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Why Task Forces? CFLA's New Structure

Since its inception in 2016, CFLA's committees have brought together volunteers from across the Canadian library sector who have contributed their time, effort and expertise to address key priorities for CFLA. Their efforts have been instrumental in supporting CFLA and its members. The CFLA Board is deeply grateful to the many committee volunteers over the years, and their home institutions for supporting their participation with the Federation. CFLA is moving in a new direction that is necessary for the sustainability of the organization, but not without appreciation for committee members past and present.

Feedback from CFLA stakeholders identified that the committee structure was ineffective due to lack of clarity, lack of input into appointments, unclear expectations, lack of tangible outcomes, and confusion over reporting and accountability. Additionally, stakeholders, including committee members, identified that committees did "a lot of talking, but not enough action". CFLA also heard from several stakeholders that in some cases the committees overlapped work happening at the regional level, or in some cases worked at cross-purposes from members on certain files.

CFLA is thus moving away from standing committees towards a taskforce-based model for accomplishing strategic priorities. The process for taskforce development and approval will be posted on the CFLA website to ensure full transparency.

Moving to a task force model has several benefits, including addressing the feedback above. Several of the committees already have working groups, so the task force model is familiar; however, under this new model, they will be approved by the Board and directly reflect CFLA's strategic priorities. In addition to task forces, CFLA-FCAB will identify representatives to serve on external boards and projects and provide subject expertise. Each of these representative positions will have terms of reference that define expectations and limits for reporting, commitments of CFLA-FCAB resources, and other areas of accountability. Examples of these are the **Canadian DAISY Consortium** and the **National Financial Literacy Strategy**.

Some members have expressed concern that CFLA-FCAB will not be able to respond quickly to arising issues. The task forces model should allow us to respond very quickly as experts can be identified quickly through CFLA-FCAB's members, board and task force members and can be called upon quickly as issues arise. We have already operated this way in the past when issues arose that did not fit neatly into the committee structure. It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to address urgent and unexpected issues.



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CFLA-FCAB is responsible for the ongoing monitoring of the national/international library landscape and issues related to our policy files and areas of action - as issues emerge, action can be taken promptly to identify a task force and call in the right people. The process that allows any of our members (or others in the sector) to propose a task force means that we have many people monitoring their areas of expertise.

This is not a change in priority for CFLA-FCAB. After reviewing our recent progress, this is an effort to focus our energies on achieving our goals.

Task Forces	Standing Committees
Each one will have a measurable outcome with evaluation criteria determined by the Board, reporting requirements, timelines and budget requirements	Has depended on the committee to propose in their work plan
Focus on a specific issue allows CFLA-FCAB to solicit expertise on that specific issue.	Tended to have a more general perspective.
Due to their specific focus, they can seek funding such as grants or sponsorships.	Due to their general nature, it was difficult to identify funding sources.
Defined role clarity for the members, the administration and the board.	Decision making is unclear.
Small size and focus allow for quick responses.	Larger size and lack of clarity often delayed responses.
Engaging the specific expertise of individuals for a limited period allows CFLA-FCAB to respond in a more nuanced way.	Committee responses tended to be limited to the expertise of committee members.
Time bound commitments allow us to engage people who may not be able to commit to standing committees	Participation is limited to people who can make long term commitments.
Task force issues will be identified by the board based on CFLA's strategic priorities AND can be proposed by members and their members - this process will be transparent and published on our website	The standing committee structure was historical, and it was unclear how to propose change.
The taskforce model broadens the potential for a more diverse range of participation by engaging members as needed to achieve specific outcomes	The standing committee structure limited the number and diversity of individuals who could be engaged.
It allows us to address issues that did not neatly fit into the standing committee structure.	Issues tended to land on the workplan of whichever standing committee addressed it, e.g. AI appeared on the workplan of the



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	copyright committee but crosses into other areas of focus.
Advocacy will be focused on specific issues and specific targets and will include work with federal employees and participation in federal initiatives to raise the visibility of libraries. Advocacy issues will be built into the task force structure.	There was no clear link between standing committee work and advocacy work.