MiALA Interest Group Leader Resource Manual

Congratulations on becoming an interest group (IG) leader! This manual should assist you in your role. If you find any corrections that need to be made and/or additional information that you would like to include in this manual, please email the MiALA Admin <contact@miala.org>.

Who? What? Why?

What exactly is an IG? Interest groups are self-created communities of interest and practice organized for the purpose of discussing specific concerns and issues in academic libraries. They can be short-term or long-term, and address any relevant professional issue or hot topic. They are not set-in-stone but form naturally when a group of MiALA members shows enough interest and enthusiasm. The value of an IG within MiALA (as opposed to ad hoc groups outside MiALA) is that a MiALA IG can take advantage of the professional ties and funding available to MiALA members. An IG can form with at least five association members showing interest.

Why? To further the continued interests and enthusiasm of MiALA members on relevant professional issues.

What do I need to be doing to be a successful IG leader? There are lots of different ways to be a successful IG leader. There is no one model. At the very least, a successful IG leader should be able to facilitate communication and conversation among the members. You should try to gather IG members together several times a year for discussions and events, but these activities do not need to be formal or highly structured. Examples of activities: discussion boards, bringing in speakers, monthly MiALA meetups, hosting pop-up conferences and events, reading groups/article groups.

What is the relationship between the IGs and the IGCC? The Interest Group Coordination Council (IGCC) exists to assist IGs in planning events and obtaining funding for workshops or other activities. Each IG is assigned a member of the IGCC to be their main contact and liaison. For more details, please see the MiALA Bylaws.

Structure of IGs

IGs can be as active or relaxed as the members choose. They exist to further the interests of the members. The **only requirement for an IG** is that you must have a chair or co-chairs. The chair simply convenes and runs the meetings. It is a good idea to have a secretary to take notes at meetings, although you can also have IG members rotate these duties. You can choose to have additional structure like having representatives from different types of institutions (i.e., public, private, 4-year, community) or having ad hoc subcommittees for special projects. The IG chair or secretary will be responsible for submitting minutes or reports of meetings to the IGCC within fifteen working days of meetings; the IGCC will forward minutes for publication on the web

site (this submission is currently required by the Bylaws, but the IGCC is considering putting forward an amendment to change this).

Active vs Inactive IGs

What is required for an IG to be active? IGs should try to meet a few times a year. Some IGs meet every month, others only once or twice a semester. This can be very informal. Do not worry about trying to get all members to attend every meeting. If you can get 3-4 people to attend each meeting, you are doing great!

As stated in the the MiALA [Procedures manual](#) (under "Dissolution Process for Inactive Interest Groups"), if an IG does not meet or submit a report of its meetings for two consecutive years, it will automatically cease to exist and be removed from the list of active IGs. However, IGs can be reinstated at any time if there is interest among the membership.

Procedures for requesting funding

Your IG may never need funding for anything. However, if you wish to hold a webcast for professional development, invite a speaker, or host a pop-up conference or event, you can request funding from the IGCC. You should do some initial planning and research to determine when you plan to hold the event, an estimate of how much the event will cost, and where the event will take place. The IGCC considers the following criteria when reviewing requests, so you should consider these questions when planning your request:
- Is the request in support of relevant IG related activity? [yes/no/other]
- Does the funding have the potential to benefit all IG members? [yes/no/other]
- Has your IG already requested funds this year?

Once you do that, fill out the [Interest Group Event Proposal Form](#). The IGCC chair will add your request to the Funding Request Tracking Spreadsheet, and it will be considered at the next IGCC meeting. If the IGCC has any questions, they will contact you. If the IGCC feels the amount exceeds their authority to approve, they will take the request to the MiALA Board.

Keep the IGCC Informed

IGs are asked to complete a report at the end of each year of operation. The IGCC liaisons will ask for this report in April/May. It needs to be submitted to your IGCC liaison before the end of June. This report is a page long template and should be a summary of the group's activities for the year. It is just a good idea to keep track of what IGs are doing, and the Documents section on your IG's section on the MiALA website is a good place to store documents for membership access.

