

**Core Forum 2022**  
**Final Report from the Core Forum Planning Committee**  
**Wendy Tressler, Chair**

Members: Wendy Tressler(chair), Arthur Aguilera, Melissa Brooks, Amanda Click, Debbie Erhman, Richard Guajardo, Daniel Neville-Rehbehn, Renna Redd, Marcy Simmons, Frank Skornia, Catherine Soehner, Margaret Heller. Staff liaisons Julie Reese and Tom Ferren, with assistance from Brooke Morris-Chott, Jenny Levine, and Mia Blixt-Shehan.

**Summary**

In October 2022 Core worked to deliver the first ever Core Forum. Using the successful LITA Forum as a model, members from the Forum Planning Committee worked together for 9 months to develop an in-person Forum with content and themes relevant across the division. The Core Office took the lead in managing the budget, contracting with hotel and external vendors, and providing staff support. Core President-Elect Wendy Tressler chaired the Forum Planning Committee. There were a total of 272 registrants. Hosting the Forum provided a launching point for Core members to come together and attend professional development across Core. We believe the success of the event will allow it to become a staple of professional development for Core. Assuming a post-pandemic world supports in-person professional events, we recommend at least three years of in-person Forum to build up the Core brand and develop a strong following. After that time, Core staff and the Board will discuss the future of Core Forum determining if it should be an annual in person event or to offer it in alternating years with the in-person Core Forum and virtual Exchange or some other model.

**Philosophy and Structure of Forum**

The Forum Planning Committee used the model of 2021 canceled Forum to shape the 2022 event. Like the 2021 Forum, the 2022 Forum wanted to create a themed conference around high-interest areas that would be of interest to practitioners of all levels and across the areas covered by the three newly merged divisions. The main theme of the conference was **"Together Again."**

The three-day event featured the following themes and topics:

**Day 1 (Thursday, October 13)**

We offered 3 preconferences and 2 tours followed by Welcome Reception.

**Day 2 (Friday, October 14)**

Day one kicked off with Keynote presentation by C. Thi Nyguen followed by 4 sets of 6 concurrent sessions totaling 40 sessions as well as an unconference and poster sessions.

**Day 3 (Saturday, October 15)**

Day one kicked off with Keynote presentation by Jonathan Moody followed by 4 sets of 6 concurrent sessions totaling 40 sessions as well as an unconference and poster sessions

Call for proposals went out in March. We received 90 one-hour session proposals and selected 40. We received 15 poster session proposals and approved all of them.

The committee determined that 6 tracks, one per Core Section, would be offered to ensure that content from Core's 6 Sections were well represented. Proposals were assigned to the relevant section leaders to review and recommend and the Forum Planning Committee made the final scheduling assignments. A review matrix was used by all to evaluate the proposals. Proposals were evaluated on relevance to theme, opportunities for learning, audience interactivity, equity, diversity, and inclusion, library type, and a general interest factor.

The committee selected two keynote speakers: C. Thi Nguyen to discuss gaming and Jonathan Moody... Both of their talks fit well with the themes of the event, and we feel like the strong keynote presentations were a highlight of Core.

The Salt Lake City Public Library and the Friends of Salt Lake were willing partners to support local arrangements for the 2022 Forum, so based on the recommendations of Core staff, Core contracted with Hilton Salt Lake City Center hotel as the location for the Forum 2022. Frank Skornia built and supported the Forum web site. Registration was conducted through ALA.

### **Changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic**

We got a late start in planning this event due to the uncertainty of the Covid-19 pandemic. In the beginning of 2022 we were unsure what the environment would be in the fall of 2022. In February we decided to go ahead and contract with the hotel and move forward with the event. Determining registration numbers to base the budget was difficult and decided to be conservative on our registration goal of 300 people.

We made several adjustments at the end of March:

- Overflow hotel search
- We followed ALA protocol and followed the mask mandate
- We extended early-bird cut-off by 1 week to encourage additional registrations
- We did not offer a virtual component of the Forum due cost

To save on AV costs, presenters were asked to bring their own laptops. This worked out well, for the most part. We were able to supply spare laptops in a few cases. The internet bandwidth in the hotel needed to be expanded because we reached the limit on the first day. The hotel worked with us to make this accommodation.

