

PARAPROFESSIONAL ROUND TABLE (PART) HANDBOOK

Revised 2015
Laura Poe, Chair

DEFINITION

Paraprofessionals are high-level library support personnel. They perform tasks and have responsibilities utilizing knowledge of library techniques and procedures. The term ‘paraprofessional’ may refer to any library support personnel who perform their duties in a professional manner.

ARTICLE I. NAME

Paraprofessional Round Table hereafter referred to as PART is an organization of library employees dedicated to encouraging the interchange of ideas among support personnel and professional library staff members as well as to promote the development of library service within the State of Alabama.

ARTICLE II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Section 1. GOALS

- a. Encourage membership in and orientation to professional library organizations.
- b. Encourage the interchange of ideas among support personnel and professional library staff members.
- c. Promote the development of library services and librarianship in the state of Alabama.
- d. Enhance continuous education development through the mode of workshops.

Section 2. OBJECTIVES

- a. Act as a clearinghouse for information on topics and issues of concern to paraprofessionals.
- b. Act as a forum for sponsoring workshops, seminars and the exchange of ideas and information.
- c. Act as a means for paraprofessionals to meet with colleagues of the same or similar career level and areas of interest.

- d. Act as an avenue for library support personnel to acquire continuing education credits through attending workshops.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Alabama Library Association, Inc. is required.

- a. An individual's term of membership shall be set by the Association. The Association's membership year is from January 1 to December 31 of the following year.
- b. Each member is encouraged to attend the annual business meeting during the convention and/or all quarterly executive committee meetings. Members in good standing have the right to vote in the general election.

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS

Section 1. Responsibilities

The Executive Committee of PART has the responsibility of conducting business of the Round Table as well as informing the membership of its official acts.

- a. The voting members of the Committee shall be composed of the following: Moderator, Moderator-Elect, Secretary, Northern Member-at-Large and Southern Member-at-Large.
- b. The immediate past President is a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Committee.

Section 2. Meetings

The Executive Committee shall meet quarterly.

- a. The Committee shall act for the Round Table in the intervals between meetings, subject to the approval of the membership at the next business meeting.
- b. A majority of the five voting members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Executive Committee.

Section 3. DUTIES

Subsection 1. Moderator

- a. Directs and coordinates the business and other activities of the Alabama Library Association's (ALLA) Paraprofessional Round Table (PART). Seeks means to comply with the ALLA's goals.
- b. Presides over all Executive Committee meetings and the annual business meeting at the Association's convention.
- c. Prepares an annual calendar of events and authorize budgets and disbursements after discussion with Executive Committee members and committee members. Plans will be approved by a simple majority vote of a quorum of Executive Committee members.
- d. Requests from the Moderator-Elect a list of all working members, (officers and committee members) and then sends this list to the ALLA President and Association Administrator as soon as possible after the annual convention.
- e. Attends Association Executive Council meetings as the representative of PART when necessary or required. Submits quarterly minutes to the ALLA Secretary. Present plans of proposed workshops and seminars for Council's approval then submits progress reports to the ALLA Executive Council, as well as written reports to the Association Administrator.

- f. Gives direct assistance and guidance to the different Committees, assisting in planning activities.
- g. Keeps all files and records in order. At the end of the term, presents all correspondence and transactions to the ALLA Archives.
- h. At the end of the term, prepares an annual report with any comments or recommendations for the Executive Committee and committees, their successor, and the Executive Council. Submit a copy to the ALLA Association Administrator and to the Editor of the Alabama Librarian for publication.
- i. Presents to the Executive Committee names of candidates to fill any vacancy that occurs during the term. Approval of candidates will be by a majority vote of the quorum.
- j. Financial Responsibilities:**
 - 1. The Moderator will be directed by the Association Administrator of the Association through the Executive Council meetings regarding financial standing of the Association, thereby guiding the Moderator in requests for monies.
 - 2. Requests for yearly budgeted funds should be turned in to the Chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee of the Association before the Budget Committee's first meeting of the new year (which may be prior to the first meeting of the Executive Council. These requests should cover incidental expenses anticipated during the year, such as postage and photocopying. Requests for funds for workshops, seminars, etc. should be made directly to the Association's Association Administrator. It is generally considered that all Round Table sponsored workshops shall be self-supporting.
 - 3. A letter or form describing the use of requested funds sent to the Budget and Finance Committee prior to their first meeting will facilitate budget requests. Each item in the budget request should be listed and described in detail, with requested amount of money listed for each. Also, attendance at the Budget and Finance Committee's first meeting

of the new year to answer possible questions is strongly suggested, if permission is given by the chairman to attend this meeting.

