



Recommended Practices for Units

April 2017

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NOTE

This document is applicable to Divisions, Chapters, and Caucuses of SLA. The appropriate specific designation should be assumed where noted, i.e. “Unit Leader” means Division Chair, Chapter President, or Caucus Convener.

FOREWORD
Association Statement

The Special Libraries Association (SLA) is an international organization of innovative information professionals and their strategic partners.

I. INTRODUCTION

These Recommended Practices serve as a reference for Unit Leaders in the development of Practices for their particular unit. Each Unit is encouraged to customize its own Practices based on the model presented here. This model contains valuable, "must-know" information on Unit responsibilities, Association structure, policies and procedures. The Practices delineate the responsibilities of key Unit Leaders and will aid in the understanding of the relationships among Unit Leaders, Association officers, and Units.

Each Unit will maintain approved Practices that define, in detail, the responsibilities and duties of the individual elected Unit officers, appointed positions and committee chairs, as appropriate for the Unit.

Suggested additional content of a Unit Practices Manual:

- A. History and background of Unit, including a list of past Unit Leaders.
- B. The addition or deletion of descriptions of committees chair and appointed positions, and their respective duties, as currently in practice.
- C. Detailed descriptions of existing Unit programs (such as specific Awards, traditions, special programs, meetings, etc.).
- D. Approved Unit Policies (such as an Officer Travel Policy).
- E. Calendar of deadlines (such as leadership reports, elections, meeting notifications).
- F. Copy of Unit Governing Document.

A former Unit Leader is often chosen to undertake the preparation and/or updating of the Unit Practices Manual. Each Unit Leader must have a copy of the Unit Practices Manual available. It is important that outgoing Unit Leaders pass their copies of the manual to the incoming leaders as soon as election results are known.

Additional information is available at the Unit Leadership web pages:

- [Division](#)
- [Chapter](#)
- [Caucus](#)

A copy of the Unit's most current Practices Manual must be sent to the Membership Department at the Association office (membership@sla.org). Suggestions for additions and revisions to these Recommended Practices should also be forwarded to the Membership Department.

A. DEFINITION OF UNITS

1. Relationship to Association

The creation of Units and their activities are carried on within the framework of the [Association's Bylaws and Policies](#) as determined by the Association's Board of Directors. The Association receives direct impetus in many of its professional activities from the work and support of the Units. In turn, Units receive the benefits of an international body that fosters inter-Unit cooperation and collectively promotes the advancement of information professionals and the information and knowledge work they perform.

Units exist to serve their members' special interests and the interests of the Association by planning programs and events, issuing publications (such as newsletters), maintaining an online presence through social media and Unit websites, sharing information through SLA Connect, and engaging in special projects (such as organizing webinars, institutes or seminars and cooperating with other professional groups in their respective geographic or interest area).

All Unit officers and leaders must be members of the Association and members of the Unit.

2. Relationship to Unit Cabinet

The Unit Cabinet (Division or Chapter) consists of all SLA Unit Leaders and Unit Leaders-Elect. If the Unit Leader or Unit Leader-Elect is unable to attend a meeting of the Unit Cabinet, the Unit Leader may assign a delegate to attend the meeting. The Unit Cabinet represents Unit interests on all matters considered by the Board of Directors or acted upon by the Association staff and committees, and the Unit Cabinet keeps the Units informed of all decisions and policies affecting them. The Unit Cabinet is headed by the Cabinet Chair and Chair-Elect, elected by the SLA membership to the Board of Directors.

The Unit Cabinet shall hold at least one regular meeting per calendar year. If there is only one meeting, it shall be held during the Association's annual conference. Special meetings may be held upon call of the Chair or upon written request of 15 members of the Unit Cabinet. Joint sessions with the Cabinets may be requested by the Cabinet Chair or the Association President. Meetings of the Unit Cabinet shall be open to all Association members.

II. BEST PRACTICES FOR OFFICERS

A. Unit Leader

Each Unit is required to have an elected Unit Leader by the Unit's Governing Document. The Unit Leader's duties are as follows:

1. Communications

Unit Leaders may be asked to speak or act officially on matters that are within their areas of official responsibility and on which they are fully informed. When the Association's official position is known, particularly when it has appeared in writing, it should be quoted to ensure consistency of response. Advice from Association leadership and staff should be sought when the official position is not known. Without exception, new or controversial matters should be referred to the Association President and Executive Director. This is particularly important when drafting a statement that will publicly reflect the Association's position.

Interactions at Leadership Events and Annual Conference are the best means of establishing a productive rapport among Cabinet members. Between meetings, telephone, email, and SLA Connect discussion lists assist the functioning of the informal communications network.

To assure that the Unit Leader-Elect is fully informed on all business of the Unit and the Unit Cabinet, it is important for the Unit Leader to share all Unit and Association-related messages and information with the Unit Leader-Elect, even if the subject matter seems inconsequential. This keeps the Unit Leader-Elect both informed and prepared to substitute for the President, in case of an emergency.

2. Appointment Duties

The appointment duties of the Unit Leader are:

1. To appoint chairs for all committees and other positions as specified in the Unit's Practices Manual. Appointments should be made before the Unit Leader-Elect assumes the office of Unit Leader, and for a specific term of office. Unit Committees and appointed positions are identified in Section III of this Guide.
2. To aid the Unit Treasurer to appoint an auditor by the end of December to audit the year-end financial statement prepared by the Unit treasurer. The auditor may be neither an elected or incoming Unit officer nor a current or incoming member of the SLA Board of Directors.

3. Meeting Attendance

The Unit Leader will attend all Unit meetings.

The following are the specific meeting responsibilities of the Unit Leader:

1. To attend all Unit meetings.
2. To preside at Unit Board meetings. These meetings can be very useful for problem solving and can include the entire Advisory Board.
3. To preside at the Unit's annual business meeting.
4. To attend Unit Cabinet meetings and any joint meetings of the Cabinets at the Association's Annual Conference.
5. All Unit Leaders and Unit Leaders-Elect constitute the Association's Unit Cabinet. Attendance at the meetings of the Cabinets is one of the most important responsibilities of Unit officers. The Unit Cabinet can be truly effective only if all representatives participate.

The Association Office issues a "Call to Meeting" approximately two months before the Annual Board of Directors and Cabinet meetings, held at the Annual Conference. This document includes

detailed instructions on the preparation of documents for information or action at the Board and Cabinet meetings. The deadline for receipt of documents for placement on the Cabinet's agenda is usually about one month before the meeting.

If the Unit Leader has last-minute business to bring to a Unit Cabinet meeting, the nature of the business should be brought to the attention of the Unit Cabinet Chair a minimum of 24 hours before the start of the meeting. *All motions, petitions, resolutions, etc., should be provided in advance.*

5. To attend the Association's Unit Leadership meetings and any orientation and meetings for Unit officers moderated by the Unit Cabinet Chair and Chair-Elect. Orientation aids for incoming leaders can be found on [the Leadership Webinars page](#).

This information serves to expand the communications network and provides an opportunity for Unit Leaders to get to know the Association's inner workings and concerns. It is also of real value for information on funding meetings, finances, bulletins, etc.

6. To attend the open session of the Board of Directors at the Annual Conference and leadership trainings offered by the Unit Cabinet Chairs.

4. Reporting Duties

The Unit Leader must submit several specific reports that are due at predetermined times during the Association's business year. These reports must be submitted on or before the stated deadlines. Regardless of which Unit officer or committee chair has the responsibility for preparation and distribution of a report, the Unit Leader is responsible for seeing that all deadlines are met. Refer to Section H for the Association Action Deadline Chart. See also, [Association Policy for Reporting Requirements for SLA Units](#). Timely submission of the Unit's annual report and year-end financial report (including all bank statements) are **required** in order to receive the dues allotment the following year.

5. General Duties

There are several general duties that are crucial to the successful operation of the Unit and to the smooth transitions of authority. Among the general duties of the Unit Leader are the following:

- a. Serves as Unit Leader of the Executive Board and Advisory Board.
- b. Reads the Unit's Governing Document and Practices Manual thoroughly to determine the responsibilities of each Unit officer.
- c. On assuming office, acquires from the Past Unit Leader all of the Unit's current records. Those records not needed should be forwarded to the Unit archivist. (If current records are not received within 20-25 days, contact the departing Unit Leader to request their transfer.)
- d. Reads all the information sent by the Association office and the Unit Cabinet Chair via the SLA Volunteer Leadership Community on Connect (both Unit Leader and Unit Leader-Elect should maintain current email listings in their SLA member records).
- e. Prepares the Unit's budget in consultation with the Treasurer and other Unit leaders.
- f. Holds check signing authority in addition to the Treasurer and Unit Leader-Elect.
- g. Makes decisions on Unit policy; referring questions to the appropriate Unit officer or the entire Executive and/or Advisory Boards.
- h. Serves as ex-officio member of all committees except the Nominating Committee.
- i. Recommends to the Board, via their Board Liaison, any measures that will further the Association's objectives and improve the effectiveness of the Unit.
- j. Works with appropriate Unit volunteers (i.e. the Communications Director, Community Admin, and/or Webmaster) to bring all pertinent information before the Unit membership.
- k. Takes part in the interviewing process of the SLA Scholarship Program for applicants from the Unit area. The task of interviewing may be delegated to other Unit members.

- l. Informs the Membership Department at Association HQ at once if the Unit appoints a representative to another professional society.
- m. Informs the Membership Department at Association HQ of appointment/changes throughout the year of elected and appointed offices.
- n. Sends copies of all reports, publicity, etc., to the Unit archivist (or other designated Unit member) and copies of current correspondence to the Unit Leader-Elect.
- o. At the conclusion of term as Unit Leader, reviews with the Unit Leader-Elect the responsibilities of the position and any ongoing projects.
- p. At the conclusion of term as Unit Leader, forwards all current records to the incoming President within 20 days of stepping down from office. At the discretion of the Unit, retiring Unit Leaders often have continuing responsibilities as past Unit Leaders.

B. Unit Leader-Elect

The Unit Leader-Elect's duties are as follows:

1. Orientation and Communications

It is very important for the Unit Leader-Elect to read the Unit's Governing Document and Practices Manual to become familiar with the duties of all Unit officers.

Among other responsibilities, the Unit Leader-Elect will substitute for the Unit Leader in his/her absence. In the event of disability or withdrawal of the Unit Leader, the title and all duties and obligations shall be assumed by the Unit Leader-Elect.

The Unit Leader-Elect should take every opportunity to become acquainted with other members of the Unit Cabinet, especially the Unit Leaders-Elect of other Units. Unit Leaders-Elect who are diligent in becoming acquainted with other Cabinet members will find that they are soon well established in the informal communications network that exists among Unit officers.

2. General Duties

The following duties are essential for the efficient operation of the Unit and for the smooth transition of office:

- a. Serves as a member of the Executive Board.
- b. Substitutes for the Unit Leader. The Unit Leader-Elect may act in the Leader's absence and perform other duties as specified in the Unit's Governing Document and/or Practices Guide.
- c. Attends all meetings. The Unit Leader-Elect is required to attend the same meetings as the Unit Leader. These are detailed under the Unit Leader's responsibilities, Section II.B.3. of these Practices.
- d. Learns during the year as Unit Leader-Elect, as much as possible about the operation of the Unit so that when he/she assumes Leadership the following year, a smooth transition will occur.
- e. Holds check signing authority in addition to the Treasurer and Unit Leader.
- f. Recruits Advisory Board members to serve during his/her term as Unit Leader.
- g. Provides Association HQ with the names of all Unit and committee officers elected and appointed to serve the Unit. Forms for submitting this information are supplied by the Association office.

