Attitudes of NCLA Members and Non-Members Towards the Association: The Results of the 2007 Survey

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One of the major goals of the North Carolina Library Association during its 2005-2007 biennium was to make the association more responsive to its members and to the profession as a whole. The association addressed this goal by conducting a survey of members and non-members to determine, among other things, what members valued about NCLA and what prevented non-members from joining.

The survey was conducted via SurveyMonkey in early 2007 by the NCLA Membership Committee, which publicized the survey via the NCLA listserv, the library listserv at UNC Chapel Hill, and the Society of NC Archivists listserv. In addition, members were urged to post the survey link on other library lists to which they belonged. The committee also offered incentives in the form of prizes for individuals who completed the survey; several NCLA sections also offered free membership as prizes for individuals completing the survey. A total of 1,157 individuals responded to the survey, including almost half of the members of the association (665 respondents), 468 non-members, and 24 individuals who did not indicate membership status.

The questions that were included in the survey are provided as Appendix A. The first set of questions collected demographic data about the respondents: gender; age group; type of library; years of experience in libraries; position; knowledge of which colleagues are NCLA members; and current membership status in the association.

Respondents were then asked whether they were aware of various benefits of membership in NCLA: *Tar Heel Libraries* newsletter; development of leadership skills; subscription to *North Carolina Libraries*; membership in sections and round tables; networking with colleagues; online training; workshops at member rates; individual voting rights; the biennial conference at member rates; and current information on events of concern to libraries and librarians. Respondents were also asked to rank the importance of these benefits on a five-point scale from "Not important" to "Very important."

The conditional logic provided by Survey Monkey allowed NCLA members and non-members to be asked different sets of questions. Current NCLA members were asked how long they had been members, how satisfied they were with their current level of activity in the association, the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the association, their preferred methods of communication, and the sections and round tables to which they belonged.

Non-members were asked whether they had previously been members of NCLA. Those who had previously been members were also asked when they last joined the association, why they decided not to continue membership, and the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the association. All non-members were asked to identify their primary reason for not joining NCLA.

The results of the survey are outlined below, and some implications of the results for the future direction of the association are suggested.

Overall Results

Table 1 summarizes the responses to the survey's demographic questions. Over four fifths of the survey respondents (82 per cent) were female; this proportion is similar to the gender make-up of the library profession as a whole. Likewise, the age distribution of respondents was similar to that of the profession as a whole. The largest group of respondents (35 per cent) was fifty to fifty-nine years of age, with ages forty to forty-nine (23 per cent) and thirty to thirty-nine (20 per cent) representing the next largest age groups.

The two largest groups of respondents (19 per cent each) represented those with two years or less experience in libraries and those with six to ten years of experience; those with over twenty-five years of experience (17 per cent) was the next largest group. Respondents were most likely to work in public libraries (39 per cent) and academic libraries (36 per cent). No other type of library represented more than 7 per cent of respondents.

The most frequent answer to the question, "Do you know which of your colleagues are NCLA members," was "Some of them" (35 per cent); the 29 per cent of respondents who answered "No" represented the next largest group.

Finally, while the majority of respondents (59 per cent) were members of NCLA, non-members represented a large group (41 per cent).

Demographic Data – Members and Non-Members

The demographic data can be further analyzed to provide valuable insights into the relative make-up of the two groups of respondents – members of the association and non-members.

Age

The members of NCLA who responded to the survey tended to be older than the non-members who responded. (See Table 2.) Almost half of the NCLA members (48 per cent) were fifty or over, while only 39 per cent of the non-members were in that age group. Likewise, 38 per cent of the non-members were under forty, while only 28 per cent of the NCLA members were that young.

This finding and others, explored below, suggest that NCLA membership may be too costly for some potential members, e.g., those who are younger and presumably earn lower salaries. Of the 65 non-members who said that they had not joined the association because membership was prohibitively expensive, 45 per cent were under forty years of age, slightly higher than the 38 per cent of non-members represented by that age group.

