Communications Committee Policy and Procedures Manual

Communications Committee members serve 2 years, as does the Chair. The committee will at all times have a member from each state represented in the Southern Chapter. Ex Officio members of the committee include: Newsletter Editors, Membership Committee Chair, Website Administrators, Membership Database Manager, and Discussion List Moderator.

Committee Objectives
1. To communicate information concerning the Chapter to its members and other interested individuals.
2. To communicate information selectively about MLA and its Chapters and Sections, and other items of professional interest.
3. To determine the topics or items to be included in each issue of Southern Expressions.
4. To create a record of Chapter activities.
5. To establish publication dates and reporting deadlines for Southern Expressions.
6. To pass on governmental information through an annually designated committee member.
7. To carry out any other charges that the Executive Committee deems appropriate.

Newsletter
The newsletter, Southern Expressions, shall be the established communication mechanism for the Southern Chapter/MLA. There will be at least four issues per year.

Editor
The Editor is appointed by the Executive Committee for an indefinite term, renewable from year to year. The Editor is responsible for preparing and distributing Southern Expressions within the policies, guidelines, and budget established by the Executive Committee, with input from the Communications Committee. The Editor is a member of the Executive Committee.

An Assistant Editor may be appointed by the Executive Committee upon request of the Editor. The Assistant Editor will aid and advise the Editor in her/his duties. The Assistant Editor will represent the Editor when necessary.

Governmental Liaison to MLA
A member of the communications committee or the chair will serve as governmental Liaison to MLA. They will serve for one year and the term can be renewed for as long as they serve on the Communications committee. The Liaison will be added to the MLA Governmental Liaison listserv and will pass on information of import to the chapter that they receive on the list.

Electronic Discussion Group Moderator - SOCHAP-L@LISTSERV.UA.EDU
The Electronic Discussion Group Moderator is appointed by the Executive Committee for an indefinite term, renewable from year to year. He/she is responsible for moderating and maintaining the chapter Electronic Discussion Group.

Web Site Coordinator - www.scmla.org/home/
The Web Site Coordinator is appointed by the Executive Committee for an indefinite term, renewable from year to year. The Web Site Coordinator is responsible for editing and updating the Chapter web site, with input from the Communications Committee.

An Assistant Web Site Coordinator may be appointed by the Executive Committee upon request of the Executive Committee.
request of the Web Site Coordinator. The Assistant Web Site Coordinator will aid and advise the Web Site Coordinator in her/his duties. The Assistant Web Site Coordinator will represent the Web Site Coordinator when necessary.

**Communications Committee Members**

Members of the committee consist of the Chair, Southern Expressions Editor, Southern Expressions Assistant Editor, Web Site Coordinator, Electronic Discussion Group Moderator, and a representative from each state. The Communications Committee advises the Editor, Web Site Coordinator and Electronic Discussion Group Moderator in matters related to all means of communication. They are appointed for two years.

State representative members solicit or contribute articles, columns, or news items about institutions, events, and people within their state. Committee liaison members report information concerning their committee.

The Chair governs the committee and identifies relevant issues. The Chair reviews the Communications Committee Manual annually and makes changes when appropriate. The Chair is a member of the Executive Committee and is appointed for a two year term.

**Southern Expressions**

**Reporters**

Reporters are those who have officially expressed interest in reporting information for the newsletter, but are not members of the Communications Committee. They report information to the Editor within the publication deadlines of Southern Expressions.