[Chapter Elected Form](#) (due October 1)

[Chapter Appointed Form](#) (due December 1)

[Division Elected form](#) (due October 1)

[Division Appointed Form](#) (due December 1)

The completed forms should be submitted to the Association office by December 1st.-Failure to

report the names of officers and committee appointees before December 15 may result in the untimely addition of individual's e-mail addresses to the appropriate Connect community.

- h. Transfers records to the new Unit Leader-Elect. On assuming the office of Unit Leader, all pertinent records should be given to the incoming Unit Leader-Elect within 20 days of assuming office. As the new Unit Leader, make sure all Unit officers have received their files.
- i. Performs any other duties as required for operation of the Unit and the request of the Unit Leader.

C. Unit Treasurer

Each Unit is required to have an elected Treasurer by the Unit's Governing Document. This position is sometimes combined with the Unit Secretary, but cannot under any circumstances be combined with the Unit Leader to ensure checks and balances.

The Unit Treasurer's duties are as follows:

1. Serves as a member of the Executive Board.
2. Maintains all financial records of the Unit in accordance with Association Practices and submits required reports to the Association office accurately and on time.
3. Collects, deposits, and expends funds for the Unit as requested and authorized by the Unit Leader, including annual allotment payments from Association HQ. In addition, to arrange for the Unit Leader and Unit Leader-Elect to have signing authority at the beginning of each year.
4. Prepares, signs, and submits an audited year-end financial statement for each fiscal year ending December 31. Forms can be accessed on the Association web site in the [SLA Treasurer's Community](#). The completed form must be submitted to the Director of Finance at the Association office by January 31. Each Unit's year-end financial statement must be certified as to its accuracy by the auditor appointed by the Unit Treasurer.
5. Reports the fiscal condition of the Unit to the Executive Board at each Board meeting.
6. Prepares the budget with the Unit Leader for approval at the first Board meeting of each new calendar year, and to submit these to the Membership Department of the Association office by January 31.
7. Monitors Unit fundraising activities to ensure that they are in compliance with Association Practices.

For additional information about the duties of the Unit Treasurer, consult the [SLA Treasurer's Community](#).

See Also:

- [Unit Reporting Requirements Policy](#)
- [Credit Card Practice for Association Units](#)
- [Practices for the Administration of Property Owned by Units of SLA](#)

D. Unit Secretary

Each Unit is required by the Unit's Governing Document to have an elected Secretary. This position is sometimes combined with the Unit Treasurer.

The Unit Secretary's duties are as follows:

1. Records and distributes minutes of the Unit's business meetings, including the annual business meeting. Minutes are a record of the proceedings of a meeting. They should contain a record of actions taken at the meeting. Minutes are to be kept not only for the annual business meeting, but also for all Executive Board and Advisory Board meetings of the Unit. The first paragraph of the minutes should include the following information:

- a. Kind of meeting: annual business meeting or executive board or Board meeting;
- b. The name of the Unit;
- c. The date, time and place of the meeting;
- d. The name of the convening officer and secretary or their substitutes, and if an executive board meeting, the names of those present;
- e. Whether the minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved or corrected.

The body of the minutes should contain a separate paragraph for each subject discussed and should include the wording of each motion; the name of the seconder does not need to be entered. The minutes should state if the motion was approved, failed, failed for lack of a second, amended, postponed, or referred. If there is a count taken of a vote on a motion, the count must be recorded.

Depending on the nature of a committee report, it can be summarized by the secretary or included intact in the minutes. The name and the subject of a guest speaker can be given, but no effort should be made to summarize the speaker's remarks. The final paragraph includes the time of adjournment and the signature of the secretary. Send a copy of the approved minutes of each Unit board or business meeting to the Unit Membership Department at Association HQ.

2. Conducts official correspondence and maintain a file of current records as requested by the Unit Leader. These should be kept in the Unit's SLA Connect community library. At the end of the Association year, archival material should be transferred to the Unit archivist. It is preferable to have two-year overlapping terms for secretary and treasurer to assure continuity of records.
3. Serves as a member of the Unit Executive Board.

E. Past Unit Leader

The Past Unit Leader's duties are as follows:

1. Serve as a member of the Executive Board.
2. Advise the Unit Leader based on previous years' experience.
3. Serve as Chair of the Awards Committee.
4. Coordinate the updating of the Unit's Recommended Practices Manual, including the updating of the Awards, Past Unit Leaders, and other regularly revised sections.
5. Undertake special projects at the request of the Unit Leader.
6. Undertake the responsibilities of revising the Governing Documents, if needed.
7. If the position of Archivist is not filled, the immediate past Unit Leader serves as the Archivist for the Unit.

F. Director

The Unit may elect one or more Directors. Units are encouraged to have additional elected Director positions to increase the number of voting members of the Executive Board. Units that have specific director positions such as Director-Vendor Relations, Director-Membership, or positions with other defined duties, will include those positions and their duties here.

The Unit Director's duties are as follows:

1. To serve as a member of the Executive Board.
2. To undertake special projects as directed by the Unit Leader, especially in such things as conducting membership surveys, reviewing aspects of the Unit's operation, planning future directions, and other tasks which will affect the overall philosophy of the Unit.

G. Executive Board

The Executive Board is comprised of the elected officers of the Unit (Unit Leader, Unit Leader-Elect, Secretary and Treasurer, and in some Units, Director(s) and Past Unit Leader). As only elected officers

may vote on matters of the Unit (see this issue treated further below in Voting), many Units may want to make posts which may have been historically Advisory positions, equal to Director positions, with candidates found through the Nominating process by the Nominating Committee (recommended positions might be Director-Vendor Relations, Director-Membership, etc.). The Executive Board shall hold a minimum of one meeting annually. Additional meetings may be held by call of the Unit Leader, or by established practice or upon request of another board member. A majority of board members in office shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board. Many Units hold meetings of their entire Board (Executive and Advisory Board/Council) and do not hold separate Executive Board meetings unless otherwise deemed necessary, such as in the case of the resignation of an officer.

Elections Process

Each Fall elections are held for Unit officers. A Unit Leader and Unit Leader-elect are elected every year. The Secretary, Treasurer and two directors (if needed) serve two-year terms of office with one director elected each year and the secretary and treasurer elected every other year in overlapping terms. (Note that although the Unit Leader-elect serves in that position for one year, the person then automatically becomes Unit Leader for one year, and then Past-Unit Leader for one year. Thus the person who becomes Unit Leader-Elect will serve on the Board for three consecutive years.)

Terms of the Executive Board

The Executive Board is composed of the elected officers of the Unit.

Terms of Office:	Leader	1 year	Director	2 years
	Leader-Elect	1 year	Director	2 years
	Past-Leader	1 year		
	Secretary	2 years		
	Treasurer	2 years		

Notes:

- 1) A Director is elected every other year.
- 2) All Unit officers must be members of SLA and the Unit. Non-Unit members who are members of SLA may serve on a committee, such as students.

The independent Nominating Committee should be appointed by the Unit Leader and Approved by the Executive Board by July 1 of the current Unit year. Information on the Committee should be published in the Unit Bulletin and to the Connect community.

Candidates for office are selected by the Nominating Committee, and the slate presented to the membership in August. The slate must be presented to the membership 30 days before the election. Election is by ballot even if the slate only includes one candidate per office.

The forms for new officers must be submitted to the Association office by October 1st (for elected officials).

[Chapter Elected Form](#) (due October 1)

[Chapter Appointed Form](#) (due December 1)

[Division Elected form](#) (due October 1)

[Division Appointed Form](#) (due December 1)

New officers assume their duties on January 1st. Candidates for office should be added to the Board Connect community as soon as elected. This helps candidates gain some history before they assume their new roles.

Duties and responsibilities of the Nominating Committee are outlined later in this manual.

Voting

As a practice, Boards are encouraged to have conference calls and meetings that include the full Board, in which topics are discussed and consensus reached. Federal law and liability concerns require that voting be restricted to members of the Executive Board. Advisory Board/Council members (hereinto referred to as Advisory Board) should certainly provide input and recommendations, and there should be opportunities to hear from all sides, but Advisory board members cannot have voting rights that could, in effect, override the vote of elected board members.

Electronic Voting

As SLA Units are not separately incorporated but rather are merely subdivisions of a single legal entity -- SLA, a New York not-for-profit corporation -- their Boards and memberships are not governed by the requirements and restrictions contained in the New York Not-for-Profit Corporation Law relating to voting and other governance matters. Only SLA's Board of Directors, certain committees of the SLA Board, and SLA's membership (when voting as an entire membership) are governed by these requirements and restrictions. Consequently, SLA's Units are free to institute whatever governance procedures they choose, including all forms of electronic voting.

Unit Leadership Code of Responsibility

The role of leaders in SLA is to advance opportunities for members to share in and accomplish the Vision and Mission of the Association. To ensure that outcome, leaders shall respect and adhere to the code that identifies SLA Unit Leadership's responsibility and accountability to the Association and its members. Unit Leadership is defined as the leaders and members of the Board of Directors, Association Committees, Task Forces, and Advisory Councils, as well as the voting members of Unit Executive and Advisory Boards and Caucus Conveners. The [Unit Leadership Code of Responsibility](#) shall be read and signed by the Unit leaders at the beginning of their term and no later than February 15 of the year in which they're serving.

The duties of the Executive Board are as follows:

1. Approves amendments to the Unit's Governing Documents before presentation to the Advisory Board and Unit membership.
2. Acts as the Unit's Finance Committee, overseeing budget, income, and expenses and approving requests for additional funds not addressed in the budget.
3. Approves contracts and agreements entered into by the Unit. Any contract or expense exceeding \$5,000US must be approved and signed by Association HQ.
4. Appoints a Nominating Committee for the election of members to the Board.
5. Appoints a successor in case of the resignation of any officer except the Unit Leader. The Unit Leader-Elect automatically succeeds as Unit Leader if the Unit Leader resigns. A new Unit Leader-Elect is then appointed.
6. Is responsible for all additional duties assigned to the Advisory Board.