Table 1. Survey Responses to Demographic Questions

Gender	Number	Percentage (N = 1152)
Female	949	82%
Male	203	18%

Age	Number	Percentage (N = 1156)
18-29	139	12%
30-39	227	20%
40-49	264	23%
50-59	400	35%
60-69	107	9%
Over 70	13	1%
Rather not say	6	1%

Years of Experience	Number	Percentage (N = 1135)
0-2 years	221	19%
3-5 years	172	15%
6-10 years	214	19%
11-15 years	134	12%
16-20 years	120	11%
21-25 years	86	8%
Over 25 years	188	17%

Type of Library	Number	Percentage (N = 1139)
Academic Library	418	36%
Corporation	9	1%
Government	32	3%
Library School Faculty	78	7%
Nonprofit	14	1%
Public Library	446	39%
School	65	6%
Other	77	7%

Position	Number	Percentage (N = 1124)
Administrator	171	15%
Library school faculty	34	3%
Library school student	74	7%
Paraprofessional	196	17%
Retired library personnel	15	1%
Solo librarian	61	5%
Staff librarian	410	36%
Trustee/Friend of the library	6	1%
Other	157	14%

Do you know which of your colleagues are NCLA members?	Number	Percentage (N = 1127)
Yes	153	14%
Most of them	207	18%
Some of them	392	35%
No	331	29%
Don't have colleagues	44	4%

Are you currently a member of NCLA?	Number	Percentage (N = 1133)
Yes	665	59%
No	468	41%

Table 2. Age of NCLA Members and Non-Members

	NCLA Members		Non-Members	
Age	Number	Percentage (N = 661)	Number	Percentage (N = 466)
18-29	69	10%	69	15%
30-39	118	18%	107	23%
40-49	151	23%	110	24%
50-59	240	36%	147	32%
60-69	75	11%	28	6%
Over 70	8	1%	5	1%

Table 3. Years of Experience for NCLA Members and Non-Members

	NCLA Members		Non-Members	
Years of Experience	Number	Percentage (N = 660)	Number	Percentage (N = 464)
0-2 years	110	17%	109	23%
3-5 years	78	12%	94	20%
6-10 years	122	18%	90	19%
11-15 years	83	13%	48	10%
16-20 years	78	12%	41	9%
21-25 years	53	8%	32	7%
Over 25 years	136	21%	50	11%

Years of experience

Similarly, the members of NCLA who responded to the survey had more experience working in libraries than did the non-members who responded. (See Table 3.) Two-fifths (41 per cent) of the NCLA members had worked in libraries for sixteen years or more, while only 27 per cent of the non-members had this much experience. Likewise, 43 per cent of the non-members had five or fewer years of experience while only 29 per cent of the NCLA members had five or fewer years of experience.

This finding does not appear to be related to the idea, discussed above, that NCLA membership may be too costly for members who have been in libraries for a short time and are presumably earning lower salaries. (Of the sixty-five non-members who said that they had not joined the association because membership was prohibitively expensive, the percentage with five or fewer years of experience was 43 per cent, equal to the percentage of non-members with that level of experience.) Instead, the lower rate of membership among those with less experience is likely due to other factors, which have not yet been identified.

Type of library

Another area where interesting comparisons can be made between NCLA members and non-members in the survey is the type of library in which the respondents worked. (See Table 4.) The largest percentage of NCLA members who responded to the survey worked in public libraries (41 per cent) and in academic libraries (40 per cent), and the same was true of non-members, 37 per cent of whom worked in public libraries and 32 per cent of whom worked in academic libraries.

On the other hand, a much larger percentage of non-members were library school faculty: 11 per cent of non-members were represented by this category, as opposed to only 4 per cent of members. Likewise, school librarians made up a larger percentage of the non-members (9 per cent) than the NCLA members (only 3 per cent). Given the decision of the school librarians to leave NCLA and form their own association (the NC School Library Media

Association), the latter finding is perhaps not surprising, but it is not clear why relatively few library school faculty members reported belonging to NCLA.

Type of position

Differences between NCLA members and non-members were also seen in the type of position held, as shown in Table 5. Staff librarian was the most common type of position for both groups (40 per cent for NCLA members and 31 per cent for non-members).

