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TO: Board of Directors
FROM: 2009 SLA Awards Committee
DATE: 8 October 2009
RE: Awards Committee Report and Recommendations for 2010 Program

The 2009 SLA Awards Committee would like thank the Board for the opportunity to serve the association by identifying and choosing for recognition SLA's brightest and best members in the earlier part of this year. Following our last report in July we continued to have discussions surrounding the various awards that SLA currently offers for recognition of members.

As charged by the President we reviewed and considered the timeline and efficacy of the current SLA Awards and Honors program. Additionally we took into consideration all award sponsorship agreements that are currently in place, the cost of administering and promoting each award, as well as the reality of the potential for an extended difficult economic time ahead for our association.

We reviewed each award to determine if it should continue to be a part of the program based on how it fits into the association's strategic goals and direction for the future. We also questioned the ability of each award to inspire others or to promote the types of attributes or behaviors that are in need of promoting and support across the membership.

What follows is the consensus and recommendations of the 2009 committee for the 2010 awards program.

1) Place Innovations in Technology on Hiatus for 2010 Awards and Honors Program

This award was created in 1992 to promote and reward SLA members that were embracing a "new" manner of providing library services through innovative use of technologies in their libraries. This award was supported by sponsorship from its inception.

At this point, the committee feels there is very little value in promoting "technology use" to our members through an award. 17 years ago, there was a need to reward members who were embracing "new" tools and using the Internet or other technologies to deliver services. Innovative use of technology by SLA members appears to be widespread, and in the committee's opinion does not require the attention it once did.

Additionally, there are no sponsors signed on to support this award for 2010, allowing us an opportunity to consider the need for such an award, or the potential for revising it to better fit the current issues of importance to the association.

The committee would like to place this award on hiatus for 2010 in order to take more time to discuss the extended future of the award. We will consider and investigate new and revised criteria for 2011 or sun-setting this award permanently.

2) Place the Professional Award on hiatus for the 2010 Awards and Honors Program

This award was created in 1945 to recognize a special event, major achievement or specific significant contribution from an SLA member to the field of librarianship or information science which advances the Association's goals and objectives.

The committee feels that this award and the Member Achievement Award (created in 2003) are too similar, and the differentiation between the criteria for each award is too vague. Usually, a member who is nominated for one of these awards also fits the criteria for the other one.

In recent years, due to sponsor commitments, the committee was required to name a recipient for both the Professional and the Member Achievement award. Each year, for purposes of that year's program, the committee has had to make its own decision on how they will differentiate and define each of these two awards. This changes with each association year, and has been inconsistent over the course of the last seven years.

Additionally, as there are no sponsors signed on to support the Professional Award for 2010, this allows us an opportunity to consider the need for such an award, or the potential for revising it or combining it with the Member Achievement Award to better fit the current issues of importance to the association.

The committee would like to place this award on hiatus for 2010 in order to take more time to discuss the extended future of the award. We will take into account the long history that this award has, and will consider and investigate new, revised, or combined criteria for 2011 or sun-setting this award permanently.

3) Announce Rising Stars and Fellows of SLA at 2010 Leadership Summit

As was reported to the Board of Directors in July we will be changing the schedule for soliciting nominations, announcing, and then promoting the recipients of these awards. We will present the chosen candidates for Fellows and Rising Star awards to the Board in January 2010, and will announce them publicly at Leadership Summit.

Taking feedback from the Fellows into account, and drawing on the very nature of these awards as "leadership and service" awards with an expectation of future service to SLA, it seems more appropriate to announce these awards at the beginning of the year during the Leadership Summit.

Press releases will go out immediately following the Leadership Summit. The recipients will still be asked onstage along with brief video introductions during the Awards Ceremony at Annual Conference. We would like to continue the format used in 2009 of current fellows presenting to new fellows, who then present to the Rising Stars.

We have secured JJ Keller as a sponsor for this award for 2010, and they have also graciously decided to sponsor an additional event at Annual Conference in New Orleans that will feature the 2010 Fellows and Rising Stars as part of a panel or roundtable discussion on a hot topic TBD.

Item for Discussion: It was suggested that there may be an opportunity to create a more formal mentoring structure between fellows and rising stars. The committee would like to hear any thoughts on the value of this type of arrangement so that we can take it under consideration for both 2010 and the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Chair: Rebecca Vargha

Staff Committee Member: Cara Schatz

Committee Members:

Stephen Abram

Tom Rink

Anne Caputo

Susan Fifer Canby