Is Your Meebo Status Set to “Away”? Or Are You Ready for the Thing Called Change?

Wondering about the title? This sign is posted in my library’s telephone reference room. The “Meebo status” refers to a message on an instant message board that shows the user is away from the computer or has stepped out. With all the change happening in our profession now, none of us can afford to be away for any length of time. When I was a reference librarian (in the previous century), we dreamed about having all resources at our fingertips. We spent lots of time running around physically gathering all the “stuff” we needed to provide great reference service. Now we’re there. The key as always with great change is to provide even greater service. That’s my goal and wish for LLAMA in the coming year.

Hi, I’m Gina Millsap, LLAMA president for 2009–10. I’m proud to serve all of you and eager to work with our board, section and committee chairs, and all our colleagues. I’ve just completed making committee appointments and it’s exciting and humbling to connect with and learn more about those of you who volunteer your time and expertise to provide wonderful continuing education and networking opportunities for our members.

We talk a lot about change—how to manage it, lead it, reward those who embrace it, and work with those who don’t. How well do we practice what we preach in our libraries and in our professional association? This year, LLAMA members will have a chance to find out. Think of it this way. Last year we changed our name to include the word leadership. Now we have to demonstrate that leadership.

Here’s the vision from LLAMA’s Strategic Plan: “LLAMA will be the foremost organization developing present and future leaders in library and information services.”

Who owns this vision and who will make it happen? The answer: us! If this is us and what we want to be, we must work together to get there.

For the purposes of our strategy session, we’re re-stating the vision to make it a bit more specific and action-oriented: “LLAMA will position itself to become the go-to division in ALA for leadership education, training, discussion, and best practices.”

And here are the questions we focus on together:

- Why will LLAMA do this?
- What will LLAMA do to achieve this?
- How will LLAMA achieve this?
- Who in LLAMA will help make this happen?

What will the outcomes be? I don’t know, but here’s my hope: What should happen through great discussion and synergy is that we’ll answer a whole other series of questions that relate directly to the goals and objectives in LLAMA’s strategic plan. We have a great plan. It has all the continued on page 160
key elements for success. We just have to figure out how to own it and work on it cohesively and with a shared vision.

Some of those other questions that we need to answer are:

- How do we define and stay focused on what matters most to LLAMA members?
- How do we increase the value of a membership in LLAMA?
- How does LLAMA generate revenues to allow us to provide the kinds of services and continuing education that our members want?
- At the end of the day, how do we know LLAMA is a successful organization?
- What are our performance measures?
- What are the products or deliverables?
- What will we do to grow and strengthen LLAMA through diversity?

- Do we have a good understanding of why members join, why they stay, and how they select a section?
- How do we create that shared vision and resulting action that sections and committees will buy into and help implement?
- What are the issues we should be discussing now and in the future?
- How will we obtain the type of environmental scanning necessary to identify and understand those issues?
- How can we tie our continuing education initiatives to the Certified Public Library Administrator (CPLA) program and other certification programs?
- How do we integrate ALA’s initiatives and priorities into LLAMA’s strategic thinking and initiatives?

I’ll be sharing the results of the strategy session via LLAMA’s website and ALA Connect.

References and Notes

2. Dyan Machan, “Author, Author!” Smart Money 18, no. 7 (July 2009).