By contrast, a far larger percentage of non-members were paraprofessionals. This job type represented one fourth of the non-members but only 12 per cent of the NCLA members. Again, this finding is consistent with the idea that NCLA membership may be too costly for some potential members, e.g., paraprofessionals, who tend to earn lower salaries. Of the sixty-five non-members who said that they had not joined the association because membership was prohibitively expensive, 35 per cent were paraprofessionals, a good bit higher than the 25 per cent of non-members represented by that age group.

More non-members were library school students: 9 per cent of non-members vs. only 5 per cent of members. Likewise, more non-members were solo librarians: 9 per cent of non-members vs only 3 per cent of members. As with newer members, it does not appear that this finding is related to the possibility that NCLA membership may be too costly for some individuals, like library school students. Of the sixty-five non-members who said that they had not joined the association because membership was prohibitively expensive, 9

per cent were library school students, equal to the percentage of non-members who were library school students.

By contrast, a far higher percentage of NCLA members were administrators. Nearly one fourth of the NCLA members who responded to the survey (23 per cent) were administrators. Only 5 per cent of non-members listed themselves in administrative positions. One reason for this may be the fact that administrators tend to be paid more than other librarians and that membership in the association may therefore be less expensive for these individuals. In addition, as one respondent pointed out, in many organizations, the library pays for association membership for the top administrators.

Benefits of Membership

Another area where differences between NCLA members and non-members were seen was in their ranking of NCLA member benefits, shown in Table 6, which displays the percentages of respondents (NCLA members and non-members) who rated the benefits as "Very important" or "Important."

Not surprisingly, a higher percentage of the NCLA members rated the benefits of membership in the association as "Very important" or "Important." This result is to be expected; the benefits that are valued so highly would tend to convince individuals to join the association.

While the members gave higher ratings to all of the benefits of NCLA membership than did non-members, it is interesting to note that for "Online training," the ratings of the two groups were very close: 69 per cent of

NCLA members rated this benefit as "Very important" or "Important" while 64 per cent of non-members did so. No other benefit resulted in such close ratings.

It is also interesting to compare the rankings of the membership benefits and to note, for example, that both groups ranked "Current information on events of concern to libraries and librarians" and "Networking with colleagues" as the highest rated benefits. Likewise, both groups ranked "Individual voting rights" and "*Tar Heel Libraries* newsletter" as the lowest rated benefits.

What other benefits should be offered

Respondents were asked to list other benefits that NCLA should offer its members, and 207 responses were provided to this open-ended question. While several of these included comments such as "Can't think of any," many of the suggestions are worth consideration.

o   One of the most frequent requests was for more workshops, particularly regional workshops to minimize travel costs; for example, one respondent suggested "More workshops annually, particularly any directed at paraprofessional managers as well as support staff; these should be offered regionally so small libraries can afford to send staff." Specific workshop topics (PR and marketing, leadership skills, collection development) were also mentioned, as were specific delivery methods (online training), specific times (weekends), and specific target audiences (paraprofessionals).

o   Another frequent request was for discounts, including joint membership

Table 4. Type of Library for NCLA Members and Non-Members

	NCLA Members		Non-Members	
Type of Library	Number	Percentage (N = 657)	Number	Percentage (N = 467)
Academic Library	263	40%	151	32%
Corporation	4	1%	5	1%
Government	22	3%	9	2%
Library School Faculty	27	4%	50	11%
Nonprofit	8	1%	6	1%
Public Library	270	41%	173	37%
School	19	3%	44	9%
Other	44	7%	29	6%

Table 5. Type of Position for NCLA Members and Non-Members

	NCLA Members		Non-Members	
Position	Number	Percentage (N = 662)	Number	Percentage (N = 461)
Administrator	149	23%	22	5%
Library school faculty	19	3%	15	3%
Library school student	31	5%	43	9%
Paraprofessional	79	12%	117	25%
Retired library personnel	10	2%	5	1%
Solo librarian	19	3%	42	9%
Staff librarian	266	40%	144	31%
Trustee/Friend of the library	5	1%	1	0%
Other	84	13%	72	16%

discounts with other professional organizations (like ALA and SELA) and discounts at bookstores and other businesses.

o A number of responses focused on the NCLA conference, and these included a handful of calls for an annual conference. Typical was the remark that "Things change too fast in this field for a conference once every two years."

