

PALCI Future-Framing Task Force Final Report

Submitted by FFTF members:

Scott R. Anderson, Millersville University

Rick Holmgren, Allegheny College

Danuta A. Nitecki, Drexel University [convener]

Jennifer Livingston, Shift Consulting, [facilitator]

Ex officio PALCI members:

Sara Baron, Duquesne University, Board President

Jill Morris, Executive Director

July 6, 2020

Executive Summary

The Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Academic Library Consortium, Inc. (PALCI) charged the Future-Framing Task Force (FFTF) in December 2019 to articulate and present an updated Mission, Vision and Values statement for PALCI at its annual June 2020 Members Meeting.

The result of the FFTF work affirms that PALCI has become more than a membership organization. It affirms the consortium's increasing market strength and influence as *Partners* for Academic Library Collaboration and Innovation and fundamentally operates on *Trust*. The FFTF envisions the organization enabling cost-effective and sustained access to information resources for academic libraries through three tiers of support for its partners: Common Services, Customized Services and Innovation Support.

This report documents the background and detailed results of the FFTF work and proposes renewed Mission, Vision and Values statements. The recommendations address community engagement, communication, financial feasibility testing, and change management.

Background

Several factors converged in 2019 that influenced the PALCI Board to recognize both a strategic necessity for thoughtful examination of its mission, vision, and values, and a competitive opportunity to intentionally shape its future. The influential factors that led to the establishment of the Future-Framing Task Force included the following:

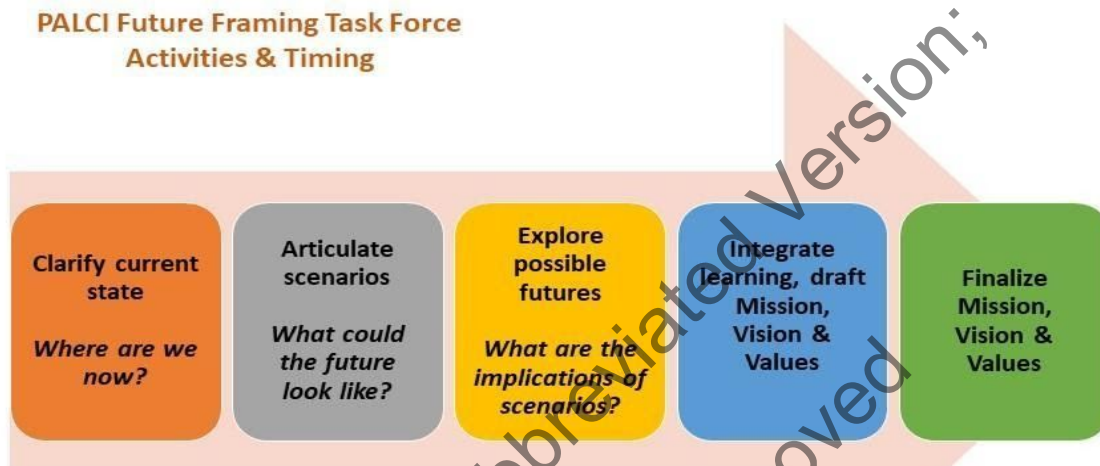
- New executive leadership
- A desire to learn from and systematically integrate positive experiences from past initiatives and experiments
- Changes in the operating contexts of its members, especially financial pressures and increasing demands for expertise and services
- Member requests for more transparency regarding PALCI operations, future directions, and mechanisms for engagement
- Shared and growing interest in deeper collaboration among members, a current strength which needed more definition
- Emerging tensions between competing organizational values

The PALCI Board recognized these factors through a board member survey, in-person discussions and a draft mission, vision and values (MVV). The Board subsequently charged the FFTF, consisting of three Board members, to engage with stakeholders to create a statement of identity and direction through a transparent and collaborative process (see Appendix A). The Task Force's work was viewed as the initial phase of a strategic planning process, gaining clarity on "who we are" and directionally, "where we're headed," before deciding on specific strategic initiatives.

Process

The FFTF members almost immediately recognized their limited capacity to undertake the Board's charge within the short time allocated for its completion. They requested, and the Board approved, engagement of a consultant to facilitate an effective and efficient process for the FFTF to accomplish its charge. Jennifer Livingston, Shift Consulting, joined the Task Force members in January 2020.