4. A general rule to follow is that a yearly budget request may be made for at least as much as income generated from PART membership dues, but is not limited to that amount.
5. Requests for payment from budgeted funds of the Round Table must be approved by the Moderator and then submitted to the Association's Association Administrator for payment.
6. All requests for payment should be submitted by the end of the annual convention to insure that they are paid out of the current year's budgeted funds. If they are not paid before the current fiscal year ends, they will be carried over and the PART budget will begin with a deficit.
7. A separate budget request for convention expenses should be submitted to the Convention Chairperson before the first quarterly meeting of the ALLA Executive Council and Convention Planning Committee (see Convention Responsibilities).

k. Convention Responsibilities

1. Moderator will have the option of planning the Convention program or appointing an ad hoc committee to formulate convention plans. Any planning should begin as soon as possible and should cover the following:
 2. Type of program: pre-conference, general session, reception, etc.
 3. Suggestions for speakers, themes, audience appeal, etc.
 4. Tentative expenses should be gathered before the first quarterly Executive Committee meeting so that a convention budget can be submitted to the Convention Committee.
 5. Time slots. It is recommended that joint programming with other Round Tables or divisions be utilized.
 6. Convention Chairman should submit a budget request to the Association Convention Chairman. This budget request should detail estimated expenditures for speaker honorarium, printing, telephone,

postage, etc. The Convention Chairman will need this information before the Round Table can make definite plans, so general planning and an estimated budget must be made. In the event the program is not adequately funded, the convention planner will have to renegotiate plans that have been made in order to function within the proposed budget.

7. Submits receipts for reimbursement to the Association's Convention Chairman prior to or at the close of the Convention.

Subsection 2. Past Moderator's Responsibilities:

- a. Attends Executive Committee meetings as a non-voting member.
- b. Serves as a consultant for the Executive Committee.
- c. Acts as parliamentarian for all Executive Committee meetings.

Subsection 3. Moderator-Elect

a. General Responsibilities:

1. Attends all PART Executive Committee meetings as a voting member.
2. Presides over PART's Executive Committee meetings and/or the annual business meeting at the ALLA's annual convention in the absence of the Moderator.
3. Attends Association Executive Council meetings, and represents PART in the Moderator's absence.
4. Appoints committees and their chairpersons to serve during their tenure as Moderator. These appointees will be presented during the first Executive Committee meeting following the annual business meeting held during Convention.
5. Keeps copies of all correspondence in a file with other pertinent records of the office of Moderator-Elect and submits file to the Moderator for permanent recordkeeping.
6. Helps plan all PART's activities, working closely with the different committees and PART's Executive Committee.

7. Promotes the growth of the membership by developing membership brochures, submitting articles for the Alabama Librarian, and developing promotional ideas to increase membership in PART.
8. Prepares a report with comments or recommendations for their successor to PART's Executive Committee.

Financial Responsibilities:

1. Becomes familiar with financial responsibilities of the current Moderator.
2. Begins planning PART's budget for their term as Moderator.

Convention Responsibilities:

1. Works with the current Moderator in planning for the annual convention. This may include chairing the Convention Planning Committee during their second term as Moderator-Elect.

Subsection 4. SECRETARY

General Responsibilities:

1. Attends all Executive Committee meetings as a voting member.
2. Records the minutes of all meetings and reads those of the previous meeting.
 - a. Minutes should be typed and mailed to all Executive Committee Members and committee chairmen within two weeks following the meeting.
3. Types and mails, if necessary, all PART's business correspondence.
4. Maintains files of all records of PART's business. This includes minutes, correspondence to and from the Round Table and records of all workshops, seminars or programs sponsored by PART.

5. Submits all files to the Moderator for permanent record keeping at the end of the current term.

Subsection 5. MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Responsibilities:

1. Attend PART's Executive Committee meetings as voting members.
2. Represent paraprofessionals in their respective regions. Regions North and South are divided by 33 degrees latitude.
3. As regional representatives, communicate with PART members and potential members. Answer questions concerning PART and act as liaisons with the Executive Committee.
4. Assist the Moderator-Elect in obtaining information about paraprofessionals in their region and help with publicity of special events.
5. Submit to PART's Editor any news or articles about or from paraprofessionals in their region.
6. Assist the chairman of the Convention Planning Committee or any other special events chairman with arrangements when a workshop, convention, seminar, etc., is held in their region.
7. Keep a file of all correspondence and activities. At the end of the term, submit an annual report to the Executive Committee.