H. Association Action Deadlines

The chart below indicates action deadlines and responsibilities. These dates are firm with the exception of those about the Annual Conference, which may fluctuate depending upon the year. Deadline dates for conference activities, will be distributed during the year by the Association office. Unless otherwise stated, all documents should be submitted to the Association office via leadership@sla.org.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>
ASAP	Unit Board and Annual Business Meeting minutes, approved by the board sent to leadership@sla.org .	Unit Secretary
Quarterly	Forward all reconciled bank statements to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO). All statements for the prior year must be sent by January 31. MANDATORY REPORT TO RECEIVE ALLOTMENT	Unit Treasurer
January	First Planning meeting for Chair-Elect/President-Elect/incoming Program Chair for Conference Planning.	Unit Leader / Incoming Program Planner
January 9	Nominations due for Fellows, Rising Stars, Hall of Fame, John Cotton Dana, and Rose L. Vormelker Awards	Unit Leader
January 15	Listing of all U.S. residents paid over \$600 to include name, Social Security Number, address, amount paid, reason for payment to CFO	Unit Treasurer, Caucus Convener
January 15	Ultimate deadline for elected division officers to return signed copy of Leadership Code of Responsibility	Elected Unit officers, Caucus Convener
January 15	Chapter Visit Request Form Due	President/President-Elect
January 15	Completed Leadership Code of Responsibility due from ALL Elected officials	Unit Treasurer
January 31	One copy of audited financial statements to CFO plus statement of liabilities, property report and audited certificate (in unit treasurers wiki) MANDATORY REPORT TO RECEIVE ALLOTMENT	Unit Treasurer
January 31	Update Pooled Fund Signatory Participation Agreement	Unit Treasurer

Recommended Practices for Units

January 31	Update signature cards on bank accounts. Check with bank to determine if needed.	Unit Treasurer
April 15	First quarter financial statement due to CFO	Unit Treasurer
May 1	Requests for Board action at June Annual Conference meeting due. Send to Agenda items for Cabinet meeting due to Cabinet Chair with copy to Association HQ	Unit Leader
May 10	Agenda items for Cabinet Meeting at Annual Conference. Send to Unit Cabinet Chair, with copy to the Association's Leadership Department.	Unit Leader
June	Cabinet Meetings and Board Meeting (Annual Conference) Annual Conference Planning meeting for Presidents/Chairs-elect/incoming Program chairs and final meeting for Presidents/Chairs.	Unit Leader / Incoming Program Planner
July 1	Unit's Nominating Committee should be appointed by the Unit Leader and Approved by the Executive Board. Information on the Committee should be published in the Unit's Connect community.	Unit Leader
July 15	Second quarter financial statement due to CFO	Unit Treasurer
August	Slate of Candidates for Office must be presented to the Unit membership, at least 30 days prior to the elections	Nominating Committee/Unit Leader
August 15	Request for Funds in addition to regular allotment	Unit Leader
August 31	Sponsorship Agreement Renewal or Revision Due to Association HQ	Unit Leader
October 1	Unit leadership elections completed. Election reports for those eligible to hold office and vote; leadership history reports available.	Nominating Committee Chair
October 10	Results of Unit elections reported to Association HQ through the Elected Officer Form and posted to SLA Leadership List.	Unit Leader
October 15	Third Quarter financial statement due to CFO	Unit Treasurer

December 1	<u>Appointed Unit Officer Form</u> to Association HQ	Unit Leader
December 15	<u>Annual Report</u> of Unit activities submitted to Association HQ through the <u>Annual Report</u> form. MANDATORY REPORT TO RECEIVE ALLOTMENT	Unit Leader

See Also:

- [Reporting Requirements for SLA Units](#)
- [Chapter Practices](#)
- [Practices for Divisions and Sections](#)

III. UNIT PRACTICES FOR ADVISORY BOARD AND COMMITTEES

The Unit Advisory Board consists of all appointed Unit Leaders and Committee Chairs and has the following duties:

1. Reviews and recommends to the Executive Board approval of the Unit budget prepared by Unit Leader and Treasurer.
2. Reviews and recommends to the Executive Board approval of preliminary program plans and special projects and the authorization of funds to implement them.
3. Hears reports of appointed positions and committee chairs and takes appropriate action on recommendations.
4. Prepares report of activities for each Board meeting held.

The Chairs of Unit Committees are appointed by the Unit Leader, generally for a period of one year. The Unit Leader may appoint Unit members to additional positions as outlined in the Unit's Practices. Committee members may be appointed by the Unit Leader or the Committee Chair as specified in the Unit's Practices.

The Unit's Governing Document prohibits any member from serving on a committee for more than six consecutive years. The Advisory Board assists the Executive Board in directing the activities of the Unit, and members are expected to attend all Board meetings. Most Units, in practice, seek a consensus opinion from the Advisory Board on all matters. If consensus is not achieved, the Advisory Board should make opinions known to the Executive Board who will then vote.

The appointed positions and committee chairs listed below are a sample and do not constitute required appointed positions or committee chairs; the positions deemed as most important to the success of the Unit are listed first. The duties of these positions may be combined or assumed by one of the elected officers.

A. SLA Connect Community Administrator

The SLA Connect Community Administrator manages the Unit's Connect community, which is used to disseminate information and promote activities relative to the Unit, as well as to build community and engagement among Unit members.

Duties:

1. Serves as a member of the Advisory Board.
2. Maintains the Unit's online community.
3. With notice from the Unit's Membership Committee, welcomes new members to the community.
4. Publicizes instructions on how to build a profile, connect with members, start a discussion, post a reply, upload a document to the library, and maximize the usage of the online community for all members.
5. Keeps community discussions active and engaging through posting seed questions and replying to unanswered posts.
6. Monitors posts in the community and immediately addresses any discussions that go against [SLA Connect's Code of Conduct](#).
7. Explains system rules to members of the community, if needed.
8. Notifies the Board of problems with postings to the list that are defamatory, abusive, threatening, or illegal. The Community Admin is responsible for suggesting to the Board any corrective actions that need to be taken.
9. Reports any errors or problems with the operating software to the SLA IT Director
10. Receives and distributes messages from SLA to members of the community, such as events, promotions, campaigns, etc.

11. Shares from SLA's Career Center any jobs that are relevant to the Unit either geographically or by industry, and links to the Career Center.
12. Prepares a report of activities for each Board meeting.

B. Archivist

Each Unit shall maintain their own archives. Since Units are part of the Special Libraries Association, all archives are, ultimately, the property of the Association. Units should treat their archival material with the highest level of professional competence.

All digital archived documents should be stored in the Unit's SLA Connect community library. Physical materials should be located in a place easily accessible to Unit officers or members, not in a private home or office. A retention agreement must be signed by a responsible representative of that institution and approved by the Association.

Duties:

1. Serves as a member of the Advisory Board.
2. Maintains non-current documents, correspondence and publications of the Unit.
3. Solicits archival materials from Unit officers, committee chairs and appointed positions.
4. Sorts, files and weeds collections, retaining only materials of genuine historical importance.
5. Prepares an annual report for the Unit, with as-needed reports to the Board on any special acquisitions or projects.
6. Stores digital archived documents in the Unit's SLA Connect community library.
7. Familiarizes himself/herself with the Practices for Unit Archives to understand more specific requirements for the housing of archives, archivist, retention schedules, transfer of materials to archivist, organization of archives, filing of archives. Any questions should be directed to the IT Director at the Association office.

See also:

- [Practices for Chapter Archives](#)
- [Practices for Division Archives](#)

C. Membership and Recruitment Committee

The Membership and Recruitment Committee is responsible for encouraging the growth of membership in SLA. Any members appointed to the committee should assist in carrying out the responsibilities of the Chair.

Duties:

1. Committee Chair serves as a member of the Advisory Board.
2. Maintains up-to-date membership records as downloaded from the SLA website's Membership Directory, and alerts the Association office of irregularities with membership lists.
3. Writes welcome communications to new members, inviting them to upcoming Unit or Association activities, and sends their names to the SLA Connect Community Admin to be welcomed.
4. Supplies items for the newsletter/SLA Connect community encouraging recruitment of new members. These items should discuss the requirements for membership and inform members of the application process, and provide a link to the [online membership application](#) form.
5. Acts as host to new members attending their first Unit Meeting or arranges for Unit officers to fulfill this duty.
6. Reaches out monthly to members who are up for renewal the following month, encouraging them to renew.

7. Regularly reminds members to renew membership by highlighting the value of membership.
8. Follows-up with lapsed members by encouraging reinstatement. Personal telephone calls or e-mails from other members or officers are particularly effective.
9. Plans recruitment activities or campaigns to attract new members to the Association, including distribution of brochures and registration forms to non-member attendees at Unit meetings and to other potential members.
10. Plans and carries out membership drives in cooperation with the programs of the Association.
11. Prepares a report of activities for each Board meeting.
12. Advises other officers, SLA Connect Community Admin, newsletter editor and Mentoring Committee.
13. Membership applications for potential members can be obtained from the Unit's membership chair, from the Association office, or online at www.sla.org. Contact the Association's Membership Department via e-mail at membership@sla.org for authoritative up-to-date information that will answer the questions asked by potential members about membership requirements, dues, benefits, etc.

To avoid distributing outdated information to potential new members, officers and membership committees are advised to take care that they use the most recent revision of the membership application and brochure when recruiting new members.

For more information, consult the [SLA Connect Community for Member Engagement](#).

D. Awards Committee

The Awards Chair is responsible for appointing two additional Unit members to form an Awards Committee, subject to the approval of the Unit Leader. The Committee is responsible for soliciting nominations for any Unit Awards. Normally, the Past-Leader serves as Awards Committee Chair.

Duties:

1. Committee Chair, typically the Past-Leader, serves as a member of the Advisory Board.
2. States guidelines and call for nominations for Unit awards clearly to all Unit members via Unit communications methods.
3. Selects recipient(s) of award(s), purchases the awards, presents the awards, and publicizes the award winners.
4. Nominates or coordinates the nomination of qualified candidates for other Unit and SLA Association-level awards.
5. Maintains files of past candidates for awards to assist with documentation in the future.
6. Communicates to the Association's Membership Department the award winners.
7. Maintains liaison with the student liaisons.
8. Prepares a report of activities for each Board meeting.
9. Investigates and establishes awards pertinent to the Unit. Such awards may be in terms of community services, professional contributions, contributions to the Unit, or student recognition or scholarship.
10. Transfers all working papers, lists of award winners, committee reports, etc. to new Awards Chair, at the completion of Chair's term.

E. Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee consists of three members appointed by the Unit Leader with the approval of the Unit's Executive Board. Committee members should be experienced in Unit operation and well acquainted with the interests and capabilities of Unit members. The Committee, and its Chair, must be appointed before July 1st.

Duties:

1. Committee Chair serves on the Advisory Board.
2. Meets as soon after appointment as possible to consider candidates and draw up a tentative slate.
3. Contacts each potential candidate by phone or other means of communications to determine his/her willingness to serve.
4. Issues follow-up communication to each candidate, confirming the Committee's invitation to become a candidate, requests a biographical profile and a recent photograph.
5. Presents the slate of nominees to the membership via the Connect community.
6. Slate, even if it only includes one candidate for each office, is distributed by ballot to each member before August 15. (Electronic balloting is acceptable. Paper ballots must be mailed to those members for whom the Unit does not have an email address.)
7. Tallies votes and notifies all candidates of results.
8. Reports election results to the membership. The report should be included as an agenda item of the Annual Business Meeting.
9. Nominations Chair, or a member of the Nominating Committee, presents the slate and election results. New officers are introduced and their term of office begins in January of the next calendar year.

