations from that task force could be that ALA establish an allied 501(c)6 professional association to undertake activities related to the status of librarians which ALA, as a 501(c)3 organization, cannot itself undertake. Were such a body to be recommended and ultimately created, it could realistically take over the certification function recommended by this proposal.
- (B) There has been considerable discussion regarding the most appropriate and valid mechanism for determining that an individual should, in fact, be certified. Use of a validated testing process for initial certification in an area of post-masters specialization is recommended here the several reasons: (1) It is the dominant model among professional bodies which certify practitioners. There is a high rate of acceptance. (2) It minimizes issues which would otherwise be raised by

enabling applicants to gain knowledge through a wide variety of means – through courses from universities or associations, through independent study or study groups, etc. (3) It minimizes the subjective aspects of the review process.

While strongly recommending test-based initial certification, the Committee on Education has, nevertheless, invested significant effort in developing an alternative approach, should the testing model not be ultimately acceptable to the profession. The alternative would be to require completion of appropriate coursework from a range of approved providers, which could include ALA and its divisions, other associations, LIS programs and independent trainers. COE has developed a list of criteria for the approval of providers. It would require initial development and ongoing maintenance and dissemination of a list of approved providers. Applicants would present proof that courses had been completed. Course providers would be expected to determine that the content had been learned.

This “portfolio” approach is, on the other hand, recommended for subsequent re-certification. In other words, having initially been certified through the examination process, the applicant for re-certification would present proof of continuing professional development. Application for re-certification, including a record of continuing professional development, would be made to the ALA/IPP.

10. Next Steps

- (1) Council is asked to approve the following statement of policy:

Toward fulfillment of its declared mission to provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of the profession of librarianship, the American Library Association will establish an allied professional association to certify individual librarians in areas of specialization beyond the ALA-recognized masters degree.

- (2) Council is asked to approve the Bylaws provisions outlined in section 4, which tie the proposed ALA/IPP to ALA through a completely interlocked board and officers, which are elected by ALA members and Council and which will direct the ALA/IPP in a manner consistent with ALA philosophy and values.
- (3) Council is asked to refer to the Committee on Organization a revision in the structure of the Committee on Education, to make appointments to COE for a single four-year term and to ensure representation of practitioners and educators and trainers, as well as appropriate liaison to divisions.

- (4) Based on Council's approval of the outlined Bylaws provisions, ALA staff will work with ALA's legal counsel to prepare final Bylaws language which will come to the ALA Council at the Midwinter Meeting in 2002.
- (5) COE/PLA/LAMA/ASCLA will work with the ALA Office for Human Resource Development & Recruitment to ensure that the standard for professional practice (e.g. the definition of the knowledge base and specific experience) are fully documented and ready for license by the ALA/IPP.
- (6) The ALA Office for Human Resource Development & Recruitment will work with ALA Finance and the Budget Analysis and Review Committee to bring the Year One budget for the ALA/IPP forward with the ALA FY2003 budget (spring 2002).

18 May 2001

ATTACHMENT A: ALA/IPP PRELIMINARY BUDGET (15 May 2001)

	FY2003 Year One	FY2004 Year Two	FY2005 Year Three	FY2006 Year Four	FY2007 Year Five
Applicants	100	150	200	250	350
App. Fee	\$275	\$285	\$300	\$320	\$340
Cash In	\$100,000	\$77,500	\$46,600	\$26,964	\$18,243
Revenues					
Sales		\$2,000	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$7,000
App Fees	\$27,500	\$42,750	\$60,000	\$80,000	\$105,000
Donations					
Interest	\$4,000	\$3,100	\$1,864	\$1,079	\$730
Misc Fees					
Commissions	\$(5,000)	\$(7,500)	\$(10,000)	\$(15,000)	\$(21,000)
Total Revenues	\$26,500	\$38,350	\$51,864	\$66,079	\$84,730
Total Cash Avail	\$126,500	\$77,500	\$46,600	\$26,964	\$18,243
Cash Out					
Expenses					
Salary/Rel	\$32,500	\$33,250	\$35,500	\$36,300	\$37,300
Loan/Int	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000
Legal/Acct	\$8,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,500	\$7,500
Travel/Rel	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,500
Publn Rel	\$8,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Operating	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,500
Rent/ALA	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,500	\$3,500
Equip/IT	\$5,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,500	\$4,500
Insurance	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Total Expenses	\$75,500	\$69,250	\$71,500	\$74,800	\$77,800
Net Income	\$(49,000)	\$(30,900)	\$(19,636)	\$(8,721)	\$6,930
Cash Avail	\$77,500	\$46,600	\$26,964	\$18,243	\$25,172

