

MiALA Board Meeting Minutes

April 2, 2026 at 11:00am

Attendance: Julie Garrison, Mary O'Kelly, Mies Martin, Linda Miles, Jessica Hronchek, Edward Eckel, Samantha Minnis, Kelli Herm, Kyle Ceci, Gina Bolger, Jen Bowen, Katie Edmiston, Kayln Huson

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 11:00 (Julie Garrison)

- Thad Dickinson (Chair) and Beth Wallis (Vice Chair) will lead next year's conference committee.
- Still looking for an archivist; the one possibility mentioned last month fell through. If you know of anyone, please let Julie know. This will also be promoted in today's newsletter.
- The Policies & Procedures Manual work is ongoing and will be on the Board agenda for May.
- There is a proposed ALA [Resolution on ALA Financial Sustainability and Leadership Accountability](#) circulating through various lists and on ALA Connect. Beth McNeil and Trevor Dawes are seeking support. As Dawes writes, signatures are not needed to move the resolution forward, but are appreciated. If desired you can add your name and ALA ID# on [this form](#).

Board Business Meeting:

1. Approval of Agenda – Kyle Ceci made a motion to approve the agenda and Mies Martin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
2. Approval of Minutes from the [March Meeting](#) – Edward Eckel made a motion to approve the agenda and Mies Martin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
3. Approval of Consent Agenda – Mies Martin made a motion to approve the agenda and Mary O'Kelly seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
 - a. Committee reports
 - i. Advocacy – We had a great meeting with Dr. Mia Murphy from MASU who gave us a lot to consider for our future advocacy work. The committee will be discussing this further in our next meeting and will begin to set up suggestions for the work of the committee going forward. We also sent out two newsletter items related to advocacy.
 - ii. Communications and Marketing – Committee has created a [LinkedIn page for MiALA](#). Actually, LinkedIn created one for MiALA some time ago - [Angela Brcka](#) was able to get access and the committee will use it to promote MiALA from now on. The membership impact statements have been gathered and posted on the MiALA Main Page (under Prospective Members). The Committee will share these on LinkedIn as well. The X(Twitter) and Facebook links will be deleted from the main MiALA page and replaced with the LinkedIn page link.
 1. The Committee is working on updating the [Committee webpage](#). They are working on a draft in a Google Doc.

2. The Committee is also working on improving workflow issues with the Job Board.
- iii. Conference Planning –
- iv. Executive – Discussed the following: 2027 conference leadership (Thad Dickinson and Beth Wallis) and the opportunity to institute a two-year leadership cycle, framing MiALA partnership conversation for the Board, setting the leadership retreat date and location, change to membership meeting time at the 2026 conference, how to proceed with the Academic Librarian of the Year award for 2026 due to timing, and nominations.
- v. IDEA – Conference Accessibility Sub-Committee met to discuss preliminary accessibility plan for 2027 conference.
- vi. Membership – No meeting
- vii. Nominating – Nominating Ballot is complete and voting will take place from March 30th - April 13th.
- viii. Website Review Taskforce - Held second meeting on March 17. We have completed an initial audit of the website, recording all pages in a Google spreadsheet. [Angela Brcka](#) has been given access to the MCLS Google Analytics platform and the MiALA web backend, to allow us to track usage of the website, and to identify and audit hidden pages. Next steps are to evaluate necessary content, gather user feedback about webpage issues, and create a schematic of the entire website to assist with planning.
- b. Partner Reports-
 - i. MCLS –
- c. Treasurer's Report – See Old Business
- d. Interest Group Coordinating Council – Approved funding requests from Fine Arts IG and Health Sciences IG. Finalizing details for the IG Leaders happy hour/meet-up at the MiALA Conference. Marketed out birds of a feather lunch tables and dine-arounds to IGs.
- e. Board Actions via Email –

