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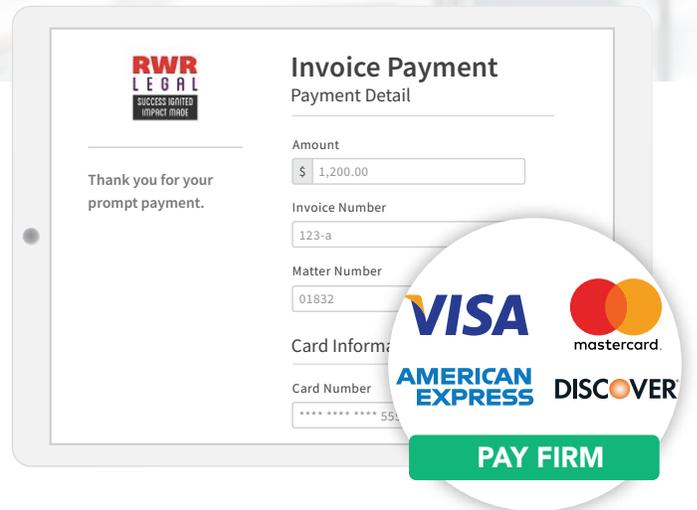
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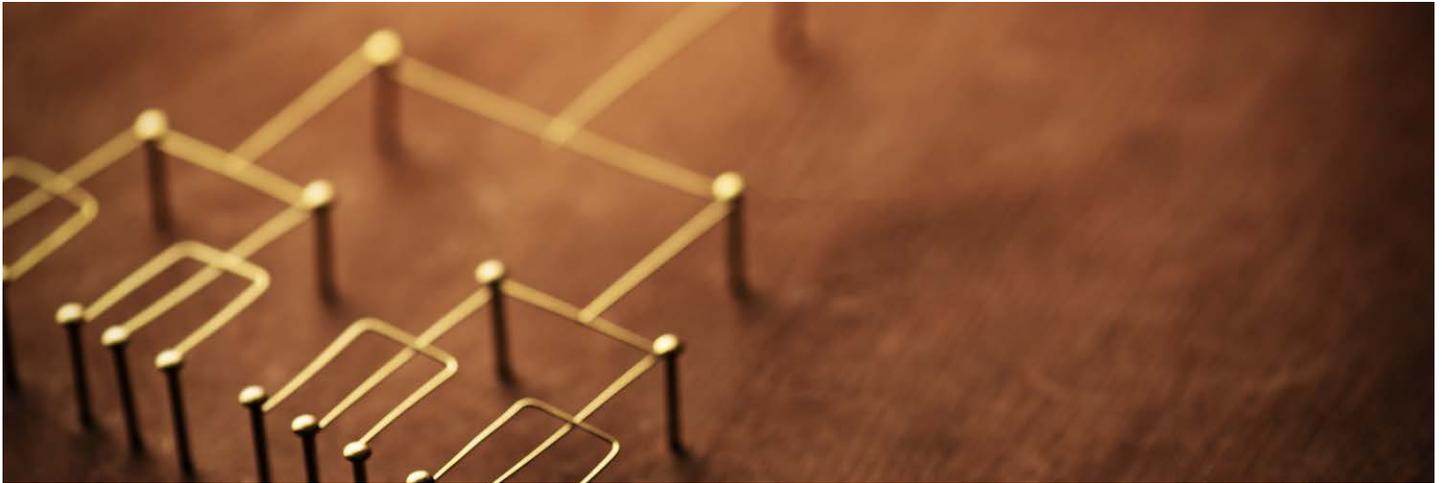
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OLIVER YANDLE, JD, CAE
Executive Director, Association of
Legal Administrators

Realigning Our Structure: An Inside Look at the Proposed Bylaw Changes

Note: This article contains links to the FAQs and the redlined version of the bylaws. Visit the web version of this article to access them directly.

