



:. ontario library association

Board & Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Logistics

As a member of your Council, you have been chosen by your peers as a leader. The function of the councils is to establish and review major plans and policy of the Association. Council members have specific legal and fiscal responsibilities to the members of the Association. Council positions are three year terms unless appointed mid-cycle.

Suggestions to consider while serving on your council:

- ☆ Get acquainted with OLA's by-law, and your divisional by-law. The by-laws stipulate what the association can and cannot do. Councils can change by-laws at the OLA AGM towards the goal of efficiency and effectiveness.
- ☆ Review positions statements, policies, and procedures as they apply to the work of your council. These are available online.
- ☆ You are responsible for considering the needs of the membership at large including determining what members need and want, and to bring these forward to council meetings.
- ☆ You are representing OLA and your division and as such should be mindful of comments and statements.
- ☆ Well-informed, constructive criticism is essential to the operation of a healthy council. Be proactive and positive in effecting change.
- ☆ OLA's strategic plan should be used to guide initiatives and activities.
- ☆ Do your homework! To be an effective councillor, you must be well informed. Study the issues and details relevant to the subjects about which you must make a decision.
- ☆ Review agendas and council meeting documents in advance and be prepared to actively contribute at meetings.

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- ☆ Recognize that your council members represent a range of experience with committee work. Some may not have extensive experience with meeting procedures or this may be their first leadership role. Council involvement is an opportunity for professional development and growth and all members should feel free to ask questions that will help them learn and contribute.
- ☆ Make every effort to attend every council meeting (usually 4 full day meetings per year, and the AGM which is held at the Super Conference)
- ☆ Always feel free to contact the Executive Director.

Divisional Presidents and Vice-Presidents:

- ☆ Divisional presidents and vice-presidents are also OLA Board members. When serving as an OLA Board member, they are responsible for the governance of the association as a whole.
- ☆ Attendance is required at OLA board meetings (usually minimum 4 annually), the OLA AGM, the divisional council meetings and AGM, and the annual Super Conference (registration is complimentary for presidents and vice presidents. Expenses are provided for presidents).
- ☆ In the absence of the president, the vice president assumes the responsibilities.

Duties for Presidents:

- ☆ As president, you are responsible for chairing your meetings. This includes providing ample notice to council about meeting dates, sending a draft agenda in advance for input, ensuring the meeting runs smoothly, and that all councilors have the opportunity to contribute.
- ☆ Ensure all approved minutes are forwarded to the Executive Director for archiving. Approved minutes should also be sent to the OLA Board list for informational purposes.
- ☆ Presidents will want to facilitate the assignment of portfolios or responsibilities for each councilor as suits the work of their division.

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- ☆ Consider involving your membership in council initiatives. For example, you may require assistance with an event or a survey, or wish to create ad-hoc sub committees to help with a specific project.
- ☆ Feel free to invite guests to your meeting who can help advance council work. Welcome guests who need something from your council.
- ☆ Be prepared to respond to media requests, or to provide the association position on an issue. Attend the media training session offered each year at Super Conference.
- ☆ Presidents are responsible for their annual AGM, for example, creating the agenda and chairing the meeting.
- ☆ Presidents are responsible for recognition of outgoing councilors. Contact the Executive Director for expense guidelines.
- ☆ Presidents are usually the convenor/presenter of the divisional spotlight session at Super Conference.
- ☆ Rely on the Executive Director who can provide context, answer questions, and advise on initiatives.

Committees/Initiatives that councils are involved in:

- ☆ The treasurer from each council is a member of OLA's finance committee chaired by OLA's treasurer. This committee usually meets once a year in January to develop the budget that is then approved by the OLA board. Additional meetings are at the discretion of the OLA treasurer.
- ☆ Open Shelf magazine (OLA's online publication) editorial committee. A councilor may be a divisional editor, or council may designate a member to do this. The Open Shelf editorial Board usually meets once a year at Super Conference.
- ☆ Councils will need to establish nomination and awards committees. Procedures for these activities are listed separately. Speak to the OLA Executive Director.
- ☆ Most councils have a designated editor of their divisional newsletter or blog. This is at the discretion of councils.

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- ☆ Each council must have a web master familiar with basic web functions such as using web templates. OLA can provide training, if required.
- ☆ Some divisions have entire sub-committees that meet at separate times and focus on specific projects. These are listed on divisional web sites. Presidents will ask for, at minimum, annual reports from sub-committees.

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