IG Leader Selection Process

Each interest group must have a chair or co-chairs, and may have other positions. Upon establishment, the IG's key contact will become the interim chair of the IG until the fiscal year (to

correspond with the association board election cycle). Selections for the incoming IG chair should occur in the spring and should be recruited through a call for nominations from the IG membership. If only one member is nominated/self-nominates for each open position, then no election is necessary. If two or more members are nominated, an election should take place. These IG elections can be handled as formally or informally as the IG membership prefers. Methods of election may include (but are not limited to): email ballots, using an online survey tool, using the IG message board, and/or informal selection during an interest group meeting. After selections occur, the change in board members must be communicated to the IGCC liaison and MiALA admin prior to July 1.

If no members express interest in serving as the next IG chair, the current chair should reach out to their IGCC liaison. The IGCC will put out a final call for volunteers to serve as IG chair (or co-chairs) for the upcoming term. If the seat is still unable to be filled, the IG will fall into inactive or "dormant" status and will be removed from the list of active interest groups on the MiALA website. At any point during the year, an interested member may "reactivate" a dormant IG by emailing the IGCC and expressing their willingness to serve as IG chair for the remainder of the term. Interest groups are only formally dissolved after two consecutive years of inactivity.

Year End Officer Transition

The MiALA admin will request contact information from all incoming interest group leaders to be included on their respective IG information pages. All incoming IG leaders will receive leader access to their IG project area. All outgoing IG leaders will be removed from leader access to their IG project area. All files pertinent to their IG leadership (e.g. meeting minutes, ongoing project documents, etc.) should be shared with the incoming IG chair before June 30 with a copy sent to the MiALA admin for storing in the MiALA file archive on the MCLS Sharepoint server.

Typically MiALA hosts a leadership retreat in August to onboard incoming IG chairs and other leaders within the organization.

Communication

Communicating with Members
Most IGs use email as their main form of communication. Member lists and methods to email the group as a whole can be found in the IG Webpage and Tools section.

Communicating with the IGCC
The IGCC designates one of its members to serve as a liaison to each IG and this liaison should reach out to the IG leadership in the Fall as well as several times a year. Your liaison will also be listed on the IG webpage. To contact the IGCC as a whole, please email <igcc@miala.org>.

Communicating with all MiALA Members

If your IG wants to communicate with members in the wider organization, there are several options to do so, including adding events to the MiALA event calendar, writing articles for the online Monthly Newsletter, posting from the official MiALA social media accounts, and sending messages to the MiALA listserv.

All of these communications go through the Communications and Marketing Committee and can be submitted by completing the [News and Events Publication Request Form](#).

Information and editorial policies can be found in the MiALA Policies and Procedures Manual.

Resources

MiALA Policies and Procedures Manual
This is a great resource that lays out the mechanics of how our organization operates and will go into more detail than this manual. It is linked on the Current Members area of the MiALA website and can be downloaded as a PDF.

Video Conference Services
Post-2020, most IGs choose to meet virtually. IG leaders often will schedule smaller or more frequent meetings with their own institution's services, but for larger meetings or webinars, the MiALA's Zoom services can be reserved by contacting the MiALA Admin <contact@miala.org>.

Online Surveys and Document Storage
Like video conferencing services, many IG leaders will use their own institutions' services to run a quick survey or election or to create meeting agenda and notes. However for larger projects or to have MiALA store the documents and data, contact the MiALA Admin for help.

Reserving Physical Meeting Space to Meet
MiALA IGs can reserve MCLS meeting rooms if they want to meet in person. Contact the MiALA Admin for help.

Reserving an Audio/Video Conference Line
If the IG would like to use a conference line to meet with their group or to hold a program, contact the MiALA Admin for help.

IG Webpages and Tools

When MiALA members sign up for an interest group or committee, their membership will be listed in the Interest Groups / Committees tab on their Member Menu. As an IG leader this area is important as it allows you to see who is a member of your group, allows you to communicate with them easily, and acts as a storage area for group documents like meeting agenda and minutes.

To access Interest Group pages and tools on the MiALA website:
1. Click on **Member Login** and sign in using your MiALA credentials.