F. Communications Committee Chair

The Communications Committee Chair is responsible for the content, production, publishing and distribution of any bulletins, newsletters, blog postings or other unit-focused communication channels. In many Units this role may be called the Bulletin Editor, or Newsletter Manager. The Communications Committee includes the Webmaster, and may also include a Social Media coordinator. The Chair coordinates with members of the Committee to provide and deliver this information. The Chair is responsible to the Unit Leader. If the Unit has a defined editorial policy, it must be adhered to in all respects, as well as to SLA brand guidelines. The Communications Committee Chair's annual report must be submitted to the President (copies must also be sent to the secretary, treasurer, and archivist).

Duties:

1. Serves as a member of the Advisory Board.
2. Publicizes news copy deadlines and solicits important and interesting news from reporters, members, officers, committee chairs and appointed positions.
3. Collects and edits materials to appear in the communications channels. Discusses copy of any formal publication such as a Bulletin with Unit Leader before final publication. Oversees layout, typing, proofreading, reproductions and distribution of each issue.
4. Prepares a report for activities for each Board meeting.

For more information, see the SLA [Communications Resources](#) page.

1. Webmaster

The Webmaster is part of the Communications Committee and is responsible for Unit website content. The Webmaster evaluates and implements new web technology and its applicability to the webpage. The Webmaster brings issues to the Communications Chair for review and approval.

Duties:

1. Publicizes the Unit's Website to the membership, at peer-group meetings, SLA functions, and industry functions (the goal being to increase the Unit's visibility via the Website).
2. Maintains and updates existing pages, and regularly checks and updates links.
3. Creates new pages from content provided by the Unit Board and SLA staff that adhere to SLA brand guidelines.

4. Designs page schemes, graphics, CGI scripts, etc., on an as-needed basis. These should adhere to SLA brand guidelines.
5. Communicates with SLA's Director of Information Technology to ensure that the site is accessible. Troubleshoots problems on an as-needed basis.
6. Ensures that the Unit website's content and hosting is securely backed up, and runs security scans on a regular basis
7. Responds to emails directed to the Webmaster in a timely fashion.
8. Assists, if necessary, with posting the Unit's Bulletin or Newsletter to the Unit website.
9. Works with Unit Leader and Advisory Board to update the website for the Unit's functions and meetings.
10. Makes recommendations regarding new web technologies to the Board.

For more information, consult the [SLA Connect Community for Unit Webmasters](#).

G. Career Guidance/Employment Committee

The Unit may have a Career Guidance/Employment Committee to assist Unit members with career guidance and employment.

Duties:

1. Committee Chair serves as a member of the Advisory Board.
2. Informs interested job seekers of employment positions of which the person is currently aware. The Chair will be made aware of the available jobs by subscribing to SLA's Career Center, and then sharing these jobs onto the Unit's community in SLA Connect. Should the Chair learn of new job opportunities, he/she should refer the hiring manager to SLA's Career Center in order to purchase a job posting.
3. Works with the Unit's webmaster to ensure SLA's Career Center display is operating correctly on the Unit website and SLA Connect.
4. Provides employment guidance to Unit members by writing articles for Unit's communication forum (SLA Connect,-Newsletter, Unit website) on employment related topics.
5. Prepares a report of activities for each Board meeting.
6. Acts as a liaison between the Unit members and the employment services offered by the Association offices.

H. Mentoring Committee

Typically, a mentoring relationship is developed between someone who is new to the profession and a more experienced person in the field. The Mentoring Committee works to facilitate the building of mentor/mentee relationships and assists with the Chair's duties. The Chair will also collaborate with the SLA Mentoring Program and its liaison.

Duties:

1. Committee Chair serves on the Advisory Board.
2. Institutes formal mentoring programs, including the development of applications for mentors/mentees, pairing of applicants and the creation of promotional materials for the program.
3. Works with the Webmaster, Program Planning Committee, Student Relations Committee, Career Guidance Committee, and Public Relations Committee to plan and advertise programs and services that foster the building of mentoring relationships among members of the Unit.

I. Program Planning Committee

Unit-wide programs are held at varying intervals depending on the size and location of the Unit. Members often base their opinion of SLA in large part on the subject matter, timeliness and quality of these programs. It is essential, therefore, that programs be selected with great care, based on the needs and suggestions of the membership. It is important to focus on topics of current interest, provide a variety of subjects to interest all types of information professionals and their strategic partners and obtain excellent speakers who are both knowledgeable and entertaining.

- Arrangements for meetings must be made with attention to every detail so that the program, schedule, food and facilities all contribute to fulfill members' expectations.
- Programs should be planned so that sponsorships and registration fees cover their costs. If possible, programs should provide a net gain to the Unit's operating budget.
- If Unit is geographically dispersed, in-person meeting locations should vary depending on the region the Unit covers, in order to encourage the participation of more Unit members.

The Program Planning Chair is responsible for appointing as many additional committee members as needed for successful programming, subject to the approval of the Unit Leader. Members of the committee should assist in carrying out the responsibilities of the Chair.

Duties:

1. Committee Chair serves on the Advisory Board.
2. Works with the Executive Board and the Advisory Board to select programs and locations, and ensure costs and sponsorship fit within the Unit's budget.
3. If Unit plans to submit proposals for the Annual conference, the program planning chair should attend all Annual Conference Program Planning training and information sessions. If Unit is interested in submitting a proposal for Continuing Education (a CE Course) at the conference, program planning chair should contact the Learning and Success department for guidance and information at learning@sla.org. (NOTE: The Annual Conference Program Planners Handbook is distributed to Program Planners a year before for planning programs at the Annual Conference.) For more information about the Program Planners Handbook, contact SLA.
4. Supervises detailed plans for each program. Arranges for speakers, panelists, exhibitors, films, etc.
5. For local meetings, work with SLA staff as much as possible to make arrangements with local facilities (e.g., hotel, conference center, or library) to host the meeting. Ensures that the correct size room is available. Oversees breakfast, lunch or dinner arrangements.
6. Solicits input from Unit members – formally or informally – on program topics, speakers, locations and times. Chair may also reach out to other Units who may want to partner in planning the program.
7. May include a local SLA member on the Committee to aid in Program Planning arrangements, if planner is not in the same city and whenever possible.
8. Creates a budget for the program, in conjunction with the Treasurer, and works with the Partnership and Sponsorship Program on soliciting sponsorships for the program. The use of sponsorships should ensure that the registration fee is reasonable for Unit members.
9. For local meetings, if hotel rooms may be needed for members who want to stay overnight, the Program Committee Chair tries to arrange for a special room rate at a local hotel and communicates this information to the membership when publicizing the meeting.
10. Works with the Communications Chair and Public Relations Chair to announce and publicize meetings.
11. Works with the Library School Liaisons to offer free passes or special rates for library school students.

12. For local programming, works with Vendor Relations Chair to secure needed sponsorships for programs.
13. Checks with Unit Leader for special activities or announcements to be included in the program.
14. Works with incoming Program Planning Chair to inform that person about the duties of the job by passing along step-by-step written instructions on planning a program. The outgoing Chair may meet with the incoming Chair for an orientation session.
15. For local meetings, works with SLA Connect Community Admin to add to Community calendar and promote through SLA Connect, and with the Unit Webmaster to announce and promote on the Unit website.
16. For local meetings, prepares final Program Packets, with agenda, attendees list, and other handouts. **Unit Policy Note:** Attendee list published with Program Packets cannot list full contact information such as phone, mail or email address. Only provide name, and place of affiliation.
17. Works with Membership Chair to help to target non-members to whom meeting notices, session announcements and registration forms will be sent.
18. Acts as "master of ceremonies" for the day; introduces speakers, makes announcements, thanks those responsible for local arrangements, etc.
19. Reports on each meeting to the Board and ensures that meeting highlights are written for the Communications Chair to promote. (Sometimes students who attend gratis are asked to write a meeting summary, thus allowing them to give back to the Unit.)
20. Summarizes evaluation forms and distributes to Board.

For more ideas on program planning, please contact the SLA Learning and Success department at learning@sla.org.

J. Public Relations Committee

A Public Relations chair and committee should be appointed by the Unit Leader to develop and coordinate public relations activities at the local or Unit level. Members of the committee should have an interest in public relations. The committee should draft a statement of purpose to develop goals for their public relations program.

Duties:

1. Committee Chair serves as a member of the Advisory Board.
2. Works with the Membership Committee to coordinate the development/revision of the Unit Brochure to be used for recruitment and public relations. All publications should adhere to Association brand guidelines.
3. Distributes all news releases and publicity for activities of the Unit, such as meetings, elections, special projects and awards.
4. Forwards special or targeted information to Student Groups.
5. Maintains a distribution list for press releases.
6. Writes and submits Press Releases to SLA's *Information Outlook*.
7. Assists other Committee chairs with projects, as requested.
8. Solicits the Executive Board and membership for constructive suggestions and ideas for the public relations committee to pursue. Should also consider past activities, as well as activities undertaken by other units and SLA headquarters.
9. Prepares a public relations plan, and obtains input and approval by the Board.
10. Prepares a report for each Board meeting held.
11. Originates or arranges for publicity of special librarianship as a profession, in partnership with SLA staff.
12. Cooperates with Association Public Relations Advisory Council (PRAC) to further the public relations program of the Association.

K. Strategic Planning Committee

The Strategic Planning Committee may be appointed by the Unit Leader to develop a Strategic Plan for the Unit. Once a plan is completed, the Committee will be dissolved. A new Committee can be formed as needed or when a previous plan requires extensive revision.

Duties:

1. Committee Chair serves as a member of the Advisory Board.
2. Develops and recommends a strategic plan to the Board.
3. Reviews the Strategic Plan periodically for revisions.
4. Facilitates discussion and selection of Unit goals and priorities with input from the Unit Boards.
5. Works in conjunction with the Executive and Advisory Boards to develop surveys and gather member input to help plan future meetings, program sessions, and continuing education courses.
6. Monitors progress under the current plan.
7. Prepares a report of activities for Board at each meeting held.

Individual Unit Strategic Plans should be in line with [SLA's overall Strategic Plan](#).

L. Student Relations/Library School Liaison

Coordinates Unit contact with students in degree-granting programs for the purpose of providing information about scholarship opportunities and Unit activities and to recruit them as new SLA members.

Duties:

1. Serves as a member of the Advisory Board.
2. Promotes, encourages and develops relations between the members of the Unit and students and faculty members of graduate programs in library/information science.
3. Submits a report on student events and outreach to the Unit Leader in November for inclusion in the Unit Annual Report.
4. Works in cooperation with Awards Chair for any student awards, if offered.
5. Contacts library schools to inform them of Unit activities and scholarships and encourage students to attend Unit meetings.
6. Works with Membership Chair to recruit new student members.
7. Submits announcements and articles concerning students, SLA Student Groups, and scholarships to the Unit Communications Chair.
8. At the request of the Unit Leader, may coordinate interviews for SLA scholarships.
9. Prepares a report for each Board meeting held.

See also:

- [SLA Guidelines for Advisors of SLA Student Groups](#)
- [Practices for SLA Student Groups](#)

M. Industry Partner Relations/Fundraising Committee

The Industry Partner Relations Committee Chair is responsible for all relations with industry partners, including soliciting partners for Unit programs to help recover/reduce the cost of the programs, and for soliciting advertisers/partners for the Unit communication channels.