### **Marketing**

Marketing of Core Forum was handled in a variety of ways including Email, Connect (ALA, Core, PLA, ACRL), American Libraries Online, and State newsletters such as Utah and Ohio. In addition, Feather Ads were used. See detail below.

#### **Feather Ads:**

First Ad 09/01/2022 - 09/07/2022

Views: 8,504

Unique Clicks: 86

Clicks: 143

1.68% CTR

Spend: \$70.01

CPC: \$0.49

Extended Early Bird: 9/09/2022 - 09/13/2022

Views: 6,221

Unique Clicks: 77

Clicks: 155

2.49% CTR

Spend: \$50.01

CPC: \$0.32

#### **Registration and Budget**

The pricing for the event was based on pricing from the 2021 canceled event. We ended up with a total of 273 registrations, of that number, 97 were presenters and 20 were exhibitors. We brought in \$24,500 in sponsorship dollars, which was \$15,000 over what we had expected. This helped to offset expenses, however due to lower than anticipated registration, we ended short by \$13,000.

<b>REGISTRATION FEES</b>		
<b>Member Type</b>	<b>Early Bird (Thru 9/13)</b>	<b>Late (9/14-10/13)</b>
Division Member	\$299	\$349
ALA Indiv Member	\$369	\$419
Non-Member	\$449	\$499
ALA Student Member/Retiree/Seeking Employment/International	\$109	\$209
Utah Library Association Member	\$299	\$349

To extend the reach of Forum and make it accessible to all members, attendees voted on their Best of Core Forum sessions which are being presented as live webinars in the months following the event. Registrants of Core Forum can attend the webinars at no additional charge.

The committee obtained the following sponsors: OCLC as a Platinum Sponsor, Lyrasis and Agati Furniture as Gold Sponsors, Backstage Library Works, Arch Nexus, and Caia Software Solutions as Silver Sponsors, and Moody Nolan and Friends of the Salt Lake City Public Library as Bronze Sponsor. Additionally, Elsevier, Duke University Press, EBSCO, and Project Muse as Supporters.

Expenses came from the hotel for audiovisual equipment, meeting room rental and catering. Other expenses included honoraria for the keynote speakers, registration processing, and ALA overhead. Overall, the event provided a net income of **\$86,000**. Although we did not break even, we consider this very successful first event for Core and have ideas to implement in 2023 and our goal for 2023 is to make it a revenue producer.

Income	Rate	# Registrants	Total
Core Member (Early) - Sept 6th	\$299	68	\$20,332
Core Member (Reg)	\$349	7	\$2,443
ALA Member (Early) - Sept 6th	\$369	5	\$1,845
ALA Member (Reg)	\$419	0	\$0
Non-Member (Early) - Sept 6th	\$449	13	\$5,837
Non-Member (Reg)	\$499	3	\$1,497
Student/Seeking Employment/Retired/International	\$199	9	\$1,791
Student/Seeking Employment/Retired/International (Reg)	\$209	1	\$209
Utah Library Association Member (Early) - Sept 6th	\$299	26	\$7,774
Utah Library Association Member (Reg)	\$349	2	\$698
Session Presenter Registrations	\$159	90	\$13,197
Poster Presenter Registrations	\$199	6	\$1,194
Keynote (Comp)	\$0	2	\$0
Exhibitor Registration (reg incl. in tabletop purchase)	\$0	15	\$0
Sponsor Reps (reg. included in sponsorship purchase)	\$0	0	\$0
Planning Committee Member Discounted Fee	\$159	4	\$636
Planning Committee Chair (Comp)	\$0	1	\$0
Staff (Comp)	\$0	3	\$0
Pre-Conference Registration Only	\$0	1	\$0
Exhibitor Table Top Displays	\$600	3	\$1,800
Cancelled Registrations	\$50	8	\$400
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>273</b>	<b>\$61,503</b>

<b>Sponsors</b>			
<b>Platinum Sponsor</b>	<b>\$5,500</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>\$5,500</b>
<b>Gold Sponsor</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>
<b>Silver Sponsor</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>
<b>Bronze Sponsor</b>	<b>\$1,500</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>
<b>Supporter Sponsor</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>\$4,000</b>
<b>Total Funding</b>			<b>\$24,500</b>

