

The work of the North Carolina Library Association during its 2005-2007 biennium focused on four goals. With the help of an excellent Executive Board and the hard work of many members of the association, we have been able to achieve these targets.

The first goal – and the major focus – of the association was to increase membership. The Executive Board believed that this goal was extremely important because the vast majority of the association's income derives from memberships, and so increasing membership became the responsibility of every section, roundtable, committee, and member of NCLA. Individual sections and roundtables conducted membership drives. The association sponsored over 200 student memberships in ALA and NCLA through the joint membership program that Membership Committee chair Caroline Walters helped implement. Members reminded non-members of the many benefits of membership.

The association's membership was 1,353 at the beginning of the biennium, and the Executive Board set what seemed like an unrealistic goal of reaching 1,600 members (an increase in membership of 18 per cent) by the end of 2007. Incredibly, the association's membership grew to 1,818 by the end of the biennium, an increase of 34 per cent.

The second goal was to make the association more fiscally secure, to operate a balanced budget without going into reserves. The Executive Board was able to meet this goal and to leave the association on a sound financial footing as it moves into the next biennium. There were several factors that helped the association achieve this fiscal success, beginning with the 2005 conference, which was the most profitable conference in recent memory. The association also benefited during the biennium from the excellent ideas of several groups, including the Finance Committee and the Financial Vitality Committee. The increase in memberships and an increase in revenues from *North Carolina Libraries* ads and subscriptions led to an increase in the association's income. The association was fortunate enough to receive some unbudgeted income, including profits from a 2006 book drive with Border's and grant funds from the State Library. Expenditures were held in line too, and with healthy

profits from the 2007 conference (which appears to have been even more successful than the 2005 conference), the association is firmly in the black.

Third, the Executive Board wanted to make the association more responsive to its members and to the profession as a whole. The board achieved this goal by conducting a survey of association members and non-members to determine what members value about NCLA and what prevents non-members from joining. Almost half of the members of the association and over 450 non-members responded to the survey and provided us with valuable information, which will be passed to the new Executive Board as they craft the association's next set of goals and objectives.

Finally, the fourth goal was to make the "behind-the-scenes" workings of the association and its Executive Board more efficient. While these changes will not be seen by the vast majority of the members of the association, they have been important, and as a result, the association has worked more smoothly and more efficiently.

In the end, the association met its four goals – no matter how audacious they may have seemed at the beginning of the biennium – because the members of the Executive Board and the members of the association as a whole were willing to work hard to see these goals achieved. In fact, the association met its four goals in spite of some significant challenges. Our secretary, Paula Hinton, passed away. The chair of our Leadership Committee, Barbara Beebe, died all too young. The chair of our Finance Committee, Wanda Brown, was sidelined by a very serious accident. Other officers and committee chairs had to step down for various reasons. But in spite of these challenges, the remaining board members and the members of the association rallied to ensure that the association's goals were met.

In the end, that may be the most enduring and most important lesson of the 2005-2007 NCLA biennium – that in spite of the difficulties that we face as an association or as a profession or as individuals, if we all work together, we can achieve great things.