o Increased advocacy was another frequently mentioned request. As one respondent suggested, "Advocate on behalf of libraries and librarians to improve professional image and raise awareness of issues facing the profession."

o In spite of an interest in nonprint communication, there were also four recommendations that *North Carolina Libraries* be provided in print format. ("I would prefer two print-on-paper issues of *North Carolina Libraries* each year to the four electronic issues, followed by compilation of all four into one paper issue. Emails, listservs, websites, and other such means of electronic and digital communication are important and valuable--increasingly so. We need and should use them. But as a professional organization, NCLA benefits from a high quality, 'professional' quality official journal. We shouldn't abandon that.") On the other hand, the only respondents to mention the newsletter *Tar Heel Libraries* suggested that it be distributed online, instead of in print, to ensure timeliness.

o Several respondents mentioned benefits specifically for NCLA's newer members. Mentoring programs for new librarians were recommended by several respondents, and more specific assistance ("help in finding work through resume reviews or assistance") was suggested by others.

Several recommendations by respondents called for services that are already provided. In some cases, there were recommendations for services provided by other groups; for example, several respondents wanted statewide job postings, a service already provided by the State Library of North Carolina at http://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/JOBS/jobs.html.

Likewise, a few respondents were made aware of existing benefits through the survey itself. As one noted, "I had no idea we had some of these benefits, for instance: voting for what?

We get *North Carolina Libraries*? What online training? Perhaps an orientation packet for new members would help."

Members Only

Respondents who were NCLA members were asked a number of questions, and the results of several of these are discussed here. These questions addressed the length of membership in the association, the respondent's level of satisfaction with NCLA, the means by which the respondent preferred to receive communications, and the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the association.

Length of NCLA membership

Members were asked to state how long they had belonged to the association, and the results are shown in Table 7. The most frequent response was "Over 10 years," selected by just over one fourth (29 per cent) of the respondents. However, a full third of the members had belonged to NCLA for fewer than two years: 19 per cent in the "Under 1 year" category and 14 per cent in the "1-2 years" category.

Satisfaction with NCLA

Members were asked how satisfied they were with the association, and the results are shown in Table 8. The level of satisfaction

Table 6. Percentages of Members and Non-Members Rating Membership Benefits as Very Important or Important

Benefit	NCLA Members	Non-Members
Current information on events of concern to libraries and librarians	87%	72%
Networking with colleagues	84%	66%
Workshops at member rates	81%	54%
Biennial conference at member rates	80%	44%
Development of leadership skills	73%	61%
Membership in sections and round tables	71%	35%
Online training	69%	64%
Subscription to *North Carolina Libraries*	61%	37%
Individual voting rights	58%	33%
Tar Heel Libraries newsletter	56%	28%

seems reasonably good: 69 per cent of the members were "Very satisfied" or "Satisfied" with the association, and only 3 per cent were "Unsatisfied."

Nevertheless, it is instructive to explore the answers to open-ended questions from the nineteen members who were "Unsatisfied" to determine ways to improve the services offered to members by NCLA. For example, when asked to list the strengths and weaknesses of the association, several of the "Unsatisfied" members referred to the difficulties of getting involved with NCLA. Three respondents specifically cited attempts to volunteer for sections or round tables, only to be ignored or rebuffed. Several referred to poor communications, especially problems receiving membership information from the association.

Communication preferences

Members were asked to indicate the means by which they preferred to receive communications. As shown in Table 9, the most popular response, by a large margin, was email. The other three means of communication (listservs, newsletters, and the Website) all ranked about the same.

Table 7. Length of NCLA Membership

Length of NCLA Membership	Number	Percentage (N = 643)
Under 1 year	121	19%
1-2 years	89	14%
2-5 years	158	25%
6-10 years	90	14%
Over 10 years	185	29%

Table 8. Satisfaction with NCLA

Satisfaction with NCLA	Number	Percentage (N = 633)
Very satisfied	87	14%
Satisfied	347	55%
Somewhat satisfied	180	28%
Unsatisfied	19	3%

Table 9. Preferred Means of Communication

Satisfaction with NCLA	Number	Percentage (N = 665)
Email	541	81%
Listservs	327	49%
Newsletters	306	46%
Website	272	41%

Strengths and weaknesses of NCLA

An open-ended question asked members to identify what they saw as the strengths and weaknesses of the association. In all, 371 members responded to the question, with most providing both strengths and weaknesses. In general, the strengths listed outnumbered weaknesses by about two to one.