Duties:

1. Committee Chair serves on Advisory Board.
2. Contacts library supply houses, book dealers, subscription agents, consultants, online vendors and other library-related vendors to inform them of partnership opportunities and Communications

- advertising possibilities. Makes follow-up phone calls to partners to inquire if they will sponsor Unit programs or advertising.
3. Obtains advertising copy from partners and sees that it is included in the correct communication channels and/or program, when appropriate. Sees that the partner receives a copy of any issue in which their ad appears.
 4. Sends confirmation communications to partners who have agreed to sponsor programs, outlining what recognition they will receive, how much money they have agreed to contribute and information on where to send the check. Ensures that program partners receive all agreed-upon deliverables.
 5. Finalizes information of correct partner name and spelling for preliminary program, final program, brochures, signage, and obtains partner description if needed.
 6. Invoices the partners for all commitments. Invoices should be sent as soon as the partner has committed to supporting the Unit; if a delay in invoicing is needed, notify the partner as soon as possible. Works closely with SLA Staff and the Unit Sponsorship and Partnership Program.
 7. Receives payment from partners and forwards to the Unit Treasurer. If partners do not pay promptly, follows up with reminders or past due invoices requesting payment. Adheres to [SLA Unit Fund Development Practice](#).
 8. Maintains and updates the listing of partner names and contacts.

N. Diversity Unit Leadership Development Liaison

The Unit Leader may appoint a Diversity Development Liaison. This should be an individual who has an interest in diversity concerns relevant to present and potential special librarians and information professionals.

1. Serves as a member of the Advisory Board.
2. Prepares a report of activities for each Board meeting.
3. A written report summarizing activities for the past year should be submitted to the Association's Diversity Development Committee chair no later than April 15th of each year.

For more information, consult the [Affirmative Action Handbook](#).

IV. UNIT STRUCTURE

A. Guidelines for Scope Notes

(Scope Notes are not used for Chapters)

"Scope note" describes the subjects constituting a Division's interest, mentioning any other specific features which characterize those subjects, e.g., what specific aspects of those features are of interest to the Division.

Scope notes should be concisely expressed in one or two sentences. The various aspects or phrases may be written in sequence, set off by semicolons or in lettered subparagraphs.

Revision of a Division's scope should be reviewed by the Division Cabinet Chair prior to a formal vote of approval from the Division membership.

A proposed scope note is to be included with each petition for a Division, provisional Division or new section. Copies or samples of Division scope notes can be obtained from the Association's Leadership Department.

B. Governing Documents

A Governing Document consistent with the bylaws of the Association may be created or amended. Model Unit Governing Documents and copies of other Units' governing documents can be requested from the Association office or from the Units themselves. Additionally, [the Association bylaws are available on the Association website](#).

1. Procedures for Amending the Unit's Governing Document

The following steps must be completed in the order with which they are presented in order to amend the Unit's Governing Document:

1. At least six months prior to the Unit business meeting, send the proposed Governing Document to the Chair of the Association Joint Governance and Bylaws Committee for review, comment and approval.
2. Submit to the Unit's executive board for approval. Amendments may be proposed by the executive board, governance committee or 15 members of the Unit. Proposals originating in the executive board or in the Unit committee concerned with governance shall be approved by a majority vote of the Unit's board before submission to the members. Proposals originating by membership petition shall be submitted in writing to the executive board and shall be presented to the members with the recommendations of the board.
3. Present Governing Document revisions to Unit membership for approval in accordance with the current Unit Governing Document. These governing documents may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any Unit meeting
4. If significant amendments are proposed to the Governing Document after it has been reviewed by the Association Joint Governance and Bylaws Committee, it is important to continue consultation with the Chair of the Committee in preparation for final approval.
5. After membership approval, Unit Leader must sign and date two originals of the complete text of the newly approved Governing Document.
6. Send both copies of the signed complete text to the Chair of the Association Joint Governance and Bylaws Committee with space for signature and date on the last page. One signed original will be returned to the Unit.
7. Original signed copy retained in Unit's SLA Connect community.
8. Copies showing both signatures are sent to: Association Unit Leadership Department; Unit Cabinet Chair and Chair-Elect.

C. Unit Subgroups

1. Sections within Divisions

Sections relating to definite areas of interest within a Division may be established by the Division.

The Director of Member Engagement and the Division Cabinet Chair and Chair-Elect should be the first points of contact when consideration is being given to creating a new section. Scope notes will be reviewed to prevent duplication of effort and to ensure that the section is paired for the best match with a Division. As a courtesy, the Division Chairs and Division Chairs-Elect will be notified of the potential section. Advance notice enables the entire Leadership to think through the process of section development and best fit. The petition for the formation of a section within a Division must be prepared and signed by 15 current Division members interested in the section and then submitted with a scope note to the Division members at the Division's annual business meeting or to the Division's executive board for approval.

If approved, the scope note and the petition is then forwarded to the Division Cabinet Chair, with a copy to the Division Cabinet Chair-Elect.

If in the opinion of the Division Cabinet Chair and/or Division Cabinet Chair-Elect there appears to be a possible conflict between the scope of the proposed section and another existing section or Division, the Division Cabinet Chair notifies the chair of the Division, and the scope note and petition is sent by the Division Cabinet Chair along with their recommendation, to the Division Cabinet Members. The Cabinet then votes on the recommendation.

After approval of a new section, an announcement is made to the Division Cabinet and is published in SLA's online magazine, *Information Outlook*. The Division Cabinet Chair is responsible for seeing that both announcements are made and reports the formation of the new section as part of the routine report to the Board of Directors at its next meeting.

The Division is financially responsible for the section. The Division chair includes a report of the section's activity in the chair's annual report and ensures that the SLA Membership Department receives a list of the names and addresses of the section officers.

The chair of the section is responsible for submitting an annual report, including an annual financial statement, to the Division chair. Information on the activities of the section can be included in the Division's newsletter or in a separate newsletter. If separate, the distribution needs to include the Association office and the SLA Board of Directors.

Time should be allowed for the section to hold its annual business meeting prior to the Division's annual business meeting at the annual conference.

The section and any proposed section may want to have its own programs at the annual conference. This should be coordinated with the Division conference program planner.

Should the section be dissolved, its assets automatically revert back to the Division.

2. Groups within Chapters

In a number of the larger Chapters and in Chapters having a more concentrated membership in a particular discipline, groups have been established. These groups bring together common interests and carry out projects much as the Association's Divisions do, but within the Chapter's geographic confines. Groups are constituent parts of the Chapters. They may or may not bear direct relationship to the

Association's Divisions. In a few instances, Chapter groups have been formed having no prototype in an Association Division.

The formation of subject groups in local Chapters is a Chapter function and depends primarily on the size and interests of the proposed group. The local groups may be formed by authorization of the Chapter's executive committee when an appreciable number of members express active interest. If a Chapter prefers to operate as one unit rather than with subunits, it is improper for a Division to encourage the organization of a group within a Unit.

Some groups meet at definite times in addition to Chapter meetings and are often responsible for one or more programs at the regular Chapter meeting. Occasionally, a portion of the regular program is allotted to the groups. Care should be taken that the group cooperates and does not compete with the Chapter. Groups should clear program dates with the Chapter program officer to avoid meeting date conflicts.

If the Chapter has sufficient funds, it is their responsibility to finance its groups. However, to assist in paying for group expenses (such as postage for meeting notices, etc.) it may be advisable to have some continued form of group membership assessment.

If a group plans a project that the Chapter approves but cannot finance, the Chapter may ask for a loan from the Association through the Chapter Cabinet Chair. Group activity may also be supported by Association Divisions through grants to the Chapters if the activity will benefit the whole Division. However, Division officers have neither the authority nor direct responsibility for group enterprises.

Chapter members considering formation of a group within a Chapter should give consideration to some of the potentially undesirable effects on the Chapter. For example, when the Chapter membership is largely concentrated in one group with only a scattering of group meetings attracting a larger number, the Chapter may thus give unequal service to its members. The size of the parent Chapter is an important factor in the formation and success of groups. A Chapter should take care to avoid creating a group that would segregate out some of the members. In the event of internal conflicts or disagreements within Chapters, the problem should be submitted for discussion and vote by the general membership of the Chapter. If this action does not resolve the problem, the problem should be brought to the Chapter Cabinet Chair for resolution.

D. Caucuses

Caucuses and other units relating to areas of interest that do not fall within the scope of any one division or geographic areas that do not fall within the boundaries of any chapter and do not conflict with any other established unit of the Association may be authorized by the Board.

E. Creation of New and Provisional Units

A new Unit (Chapter, Division, or Caucus) may be authorized by the Association's Board of Directors upon written petition of 25 or more voting members of the Association who desire to participate in the activities of the proposed Unit.

- A new Unit may be authorized by the Association's Board of Directors upon written petition of fewer than 25, but at least 15, voting members of the Association to be served by the proposed Unit and receive Provisional status. (See Practices policies linked below.)
- Approval of a Provisional Unit is limited to two years unless the Board approves a two-year extension.
- The Association Board may authorize provisional Divisions as full Divisions upon submission of a statement of the proposed Division's name, scope note, together with confirmation from the

Association office that the provisional Division has maintained a membership of 100 or more for a period of 12 months.

- The Association Board may authorize provisional Chapters as full Chapters upon submission of a statement of the proposed Chapter's name and geographical boundaries together with confirmation from the Association office that the provisional Chapter has maintained a membership of 25 or more for a period of 12 months.
- The Association Board may dissolve a Provisional Unit at any time.

Provisional Units will receive an allotment, prorated to the time remaining in the Association's year. Provisional Units shall not be entitled to representation in the Unit Cabinet. They are invited to attend Unit Cabinet meetings but are not authorized to vote.

Origin of Petitions for New Units

Petitions for New Units may originate in one of the following ways:

1. By action of interested members in any geographic region, or, by action of interested members who wish to participate in the activities of the proposed Division.
2. By action of the Unit Cabinet Chair upon information from the Association office noting a concentration of unaffiliated members in an area not served directly by a Unit. In this case, the Unit Cabinet Chair shall appoint a representative to call an informal meeting and to act as Unit Leader for purposes of organization.

Form of the Petitions for New Units

The following language is suggested for use in the petition for organization of a new Chapter:

"We, the undersigned members of Special Libraries Association, do hereby petition for the organization of the *[insert name]* Chapter of the Special Libraries Association. There are presently *[number]* Special Libraries Association members within the proposed area which is to include: *[geographical description; be specific about boundaries]*."

Adjacent Chapters should be contacted for agreement and approval of proposed boundaries of the new Unit prior to the petition. Any boundary disagreements that cannot be settled by negotiation between the Chapters concerned shall be submitted for arbitration by the Chapter Cabinet Chair prior to the proposed Chapter's approval by the Board of Directors.

The following language is suggested for use in the petition for organization of a new Division:

"We, the undersigned members of Special Libraries Association, do hereby petition for the organization of the *[insert name]* Division of the Special Libraries Association. We desire to participate in the activities of the proposed Division. The proposed scope note of the Division shall be *[insert scope note.]* "

As with a proposed Section, the Membership Director and the Division Cabinet Chair and Division Cabinet Chair-Elect should be the first points of contact when consideration is giving to creating a new Division. Scope notes will be reviewed to prevent duplication of effort and to ensure that the proposed Division does not conflict with the interests of an existing division. As a courtesy, the Division Chairs/Division Chairs-Elect will be notified of the potential Division. Advance notice enables the entire Leadership to think through the process of creating a new Division.

