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## Leadership Conference Charts Course for Future of SELA

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Let's continue our commitment to cooperation, research and staff development as we make our way back to Tennessee, the location of SELA's first conference held in 1920 at Signal Mountain.

All the best,

Judith Gibbons

## **Leadership Conference Charts Course for Future of SELA**

By Carol S. Brinkman, Director  
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The bi-annual leadership conference of the Southeastern Library Association was held in Decatur, Georgia on May 13, 2004. This conference serves as a training opportunity for incoming leadership - officers and chairs of committees, sections and roundtables - as well as any interested member, including those who might take a leadership position in the future or just want to develop their leadership skills. Additionally, the conference provides an opportunity for networking, discussion of issues important to SELA and librarians in the region, and planning for SELA's future.

For the Executive Board, the conference started early with a meeting on Thursday afternoon. The Board is composed of the association officers and the Executive Secretary; section, roundtable and committee chairs; and state representatives. Three recommendations were passed by the Board:

- Elimination of state association membership dues.
- Sponsorship, in name only, of an advocacy pre-conference at the 2005 Annual ALA Conference.
- Payment by SELA of at least part of the registration fee for Vice-President/President-Elect Faith Line to attend the membership pre-conference at the 2005 Annual ALA Conference as a representative from SELA.

The Leadership Conference started bright and early on Friday May 13<sup>th</sup>, and ended late that afternoon. There were 40 SELA members in attendance with President Judith Gibbons presiding. Reports were given by the officers and the editor of the Association journal, *The Southeastern Librarian*. In the afternoon, committees, sections and roundtables met too begin their work for 2005/2006.

Following the reports, President Judith Gibbons moved the conference into the long range planning phase. Using the 2004 report of the Planning and Development Committee as a basis, participants were asked to focus their thinking on SELA today and in the future, and not get bogged down in what has been done in the past or what is traditional. Judith encouraged everyone to aim high yet keep in mind who our members are and what makes SELA different from other library organizations. Lastly, she cautioned a realistic view as to what SELA can and can not accomplish.

Participants then divided into discussion groups with each group focusing on one of the following areas: training and continuing education, technology and electronic resources, leadership and mentoring, advocacy and assessment, and the future of SELA. The groups were asked to consider what activities the Association might undertake in their assigned area, and to consider the following:

- Is anyone else providing this service/need?
- Is it worth doing?
- Is it an added benefit to SELA members?
- Will it increase SELA membership?
- Is it cost effective for SELA?

Later, the groups gathered to report on their discussions and suggested actions were listed on flipchart paper taped to the walls so that everyone could see and remember all the great ideas - and there many! A vote was taken to identify the actions that participants felt were the most important for SELA to address [see Table 1]. The actions identified as priorities can be divided into three general categories with the area of highest priority being the reorganization and marketing of SELA. Discussion in this area included the need to establish an organizational identity, increase SELA's presence at state conferences, and market the benefits of SELA membership.

The second highest priority was to provide training and mentoring for SELA members. Training was defined as continuing education with practical applications to the workplace, and the development of leadership for the profession and the Association. Communication and partnership with other regional organizations was the area identified as a third, but substantially lower, priority. Regional organizations with which SELA might collaborate include any that share similar goals such as educational associations, museums and historical societies.

Specific Action Areas in Order of Priority:

1. Liaison with Library Schools
2. Update website
3. Marketing/ PR
4. Refocus Committees
5. Expand Leadership Conference
6. Web version of *Southeastern Librarian* with print compilation
7. Practical Training & CE programs
8. Partner/collaborate with Regional Groups
9. Revise State Representatives' job descriptions
10. Organizational Identity
11. Mentor Bank
12. New Member Development
13. Pre-conference with SOLINET
14. Clear Identify for SELA at State Conferences
15. Communicate with other Regional Groups

While committees, sections and roundtables conducted their meetings in the afternoon, those not involved met to continue the planning started by the discussion groups. Based

on the priorities identified earlier and led by Vice-President/President-Elect Faith Line, this group reviewed the committee list and made recommendations to change, combine or eliminate some of the committees. This action was followed by a review and recommendation for changes to the duties of the State Representatives.

The conference ended on a very positive note with renewed enthusiasm for SELA on the part of participants. Coming into the Leadership Conference, there were some who felt that SELA's days were numbered. An unprofitable 2004 conference and a declining membership have placed a financial strain on the Association. However, with the high interest and combined energy of those participating in this conference, planning for a strong future for SELA is well underway. Don't miss out - join in and be a part of the action!

## **FORMAT CHANGE**

Beginning with the Winter 2006 issue, *The Southeastern Librarian* will change its publication format. The winter and summer issues ("newsletter" type issues) will be published in electronic format only. The spring and fall issues ("scholarly" type issues) will continue to be published in print format. This change is being made in order to more wisely utilize SELA finances. Any concerns about this change should be directed to Perry Bratcher, SELn Editor, [bratcher@nku.edu](mailto:bratcher@nku.edu).

## **OUTSTANDING SOUTHEASTERN LIBRARY PROGRAM AWARD CALL FOR NOMINATIONS**

**For the Biennial Meeting with the Tennessee Library Association  
Memphis, TN, April 6-7, 2006**

**Purpose:** To recognize an outstanding program of service in an academic, public, school, or special library in a Southeastern Library Association member state.

**Criteria:**

1. Any academic, public, school, or special library in the member states of the SELA may be cited for an outstanding program of service. Programs of service may include, but are not limited to library activities, projects, or programs.
2. The program of service must take place during the biennium in which the nomination is made.
3. The minimum time span for a nominated library program must not be less than three months, including the development and evaluation stages of the program.
4. The person making the nomination must be a member of SELA.
5. Nomination applications for the award should include the following information:
  - SELA member's name
  - Library's name, address, telephone number
  - Beginning and ending dates of the program
  - Narrative statement describing the program
    - goals and steps to achieve the goals
    - special contribution of the program/project