For members, the most often cited strengths of the association were

o **Workshops.** Nearly a third of those citing strengths mentioned the workshops that NCLA sections, round tables, and committees sponsor. Typical was the response that "Current, timely workshops from the various function-related groups are a strong point."

o **Conference.** Almost as many of the respondents who cited strengths mentioned the association's biennial conference. As one respondent noted, "Have been to the last 2 NCLA conferences -- a strength is the range and quality of the workshops offered at these conferences."

o **Networking and information sharing.** The opportunity to network and share information with other NCLA members was cited as a strength by about one fourth of those who listed strengths. One respondent summed up this strength as follows: "Connecting [with] librarians with similar interests and concerns about librarianship." Some respondents felt that the size of the association made it easier to network with other librarians: "I feel that NCLA gives a human face to librarianship. This is in comparison to ALA, where I just feel adrift in a sea of impersonal information."

o **Communications.** Nearly 10 per cent of those who identified strengths listed NCLA's communication with members. As one respondent noted, "Communicating information is great. I am surprised by all the email communication."

For members, the most often cited weaknesses of NCLA were

o **Involving members.** Just over one fourth of those who listed weaknesses identified member involvement as a weakness. This included the difficulty that new members have in becoming involved in the association, as reflected in the following remark: "I think it's incredibly hard to break into. I haven't been able to figure out how to get involved other than attend workshops."

o **Focus.** Just under one fourth of those who cited weaknesses mentioned the focus of the association. The category included concerns that NCLA is too focused on public librarians, not focused enough on academic librarians and paraprofessionals, not focused enough on the western part of the state, and so forth.

o **Lack of communication.** About one fifth of those who identified weaknesses cited a lack of communication from the association, particularly regarding member benefits and activities.

o **More workshops needed.** Nearly one fifth of the respondents who cited weaknesses stated that more workshops were needed. These remarks were particularly focused on having workshops during non-conference years, e.g., "Need to connect more closely with training needs of librarians throughout the year, not just at the NCLA Conference."

o **Promotion.** About 13 per cent of the individuals who listed weaknesses identified some aspect of promotion, both promotion of the association itself ("NCLA has a difficult job of promoting itself as an exciting and meaningful place where young professionals/non-professionals are embraced") as well as promotion of the profession ("Weakness - Promoting greater visibility and support for libraries in North Carolina").

o **Conference.** Of the respondents who identified weaknesses, about one in ten mentioned the conference. The primary concern was the desire for an annual conference: "Having only biennial conferences is a terrible missed opportunity to provide continuing education for library staff, trustees, and friends."

Non-Members Only

Respondents who were not members of NCLA were also asked a number of questions, and the results of several of these are discussed here. These questions addressed reasons for not joining the association or for not renewing membership, as well as the perceived strengths and weaknesses of NCLA.

Reasons for not joining

Non-members were asked why they had not joined the association and were given six possible responses, including "Other." The results are shown in Table 10.

The two most frequently cited reasons were "Unable to attend any meetings/workshops" (16 per cent) and "Membership fee is prohibitive" (14 per cent).

Table 10. Reasons for Not Joining the Association

Reasons for Not Joining	Number	Percentage (N = 468)
Unable to attend any meetings/workshops.	73	16%
Membership fee is prohibitive.	65	14%
NCLA does not represent my interests/goals.	24	5%
I am in enough professional organizations.	23	5%
Meetings/workshops are not valuable to me.	10	2%
Other	129	28%

It is encouraging to note that only 5 per cent of respondents indicated that "NCLA does not represent my interests/goals." (Of the twenty-seven individuals who indicated that NCLA did not represent their interests, the largest group – 33 per cent – were paraprofessionals. Interestingly, only two of the twenty-seven were school librarians.)