**Southern Expressions Content**

Regular Features (generally in this order)

1. Message from the chair--each issue
2. Chapter Information page--each issue; current listing of officers, committee chairs, and their addresses; also the masthead with the publishing information should appear on this page.
   a. Statements and opinions expressed in Southern Expressions do not necessarily represent the official position of its editor or the Southern Chapter of the Medical Library Association. Contributions may be edited for brevity, clarity, or conformity to style. Final decisions on the content of Southern Expressions shall be left to the discretion of the Editor with the advice of the Communications Committee of the Southern Chapter/Medical Library Association.
3. Chapter Council News - each issue; report from the Chapter Council Representative
4. Committee Reports - if committees have been active since the last issue, the chair of the Committee should submit a report
5. Annual Meeting Announcement - if the issue precedes the annual meeting, Conference chair (or designate) should write an article
6. Annual Meeting Report - if the issue follows the annual meeting, Past Chair and/or Conference chair (or designate) should write a report
7. Chapter News - as reported
8. Research Spotlight - submitted by the Research Committee, this section highlights a SC/MLA member for their research accomplishments or reports on research opportunities available.
9. Coming Up - meetings, CE opportunities
10. Around the South - reports about new services, special programs, etc. at places within Chapter boundaries
11. Regional and MLA news
12. Personal - information about Chapter members, generally: a) appointments, b) presentations, publications, professional activities, c) obituaries, d) kudos, e) attaining AHIP membership

Note: See also the attached list from Strategic Plan which mentions action items to be communicated through Southern Expressions

**Southern Expressions Format**
Format (such as font, number of columns, margins, etc.) is largely left to the discretion of the Editor; however, consistency throughout the issue and between issues in a single volume should be maintained as much possible. Major design changes to the logo and title area should be instituted at a volume change or after consultation with the Communication Committee.

**Volume Designations:**
- One volume per year. 1998 is Volume 14.
- Issues are designated as: Winter issue 1; Spring issue 2; Summer issue 3; and Fall issue 4.
- Length: Generally, between 8 and 20 pages.
- Format: Southern Expressions may be published in print and/or electronic, at the discretion of the Executive Committee. *Electronic only publication began with volume 21, 2005*

**Procedures & Tips for Preparing Southern Expressions**

**Notification of Reporters**
- Approximately four weeks prior to the reporter’s deadline, send out an e-mail message to the membership via the SOCHAP-L electronic discussion group to invite submissions and notify them of the deadline and other pertinent information. The message will include a list of Communications Committee members so that Southern Chapter members may submit items to the committee representative from their state. Another message will be sent one week prior to the deadline as well.
- Respond to each email submission to confirm it has been received.

**Standard Deadline Schedule:**

**Winter Issue:** Submissions: December 15 | Mailing: January 15
Special Features: SC/MLA highlights, Call for Papers for next SC/MLA.

**Spring Issue:** Submissions: March 15 | Mailing: April 15
Special Features:

**Summer Issue:** Submissions: June 15 | Mailing: July 15
Special Features: MLA highlights, Invitation to SC/MLA meeting

**Fall Issue:** Submissions: August 15 | Mailing: September 15
Special Features: Last reminder of annual meeting

**Submissions**
- News items should be composed in Word documents.
- Images or graphics should be submitted in .JPG or .tiff format in separate files.
Creating the Newsletter

- Make volume, issue, and date changes on master pages
- Check the Chapter Information page (Officers, Committee chairs, etc.) for updates to names and addresses and make corrections. Place stories in order indicated under Content.
- Check after each section (Chapter News, Around the South, etc.) To be sure all stories are included.
- Proofread, proofread, proofread!

Reporting to the Executive Committee & Membership

- The Editors are placed on the agenda at the executive board meetings, which are generally held thrice annually (two at the SC/MLA annual meeting and one at the MLA annual meeting.) A report should be prepared annually for the first board meeting at the SC/MLA meeting outlining the activities incurred by the newsletter over the past year.
- The Editor is also placed on the agenda at the SC/MLA annual business meeting. An abbreviated report of activities, a call for participation, etc. may be given here.
- Archives: Print Issues of Southern Expressions are in the official SC/MLA archives at Emory. The Editor also needs to maintain an archive. The online archive exists on the Southern Chapter website.