Subsection 6. EDITOR

General Responsibilities:

1. Attends all meetings of PART's Executive Committee and Editorial Committee.
2. Works in close association with ALLA publication editor PART's Executive Committee.

3. Composes, edits, and types PART's news, mailing it to the ALLA publication editors before each issue's deadline.
4. Communicates with members-at-large to gather news from other professional sources that would be of interest to all library paraprofessionals.
5. Keeps a file of ALLA publication issues, as well as copies of each item submitted.
6. Keeps a correspondence file and submits it to the Moderator at the end of the term.
7. At the end of the term, submits to the Executive Committee a brief summary of their activities, with any suggestions and recommendations for their successor or the Executive Committee.

Subsection 7. SPECIAL EVENTS CHAIRMAN

General Responsibilities:

1. Assists Moderator with plans for special events such as workshops, seminars or convention programs. Some of the duties include:
 - a. Plans themes.
 - b. Contacts speakers to arrange for their travel, lodging, honorarium, etc.
 - c. Prepares a draft of the financial needs for the planned special event.
 - d. Coordinates publicity with PART's Editor.
 - e. Makes sure facilities are set up before functions and are cleaned up afterwards.
 - f. Keeps records of all functions and presents an analysis of the events to the Executive Committee within two weeks following the events.

2. At the end of the term, submits a brief annual report to the Executive Committee outlining all activities. Included in this report should be any suggestions and recommendations for the successor or the Executive Committee.

Subsection 8. HANDBOOK/ BYLAWS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

General Responsibilities:

1. Attends all Executive Committee meetings.
2. Maintains a current master copy of PART's by-laws and handbook.
3. Solicits suggestions from officers and members of the Executive Committee regarding needed additions or revisions of the Handbook.
4. Revises handbook as needed.
5. At the end of the term, submits a brief annual report to the Executive Committee outlining all activities. Included in this report should be any suggestions and recommendations for their successor or the Executive Committee.

Subsection 9. NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

General Responsibilities:

1. Attends all Executive Committee meetings.
2. Seeks recommendations for nominations of qualified persons from the membership for the offices of Moderator, Moderator-Elect, Secretary, Northern and Southern Members-at-Large.
3. Candidates should be selected on the basis of ability, efficiency, and leadership qualities.
4. The names of qualified candidates should be presented to the Executive Committee by the December quarterly meeting in order to appear on the ALLA's ballot.
5. Names not selected should be given to the following Nominating Committee Chairman for future use.
6. At the end of the term, submits a brief report of all activities. Included in the report should be any suggestions or recommendations for their successor or the Executive Committee.

Subsection 10. AWARDS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

General Responsibilities:

1. Solicits and selects recipients for the following categories:
 - a. Cash Grant Award: awarded to a member of the Paraprofessional Round Table who has made significant contributions to libraries or librarianship through activities, publications or whose activities have proven to be a creditable gain for the library profession.
 - b. Commitment to Excellence: awarded to recognize the contributions of a person or persons outside the paraprofessional ranks who have encouraged the growth of library paraprofessionals across the State of Alabama or within a specific library.
2. Sets deadline for nomination forms to be completed and returned.
3. Presents names to the Moderator at the last quarterly Executive Committee meeting prior to the annual ALLA convention.
4. Prior to the convention, informs award winners and extends an invitation to them to the annual business meeting for the presentation. Orders plaques and certificates.
5. Submits all records regarding nominations and election of award winners to the Moderator.
6. At the end of the term, submits a brief report on all activities. Included in this report should be suggestions or recommendations for their successor or the Executive Committee.

PART'S HISTORY¹

The very acronym of this Round Table symbolized support personnel as an integral part of the library team. The formation of such Round Tables throughout the U.S. is due to the efforts of many library personnel, improving communication and strengthening unity in this profession. Interest for Alabama's Paraprofessional Round Table got off the ground in late 1976 through the vision and efforts of Ms. Nancy Rogers, the Head Librarian at Samford University's School of Nursing, and two hard working paraprofessionals, Ginney Becker and Anne Hallmark, both of Mervyn Sterne Library, UAB. There was much support from librarians and library staff in the Birmingham area that such a combined group could serve as:

1. A clearing-house for information on topics and issues of concern to paraprofessionals;
2. A forum for sponsoring workshops, seminars and the exchange of ideas and information;
3. A means for paraprofessionals to socialize with colleagues of the same or similar career levels and areas of interests;
4. An avenue for library support personnel to acquire continuing education credits.