A large number of "Other" responses were also received, and these reveal a wide range of reasons that individuals had not joined the association. The most prevalent reasons were

o **Unaware of NCLA.** The largest number of "Other" responses reflected a lack of awareness of the association; 41 per cent of the "Other" responses fell into this category. Some respondents were simply unaware of the association ("Didn't know about it"); others indicated an interest but were unaware of how to find out more about NCLA ("Have not received any enrollment information and don't know who the contact people are"). A higher than expected percentage of these respondents (39 per cent) were paraprofessionals, one of whom responded, "I didn't know that I could be in it."

o **Not relevant.** Another 13 per cent of "Other" respondents felt that NCLA

was not relevant to their concerns. No particular job type or type of library dominated this group.

o **Time.** Just over one "Other" respondent in ten (11 per cent) cited time constraints as the reason for not joining the association. Typical were responses such as "Have no time for organization" and "Work takes up most of my time."

Interestingly, concerns about the cost of membership were listed by only 3 per cent of the "Other" respondents.

Reasons for not renewing membership. Non-members were also asked whether they had previously belonged to NCLA, and over one fourth (27 per cent) indicated that they had previously been members.

Non-members who had previously belonged to NCLA were asked why they decided not to continue their membership; 108 respondents provided answers to this question. To the extent that NCLA is interested in retaining members, these answers provide valuable information.

o Just over one third (36 per cent) cited money issues. Typical were responses like "Membership dues more than willing to pay" and "Money - salary too low for extras after paying bills." In several cases, the former members mentioned money issues in combination with other reasons, such as lack of benefits ("money and lack of relevance") and memberships in other professional organizations ("Dues increases in all the Library Associations I am a member of. Something had to give....").

o Another 17 per cent indicated that they had memberships in other professional associations. The American Library Association was the most frequently mentioned of the other associations ("I don't attend NCLA conferences and have too many ALA commitments to take on NCLA committee work"); not surprisingly, the NC School Library Media Association was also mentioned by several respondents.

o In all, 16 per cent cited a lack of benefits for members of the association. A typical response was "Didn't think it was worth the money, especially since my institution doesn't provide enough travel money for me to attend the conference. Without the conference, I don't see the benefit of the membership."

o Finally, 12 per cent indicated that they had simply forgotten to renew membership. In some cases, respondents stated that they just forgot. Others indicated that they never received a renewal notice ("I don't think I received any renewal reminder, and I let it lapse").

Strengths and weaknesses of NCLA

An open-ended question asked non-members who had previously belonged to NCLA to identify what they saw as the strengths and weaknesses of the association. A total of seventy-eight former members responded to the question, with most providing both strengths and weaknesses. In general, the strengths listed slightly outnumbered the weaknesses.

For these former members, the most often cited strengths of the association were:

o **Networking.** Nearly one third of the strengths listed by the former members had to do with networking and sharing information among members. Typical was this response: "NCLA is THE source for information and networking for librarians in NC and the listserv announcements are also invaluable."

o **Conference.** For the former members, the biennial conference was the second most frequently identified benefit of NCLA, representing roughly one fifth of their identified strengths. As one respondent noted, "[The] annual conference was informative and good opportunity for networking."

o **Workshops.** About 13 per cent of the former members who listed strengths mentioned the association's workshops, a far smaller proportion than among the members of the association.

For the former members, the most often cited weaknesses of NCLA were:

o **Focus.** By far, the most frequently cited weakness of the association for the former members had to do with the focus of NCLA; this represented about one third of the weaknesses identified. The most frequently mentioned lack of focus related to school librarians, academic librarians, and paraprofessionals.

o **Involving members.** About 9 per cent of the weaknesses identified by the former members related to ways of involving members, especially new members. As one respondent suggested, "There should be more initial, perhaps one-on-one contact, between a newcomer and someone who's been with the association for a longer period of time."

o No other weaknesses were mentioned by 9 per cent or more of the former members.