Electronic Discussion Group, SOCHAP-L, Procedures

History

SOCHAP-L was begun in January 1996 as a communication vehicle for members of the Southern Chapter of the Medical Library Association, whose members reside in Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, South Carolina, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The list is used for the dissemination of news and the discussion of business and issues related specifically to the Southern Chapter. This list is not intended to serve as a forum for the discussion of general medical librarianship issues such as those addressed on MEDLIB-L.

SOCHAP-L was originally housed on the UA1VM server at the University of Alabama (UA) but was moved to the BAMA server, also at UA, in 1998. Martha (Tillotson) Cook served as the list owner from its beginning until Fall 2000, when Nelle Williams at UA took over. The original list address was SOCHAP-L@UA1VM. The current address is: SOCHAP-L@LISTSERV.UA.EDU for postings and commands should be sent to listserv@bama.ua.edu. Information on use of LISTSERV software is found on the LISTSERV home page “Welcome to LISTSERV!” at http://bama.ua.edu/cgi-bin/wa. Management functions for list owners are performed through the Mailing List Management Interface link on that page. There are also links to the online mailing list archives and online documentation.

List Parameters

A group of list header keywords determine how the list operates. The SC/MLA Executive Board decided on the following list control keywords which were assigned to SOCHAP-L:

Attachments= No To prevent the spread of viruses, in June 2000 the UA computer center implemented security measures to reject attachments sent to the list. At the same time the computer center also limited the length of messages to 500 lines to prevent server overload.
Review= Private  This is a private list. Only the list owner may review the names and network addresses of those subscribed to the list.

Subscription= Closed  Users are not allowed to subscribe automatically. Their subscription requests are not forwarded to the list owner. Subscribers are added upon joining the Chapter or by request to the list owner when there is an address change.

Send= Private  Only those who are subscribed to the list can send mail to the list.

Reply to= List,Respect  If there is no “Reply to:” tag specified in the sender’s message, replies go to the list. If there is a “Reply to:” in the sender’s message, it is kept.

Confidential= Yes  The list is hidden from users and will not be displayed to users on the “List” command output.

Stats= Normal,Owner  Statistics are to be maintained for the list and may be retrieved only by the owner.

Notebook= Yes,/util/listserv/notebook/sochap-l,Monthly,Private  An automatic log of every piece of mail sent to the list is kept in a monthly “notebook” file which may only be a viewed by users subscribed to the list.

Errors-to= Owner  All rejection mail for the list is sent to the list owner.

Auto-delete= Yes,Full-auto  After a certain number of rejections, the listserv software automatically deletes users whose accounts have expired or whose systems have permanently disconnected.

Owner=nwilliam@cchs.ua.edu Nelle Williams  Nelle Williams is the list owner and receives all communication from the server related to the list (error messages, computer center communication, etc.) She can perform all functions allowed for list owners.

Responsibilities of the List Owner
1. Serve as an ex officio member of the Communications Committee and the Executive Board of Southern Chapter.
2. Work with the Membership Database Manager to add all new members to the list when they join the Chapter. Delete those who are no longer members upon notification from the Membership Database Manager.
3. Update e-mail addresses using information provided by the Membership Database Manager and individual members. Inform Membership Database Manager of changes
reported by members.
4. Receive and respond to questions directed to the SOCHAP-L listserv owner. Assist and educate subscribers in the use of listserv commands. Screen all messages that come in regarding subscriptions, requests for deletion from the list, and e-mail address changes, and take appropriate action.
5. Periodically check error messages to determine address corrections and deletions that need to be made. At the annual business meeting, present a list of e-mail addresses that have repeatedly caused error messages, and request assistance from the membership in resolving the problems.
6. Work with members who are having difficulty posting to the list because of address problems.
7. Post messages to the list for non-subscribers in cases where there is information of interest to Chapter members.
8. Remind subscribers of policies set for the list to maintain focus. Post reminders about misuse or abuse of the list when necessary--e.g., inadvertently replying to the list instead of to an individual.
9. Submit an annual report to the Chair of the Communications Committee prior to the annual meeting. Include information about number of subscribers, percentage of membership subscribed, amount of list activity, and any changes or problems encountered. (List statistics are available through the listserv software.)
10. Work with the Executive Board to address new issues as they arise and develop appropriate policies for handling these issues in the future.