Old Business

1. Partnerships and how to formalize those (Edward Eckel and Mies Martin)
 - a. Context: [Framing Partnership](#) document provides background on the history of organizations reaching out to partner, fiscally or otherwise, with MiALA. Some are longstanding relationships; some are one-offs. Some have official MOU agreements; others do not. In at least one instance there was a type of fiscal entanglement that we would like to avoid in the future. The problem is that we have never had a formal process to set up, carry out, or monitor agreements. Edward and Mies have developed a [draft policy](#).
 - b. It may help to think about a few specific types of partnership:
 - i. Advocacy
 - ii. Affiliation
 - iii. Collaboration
 - iv. Endorsement

- v. Funding
- vi. Sponsorship
- c. Questions
 - i. Who will take on this work? Does it make sense that there be a standing committee to vet, write up MOUs, establishing the structures?
 - ii. Do we need to have something in the bylaws about what we can/can't do?
 - iii. Some types of collaboration may not rise to the level that they require Board input. For example, are simple conference sponsorships something that should come before the Board, or is that a conference committee function?
- d. Discussion:
 - i. There is a difference between inward and outward "sponsorship." In the first case, a vendor or other organization is providing financial support for our conference, for example. In the latter case, we are agreeing to "sponsor" someone else's initiative or event.
 - ii. There is a difference between the kinds of partnership that are simply financial support, and those that require shared labor/collaboration between members of the two organizations. Simple sponsorships wouldn't need full vetting by the Board or a committee, but it would be great to have clarity of when a sponsorship conversation tips toward becoming a partnership conversation—when an organization is asking for funds and labor from dual-org members. Simple sponsorships are short term and tied to one thing.
 - iii. Things that probably wouldn't need high-level vetting: one-off advocacy requests, shared programs ("in conjunction with"). That changes if there is a funding or revenue piece. Proposals to use MiALA's name or those that would involve shared funding should always be vetted at a high level.
 - iv. Vis-a-vis advocacy: this type of partnership is now in the strategic plan: Goal 1 - Tactic 2: "Support state and national level advocacy efforts by developing and leveraging partnerships with allied library and higher education-related associations (e.g. local, state and national library associations, consortia, education unions)."
 - v. Establishing a standing committee may be too much. There may not be enough interest in that kind of service. Perhaps a subset of the Board or the Executive Committee could serve the purpose.
 - vi. Some organizations, and especially vendors/commercial entities, want to use the word partnership when they mean simple sponsorship, hinting at reciprocity that is not there.
 - vii. Having the different types of partnership defined will be very helpful. Katie Edmiston noted that interest groups are often asking for funds for events in partnership with other groups. The IGCC will need guidance on when requests should be referred to be vetted at a higher level.

- viii. The resulting policy should be represented in the Policies and Procedures Manual, but calls for only a brief mention of this as a Board responsibility in the Bylaws.
- e. Recommendations:
 - i. Any partnerships should have a designated timeframe for review and renewal (e.g., review every three years). Is this still meeting our needs? Is it meeting the goals of the partnership?
 - ii. Any partnerships should have a MOU – to include purpose, terms of use, responsibilities, timeline for review, signatures. Clear documentation will provide transparency for incoming Board leadership.
- f. Next steps
 - i. Edward and Mies will take back Board feedback, review/revise, share with Julie and Katie as part of the Policies and Procedures task group, and bring it for a Board vote next month.
- 2. [Budget planning update](#) (Jessica Hronchek, Mary O’Kelly, and Edward Eckel)
 - a. Context: The group brings to the Board five questions:
 - i. Does the board agree on maintaining a 12-month strategic reserve, adjusted for inflation and other budgetary changes?
 - ii. Does the board prefer either the 25/75 or 40/60 liquidity/investment split?
 - iii. Does the board accept the recommendation to use laddered CDs as the investment medium?
 - iv. Does the board agree to charge the Membership committee to take the lead on coming up with a strategic use of the surplus to offset membership fee increases while also planning a soft increase of membership fees (as outlined in [the doc](#))?
 - v. How do we set priorities for spending down that surplus amount (which is currently \$95,000 over annual budget amount)?
 - b. Discussion:
 - i. Regarding the first three questions:
 - 1. The proposal is that we keep in reserve funding for 12-months of operations and conference expenses for good fiscal health in an emergency.
 - 2. Recommendation to switch to “laddered” CDs that auto renew unless funds are needed or if changing interest rates require changing the CD length. Laddering would allow us to deactivate one CD at a time and keep the other four going, which can save on interest loss.
 - 3. Proposal to regularly spend down savings over and above that 12-month reserve – approx 15K/year – for strategic plan spending.
 - 4. Question: is there a sense that that reserve amount would be reconsidered every year based on inflation, cost projections? A: yes, it could be rebalanced every year. The laddered CD plan helps with making funds available periodically, regularly, in case