With her guidance, the Task Force members established a five-stage process to undertake its work:



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FFTF conducted its work within each phase on a tight timeframe:

1. Clarify the current state (January-February 2020)

The FFTF analyzed the current portfolio of PALCI services, member participation, and resources required to sustain them (see Appendix B). The Executive Director shared her perspective on the current consortia landscape and PALCI's current strengths, growth opportunities and challenges (see Appendix C). The FFTF planned a series of interviews (see Appendix D) to understand better, what members valued about PALCI, competitive alternatives, and future challenges. Ultimately, the FFTF conducted five member interviews. The FFTF members also imagined characteristics of the world of academic libraries in 2025 through a brainstorming exercise that projected factors facing colleges and universities, academic publishers and aggregators, and library systems and platform providers (see Appendix E).

A later thoughtful reflection on some of PALCI's current collaborative and innovative activities [such as CoACT, Hyku, Affordable Education, ReShare & E-ZBorrow] and various meeting discussions, exposed some organizational "tensions." These included for example, ownership vs access, opt-in vs all-in offerings, sustaining service vs contributing to innovation, PALCI vs member initiatives, collaboration vs partnership, representing self vs institution, suspicion vs trust, and values vs practice. Although the FFTF members articulated these only later in the Membership Meeting presentation (see Appendix F), they recognized these tensions as affecting the ability to shape the organization's robust and responsive future.

2. Articulate future scenarios (March 2020)

From initial insights on PALCI's current state and its environmental scan, the FFTF created three different possible future scenarios to test with stakeholders (see Appendix G). These scenarios represented different strategic directions for innovation, collaboration, offered services, financial models, and member responsibilities.

3. Explore possible futures (April-May 2020)

The FFTF engaged PALCI staff, and separately the Deans & Directors, in an interactive exercise to react to the three scenarios. These stakeholders articulated what each scenario would change for them or their institutions and how they see themselves fitting into it, and finally, rated their overall enthusiasm for each scenario (see Appendix H). An additional exercise was added for the Deans & Directors engagement, in which they were given the opportunity to create a hybrid scenario, selecting their favorite elements from the three test scenarios. The results of this phase identified several diverse preferences for the future that informed the FFTF in its next phase.

4. Integrate learning, draft MVV (May 2020)

The FFTF analyzed the notes and reactions to the three scenarios, the enthusiasm ratings, and the relative popularity of different scenario elements (see Appendix I). From this, the Task Force members created a single proposed future scenario, which the Board subsequently endorsed (see Appendix J). To support the selected future scenario, the FFTF next drafted the mission, vision and values, and with suggested edits, received Board approval to present the statement to PALCI members for a final round of feedback (see Appendix K).

5. Finalize MVV (June 2020)

During the PALCI 2020 Members Meeting, held remotely through a Zoom session on June 11, the FFTF presented the story of its work, the emergence of “partnership” and “trust” as key themes, the three-tiered model, and a new MVV statement (see Appendix F). Through invited chat comments and responses to online polls, the 145 members attending the meeting shared what they valued most about PALCI, their reaction to “a partnership based on trust” future, and their overall level of enthusiasm for the future direction of PALCI (see Appendix L).

COVID-19 Disruption

Following the closures and changes associated with the outbreak of the novel coronavirus COVID-19, the FFTF was forced to re-evaluate its approach in early March 2020. As member institutions had to quickly pivot to working remotely and providing online instruction, the capacity to engage in the Future Framing effort was reduced drastically, and the FFTF’s plan to meet in person to draft the future scenarios was canceled. With its collaborative capability limited by remote, asynchronous work, the FFTF shifted its approach. The member interview process was suspended. The convener and facilitator worked offline between the Task Force’s bi-weekly meetings to produce ideas and drafts, in order for the full group to use its meeting time efficiently to most effectively react to and refine them.

In the end, the uncertainty and change brought by the pandemic seemed to sharpen members’ focus on planning for the future. PALCI hosted a weekly series of COVID-related discussions with its deans and directors. The FFTF used this new forum to test the three preliminary scenarios.