**Content and Use Policies**

1. SOCHAP-L was originated as a communication tool for the dissemination of news and the discussion of business and issues related specifically to the Southern Chapter. This list is not intended to serve as a forum for the discussion of general medical librarianship issues such as those addressed on MEDLIB-L. The Executive Board made this decision in order to avoid overburdening Chapter members with messages and thus causing them to remove themselves from the list.
2. SOCHAP-L is not intended to be used for advertising purposes, unless such information is approved by the list owner and/or the Executive Board. If the list owner is unsure about a request for posting, the question should be should be referred to the Executive Board, either at a meeting or through the SCEXEC discussion list.
3. The e-mail address list of subscribers to SOCHAP-L shall not be distributed to any individual or group without the consent of the Executive Board.

**Webpage Procedures**

**The Website Coordinator:**

- Works with the Executive Committee and other members of the SC/MLA to update the website
- Determines which submissions are appropriate for the web page, consulting with the SC/MLA Chair and/or the Communications Committee, when needed
- Follows procedure to update the web page in a timely manner
- Works with the Chair of the Communications Committee on policies and issues related to the
web page.

Communications Committee information written/modified by Pat Higginbottom; updated by Judy Burnham Southern Expressions information written/modified by Martha Verchot; updated by Clista Clanton SOCHAP-L information written by Nelle Williams
Web Site Coordinator information updated by Taneya Koonce
Revision: 30 March 1998
Revised August 2004
Revised January 2015 by Lindsay Blake
Recommended Actions for the Communications Committee
as stated in the SC/MLA Strategic Plan (1989/90; revised 10/97)
(Timetable for each action is noted in parentheses)

1.A.1.f Report on implementation strategies for Platform for Change recommendations in
Southern Expressions, such as how to design a personal professional growth plan, with examples.
(ANNUALLY)

1.A.1.h Identify and spotlight in Southern Expressions professional development courses
offered on the local level that proved to be valuable opportunities for addressing Platform for
Change initiatives. (ONGOING)

1.A.3.a Publish calendar of education opportunities in Southern Expressions. (ONGOING)

1.A.9.a Encourage and promote Southern Chapter members’ participation in the MLA Journal
Club (including new guidelines as they are finalized) and self-study opportunities. (ONGOING)


1.B.1.a Continue routine communication of MLA and MLA chapters/sections educational
activities to Southern Chapter members. (ONGOING)

1.B.3.a Continue timely notification of education/professional development programming
by health related organizations in the southeast through Southern Expressions or other
means. (ONGOING)

1.C.4.b Continue to report in Southern Expressions column on items from Chapter Council and
MLA Board of Directors meetings. (ONGOING)


2.A.3.b Encourage individual investigators within the chapter by:

2.A.3.b.1 Spotlighting a research project of a Southern Chapter member in every issue of
Southern Expressions. (ONGOING)

2.A.3.b.2 Advertising the SC/MLA Research Award in Southern Expressions and in state
association Newsletters. (ANNUALLY)

2.A.5.a Provide opportunities for presenting research results at the annual Southern
Chapter meeting and in Southern Expressions. (ONGOING)

3.A.2.a Continue to publish such (new library technologies) articles. (ONGOING)

A.03.a Publish the reports of officers and committees, at least annually, in Southern Expressions,
on SoChap-L (Listserv) and on the web. (ONGOING)

A.06.a Continue to present Chapter Council activities at chapter meetings, in Southern
Expressions, SoChap-L (Listserv) and on the web. (ONGOING)
B.01.a Publish newsletter at least three times, preferably four times, per year, incorporating photos when possible. (ANNUALLY)

B.01.b Monitor costs of Southern Expressions and Southern Chapter=s ability to support. (ANNUALLY)

B.01.c Review/revise Southern Expressions policies and guidelines. (ANNUALLY)

B.01.d Begin planning to offer Southern Expressions in electronic format. (1997)

B.02.a Continue to publish annual membership list with addresses, telephone numbers, Southern Chapter by-laws, officer history, strategic plan, committee rosters, annual report to MLA, etc. (ONGOING - in June each year with an update in December to reflect annual meeting actions.)