As you have probably heard by now, the ALA Board of Directors has been examining our governance structure over the last several months to ensure it is meeting our current and future needs. And in keeping with this column, it's a pretty Big Idea!

“

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Given the accelerated change in the industry, the increasing expectations of our members and the critical role of chapters in ALA, we need the best Board and chapter support structure possible. Our current governance structure — a Board composed of regional and at-large directors and regional teams supporting chapters — has been in place for some time and has served us reasonably well. But we recognize that our governance structure has not been in step with the changing needs of the Association and its members.

We are excited to share that ALA's Board of Directors has unanimously approved a proposed bylaw amendment to change the organization's governance structure. We believe this new structure will align our Association with a stronger focus on organizational strategy, increased volunteer opportunities and dedicated chapter support.

This proposal is removing barriers and opening doors as follows:

- **Provide a stronger focus on organizational strategy by eliminating the regional structure of the Association.** This change, if approved by the membership, will allow the Board to focus on the strategic matters of the Association rather than management and oversight of regional and chapter affairs.
- **Increase volunteer opportunities and better meet the needs of the Association by electing all directors at large.** The Board of Directors will be composed of

nine (9) directors from the membership at large, not designated by region, and three (3) Executive Committee members (President-Elect, President and Immediate Past President). The overall size of the Board will not change; this modification will open the door for volunteer opportunities to those who currently do not qualify solely because of their geographical location. This would apply to Board service, the Nominating Committee and chapter support opportunities.

- **Redefine the roles of regional representatives by creating an Association Chapter Resource Team, led by the Immediate Past President.** The creation of the Chapter Resource Team provides a focused resource for chapters in need of guidance or assistance, while maintaining a link to the Board of Directors.

WHY THE CHANGE?

The primary rationale for the existence of the regional structure was to facilitate communications and provide localized chapter support in a time without email and the internet. Today, technology allows for instantaneous communication anywhere around the world. Our membership is not distributed evenly across North America: 46 percent of our members are located east of the Mississippi River, and more than 1,800 are not affiliated with a chapter. In addition, the needs of our chapters vary greatly, but our regional structure does little to take those needs into account. There have been situations in which we could not consider quality Board and regional representative candidates because of regional restraints.

Eliminating the regional construct will enable ALA to select leaders with the specific skills, knowledge and expertise

necessary at that particular time. A Chapter Resource Team, composed of experienced chapter leaders with skills specific to our chapters' needs, will be a better and more effective use of our human capital. The Chapter Resource Team will be able to provide more substantive direction and support for chapters in the areas they need it.

THE PROCESS

Under ALA's bylaws (amended and restated in March 2017), the governance changes being proposed require a bylaws amendment. All regular members of the Association are entitled to vote. A secure, electronic ballot was distributed to all regular members on February 4, 2019. Voting will remain open until midnight Central Standard Time on February 24, 2019. Regular members may only vote once and may not change their ballot once cast. Results of the vote will be announced to the membership on February 28, 2019.

WHAT DO I DO NOW?

Please review the redlined version of the bylaws and the FAQs to familiarize yourself with the changes and the reasons behind the proposed amendments. And please share your comments and questions or request more information by directing a message to BoardOfDirectors@alanet.org.

We look forward to your feedback and working together to Align ALA! ■



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The graphic features a circular diagram with five colored segments: ANALYZE (green), DEFINE (blue), MEASURE (teal), IMPROVE (orange), and CONTROL (red). In the center is a map of Texas with a star and the text '2019 ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXPO'. To the right, the text reads: 'Get Your Yellow Belt in Legal Lean Sigma®', 'Attending the 2019 ALA Annual Conference & Expo in Grapevine, Texas? In the market for legal project management (LPM) certification? ALA is hosting a two-day Legal Lean Sigma workshop immediately after #ALAConf19 adjourns – so you can attend both or just the one.' At the bottom left is the ALA logo (Association of Legal Administrators). At the bottom right is a star icon and the URL alanet.org/yellowbelt.