Implications

The results of the survey should be helpful to NCLA as it considers both how to develop its benefits and services in the future and how to publicize them to members and non-members. Some of the implications of the survey findings for the future direction of the association are outlined here.

o **The cost of membership.** Based on the results of the survey, the association may wish to examine the cost of membership to determine whether lower fees are needed to attract individuals in lower income categories, for example, younger librarians and paraprofessionals. As noted in Table 2 and Table 5, the relative lack of NCLA members under forty years of age and among paraprofessionals appears to be at least partly explained by the cost of membership in the association. The membership fee was one of the two most frequently cited reasons by non-members for not having joined the association (Table 10), and money issues were the most frequently cited reason by former members for not having renewed membership. Membership fees do represent a large part of the association's budget, of course, but it may be possible to attract more members through reduced membership fees and thereby maintain or even increase the association's income through membership fees.

o **The benefits of membership.** The association should be aware of the benefits that both groups identified as valuable (current information on events of concern to libraries and librarians; networking with colleagues) as well as those of particular value to members (workshops at member rates; biennial conference at member rates) and non-members (online training; development of leadership skills). (See Table 6.) These benefits should be strengthened and well publicized.

Likewise, the association should consider the list of new benefits that respondents felt should be offered.

o **Promotion and publicity.** Regardless of which benefits are offered, the association needs to do a better job of promoting and publicizing the benefits of membership in NCLA. The most frequently cited reason provided by non-members for not joining the association was a lack of awareness of NCLA. Several respondents recommended benefits that the association already provides, and others admitted being ignorant of their membership benefits ("I had no idea we had some of these benefits ..."). These responses suggest that NCLA needs to do a better job of publicizing its benefits and its activities.

o **Targeting specific groups.** The results of the survey suggest that individuals with five or fewer years of experience, paraprofessionals, school librarians, library school students, and library school faculty are less likely to belong to the association. NCLA should recognize the opportunity to better publicize the benefits of membership to these individuals and to better involve them in its work. As Table 10 notes, only 5 per cent of non-members indicated that "NCLA does not represent my interests/goals," a result that suggests that there are a large number of potential members for the association to market itself to. (Of the twenty-seven individuals who indicated that NCLA did not represent their interests, the largest group – 33 per cent – were paraprofessionals. Interestingly, only two of the twenty-seven were school librarians. These results suggest that the association needs to do a better job of recruiting paraprofessionals and that it is still perceived as relevant to the interests of school librarians, in spite of the existence of another statewide association for those individuals.)

o **Involving new members.** The fact that 33 per cent of members have belonged to NCLA for fewer than two years suggests that greater efforts should be made to involve and retain these individuals. Current efforts to involve new members may be falling short; several respondents cited attempts to volunteer for sections or round tables, only to be ignored or rebuffed, and poor communications, especially problems receiving membership information from the association. The association may wish to consider sending a more substantial "welcoming package" to new members and putting in place a mechanism for ensuring that new members become involved in the work of the association through sections, round tables, and committees.

o **Retaining members.** Over one fourth of the non-members who responded to the survey (27 per cent) indicated that they had previously been members of the association. This finding emphasizes the need for NCLA to do a better job of retaining members.

o **Website.** As Table 9 shows, the current NCLA Website is not considered an important means of communication for members. This finding suggests that the association has an opportunity to greatly improve its Website. As one respondent suggested, "Consider a reorganization of the website to better manage the wealth of information." To the question about additional benefits, several respondents suggested that NCLA offer "More member services online, such as member renewal and conference registration." Likewise, several mentioned Web 2.0 services such as blogs, wikis, and an NCLA Flickr account. Others suggested resources that might best be implemented online, for example a directory of members or an ideas exchange.

o **Building on strengths.** It is important that the association understand its perceived strengths and build on them. For the NCLA members who responded to the survey, these included workshops, the biennial conference, networking and information sharing, and communications. For the former members, the strengths included networking, the biennial conference, and workshops.

o **Correcting weaknesses.** It is likewise important that the association understand its perceived weaknesses and take steps to correct these. For the NCLA members who responded to the survey, these included the need to better involve members, the focus of the association, a lack of communication, the need for more workshops, the need to better promote the organization, and the need for a stronger conference. For the former members, the weaknesses included the association's focus and the need to better involve members.

Finally, it should be noted that this article is intended to merely share the basic findings of the survey and that the survey itself contains much more information of interest to librarians in North Carolina and to the association.[1]

Acknowledgements

References

[1] Interested individuals are encouraged to download the survey results from Google Documents (http://spreadsheets.google.com/ccc?key=rgJAgEs41WQB3xShfyUEQ8Q) and to share their own analyses.