B.03.b Maintain and promote Southern Chapter Listserv and web page. (ONGOING)

B.05.a Publish a summary of the annual meeting evaluations in Southern Expressions to make members aware of the evaluation process and its importance. (ONGOING)

C.07.a Publish honors and awards criteria and guidelines in Southern Expressions. (ONGOING)

C.08.c Encourage SC/MLA members to invite students to their libraries and to join the chapter. (ONGOING)

C.09.a Publish a list of new members in Southern Expressions. (ONGOING)

C.10.a Publish acknowledgments of retiring members in Southern Expressions. (ONGOING)

C.11.b Recognize in Southern Expressions and at the annual Southern Chapter business meeting. Southern Chapter members who have been so honored. (ONGOING)

C.14.a Publicize criteria for consideration by Executive Board. (1997)

C.15.a List committee memberships in the Southern Expressions issue published after the annual meeting. (ONGOING) C.16.a Solicit and publicize member achievements in Southern Expressions. (ONGOING)

C.18.a Publish criteria for the Hospital Librarian of the Year Award. (ONGOING)
Sample Communications Committee Annual Report

Communications Committee
Southern Chapter/Medical Library Association
Annual Report
October 1997

Committee Membership

Members of the committee for 1996-1997 are listed on the web page. New members will need to be selected for Florida and Tennessee. The Executive Board needs to consider adding the SC/MLA Webmaster and Listserv moderator as Ex Officio members of the Communications Committee.

Southern Expressions

As the new editor Martha Verchot has published three issues of our newsletter. Reporting schedule is back on track.

Chapter Listserv

As of October 6, 1997, there were 303 subscribers on SOCHAP-L. From February 15, 1996, until October 6, 1997, (599 days), there were 126 postings to the list.

Chapter Web Page

The SC/MLA web page is available at http://www.uab.edu/lister/scmla

Added this year were:

$ committee charges and members
$ bylaws
$ strategic plan
$ membership information and form
$ annual meeting information
$ grants and award information
$ chapter history

New Chapter Logo
The committee is currently working on developing a new logo for the chapter. Suggested logos can be viewed at http://www.uab.edu/lister/scmla/logo.htm

Submitted by
Patricia Higginbottom, Chair
October 15, 1997
Committee Membership
All of the openings on the committee have been filled. A list of members is available on the web page.

Southern Expressions
The editor of the newsletter has changed from Jane Bridges to Martha Verchot. Martha has published her first issue.
I’d like to thank Jane for all her hard work and thank Martha for taking over the job. Deadlines for the rest of the year are:

Volume 13, Number 3
June 15, 1997 reporting deadline
July 15, 1997 mailing date

Volume 13, Number 4
Aug 15, 1997 reporting deadline
Sept 15, 1997 mailing date

Volume 14, Number 1
Dec 15, 1997 reporting deadline
Jan 15, 1998 mailing date

Chapter Listserv
The Chapter listserv, SOCHAP-L, has 269 members. Since February 15, 1996 (453 days) we have had 94 postings. (Statistics as of May 13)

Chapter Web Page
The web page has been updated with current information regarding committees, (their members and charges.)
URLs for Libraries are being added as received. Future projects include adding forms for membership, research and awards. Also information about the history of the chapter will be added when it is ready. Information is requested from other committee chairs to publish on the web.

Submitted by
Patricia Higginbottom, Chair
May 26, 1997