If in the opinion of the Division Cabinet Chair and/or Division Cabinet Chair-Elect there appears to be a possible conflict between the scope of the proposed Division and another existing Division, the Division Cabinet Chair notifies the chair of the Division. The Division Cabinet Chair shall be the arbitrator. If any

disagreements cannot be settled by negotiation between the affected Division and Cabinet Chairs, the Division Cabinet Chair will solicit input from the Division Cabinet prior to the proposed Division's approval by the Board of Directors.

Temporary Unit Leader

Association members may appoint a Unit Leader at an information meeting, or they may call upon the Unit Cabinet Chair to name a representative to act as Unit Leader for the purpose of organization. The responsibilities of the temporary Unit Leader are as follows:

1. Call and preside at an informal organizational meeting of actual or potentially interested members.
2. Keep records of all meetings and transactions that will later become part of the new Unit's archives.
3. Handle necessary correspondence with Association HQ and the Unit Cabinet Chair.
4. Forward the required petition, governing document (to be approved by the Association Joint Governance and Bylaws Committee), and slate of officers to the Association office.
5. Carry out arrangements for the election of officers upon notification of acceptance of the petition by the Association's Board of Directors. This may be accomplished by mail/electronic ballot so that newly elected officers may be installed and preside at the first official Unit meeting.

Presentation

The temporary Unit Leader of the petitioning group shall forward the petition with signatures, the proposed Governing Document, and the proposed slate of officers to Association HQ. The Unit Cabinet Chair will present the petition to the Board of Directors at its next meeting on behalf of the petitioning group. The temporary Unit Leader and/or other members of the proposed Unit may attend the Board of Directors meeting if they wish.

1. In the case of a provisional Chapter, the petition must contain a statement of the proposed Chapter's name and geographical boundaries, and confirmation from the Association office that the provisional Chapter has maintained a membership of 25 or more members for a 12-month period.
2. In the case of a provisional Division, the petition must contain a statement of the proposed Division's name and scope note, and confirmation from the Association office that the provisional Division has maintained a membership of 100 or more members for a 12-month period.

The Board of Directors typically meets monthly. Deadlines for submitting items for Board consideration are usually one week prior to the meeting dates.

Membership of a New Chapter

When a new Chapter is approved by the Board of Directors, the Association office will notify all Association members within the boundaries of the new Chapter that they will have membership in both their current Chapter and the new Chapter at no extra charge until their next membership renewal, at which time they may choose the Chapter(s) with which they prefer to continue affiliation.

Allotments

Upon approval by the Board of Directors, the new Unit's allotment for that year will be sent from the association office (except for a former Provisional Unit, which may have already received its allotment for the year). The allotment is based upon the number of Association members within the new Unit's boundaries. The initial allotments of new and provisional Units that were approved at Board of Director meetings are prorated on the basis of the number of months remaining in the calendar year.

Unit Activities

Once the Unit has been approved and its officers installed, regular Unit activities such as Connect, other communications, programs, committee work, etc., may begin. These activities should be conducted in accordance with the Unit's Governing Documents and these Practices.

See also:

- [Practices for the Formation of Provisional Chapters](#)
- [Practices for the Formation of Provisional Divisions](#)

F. Merger of Units

The matter of merging Units is one which must be given careful consideration by the members and executive board of any Unit considering such action and should be discussed with the Unit Cabinet Chair.

After seeking the guidance of the Unit Cabinet Chair, if the Unit Executive Board still wishes to affiliate with another Unit, the Unit Leader shall immediately contact the Unit Executive Board with which they wish to affiliate and negotiate the terms for merging the two Units.

When both Executive Boards are in agreement on the terms of the merger, they shall provide advance notice to their respective membership that the topic will be discussed at the next Business Meeting of each Unit. A joint meeting should be scheduled as soon as possible to address this merger with the Unit memberships.

If the merger proposal is approved by a majority of the members present and voting at both of these meetings, both Units will send a ballot to all their members no later than 45 days after the business meeting.

If a two-thirds majority of each Unit's members returning valid ballots approve the proposal to merge, the Leader of both Units will notify the Unit Cabinet Chair and SLA Membership Department in the form of a single petition, signed by both Unit Leaders. The petition will include the reason(s) for merging, the election results, the terms of the merger, the proposed effective date of the merger, the changes needed in the name, scope note (required for Divisions only), or governing document, and a plan of how the activities of both Units will be combined.

The Unit Cabinet Chair will present the petition to the Association's Board of Directors at its next regularly scheduled meeting. Upon approval by the Board, the Leaders of the petitioning Units will be notified by the Association office that the two Units are being merged, advising of the merger effective date. The Unit Leaders will then notify their respective members of the Board's approval. The general membership will be notified through a notice in *Information Outlook* and on the SLA Connect Open Forum. Funds, properties, and financial responsibilities of the two Units will become the responsibility of the newly merged Unit.

G. Return to Provisional Unit Status

Unit membership falling below 25 members for more than one Association year will be reported to the Unit Cabinet Chair. The Unit may be placed on provisional status until membership increases or there is a decision to dissolve the Unit.

H. Downsizing

Should a Unit wish to downsize, for example from a Division to a Caucus, a similar process would be followed as outlined in Section F, Merging of Units. Merging with, or becoming a group within, another Unit should be considered as a possibility as well.

To begin the process, a Unit Executive Board meeting should be held to ensure all options and remedies have been investigated. If the Executive Board feels that downsizing is the only option left and votes as such, then a Unit Business Meeting would be called to further discuss the issue. If the downsize proposal is approved by a majority of the members present and voting at the meeting, the Unit will send a ballot to all their members no later than 45 days after the business meeting. If a two-thirds majority of each Unit's members returning valid ballots approve the proposal to downsize, the Unit Leader will notify the Unit Cabinet Chair and SLA Membership Department via memorandum. The memorandum will include the reason(s) for downsizing, the options previously considered, the election results, the terms of the downsizing, the proposed effective date of the downsizing, and any changes needed in the name.

The Unit Cabinet Chair will present the petition to the Association's Board of Directors at its next regularly scheduled meeting. Upon approval by the Board, the Leader of the petitioning Unit will be notified by the Association office that the Unit is being downsized, advising of the effective date. The Unit Leader will then notify their members of the Board's approval. The general membership will be notified through a notice in *Information Outlook* and on the SLA Connect Open Forum.

Any funds left in the downsizing Unit's accounts shall be transferred within 30 days to the appropriate group:

- For Units becoming sections of a Division, funds will be transferred to that Division.
- For Units becoming groups of a Chapter, funds will be transferred to that Chapter.
- For Units becoming Caucuses, funds will be transferred to the Association.

I. Dissolution of a Unit

The dissolution of a Unit is an action which must be given careful consideration by the members and executive board of a Unit. The Unit Leader, acting on behalf of an Executive Board that has voted to take this step, should discuss its concerns with the Unit Cabinet Chair. Dissolving should be a last resort and the Unit should first look at merging or downsizing before moving forward with a dissolution. Once all other options have been tried, a Unit may then petition to dissolve.

Once determined that the Unit has ceased to fulfill a useful role and does not wish to affiliate or formally merge with another Unit, the Unit Leader shall bring forth the matter for discussion at the Unit's next business meeting. Advance notice must be given to the Unit membership that the topic will be discussed.

If a majority of the voting members present approve the proposed dissolution, a ballot shall be sent to all Unit members regarding the proposed dissolution no later than 45 days after the business meeting. A two-thirds majority of the members is required to approve the proposal to dissolve. The Unit Leader shall notify the Unit Cabinet Chair and Membership Department in the form of a petition for dissolution. The petition will contain the reason(s) for dissolution, the actions previously taken to address the issue, the election results, the proposed effective date of the dissolution, and plans to complete current Unit activities and business matters.

The Unit Cabinet Chair will present the petition to the Association's Board of Directors at its next regularly scheduled meeting. Upon SLA Board approval, the members of the Unit will be notified by the Association office that the Unit is being dissolved with the effective date, and that its funds and properties will revert to the Association. Assistance in joining another Unit will be provided to members by the Association office, with recommendations from the Unit Leader being taken into account.

J Nomination of Unit Officers

In the selection of nominees for Association offices, the Association Nominating Committee has priority over Unit nominating committees. However, the Association Nominating Committee usually starts its work before the Unit nominating committees; therefore, conflicts are rare.

A Nominating Committee for each election of members to the Unit Executive Board shall be appointed by the board by July 1st.-This committee shall be composed of 3 members, one of whom is a member of the current Board, one is a past member of the Board, and a third participant from the general membership.

Duties of the Nominating Committee are outlined below:

1. Each year the Nominating Committee shall present at least one candidate for each officer whose term is expiring. The committee shall obtain the written acceptance of each nominee along with brief biographical information, prior to submission of its report.
2. The nominees for Unit Leader-Elect should be aware that attendance at Unit Cabinet meetings at the Annual Conference and any possible Unit Leadership Summit are part of the responsibilities of the elected candidate. An elected candidate should not simultaneously hold more than one office associated with membership in the Unit Cabinets.
3. The report of the Nominating Committee shall be published by August 15 in the official Unit bulletin/newsletter. Further nominations, accompanied by written acceptance of the nominee, may be entered by petition of 10 Unit members, and shall be filed with the Nominating Committee at least 30 days before voting occurs.
4. If the slate includes more than one candidate for any office, election shall be by secret ballot distributed to each Unit member-by August 15 (Electronic balloting is acceptable.) The candidate who receives the largest number of votes for any office shall be elected. In the event of a tie, election shall be by majority vote of the members present at the unit's next business meeting.
5. In the case of a distributed ballot, send the biographical information to the person whose duty it is to prepare and distribute the ballots (e.g. Secretary, Nominating Committee Chair or Bulletin Editor.) Full Members, Student Members, and Retired Members all have the privilege of voting. Mailing labels for envelopes and/or e-mails may be requested from the Association office. Please request these at least two weeks in advance of distribution.

K. Unit Representation and Affiliation

Unit representatives to joint committees and meetings of other societies having objectives allied to those of the Unit and of the Association shall be appointed by the Association President.

Upon approval by a majority of the Unit members voting, the Unit may affiliate or disaffiliate with a local common interest organization provided the objectives of the organization are consistent with those of the Unit and of the Association and the activities of the organization are not in conflict with the Association bylaws.

The Association Board of Directors shall approve any other affiliation, including that with a national or international organization. Notices of affiliations and disaffiliations shall be reported to the Association.

V. APPENDICES: OTHER IMPORTANT ASSOCIATION INFORMATION

APPENDIX A. Unit Finances.

The Association's Bylaws, Article X, Section 3 allows for funding of Units in the form of an annual allotment. Allotments are calculated using the Unit's membership count as of December 31. Allotment checks are mailed after Annual Conference invoicing.

No allotment shall be paid to a Unit unless the Unit has submitted an accurate Annual Report by December 1st; an accurate Year-end Annual Financial Report by January 31st; and all bank statements (quarterly, monthly preferred) to Association headquarters, Director of Finance.