Concluding the FFTF Charge

In the final two phases of its work, the FFTF proceeded to synthesize and refine its presentation of the three components of its charge:

- I. Propose a Future Frame for PALCI, answering the simple questions, “What to do?” and “How to get there?”
- II. Articulate a Mission, Vision, Values Statement that supports its proposed future.

III. Recommend next steps to identify paths for planning implementation.

I. Propose a Future Frame for PALCI to answer: What to do? and How to get there?

The FFTF evolved the Partnership Model as a better fit for PALCI than its current Membership model, leveraging the value of Trust to create a frame for its future.

As we reviewed member responses to various prompts, a few key themes emerged repeatedly. For example, at the June 11 member meeting, we asked participants, “What do you currently value most about PALCI?” Responses highlighted PALCI’s community, resource-sharing including but not limited to E-ZBorrow, and collaborative purchasing that results in both savings and increased access (see Appendix L) To be successful, all three of these depend on a high degree of collaboration. Indeed 10 of the 47 responses specifically mentioned, collaboration. These responses and the focus on collaboration are typical of what we heard from PALCI members again and again, which caused us to investigate what made that collaboration possible.

Upon reflection, it became clear that many PALCI members view PALCI differently than they do other organizations to which they belong. They are more than members; they are partners in a shared project. The discussion of the three future scenarios presented by the FFTF at the May 5 Deans & Directors forum clarified that the key value that undergirds this partnership and the collaborations it supports is trust. That is particularly evident in the responses to the third scenario, which proposes to involve commercial entities as PALCI members. For example, one participant commented, “Making vendors partners is attractive but very scary; how do we protect ourselves from [these] partners?” Another commented, “How far do we trust vendors to be socially responsible?” When presenting this same scenario to the Board, one Board member commented, “I like the idea of vendors engaging as partners, but can I trust them?” By inference, we realized that what makes our collaboration work is trust, something not all vendors have earned.

The overwhelmingly positive response at the June 11 member meeting to the proposal that PALCI is a “Partnership based on trust” supported our conclusions. Specifically, 93% of participants responded to this concept as “Spot-on!” (76%) or

“Not bad” (17%) (see Appendix L). Given this support, we propose a future frame to view PALCI as a partnership based on trust.

II. Articulate an MVV Statement that supports PALCI’s future

The FFTF proposes an MVV Statement that identifies “what we want to be, our North Star” [Vision], “why we exist” [Mission], and “how we work together” [Core Values]

1. Vision: PALCI is the preferred partnership for academic library collaboration and innovation.

PALCI is the “natural” entity to which a partner institution turns when seeking to identify options for creating, improving, or evolving an existing or new service, for developing communities of practice among partner institutions, and for professional development of staff at partner libraries.

2. Mission: PALCI enables cost-effective and sustainable access to information resources for academic libraries in Pennsylvania and surrounding states.

PALCI will seek to enable efficiencies and improvements at scale on behalf of its current partners by extending that scale with additional partners from within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and its adjacent states as set forth in the partnership by-laws. It will establish working relationships with other entities beyond PALCI’s stated geographic base as mutually beneficial when feasible and subject to mutual understanding. Extra-PALCI relationships will not impinge upon existing or future partners.

3. Core Values: PALCI operates on trust. PALCI earns and maintains the trust of its partner institutions by consistently demonstrating operational excellence, transparency, innovation, and respect for partners’ diversity and privacy.

PALCI will strive to consistently earn and retain the trust of its partner institutions by handling routine issues (invoices, renewal notices, opportunities to participate, etc.) in a forthright, timely and transparent manner. PALCI staff, partners and their employees, and the consortium as a whole, will engage with singular services, new initiatives, or innovation projects in as forthright a manner as circumstances permit. In all matters, be they routine or exceptional,

PALCI will treat each partner institution and their members with professional courtesy, collegiality, dignity and respect as outlined in the PALCI code of conduct.