<b>Expenses</b>		<b>Fees</b>	<b>Total</b>
Catering	230	\$178.00	\$54,345.36
AV (proj, screen, pc, mic)	1	\$20,166.77	\$21,311.72
Staff Room Nights (3 staff x 4 nights)	5	\$111.75	\$537.24
Staff Airfare	2	\$400.00	\$999.40
Staff Meals	1	\$500.00	\$2,226.10
Site Visit (staff flight and meals)	1	\$500.00	\$500.00
Keynote Room Nights (2 x 3 nights)	6	\$0.00	\$0.00
Keynote Ground Transportation	1	\$100.00	\$0.00
Sign Language Interpreter	0	\$1,500.00	\$0.00
Photographer	1	500	\$0.00
Miscellaneous	1	1,000	\$0.00
Total Meeting Expenses		\$24,956.52	<b>\$79,919.82</b>
<b>Program Expenses</b>			
Signage	1	\$1,500.00	\$596.65
Supplies and Printing	1	\$800.00	\$355.66
Lanyards (extra black)	1	\$83.00	\$83.00
Badge Stock & Holders	1	\$500.00	\$200.00
Ribbons	3	\$25.00	\$75.00
Attendee Giveaway	0	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
Registration Processing Fee	273	\$6.89	\$1,880.97
Day One Keynote Stipend	1	\$750.00	\$750.00
Day Two Keynote Stipend	1	\$0.00	\$0.00
ALA Overhead	\$61,503	0.265	\$16,298.30
Bank S/C	\$61,503	0.0315	\$1,752.84
<b>Total Expenses</b>			<b>\$101,912.23</b>

## Local Advocacy

As a form of local advocacy, Margaret Heller and Wendy Tressler met with the [Utah Library Association Advocacy Co-Chairs](#) to discuss how to best approach advocacy in Utah. Based on that conversation we added a presentation by the Co-Chairs, Peter Bromberg and Rebekah Cummings titled [Advocacy in a Polarized World: How to talk effectively about our values and mission with people across the political spectrum](#)". The session was well attended and received very positive feedback. It was also added as a webinar in the Best of Core Forum series. In addition, Core donated to the following Utah Library Association Partners:

1. **Equality Utah - [Equality Utah](#) –\$100.00.**
2. **PFLAG Provo/Utah County - [PFLAG Provo/Utah County | PFLAG](#) – \$100.00.**
3. **[Utah LGBTQ+ Chamber of Commerce](#) – \$100.00**

### Evaluation

Following the Forum, all speakers and participants were invited to participate in an evaluation. Out of 273 attendees, 49 responded. At under 18% percent, the response rate for participants was low enough it's hard to draw any meaningful conclusions for Forum participants as a whole. It is worth noting that in the participant survey, the majority of respondents were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the Forum and offered many positive comments.

A sample of "What did you like most about the conference?" includes:

- I loved that it was much smaller than a big ALA conference, it really gave me a chance to connect with people and interact more with the presenters.
- I liked that it was smaller and took place all in one hotel. Topics covered were useful and the speakers were overall very good. The preconference library tours were great.
- Larger conferences can feel overwhelming due to the number of attendees, sessions, etc. Core was a good size, with a wide variety of topics and an interesting mix of people. Everything was so well-organized and it felt like the conference was executed well by all of the people involved.
- The metadata track presentations and the chance to talk to vendors without interruption.
- Making connections with other attendees. I made many, many useful connections and some new friends. Salt Lake City was a terrific location, and the hotel was a nice location.
- The sessions were really wonderful and applicable to the work I do.
- I really appreciate that the conference came to Salt Lake City. I'm in the area and it was a great opportunity to send some of the people on my team to Core who would not otherwise be able to attend a national conference. Also, the programs had a good mix of representation among the three former divisions/topic areas that make up Core.
- I appreciated the intimacy of a small conference -- giving many more opportunities to network. In addition, having the multitude of sessions in the hotel meeting space was a real bonus (vs. needing to walk back and forth to a convention center). The quality and diversity of session presenters and topics was very good. Both keynote speakers were inspiring. The breakfasts and break service was greatly appreciated. A great Forum for the first year. Congratulations to the planning committee and the Core staff.