The Board of Directors may grant funds or loans at its discretion. Each Unit applying for additional monies must submit a detailed estimated budget to substantiate the request. This budget should then be submitted to the Unit Cabinet Chair, who will make the presentation to the Board.

The Unit Treasurers shall maintain the financial records required for their units. A simplified single-entry system has been found sufficient for most cases. The treasurer shall prepare a report on the Unit's finances for each Unit meeting.

The following reports and record-keeping procedures are **mandatory**:

1. The treasurer of each Unit or provisional Unit shall submit an annual year-end financial statement to the Association office to the attention of the Director of Finance by January 31 of each year. These must be submitted utilizing the Association provided financial software program. A copy of all Unit bank statements for the year must also be provided, no less than quarterly, to the Director of Finance. This deadline is most important and must be adhered to. A copy of the statement is to be retained in the unit's SLA Connect library for the Unit's archives. This report is to be audited; an auditor is defined as a disinterested third party. The auditor does not need to be an accountant, but **may not** be any of the following:
 - An elected or incoming officer of the Chapter or Division
 - A current or incoming member of the SLA Board of Directors
 - An employee of or a supervisor of the Treasurer.The auditors reviews bank statements against your records / financial reports to make sure the ending balances match.
2. No allotment shall be paid to a Unit unless an annual financial statement has been approved.
3. A Unit may have undesignated funds for general administration. These funds are derived from allotments and from income accruing as a result of normal activities, such as special events, advertising, dinner meetings, etc. Normal charges against such "regular funds" include postage, meeting notices, etc.
4. Normally a Unit will administer its expected activities to utilize the greater part, if not all, of its allocated funds. However, a Unit may elect to conserve its funds gradually in anticipation of specific undertakings where special project funds have not already been accumulated. Units may, through lack of activity in one year, carry unspent allotments over to following years. Funds accumulated for either of these reasons and not expected to be spent during the year's usual activities, may be transferred to a project fund.
5. Money earned from special Unit projects may be maintained in one or more project funds, general or designated. Examples of such projects are seminars or workshops for which a fee is charged, royalties paid by the Association for Unit-originated publications, receipts from similar works published independently by the Unit, and fund-raising activities conducted for a specific purpose. Expenses involved in such projects are to be charged against these funds. Project funds must be reported as part of the periodic and annual financial reports.

6. A Unit must report property that falls within the definition given in the "Property Guidelines" on a special page accompanying the financial statement in the year-end Annual Financial Report.

Upon dissolution of a Unit, its funds and properties shall revert to the Association. On dissolution of a group within a Unit, the group's remaining funds revert to the Unit.

APPENDIX B. Legal Issues

Each Unit Leader and Unit Leader-Elect should be aware of these basic issues and restrictions. If there are questions, please do not hesitate to contact the SLA Department of Member Engagement at membership@sla.org.

The Special Libraries Association, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation, incorporated pursuant to the Not-For-Profit Corporation Law of the State of New York. During its early years, SLA existed as an unincorporated Association. SLA was first incorporated in Rhode Island on April 13, 1928, and then reincorporated in New York on September 25, 1958.

The basic purposes of SLA as stated in its Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws, are:

"l(a) To provide an Association of individuals and organizations having a professional, scientific, or technical interest in library and information science, especially as these are applied in the recording, retrieval and dissemination of knowledge and information in areas such as the physical, biological, technical and social sciences, and the humanities."

"l(b) To promote and improve the communication, dissemination and use of such information and knowledge for the benefit of libraries or other educational organizations. No part of the property, assets, profits or net income shall inure to the benefit of any director, officer, or member or be of benefit to any private shareholder or individual within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 as amended."

Member Types

Membership eligibility is governed by the membership provisions of Article IV of the SLA Bylaws and policies established by the Board of Directors. Membership in the Association shall consist of: Full Member, Full Member Outside North America (and making <\$18,000USD annually), Student Member, Retired Member, Unemployed Member, or Organizational Member.

Eligibility for and privileges of each class shall be as stated herein.

Full Member status shall be granted to an applicant who has an interest in the objectives of the Association. A Member shall have the right to vote, to hold any Association or unit elective office or appointive position, and to affiliate with one Chapter and one Division without payment of additional fee, and to receive the official journal at no additional charge.

Student Member status shall be granted to an applicant enrolled in a curriculum of library or information science at least part time (two or more courses). This category of membership shall be available to those joining the Association for the first time. This category of membership shall also be available to current members renewing their membership after enrolling in an appropriate academic program. Student membership may be maintained only while actively a student, but for no more than three years. Appropriate verification of student status is required. A Student Member shall have the right to vote, to hold any Association or Unit elective or appointive position, to affiliate with one Chapter and one Division without payment of additional fee, and to receive the official journal at no additional charge.

Retired Member status shall be granted, upon request, to a Member who has retired. In this connection, "retirement" shall be defined by the Board. A Retired Member shall have the right to vote, to hold any

Association or unit elective office or appointive position, to affiliate with one Chapter and one Division without payment of additional fee, and to receive the official journal at no additional charge. A Member who has 45 years of uninterrupted Association membership shall be designated Forty-five Year Honoree status. Basic membership dues will be waived for members holding this distinction. Forty-five Year honorees have the same membership rights as other Retired Members.

Organizational Member status shall be granted to a firm, organization, or individual desiring to support the objectives and programs of the Association. Up to four employees of the organization may access member benefits. Organizational Members shall have the right to affiliate with one Chapter and one Division without payment of additional fee, and to receive the official journal at no additional charge. Other benefits of this membership category shall be determined by the Board.

SLA Units exist only as a part of the single corporate entity, Special Libraries Association, Inc. and are organized pursuant to Articles X and XI of the Bylaws. There is no separate incorporation of SLA Units and all are funded by allotments from the SLA annual dues. SLA, its members, and its Units can be roughly analogized to a for-profit corporation, its shareholders and branch offices. Numerous not-for-profit corporations are organized in this way, including other major library Associations.

Association Meetings

SLA meetings, including Unit and Association meetings, may be attended by any interested party regardless of membership standing. This open attendance policy does not, however, require members to subsidize attendance by non-members. Units may charge a reasonable registration fee to help defray the costs of the meeting. Non-members are permitted to attend Association meetings of SLA. The registration fee charged such nonmembers is higher than that charged members.

SLA's open attendance policy does not mean that non-members can participate in SLA in the same manner as members. Obvious examples include the fact that non-members may not vote and may not hold Association office.

The SLA Board of Directors and Unit Cabinets are not required to open their sessions to non-members although, in their discretion, they may do so.

All meetings, whether open to interested parties or restricted in attendance, should have a written agenda. Unit officers should ensure that summary minutes are prepared of all meetings and that such minutes are accurate and stored in the Unit's SLA Connect community after the meeting has concluded.

Joint and Regional Meetings

Units often participate in joint or regional meetings. Regional, sectional and joint meetings require particular attention to organization and cooperation. The responsible person must be selected on the basis of experience and ability. Where program and arrangements require them, committees should be appointed as soon as possible. If an Association officer is to be invited, arrangements should be coordinated as early as possible. When other professional Associations are involved, it should be made clear that their members are welcome at any separate SLA program.

Initial planning of joint professional meetings normally is undertaken by the officials of the respective groups. Detailed programming is then worked out by specified representatives. Decisions, such as date, place, publicity, accommodations, registration, financing, etc., must be cleared through each group. Frequently, publication of papers is also considered with distribution and cost taken into account.

Any plan involving a unit of the Special Libraries Association must conform to the [SLA Practice on Non-Discrimination](#), which reads:

I. Practice. It is the practice of the Special Libraries Association not to discriminate, limit membership or participation in any respect by race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex or physical disability.

II. Purpose. To ensure that no individual is denied membership or participation in Association programs because of his/her race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex or physical disability.

III. Practice/Procedure. It is the policy of the Special Libraries Association that membership and participation in the Association and its units are not limited in any respect by race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex or physical disability. In particular, all meetings are conducted so as to assure compliance with this policy. The Association participants in joint meetings only with other organizations having the same policy. The Association is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

IV. Responsibility. The Executive Director is responsible for monitoring the compliance of this policy."

(Approved June 1975)

Tax Status - Federal

In 1972, the United States Internal Revenue Service ruled that SLA is an organization meeting the requirements of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

As a Section 501(c)(3) organization, SLA must:

1. Be organized exclusively for charitable, scientific or educational purposes.
2. Be operated exclusively for those purposes.
3. Have no part of the net earnings inure to the benefit of any private individual.
4. Refrain from any substantial lobbying activities.
5. Refrain from participating in political campaign activities.

Corporate gifts and lifetime gifts by individuals to a Section 501(c)(3) organization are, with certain limitations, deductible to the donor for purposes of the U.S. federal income tax. Testamentary bequests are, again with certain limitations, deductible for purposes of the U.S. federal estate tax. There are other advantages. A Section 501(c)(3) organization may qualify for privileged postal rates for mailings relating to the organization's own affairs. In some states, a Section 501(c)(3) organization is exempt from sales tax.

As a general rule, the income of SLA which is related to its tax-exempt purposes is tax exempt. For example, members' dues, interest earned by bank accounts, and income resulting from the sale of SLA publications is tax exempt.

Income from a trade or business which is not substantially related to SLA's tax-exempt purposes is taxed. For example, income generated from the sale or rental of mailing lists (except for exchanging with or renting to another organization exempt under Sections 501(c)(3) or (c)(2)) and advertising income is taxed.

Although most of SLA's income is tax exempt, SLA normally does have unrelated income which is taxable. As a result, SLA annually files two returns with the Internal Revenue Service: Form 990 related to non-taxable income and Form 990T relating to taxable income.

To enable SLA to properly prepare these returns, each Unit must annually furnish certain information including all income generated during the year and expenses incurred in producing the income. New or major changes in programs and services provided by SLA must be reported in Form 990. Accordingly, any Unit which engages in a previously unreported activity must so inform the Director of Finance at the Association office through the Unit's Annual Report and Year-End Financial Statement.

SLA considers being recognized as a Section 501(c)(3) organization a valuable privilege. It is the policy of SLA to follow the provisions of the Internal Revenue Code and Regulations regarding the operation of a Section 501(c)(3) organization and not to engage in activities which might jeopardize that status. All questions regarding the Association's tax-exempt status should be referred to the Executive Director.

Tax Status - State and Provincial

Each of the fifty states and Canadian provinces has its own tax law and regulations and, accordingly, any question concerning state and provincial taxation must be addressed to the law of the state or province involved.

As a general rule, an organization which is exempt from U.S. federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) is also exempt from state income taxes. In addition, in some states, local sales and use tax exemptions are available to Section 501(c)(3) organizations. Since SLA is not incorporated in Canada, it cannot apply for tax-exemption from Canadian provinces.

Because it is SLA, and not the individual Units, which is responsible for compliance with state tax laws, responsibility for dealing with state tax authorities is that of the Director of Finance. Individual members or Unit officers are not allowed to deal with state tax authorities. Any question concerning state taxation of SLA units should be directed to the Director of Finance.