To implement the proposed Mission, Vision, and Values, the FFTF recommends a three-tiered service model:

Common Services: All institutional partners can access a set of common resources and services supported by PALCI dues. These may include for example:

- Access to an electronic ‘collection’ for undergraduate general education
- E-ZBorrow type service identifying common holdings; supporting lending and borrowing activities
- Community networking and staff development
 - Annual membership meeting
 - Dean’s and Directors sessions
 - Practitioner meetings, e.g., E-ZBorrow practitioners

PALCI dues would cover the actual cost of common services, the associated PALCI overhead for their generation and maintenance, and some contingency funding. PALCI will assess dues via tiers, much as has been done historically.

Customized Services: Interested partners pay additional fees for selected services or acquisitions on a full cost-recovery plus basis. For example:

- E-resource/service negotiations for “opt-in” content
- Acquisition/access processing
- Customized staff development sessions
- Library Services Platform support (i.e. ILS, authentication, platform configuration, reporting)

Fees for each customized service would cover the full cost of delivering the service, including associated PALCI overhead and contingency funding. Only those partners benefiting from a service would pay service fees, negotiated on a case-by-case basis among those partners participating in the service.

Innovation Support: Interested partners collaborate to support innovation. PALCI has a rich history of innovation with a number of innovative projects currently underway, including but not limited to the following:

- Project ReShare, which includes a common index of PALCI holdings, a new content sharing platform, and controlled digital lending innovations
- Affordable Learning PA, which supports innovative approaches to making course resources affordable
- Hyku, a consortial institutional repository based on open-source software
- Novel licensing models for e-resources negotiated in partnership with resource providers and PALCI partner institutions

This third tier will support and extend such collaborative projects with new opportunities for participation, for example:

- ‘PALCI Fellows’ will be competitively selected staff from participating partner institutions, who collaborate on time-limited projects (e.g. to design services, improve workflows, develop new programs such as OER training) in exchange for career development or modest stipend to their home institution
- Negotiated partnerships with industry vendors, associations, non-PALCI institutions, or non-profits that will facilitate mutually beneficial research and development, field testing, or other service developments

Resources to support innovation would cover PALCI project management and other overhead costs and might come from:

- Grants from external agencies
- Grants from PALCI partners
- Sponsorships from industry vendors, associations, non-PALCI institutions, or non-profits who donate funding (e.g. like NPR sponsors).
- Revenues or PALCI cost reductions/avoidances generated by work products
- Partner institutions that support Fellow’s overhead costs in exchange for the potential to receive multi-year discounts to purchase or license any products resulting from Fellows’ work.

III. Recommend next steps to identify paths for planning implementation

The FFTF identifies four important areas to address and effectively implement the proposed future-frame and MVV for PALCI.

1. Community engagement,
2. Communication,
3. Financial feasibility, and
4. Change management (see Appendix M for details of all four areas).

Through the following recommendations, the FFTF members propose specific actions for the PALCI Board to consider for implementing the Mission, Vision, and Values and the proposed future framework by June 30, 2021.

Recommendation 1. The PALCI Board adopts the proposed Mission, Vision, and Values statement at its meeting on August 4, 2020.

Recommendation 2. The PALCI Board charges the Executive Director to develop a change management plan by December 31, 2020, that promotes and sustains understanding, engagement and support of the Mission, Vision and Values among current and future PALCI partners.

Recommendation 3. The Executive Director develops and implements a review and edit of all existing PALCI communications and documents, such as the website, PALCI bylaws, and templates for PALCI newsletters, for consistency with the adopted Mission, Vision, and Values by December 31, 2020.

Recommendation 4. The PALCI Board appoints an Implementation Task Force to identify common and customized services; a select sample of innovation projects; develop associated fee structures for each tier; test the financial feasibility of the proposed three-tiered service model; and by March 31, 2021, recommend to the Board an endorsed process and timeline for implementing or not the proposed three-tier model.

Recommendation 5. The Board charges the Executive Director with developing an annual plan for assessing needed skills and augmenting staff expertise to execute the new future framework in the working of the PALCI Partnership. The plan will incorporate proposed opportunities for staff development and innovative partnership opportunities.

