

MPLA Steward for Reorganization and Transition
MPLA Board Report for October 19, 2006

This will be my final report to the board as I believe all the tasks, steps, and revisions that relate to the reorganization and the transition are now complete.

Betty Dance will be bringing the revisions of the last sections of the Manual of Procedure (MOP) to the Board; all the changes that resulted from the reorganization have been incorporated and much has been cleaned up and edited. This is the first major overhaul of the manual in a long time, and it is now current. We all owe Betty many thanks for the hours of work she has put into revision first the bylaws and now the MOP; her attention to detail and care she has taken with a difficult task has been extraordinary.

The Long Range Plan (LRP) has also been updated by Wayne to reflect the organizational changes and that document is also coming to the board for final approval.

I would again speak to the last remaining piece that is not yet exactly evolving as we envisioned, and that is the electronic communities. A few of them have engaged members, particularly when something specific to which people can respond is posted. A recent example was the academic section, when a question was posed about getting a position in an academic library without and MLS, and several people responded in very helpful and concrete ways, producing a useful discussion. Some other communities have had useful discussions about conference programming, while others have not. We have an electronic community for all of the electronic community moderators, and I have tried to engage them in online discussion about how to operate and how to generate use of the discussion feature. This has been almost a total failure, as with just a few exceptions they will not even engage in conversation with one another using this format. They do not read or respond to messages posted to the list.

Recommendations:

1. Leadership – we need moderators who will take initiative, and I simply have not seen that among most who currently are in these positions. Many of the communities are totally silent. In making the appointments in the future, we must be sure those who take the positions understand the job and will demonstrate the leadership that is needed. Discussing the expectations we have of moderators and finding people who will take an active role in bringing these to life is essential. A job description with detailed instructions and options about how to operate are available, but many of the moderators have just not done the job.

I recommend that the board take an active role in assisting the President-elect in identifying people who will do this job well, and that care is taken to explain the role to those who are asked to take this on.

2. Orientation – Evidently the role is not as easily understood as we had thought. Too often moderators, when they do make any effort, are using techniques that don't generate any discussion. Since we have not had success in getting them to read or respond to a discussion list, I recommend a conference call be scheduled with all the moderators who are appointed for the new year to discuss how to operate. I also recommend that one of the moderators or one of the

officers be named as the team leader who will monitor all the lists and work with the other moderators to solve problems, offer advice, and make sure the electronic communities are indeed a benefit to members and they improve communication.

Finally, as with all my jobs in MPLA, it has been both a pleasure and a learning experience to hold this position, and working with so many people in the organization has been a rich reward.