In winter 1976, Mervyn Sterne Library was the base of activity. Many letters were sent to librarians seeking support for such a group and sending personnel to a seminar. Due both to interest and proper groundwork, the first seminar was held March 1977, in Birmingham, and had 120 participants from areas all over Alabama. The highly respected personnel director of the University of Illinois at Urbana, Champaign Library, Robert F. Delzell was the main speaker who gave the assembly, through Alabamians eyes, a delightful look at the employment and training programs in operation at the University of Illinois. Their system was based on Civil Service grade levels and due to their large base of operations; there were well-defined levels for library assistants with equivalent titles and salaries. Of these job titles and salaries, there was equal emphasis

¹ Special permission was obtained from author Judy Simpson Crow for "PART's History" from her study; *Development in Paraprofessional Librarianship 1970-1980*. for inclusion in our handbook.

placed on the requirements and ability to perform in a high level position. Mr. Delzell encouraged this group to continue with its tentative plans to form a round table, become affiliated with the Alabama Library Association, and work toward establishing a set of standards by which all Alabama libraries could set hiring practices, salary scales, and training programs. With such exciting and inspiring ideas, this first group of paraprofessionals left encouraged to communicate better in their respective libraries, and hoping for good things to come with this round table.

The same enthusiasm was evident April 8, 1977 at the Alabama Library Association Annual Convention held at the Governor's House Motel, Montgomery, when the Association was petitioned by 66 names, with 61 of the signees present, to form the round table. By the Association's Constitution, the requirement for petition for a round table is ten names. Out of the round table's first official meeting, the discussion on objectives, goals, and membership became incorporated into the Round Table's Constitution and Bylaws, which is still a sound and viable foundation today. The topic, which becomes part of the next workshop—automated systems and terminal operators—, was born from those discussions. The Membership, Nominating, and Bylaws Committees were appointed and staffed. Temporary officers who served the entire 1977/78 year were Anne Hallmark, Mervyn Sterne Library, UAB and Anne M. Bowles, Air University, Montgomery, as Moderator and Page 23 (rev 3/93) liaison to the Executive Council and Ginney Becker, Mervyn Sterne Library, as Secretary-Treasurer (due to the fact that monies were donated and minutes taken during this session). The accomplishments in 1977-78 were primarily a mailing list of interested persons begun and the writing of the Constitution and By-Laws Bylaws. Included in the appendix was also a questionnaire, which Anne and her staff compiled to assess the interest of paraprofessionals in the state. This became the groundwork for defining interest and topics for future workshops.

The annual convention in 1978 was panned with Dr. Charles Evans, from the University of Mississippi, who was the Southeastern representative for the Council on Library Technical Assistants. Though the news came out late, 70 people attended his witty and enlightening session about COLT and paraprofessionals nationally. Ruth Sawyer of Birmingham took the Moderator's office and literally propelled PART's goals

as well as her own into action. Directing the Round Table through a fruitful year, she also took graduate course work and acquired her MLS degree in 1979. That year the Amelia Gayle Gorgas Library, Tuscaloosa, became a hub of activity under her able leadership. Letters to library directors, asking for names of all their support personnel, personal contact and phone numbers, resulted in an Alabama directory of library support personnel. This directory, combined with the mailing list begun the previous year, maintained newsletter mailings at approximately 700-800 for the next two years. The directory is also a valuable resource for contacting persons by locality. Two workshops, one in Birmingham and one in Tuscaloosa, were a great success according to the participant evaluations.

The Tuscaloosa workshop, developed into two concurrently running sessions, was respectively taught by Dr. Nathan Essex, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, on improving communication effectiveness and by Chris Shellabarger, Assistant Training Coordinator, Solinet, Atlanta, Georgia, who discussed and gave "hands-on" experience with OCLO to terminal operators in intermediate and advanced levels. The best summary of a learning experience are the participants own statements; some of which follows:

"The lecture and discussion were well planned, very informative and entertaining."

"He (Dr. Essex) was fantastic: He was able to get every person involved fully."

"The most interesting and outstanding workshop I have ever attended".

"Dr. Essex had a fine presentation and I felt more paraprofessionals, along with professionals should attend a workshop such as this."

