

Executive Director's report

By Annette DeFaveri.

This summer was far busier than the two previous summers at BCLA. I'm not sure if this is because I know more now and thus can anticipate the work coming, or if it's because I only now realize how much more there is to learn and I'm daunted by the task. Either way, it's been a busy summer as we plan out the goals and objectives for fall.

This fall will see the first steps in preparing the new BCLA Strategic Plan. The current plan began in January 2013 and runs until December 2015. The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to articulate the priorities of the Association and to guide and support the work of the Association. The Strategic Plan identifies key areas of interest for the membership and communicates support for Section, Committee and Interest Group activities in these areas. The Strategic Plan, along with the Mission, Vision, and Core Values statements, define the principles and goals of the Association within the library environment and society at large. So, as you can guess, this is an important document for us.

We are allowing considerable time to consult the membership about the priorities of the Association so when it's time to write the new iteration of the Strategic Plan, we can do so with clear member input. Our first step is to design and distribute a membership survey. We understand that many people may be suffering from "survey fatigue" and appreciate how easy it is to hit the delete button as soon as the word "Survey" appears on a screen. With this in mind, we will endeavour to keep the BCLA membership survey brief and to the point. Our hope is that you will give the BCLA the 10 to 15 minutes we anticipate it will take to complete the survey and so help us better serve you.

The new survey will try and collect some basic demographic information from the membership. One of the significant drawbacks of the old BCLA membership registration system is that it didn't collect "year you started working in libraries," or birthdays (in

age ranges, of course) and this has hampered us when we needed to make decisions about different segments of the membership. For example, if we had the capacity to offer three courses to the membership, we wouldn't build a course around librarianship in the final five years of one's career if we knew that the vast bulk of the membership had worked less than seven years. Understanding the demographics of the Association also helps us target new member groups, first by understanding why some groups haven't joined the Association, and then working to make the Association relevant to that group.

The bulk of the survey, though, will be in four areas: advocacy, professional development, communication and financial planning. We want to know what we are doing well, but more significantly, we want to know what we need to improve, and we want to hear any ideas members have for positive development. The information we collect on the survey will help support the BCLA Board when, in 2015, they review our current plan and draft a new three-year Strategic Plan.

The survey will go out on the main BCLA list and will be available for all members of the library community to complete. The first question on the survey will ask if the person completing the survey is a BCLA member. This way we can separate member responses from non-member responses. We will encourage non-member responses so we better understand the needs of non-members and can work to make the Association relevant them and thus encourage new membership.

I hope you will take the time to complete the survey when it comes out. Your words and thoughts are the foundation of the Association. Your input is essential to building a strong future for the Association.

Annette DeFaveri is BCLA's Executive Director.