

From the President

Beverley Gass, President

Seems to me that it is important to begin at the beginning when becoming president of an organization such as NCLA. And where is the beginning? Is it where the last president left off? Is it a totally new place where the Association has never been before? This is a rather foolish question in some respects since NCLA, its new executive board, and president are all clearly part of a continuum of events, conferences, issues of a journal, projects, and members making it impossible to consider just starting over. Being a new president, then means picking up and going from where NCLA is, doesn't it?

It is a time of reflection, of reviewing the purpose of NCLA and making sure that the purpose still fits and applies. It is a time for asking questions — a time for wondering about everything we do and how we do it. Starting a term as president should mean a time of planning for the biennium and maybe even beyond that. It is a time for renewal and refurbishing. It is a time when a president sets a direction for the Association with a clear vision for the future.

With those things in mind, therefore, the new Executive Board members gathered at the Public Library of Charlotte/Mecklenburg County on January 22-23 for a retreat/planning session and first board meeting for 1998-99. Consultant and librarian Lea Wells led us through a series of processes designed to assist us in developing a vision statement and objectives for the biennium. The vision statement and objectives are printed below. As you read the vision statement be aware that it is a *draft* based upon ideas for the next eight to ten years. The draft was written at the retreat and has not been reviewed by anyone as of this writing. The objectives are the ones that the Executive Board developed for the biennium with designations of time lines, groups responsible, and action plans omitted here, since not all objectives have yet been completed at the same level of detail.

Vision for NCLA

■ *We are a member-focused organization*

Provision of services for members is based on continuous input from our members. We develop services and activities to meet members' needs. Membership in NCLA is strong and vigorous. The membership count is more than 3,005 by 2005. All members belong to at least one section and a significant majority of members attend conferences and workshops and clamor for more member services from the Association. Everyone in North Carolina who works in any library is a member of NCLA. Membership in NCLA is required for employment within every library in the state. Many of our members, in fact, are librarians. We have a simplified and unified organization with ample staff to perform the work of NCLA and its sections and round tables.

■ *We are the association of choice for information professionals*

NCLA is recognized and respected outside of the library/information community and is the leading voice for all types of libraries. Leaders of the association are spokespersons for all major information issues within the state. NCLA uses media outlets as a means to deliver the message to the citizens of North Carolina in a manner that garners support for libraries and information professionals.

■ *We are committed to continuing education and the professional development of our members*

Sections and round tables consistently cooperate to plan and deliver continuing education programs. We continue to deliver excellent continuing education workshops and seminars. Our biennial conference is the premier membership event for the Association. In the non-conference year, we hold an "event" for the Association where several sections and round tables have a common site and time for their professional development activities. The NCLA Leadership Institute provides a reservoir of leaders for the Association and the profession. We partner with the State Library of North Carolina, the constituent representative organizations where libraries are located including the North Carolina Community College System, the North Carolina Council of Independent Colleges and Universities, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the University of North Carolina, and other affiliated agencies, associations, and corporations to provide leadership in professional development for all who are engaged in the delivery of library and information services.

■ *We use information and communications technology to serve our members effectively and efficiently*

We are committed to maintaining a large virtual Association and an active electronic outreach program for our members and our profession. We maintain an active Web site where members can conveniently locate all kinds of information about NCLA. We provide leadership in the use of technology and cyberspace for communicating among the members. We use videoconferencing and other technologies to make continuing education more accessible to all who seek it in the field of library and information services.

■ *We are a fiscally robust organization*

Financial matters are no longer a concern within NCLA. We look beyond membership dues and operation of NCLA for support for our initiatives. We seek funding through an active and robust program of Association develop-

ment. We have strong partners and allies with business and corporate North Carolina. We have built a sizable endowment fund, a foundation, and Friends of NCLA that support many of the new and ongoing programs of NCLA including our award-winning journal and the Leadership Institute. We are proactive in our support of library and information technologies issues and have been instrumental in achieving increased funding from the North Carolina General Assembly for all types of libraries within the state.

Objectives for NCLA 1998-99

1. Increase membership in NCLA through an increased perception of worth and benefit in belonging to NCLA
 - 1.1 Publish a bi-monthly newsletter in which all sections and round tables publish news.
 - 1.2 Expand and revise Web site to provide extensive information about the Association
 - 1.3 Actively recruit library school students
 - 1.3.1 Change dues structure for students to reflect their student status
 - 1.3.2 Work with library educators to encourage library students to join the Association.
 - 1.3.3. Create a section for library school students
 - 1.4 Create a mentoring program for 1st year librarians who are NCLA members
2. Continue advocacy of and education for the principles of intellectual freedom
 - 2.1 Create model policies
 - 2.2 Review existing collection/selection policies to include new technologies
 - 2.3 Conduct staff development/workshops on intellectual freedom issues
 - 2.4 Educate the public about the Freedom of Information Act through public service announcements, a speakers bureau, a Web page, and a series of press releases to North Carolina media outlets
 - 2.5 Form coalitions with other local, regional, state, and national organizations to promote intellectual freedom issues.
 - 2.5.1 Identify groups — PTA, NCAE, ACLE, ASCD & SELA
 - 2.5.2 Join/co-sponsor events and publications
3. Provide access to the Internet for all populations served by the library
 - 3.1 Secure grants for hardware and access to the Internet
 - 3.2 Develop outreach programs
4. Expand continuing education programming
 - 4.1 Increase accessibility of continuing education to all members
 - 4.1.1 Repeat workshops across the state
 - 4.1.2 Use technology, when appropriate, to deliver programs
 - 4.1.3 Schedule programs at times most "user friendly" for members
 - 4.2 Market and promote continuing education opportunities effectively
 - 4.2.1 Obtain planning data — "survey with specific workshop topics"
 - 4.2.2 Market affordability of workshops through a "Continuing Education Newsletter" or an NCLA newsletter (of all opportunities provided by all sections and round tables)
 - 4.3 Identify and maximize continuing education resources
 - 4.3.1 Canvas membership for specialized knowledge and skills
 - 4.3.2 Promote cooperative ventures among sections and round tables
 - 4.3.3 Develop funds for project grants
 - 4.4 Encourage administrators to promote continuing education
 - 4.4.1 Establish minimum standards for staff development
 - 4.4.2 Develop an NCLA "accreditation" process for libraries
 - 4.4.3 Lobby legislators on behalf of schools and community colleges
 - 4.4.4 Establish grants for continuing education in cooperation with the Department of Public Instruction
5. Communicate with members using electronic means
 - 5.1 Provide a list of free e-mail providers to new and renewal members
 - 5.2 Subscribe all new and renewing members to NCLA-L (list serve)
 - 5.3 Request e-mail addresses on all membership applications (all formats)
 - 5.4 Survey memberships connectivity (e-mail and/or Web vs. snail mail) — ask for e-mail addresses; home or work access; possible volunteer(s) for virtual mentor to 1st year librarians
 - 5.5 Develop an electronic newsletter to include news of continuing education activities, advocacy opportunities, legislation, committee/round table/section minutes and announcements, new releases and jobs
 - 5.6 Charge committees, round table, section chairs with using NCLA-L

We invite you to review and react to the draft vision statement and objectives. Let us hear what you think. It is as simple as writing, calling, or e-mailing me or any member of the executive board. The full list of executive board members is at the end of this issue (page 54). Better yet, post your reactions to NCLA-L. If you do not belong to NCLA-L, send an electronic mail message to listserv@ils.unc.edu Do not enter anything in the subject line. In the body of the letter type SUBSCRIBE NCLA-L *yourfirstname yourlastname*