Appendix A	PALCI Board Charge to FFTF
Appendix B	PALCI Portfolio Analysis
Appendix C	Consortia Landscape
Appendix D	Member Interview Guide & Notes
Appendix E	Post-COVID 2025 Library Landscape
Appendix F	PALCI Member Meeting Presentation 6.11.20
Appendix G	Future Scenarios for Testing
Appendix H	Stakeholders Scenario Exercise Output
Appendix I	Future Scenario Feature Ranking
Appendix J	Future Scenario Summary
Appendix K	Future Scenario Presentation to Board 5.14.20
Appendix L	Member Meeting Poll & Chat responses 6.11.20
Appendix M	Mission Vision & Values Presentation to Board 6.4.20

Internal Report - Abbreviated Version;
 Appendices removed

Appendix A: PALCI Future Framing Task Force Charge



PALCI Future Framing Task Force
Charge and Timeline
December 2019

PALCI Future Framing Task Force

Background

During the PALCI Board Retreat in June 2019, the PALCI Board, Executive Director Jill Morris, and facilitator Kirsten Leonard explored a number of important questions related to the future of PALCI, such as:

- What do we value about PALCI?
- What tensions exist given the diversity of institutions, and the environment we're currently in?
- What should PALCI look like, or strive to be in 3-5 years?
- What is the Board's role in facilitating our next steps related to that envisioned future?

As a result of these discussions the Board expressed a desire to develop and focus a shared strategic organizational vision and mission on which to build the foundation for a strategic roadmap, and to identify the Board's role in advancing the work of the organization.

As such, the Board aims to establish this task force and develop a plan inclusive of member input over the course of the coming year.

Timeline

The Task Force will begin in December 2019 with the goal of completing its work for presentation during the June 2020 annual member meeting.

Task Force Members

- Danuta Nitecki, Convener and Chair
- Scott Anderson
- Rick Holmgren

Additional Task Force Advisors

- PALCI Board President (Ex-officio)
- Jill Morris, PALCI Staff (Ex-officio)

Appendix A: PALCI Future Framing Task Force Charge



Charge

To be successful the Future Framing Task Force (FFTF) will articulate an updated mission, vision and values for PALCI, with some basic strategies or paths to transition its implementation. The group will use an engaging process to formulate the organization's purpose and high level organizational directions through an iterative review of existing input [from our diverse range of stakeholders], along with opportunities for input from membership and Board members. The FFTF will draft a recommendation, vet it as part of its activities, and offer it for presentation at the membership meeting. The FFTF should:

- Review and discuss the results of the Board's first retreat in June 2019, including the [Survey Questions](#) and the [Board Survey Results](#) administered by Tim Schlak, as well as [Flipchart Notes](#) (images in PDF) and [Summary of Board Retreat Discussion](#)
- Engage a facilitator and consultant who will guide the work of the FFTF and who will actively participate and engage members in an inclusive and engaging process.
- Develop a process with the facilitator/consultant's assistance as an external expert advisor to the FFTF.
- Develop and propose a statement articulating PALCI's shared value proposition, possible activities include:
 - Review and discuss existing [organizational mission statements](#)
 - Explore and articulate possible responses to the question:
 - What are we uniquely and most well-positioned to do?
 - What are the values that we espouse?
 - Engage in needs assessments activities
 - Establish feedback forums and encourage PALCI member discussion on this topic through the use of surveys, focus groups, interviews, and facilitated meetings with the goal of understanding organizational challenges of PALCI Member Libraries and building a shared vision for the consortium
- **Develop and propose a clear vision and mission statement aligned with shared organizational values**
 - Suggest strategic directions based on mission and vision
- Build shared understanding of the Board's role, responsibilities and level of engagement required for achieving the Board's work
- Create a "parking lot" for future ideas/initiatives that arise as a result of Task Force discussions
- Based on information gathered, propose any further action needed to the PALCI Board

Appendix A: PALCI Future Framing Task Force Charge



2019 - Proposed Timeline

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|----------------------|--|
| ● September-December | Review and discuss charge; Identify convener |
| ● January | Develop high-level Future Framing TF Plan; Announce FFTF |
| ● January - May | Engage with PALCI member libraries, develop deliverables |
| ● June | Present key deliverables at the June Annual Member Meeting |
- for further discussion

Internal Report - Abbreviated Version
Appendices removed