Over the years, the Director of Finance working with legal counsel, has conducted extensive research and made numerous inquiries regarding the availability of sales and use tax exemptions for SLA units. As indicated above, the rules vary from state to state. Some states grant no exemption to any organization; some states grant exemptions only to particular types of charitable organizations such as religious organizations; and, in a few states, an exemption is available to an organization such as SLA. A consideration to be kept in mind is that the paperwork costs associated with obtaining and maintaining a sales tax exemption may equal or exceed the limited savings which may be realized by a sales tax exemption. Again, if there is any question as to whether a sales tax exemption is available in a particular state, inquiries should be directed to the Director of Finance.

Political and Legislative Action

SLA, as a 501(c)(3) educational institution, is restricted in the amount of **lobbying** it can do. Although IRS rules in this area are not as restrictive as they have been in the past, they are always open to interpretation. It is therefore critical that all *legislative* endeavors be channeled centrally through the SLA President or Executive Director, both of whom, under SLA policy, are the only individuals who can officially speak on behalf of the Association. In essence, if the Board of Directors has not taken a position on a particular issue, it is imperative that either the President or Executive Director be consulted. However, if comments or statements are based on Board-approved issues, discuss them with the Association staff for clarification. This also enables Association staff to be aware of Unit activities.

A Section 501(c)(3) organization may not participate directly or indirectly, in any campaign for any public office - federal, state or local. Thus, SLA may not endorse any candidate, make any contribution to a candidate or have its members work in any candidate's campaign. This requirement also prevents SLA from having a Political Action Committee (PAC).

A Section 501(c)(3) organization may, to a limited extent, attempt to influence legislation. The specific language of the statute is that "no substantial part of the activities" of the organization may consist of "carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation." Examples of attempts to influence legislation include attempts to influence the general public to vote in a particular way, often called "grassroots" lobbying, and direct lobbying by communicating with a member or employee of a legislative body. Also included would be any effort by SLA to encourage its members to lobby.

The following would ordinarily not be considered activities endeavoring to influence legislation: making available the results of nonpartisan analysis or research; appearances before a legislative committee at the request of that committee; and communications between SLA and its members regarding legislation of interest to members as long as the communication does not encourage the members to endeavor to influence the same.

As is indicated above, a Section 501(c)(3) organization is not absolutely prohibited from endeavoring to influence legislation - the requirement is that such activities may not become a "substantial part" of the Association's activities. The U.S. Internal Revenue Code does not define what is meant by "substantial." The policy of SLA is that no more than 5% of its aggregate activities (not its income or expenditures) may be of such character.

Because SLA is so large and so geographically diverse, it is not feasible for each member or Unit to independently determine when efforts to influence legislation are to be undertaken. In January 1980, the Board of Directors approved a government relations practice statement and instructed the Executive Director to establish and conduct a government information program to carry out the statement.

Obviously, none of the foregoing affects the right of any member, acting as an individual and not as a member of SLA, to engage in whatever political or legislative activity he or she may consider appropriate.

Member Liability

One of the characteristics of a corporation is limited liability; that is, the members of the corporations are not personally liable for the debts, liabilities or obligations of the corporation. SLA is a corporation with its principal place of business in Virginia. Since it is incorporated in New York, it is covered by that state's liability law.

New York Not-For-Profit Corporation Law Section 517(a) specifically states that "the members of a corporation shall not be personally liable for the debts, liabilities or obligations of the corporations."

As a general rule, directors and officers of SLA will incur no personal liability as a result of their carrying out their duties as long as they do so in good faith and with ordinary diligence, care and skill.

Section 717(a) of the New York Not-For-Profit Corporation law states, in part:

"(a) Directors and officers shall discharge the duties of their respective positions in good faith and with that degree of diligence, care and skill which ordinarily prudent men would exercise under similar circumstances in like positions."

Under certain circumstances, a director or officer can incur personal liability. For example, a director or officer can be personally liable for gross negligence or for defrauding the Association.

Under Section 719 of the New York Not-For-Profit Corporation Law, a director who votes for certain actions can be personally liable - for example, voting to distribute the Association's properties to members other than as permitted by law; and, voting to make a loan to a director or officer. The law permits an action to be brought against a director or officer to compel an accounting for the mismanagement, loss or waste of corporate assets.

Association Liability

SLA is legally responsible for its contracts and can sue or be sued in the same manner as any corporation, whether for-profit or not-for-profit.

A normal business contract made by the SLA President or Executive Director will be binding on SLA. Because SLA is a single corporate entity, obligations of the Units are obligations of SLA. Accordingly, a normal business contract made by a Unit chairperson will also be binding on SLA and not just on the individual Unit.

Most contracts made by Unit Leaders involve routine matters such as meeting arrangements and the amounts involved are relatively small. There have been occasions in the past, however, when Units, with more enthusiasm than prudence, have entered into contracts involving significant sums of money.

The "Extra-Association Relations Policy" which was adopted by the Board of Directors on June 9, 1973 addresses this problem. It states:

"An agreement, contract, or obligation entered into by an Association unit requires advance approval by the Association Board of Directors if liability exceeds the unit's available or budgeted funds."

In addition to the foregoing, it is the policy of the Association that any contract or expense exceeding \$5,000US must be approved and signed by Association HQ.

Any questions regarding contracts and their execution should be referred to the executive director. SLA may be liable for the negligent or fraudulent acts of its authorized representatives. Therefore, officers, directors, committee chairpersons, and representatives must exercise "ordinary diligence and care" in performing their responsibilities.

In addition, SLA could be responsible for an obligation incurred by any member who had "apparent authority" to act for SLA even though such individual acted without authority and in violation of SLA's policies and Guidelines. In Hydro level Corp. v. American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 635 F. 2d 118 (2nd Cir. 1980), cert. den., 456 U.S. 989 (1981) the American Society of Mechanical Engineers was held liable for the act of two of its members. These members, while acting as volunteer ASME workers, defrauded a third party by deliberately misinterpreting the requirements of one of the ASME codes. The court found ASME liable for the acts of these members because the injured party had no reason to believe the volunteer members' code interpretation was not "regular" and because the volunteers appeared to be acting within the authority given to them by this Society.

Any Unit Leader who intends to give authority to a member to act for SLA, should keep the foregoing in mind.

Inspection of Records

New York State law requires SLA to keep correct and complete books and records of account and minutes of the proceedings of its members, Board and Executive Committee, and a list of member names, addresses, and their class or classes of membership.

Although the law permits SLA to impose restrictions on the availability of such information, it is SLA policy to make the same generally available to members. Thus, SLA publishes the names and addresses of all members in the membership directory. Meeting minutes of the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee, and the Annual Business Meeting are available for inspection by members with certain exceptions that are determined by the Board of Directors. An example is executive session minutes.

Antitrust Laws

In recent years, the U.S. antitrust laws have been the basis for actions against certain trade and professional Associations whose activities allegedly restrained competition. The decisions of the United States Supreme Court which struck down ethical codes of Bar Associations which prohibited advertising are well-known examples. The American Dental Association was subject to a similar suit by the Federal Trade Commission. The American Medical Association has been subjected to an investigation to determine whether it controls the supply of physicians in the United States through accreditation of medical schools and other practices.

The trade and professional Associations which have been subject to these actions are typically Associations of competitors. Because the members of SLA do not compete with each other, it is unlikely that SLA will be subject to an antitrust action such as is described above.

It is worth noting that SLA is essentially an open organization. That is, Association membership is open to any person "who has a serious interest in the objectives of the Association" and there are no restrictions on the general public attending SLA meetings. The antitrust actions described above have been based in part on the fact that the particular Association imposed restrictions on membership, and thereby restrained competition. Obviously, SLA is not subject to such an attack.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, it is conceivable that a particular Unit may engage in some activity which might be considered to be anticompetitive, thereby violating antitrust laws. Any member who believes that any such activity is taking place should contact the Executive Director. We must add that to the best of our knowledge, no governmental or private entity has ever claimed that SLA has to any extent violated the U.S. antitrust laws.

Bartering

For purposes of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code, a barter transaction is in substance the same as a sales transaction. For example, the exchange of a mailing list for advertising space is the essential equivalent of selling the mailing list for the value of the advertising space. The value of the advertising space is considered to be income to SLA. The comments made in the Tax Status section concerning SLA's tax liability for related business income and unrelated business income will equally apply to value received on bartering transaction. An example of barter which would generate related income would be an exchange of SLA publications for something of value. An example involving unrelated income would be the one just given, namely, the exchange of a mailing list for something of value, except when this exchange is with another organization exempt under Section 501(c)(3) or (c)(2). The sporadic and occasional bartering transaction of whatever character arguably does not constitute business income of any kind. In all events, every barter exchange transaction by any Unit should be reported, in writing, to the Director of Finance at the Association office.

Association Reserve Funds

Every Association needs the economic security of a reserve fund. Unforeseen demands or loss of income may necessitate the use of funds which are not currently available in the budget. The purpose of a reserve is financial stability - to support the Association through an emergency situation. Accordingly, the reserves maintained by SLA and by its Units should not be used to finance day-to-day operations or activities. An ideal reserve fund would be equal to the regular budget for one year. On June 5-6, 1992 the Board of Directors approved a recommendation regarding Unit investment policy that permits funds to be deposited only in principal-protected and insured investment instruments (e.g. checking accounts, passbook savings accounts, CD's and T-bills) or in the Association Pooled Fund Account.

There is no tax on accumulated earnings of a Section 501(c)(3) Organization and accordingly, such reserves and any income generated by the same are tax exempt.

APPENDIX C. Leadership Tools

The Special Libraries Association has established [Policies and Practices](#) for various topics related to the Association and its operations. Some of the Policies and Practices were established for various program areas in the Association. These Policies and Practices are to serve as informational purposes for SLA Staff, SLA Board of Directors and SLA Association Units. The Policies and Practices are reviewed periodically to ensure that they are still current. If at anytime you have questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact the SLA department of Member Engagement at membership@sla.org.

Division Leadership Information: <https://www.sla.org/governance/divisions/>

Chapter Leadership Information: <https://www.sla.org/governance/chapters/>

Caucus Leadership Information: <https://www.sla.org/governance/caucuses/>

Leadership Webinars

In addition to the Practices outlined in the document, another useful resource is the SLA [Leadership Webinar](#) series.-The goal of the Leadership Webinar series is to provide a resource to help SLA unit leaders in administering a successful and efficient unit. This series is being updated regularly.

Robert's Rules of Order

In 1876 General Henry M. Robert set out to bring the rules of the American Congress to members of ordinary societies with the publication of *Pocket Manual of Rules of Order*. It sold half a million copies before this revision of 1915 and made Robert's name synonymous with the orderly rule of reason in deliberative societies. SLA meetings are commonly run utilizing *Robert's Rules, Newly Revised*, 10th Edition. For full-text of this Manual see: <http://www.bartleby.com/176>

Unit Annual Reports

Past Unit annual reports can be accessed at the bottom of the [Unit Annual Reporting](#) page.

SurveyMonkey

The Association's Unit Leadership Department offers an online survey tool to make your job easier and at no cost to you. We've set up an account for you to use an online survey tool at <http://www.surveymonkey.com>. Credentials can be found on the individual Unit Leadership Information pages listed above and in Section I of the Foreword.