Communication must surely be the key word used to describe Ruth's term, for it was during 1978/79 that PART began to be widely known and recognized for its worthy goals and objectives.

The annual convention in 1979 found Government Documents and PART Round Tables hosting a joint pre-conference sessions with sixty participants from PART in attendance. Ms. Marjorie Baggett, Mervyn Sterne Library and Dr. James Benson, University of Alabama taught a very informative session designed to familiarize public service paraprofessionals with the most commonly requested documents and their

indices. Mr. Doyal Nelms, Mervyn Sterne Library, spoke on the paraprofessional interfacing with automation.

A dedicated Moderator, Ms. Linda Jones of Mervyn Sterne Library took over in 1979-80 with a goal of providing a good workshop. Fall was an excellent time of the year for learning and relaxation at Oak Mountain State Park. The 84 participants quickly learned the topic, "Communication: Developing Effective Working Relationships", was presented by a communications expert, Mr. John Kline. As Communications Advisor to the Commandant, Academic Instructor and Foreign Officers School (AIFOS/CAK) Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, he kept the audience attentive through a warm autumn afternoon, interposing role playing, audio-visuals, hand-outs, and group sessions with an excellent lecture. Linda also kept a listening ear, firm encouragement, and an open phone line throughout the year to paraprofessionals' concerns. The combined efforts of contact from Ruth and Linda's terms peaked membership enrollment, which doubled from the beginning of the 1978 term.

The fine groundwork of contacts brought together the largest working council ever, and Moderator, Judy Simpson, Lister Hill Library, UAB for the 1980-81 term. The Council comprised of officers, committee chairman, committee workers, and other interested members, contributed to vital interest being borne and shared outside the Birmingham locale. In PART's history, these council meetings may have been the longest ever held, as topics were not just reported but thoroughly discussed, involving every person. This contributed to the unity and high attendance of this council throughout the year. Although much work was done in previous years, and the collected materials was passed to Judy, there was poor access to the material, and a lack of continuity between old and new council faces. The primary accomplishments in Judy's term were directed toward internal organization and defining the work paraprofessional, a topic of great controversy. A workshop with continuing education credits was also held in Montgomery. Dr. William Garove of UAB's Management Training Programs guided 72 participants into getting office routines organized and using time wisely. List below are some other accomplishments during this term, which will provide a base of continuity in future terms:

1. Material collected over 3 years was organized into files with topics that can be consistently followed year after year.
2. A system for keeping some of the files was devised, material duplicated, and complete files sent to the Archives of the Alabama Library Association.
3. A study of past workshops produced a chart of financial information and other key factors brought together in one place. This will provide a base of reference, from which to develop future workshops. Information on future workshops can be added to this chart.
4. Regions for Northern and Southern Members-at-Large officers were defined by latitude.
5. All copies of the Alabama Librarian were obtained since 1977, which provides notices of Round Table's activities and annual meetings, as well as pertinent information about the Association and the profession.
6. The Constitution and Bylaws were revised and brought into conformity with the Association's Constitution and Bylaws, and to clarify wording.
7. A Task Force was formed to define "paraprofessional."
8. The Task Force surveyed Alabama librarians for their response to "paraprofessional" and their definition of the term.
9. Approximately 100 journal articles and some books about paraprofessionals were collected which provided background to paraprofessional librarianship.

Nearing the end of the term, the Council feared the economic crunch might cancel preliminary plans for the annual meeting. Program plans proceeded on faith and hope and were rewarded with 47 persons in attendance. Guest speaker, Annette Huddle, Mobile Public Library, spoke about the early developments in our society, which led to so many paraprofessional jobs, especially in the public libraries. Her contagious personality and enthusiasm were excellent preparations, which led to active discussions during the business meeting. The primary topic was the presentations of the Task Force's definition of paraprofessional and the goal for the new year—a brochure about PART. Judy Simpson accepted the office of Moderator for another year, so that with

continuity of ongoing activities and internal groundwork, the 1980/81 term may see a fruitful return.

In conclusion, the roots and activity of this Round Table have been primarily in the Birmingham area, and if such an organization can claim a birthplace, the right surely goes to the Mervyn Sterne Library. Three out of four moderators have come from their ranks. Though Judy Simpson transferred from Sterne to a different department in Lister Hill Library--1 ½ blocks away—in 1978, in her initial career mindedness developed from the paraprofessional environment and encouragement during prior employment in the Sterne Library. Acceptance of the post resulted from friendships and encouragement of colleagues there.