Appendix A

Questions Included in the 2007 Survey

What is your gender?
o Male   o Female

What is your age group?
o 18-29
o 30-39
o 40-49
o 50-59
o 60-69
o Over 70
o Rather not say

How long have you practiced librarianship?
o 0-2 years
o 3-5 years
o 6-10 years
o 11-15 years
o 16-20 years
o 21-25 years
o Over 25 years

Where are you employed?
o Academic Library
o Library School Faculty
o Public Library
o Corporation
o Nonprofit
o Government
o Other (please specify)

What best describes your position?
o Paraprofessional
o Staff librarian
o Administrator
o Trustee/Friend of the library
o Library school student
o Library school faculty

o Retired library personnel
o Solo librarian
o Other (please specify)

Do you know which of your colleagues are NCLA members?
o Yes
o Most of them
o Some of them
o No
o Don't have colleagues

Are you aware of the following benefits of membership to NCLA?

Tar Heel Libraries newsletter
o Yes   o No
Development of leadership skills
o Yes   o No
Subscription to North Carolina Libraries (a juried publication)
o Yes   o No
Membership in sections and round tables
o Yes   o No
Networking with colleagues
o Yes   o No
Online training
o Yes   o No
Workshops at member rates
o Yes   o No
Individual voting rights
o Yes   o No
Biennial Conference at member rates
o Yes   o No
Current information on events of concern to libraries and librarians
o Yes   o No

Please rate how important the following benefits are to you.

Tar Heel Libraries newsletter
o Very important
o Important
o Somewhat Important
o Less Important
o Not Important

Workshops at member rates
o Very important
o Important
o Somewhat Important
o Less Important
o Not Important

Subscription to *North Carolina Libraries* (a juried publication)
o Very important
o Important
o Somewhat Important
o Less Important
o Not Important

Development of leadership skills
o Very important
o Important
o Somewhat Important
o Less Important
o Not Important

Online training
o Very important
o Important
o Somewhat Important
o Less Important
o Not Important

Working with colleagues
o Very important
o Important
o Somewhat Important
o Less Important
o Not Important

Current information on events of concern to libraries and librarians
o Very important
o Important
o Somewhat Important
o Less Important
o Not Important

Individual voting rights
o Very important
o Important
o Somewhat Important
o Less Important
o Not Important

Membership in sections and round tables
o Very important
o Important
o Somewhat Important
o Less Important
o Not Important

Biennial conference at member rates
o Very important
o Important
o Somewhat Important
o Less Important
o Not Important

What other benefits do you think NCLA should offer its membership?

Are you currently a member of NCLA?
o Yes   o No

How long have you been a member?
o Under 1 year
o 1-2 years
o 2-5 years
o 6-10 years
o Over 10 years

How satisfied are you with your current level of association activity and service?
o Very satisfied
o Satisfied
o Somewhat satisfied
o Unsatisfied

As a current member, what do you perceive as the association's strengths and weaknesses?

By what method(s) do you prefer to receive and communicate information? Choose all that apply.
o Listservs
o Newsletters
o Website
o Email

Please tell us which sections and round tables you have joined.
o BLINC (Business Librarianship in NC)
o Children's Services Section
o College & University Section
o Community & Jr. College Libraries Section
o Government Resources Section (prev. Documents)
o Library Administration & Management
o Circulation SIG
o Personnel/Staff Development SIG
o NC Association of School Librarians
o NC Public Library Trustees Association
o Public Library Section
o Reference & Adult Services Section
o Resources & Technical Services Section
o Literacy Round Table
o New Members Round Table (included in first two years of membership automatically)
o NC Library Paraprofessional Association
o Round Table for Ethnic Minority Concerns
o Round Table on Special Collections
o Round Table on the Status of Women in Librarianship
o Technology & Trends Round Table
o Don't know

Have you previously been a member of NCLA?
o Yes   o No

When did you last join NCLA?

Why did you decide not to continue your membership with NCLA?

As a former member, what do you perceive as the association's strengths and weaknesses?

What is your primary reason for not joining NCLA?
o Membership fee is prohibitive.
o Unable to attend any meetings/workshops.
o Meetings/workshops are not valuable to me.
o I am in enough professional organizations.
o NCLA does not represent my interests/goals.
o Other (please specify)