we need to use it for the reserve. Otherwise we would rely on auto rollover.

5. Q: are there times of the year when expenses come in en masse, so we might need more than 25% liquidity? A: not historically (conference registration revenue comes in before expenses), but in a worst-case scenario, we would only need to wait one quarter for more funds to become available.
 6. General agreement from the Board: support for question one (12-month reserve); defer to the judgement of the small group for question two (liquidity/investment split); yes for question three (laddered CDs)
- ii. Regarding question four:
 1. At what point do we increase membership rates vs. spend down reserves?
 2. We are looking for a transparent process for when/how we make decisions to increase membership rates.
 3. General Board support for charging the Membership Committee to make recommendations on moving forward.
 - iii. Regarding question five:
 1. How should the strategic plan inform budgeting?
 2. General Board support for flexibility with annual review to confirm the surplus, and spending down as strategic plan-related proposals come up rather than pre-planning at this point.
 - iv. Adding a sixth question:
 1. Do we view low- and no-cost programming as a high-value priority and therefore an ongoing expense, or do we want to continue to budget it separately and expect revenue?
 2. How much would we like to gain revenue from, or spend on, our programming? At this point the conference is the only programming we expect to pay for itself. Other no cost/low cost programming is an investment based on our organizational values. This is aligned with our strategic plan.
 3. There's a need to balance our concerns for inequity among our members and member institutions with our concern for the financial health of the organization.
 4. General Board support for continuing as is for a year or two, keep an eye on whether it becomes necessary to begin charging a small amount for programming.
- c. Next steps: Jessica will bring a full budget draft to the 5/14 Board meeting.

New Business

1. Pausing the Academic Librarian of the Year award for 2026 (Julie Garrison)
 - a. We are already behind the typical schedule for this process.

- b. This was not covered in the Policy & Procedures manual and we have skipped years in the past.
 - c. General Board support for pausing the award for this year.
2. Membership Meeting - Board Report – what do we want to share with the Membership? (Julie Garrison)
 - a. So far the report to the membership will include:
 - i. The Policy & Procedures Manual review
 - ii. Partnerships Policy
 - iii. Review of finances
 - iv. Strategic plan implementation update
 - v. Website review task force
 - b. Please send additional topics to Julie.
3. Request for Sponsorship of Great Lakes Science Boot Camp (GLSBC) to be held July 8–10, 2026, at Indiana University Bloomington. See: [Sponsorship Levels](#) (Julie Garrison)
 - a. This is a program that we have historically supported, although not every year.
 - b. Jessica Hronchek notes that we currently have \$1500 in the sponsorship fund, as we did not sponsor advocacy day this year
 - c. Edward Eckel moved that the MiALA sponsor the GLSBC at the \$1500 level; Mies Martin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Issue Bin / Future Agenda Items:

- Mid-year fully online mini-conference (possibly IDEA committee in collaboration with other committees)

Upcoming Board Meetings: May 14, Jun. 4 at 11:00am

Upcoming Executive Committee Meetings: Apr. 16, May 21, Jun. 18 at 11:00am