A sample of “What would you have changed about the conference?:

- Many of the presentations were heavily focused on academic libraries. I understand that public libraries may not have submitted proposals, but presenters could have done more to make their talks more generalized. If they could take one step back, and realize that their problems/issues/practices/etc. can relate to more than just academic libraries, it would be a better conference. Perhaps for 2023, when reviewing proposals, reviewers can look for this academic leaning and request that the proposers edit their presentations to make them more applicable to all libraries.
- Would prefer to have conferences during the week and not on a Saturday. Have the conference run Thursday and Friday rather than Friday and Saturday. Those of us presenting later in the afternoon on Saturday could not catch a flight home until Sunday. No rest before heading back to the office on Monday morning. I understand it is often cheaper to have a conference run during the weekend, but work/life balance often outweighs monetary cost!
- More speakers from outside the field would be interesting. I liked the keynote speakers. and perhaps more opportunities to network. I tried the unconference sessions a couple of times, but there was no one in the room.
- Add in opportunities for committee/section/interest group meetings/casual conversations. In sessions, give more attribution when the planning and delivery has ties to committees/sections/interest groups.
- No masks. Not having to wear masks. That seemed uncalled for given the direction the rest of the world has gone at this point. (this was brought up several times during the conference itself.)
- More engaged time with the vendors. If there is only a small set of vendors perhaps set aside 30 minutes for them to give 5 minute pitches to boost engagement. The vendor raffle was unclear.
- There were too many DEI in cataloging presentations. They were repetitive.
- Better breakfast options if breakfast is going to continue to be provided.

The full surveys are archived on the Forum Planning Committee Connect site for future groups to review comments and suggestions.

### **Recommendations for the next Core Forum:**

The committee provided feedback on their thoughts on changes to the Core Forum 2023 Committee should consider. They include:

- Structure the committee differently, recruit volunteers for specific duties such as: Sessions, Poster Sessions, Sponsorship/Exhibits, Local Arrangements, Preconferences
- Session and Conference Evaluation - create a better solution than the survey at the end. Have qualitative and quantitative questions for easier analysis.
- Room Monitors: Assign in advance and in addition to the committee members if needed. Need presenters to collect attendance if there is no room monitor (this would be a great job for an intern or scholarship recipient).

- Marketing: We need to market more and sooner and ensure that all sessions and preconferences are on the website prior to marketing.
- Tech/AV: Continue to have presenters bring equipment to save on costs. Continue to have sessions in person only and not try to stream. Continue to require presenters to use the mics for accessibility reasons.
- Social Media: More highlighting of social tools/Slack. Have a Slack tutorial ahead of the conference for newbies. Have more posts before, during, and after event on Core Social platforms.
- Local Advocacy- Meet with the Louisiana Library Association to discuss issues in their state and how best Core and Core Forum can support their efforts and not unintentionally cause harm. Continue to make a small donation to LLA's local partners. Add more messaging about local politics and advocacy issues so Core Forum attendees have awareness and clear paths for them to help advocate.
- Dine Arounds - If the committee chooses to include in Forum 2023, more coordination is needed to make sure all of them have a planning person checking in with them. Send out the signup sheet a bit more.
- Sessions: Keep a variety of sessions and ensure all library types are covered, as well as all sections. Continue to have Section Leaders review the proposals and recommend selections. Change proposal form so that only 1 primary section is selected.
- Keynotes: Focus on getting interesting keynotes, possibly ask Core Reading Club to locate a local author.
- Entertainment: We received lots of positive feedback on Trivia night. Being in New Orleans in October might lend itself well to some after hours group tours.
- Sponsorships: Sponsors are very interested in supporting the Forum. Add more opportunities and increase the dollar amount per level.
- Website: Continue with the format, ensure there is a way for attendees to use it more easily during the conference.
- Meetings: Add time for committees and Sections to meet during the Forum. This was requested in the survey as well as verbally multiple times.