2. Under the **Engagement** drop down, click on **Interest Groups/Committees** to view all MiALA Interest Groups and Committees. Then to view the internal webpage for each IG, click on the IG you are a member of then click on **Enter Interest Group/Committee Area here…**
3. Or, in the **My Membership Info** section, click on the **Interest Groups/Committees** tab to view the IGs you are currently a part of.
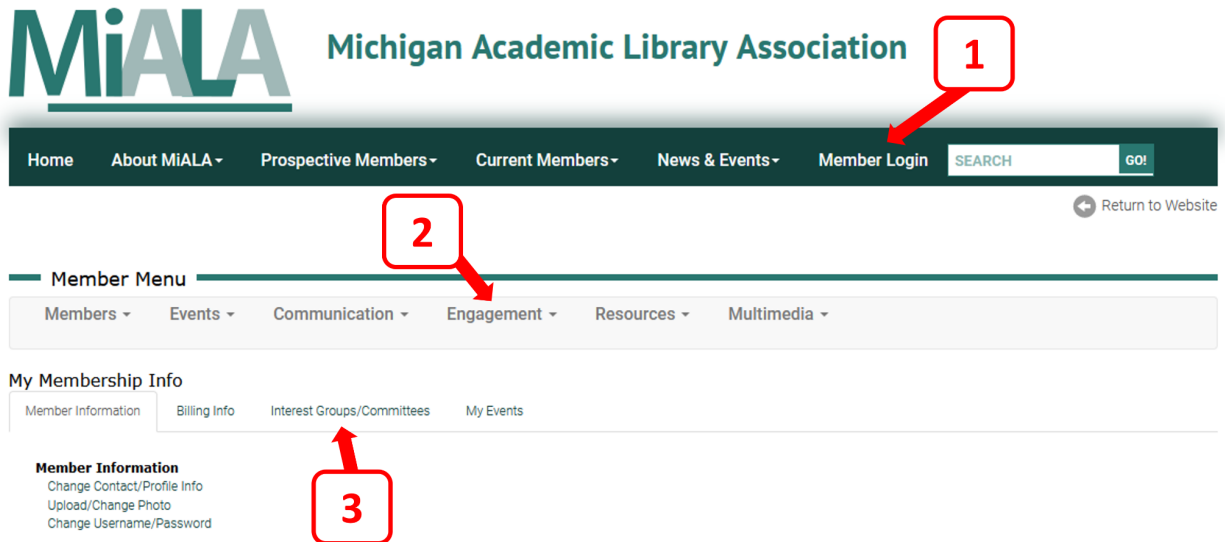
Once you navigate to the IG page, there are a number of tools and features that are good to know about as a leader in the IG, though don't feel you have to use every tool listed on the IG's page. For example, just because there is a newsletter function, it doesn't mean you have to put out a newsletter. These tools are intended to help you with your IG activities, not dictate what those activities should be.

1. The **Functions** section contains tools mostly focused on communicating with IG members.
    ○ List of Participants - Detail: alphabetical list of members and their contact information (phone number and email address). This list is downloadable in a variety of formats and includes a copy and paste-able list of email addresses.
    ○ Send Broadcast Email: allows members to send messages to the entire IG with MiALA branding and to see an open rate.
        i. There is a known issue of these emails not being received by MSU librarians.
    ○ Send Newsletter: allows you to create a newsletter from some preformatted templates and to send to all IG members
    ○ Quick Email to Group: opens up your computer's default email program if you have one installed. (Will open a blank browser window if you do not use a desktop email program.)
    ○ Update Files: storage for group's documents. You are able to organize documents by adding categories (e.g. agenda, reports, projects, etc.), upload files in any format up to 250MB, and link files for the group to access.

2. In the **Details** section, you can see your **involvement** in the IG and there is a button for joining or leaving the IG. The button will say sign up if you are not a member or "Opt Out?" if you are already a member and would like to leave the IG.
3. Each IG has a **Documents** page where they can store important files. The **Update Files** link in the **Function** section of this page will also take you to this page. While many IGs opt to use other tools such as Google Drive for ease of editing shared documents, many store meeting minutes and other important documents in the Documents section of the webpage.
4. **Message Boards** allow threaded conversations among IG members.