

Orbis Cascade Alliance

Council Member Handbook

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Introduction

The Orbis Cascade Alliance is a member-driven consortium. The leaders of all member libraries take an active role in the governance of the organization by serving on the Alliance Council, which is the decision-making body for the consortium and determines its strategic priorities.

This handbook provides an overview of the structure and functions of the Alliance; of the responsibilities of member institutions and their Council representatives; and of the operational culture of the consortium. In addition to this handbook, core documents that each Council member should review include:

1. Bylaws of Orbis Cascade Alliance (*governance*)
2. Orbis Cascade Alliance Memorandum of Understanding (*member responsibilities*)
3. Orbis Cascade Alliance Financial Framework (*fee and financial assumptions*)

History of the Alliance

<https://orbiscascade.org/history-of-alliance/>

Introduction to the Alliance

Mission

The Orbis Cascade Alliance enables member libraries to advance institutional missions through collaboration and innovation.

Vision

The Orbis Cascade Alliance is an exemplar of the 21st century library consortium. We join together in the spirit of innovation and combined expertise, seeking efficiency and productivity to strongly promote the success of students, faculty, staff, and researchers. We bring multiple perspectives together to challenge traditional thinking and elevate our ability to deliver outstanding services, programs, and collections.

Values

As a membership organization we value open communication, innovation, agility, discussion and collaborative decision making that elicits and includes the perspectives of each member. We value and nurture strong and lasting personal and institutional commitments to our work together. Where differences occur we value open debate, exploration, willingness to change, and the creation of solutions that serve the collective good of our member colleges and universities as a whole.

Strategic Plan

Alliance is guided by a regularly-updated strategic plan and set of strategic priorities. The current strategic planning cycle will support consortium activities beginning in January 2019 through fiscal year 2024.

The Alliance's current Strategic Agenda is:

Work Smart

Work and partner at the appropriate scale: local, regional, national, international

Maximize impact

Do things once

Do things the same

Do things together

Invest in staff training, development, and expertise

Leverage financial resources

Design for Engagement

Collect wisely, share freely, and enhance the teaching, learning, and research environment

Investigate, create, and implement discovery and resource sharing tools

Expose and preserve unique collections

Improve usability and reduce barriers to access

Collaborate for shared access and shared collections

Create and promote new models of publication and data curation

Explore new models of pedagogy to advance learning and scholarship

Innovate to Transform

Push boundaries, change the landscape, and inspire the profession

Demonstrate the broader contributions of libraries in higher education

Pursue research

Develop groundbreaking services

Reimagine shared systems

Advocate for change

Membership

Membership criteria and non-member participation

Member institutions must be NWCCU accredited, non-profit organizations of higher learning in Washington, Oregon, or Idaho. Members must agree to use the consortium's shared integrated library system, agree to the terms of the member Memorandum of Understanding, and participate in all core [Alliance Programs](#) (as opposed to opt-in programs). Evidence of institutional financial support for library services, and ability to contribute to the shared collections and services of the Alliance are factors in considering new members. New members may be admitted by two-thirds vote of members present at a Council meeting at which a quorum is present.

Non-member institutions may use some Alliance services on a fee basis. Non-member participation in Alliance services is only offered if participation does not detract from the benefit members achieve and if either (a) additional participants improves service for all participants, (b) members determine it is financially advantageous to serve non-members, or (c) members determine that the benefits outweigh the cost of expanded service to non-members.

Membership fee structure

Annual membership dues are set by the Council and are billed to each member at the beginning of each fiscal year. Other fees (e.g. for specific programs) are determined by Council and are billed on a schedule also determined by Council. In addition to annual membership dues, all members are required to pay fees for core Alliance programs and services.

Core programs and services are those which all members use and/or benefit from and are included in the membership criteria. In addition, all members are expected to support core programs and services through commitment of staff time (see description of [Teams / Groups](#) in this handbook).

Fees for required financial obligations (membership dues and core programs/services) are currently calculated based on a combination of these factors, depending on the program/service: a flat fee; student FTE; and usage of service. For example, the current formula for both annual member dues and the shared integrated library system is: 40% of the fee is an equal distribution + 60% of the fee is based on student FTE (a 3 year rolling average for each member is used to determine the % of total Alliance member FTE). Annual increases in required financial obligations should be anticipated; increases are normally based on the rate of inflation

and the cost of new core programs and services. This membership fee formula is regularly reviewed by the Alliance Board and Council.

Optional programs and services are funded by opt-in fee structures, which are set at a level intended to fund the full cost of participation in the program or service, including administration, equipment, space, etc.

Memorandum of Understanding: Member responsibilities

The Orbis Cascade Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlines the terms of membership and the responsibilities of each member institution. In brief, members are expected to:

- Pay all entry fees and annual membership/core service fees
- Contribute a representative to serve on the Council; this should be the library director or equivalent (who has fiduciary responsibility for their library), who should actively participate in all Council meetings and activities
- Provide, at its expense, all costs to link and ensure reliable network access from the institution to Alliance administered systems
- Contribute data and participate in collection sharing according to policies approved by the Council
- Participate in physical document delivery services that support interlibrary circulation
- Maintain active participation in core operational groups as defined by Council
- Maintain active participation in groups pursuing Alliance strategic initiatives

The MOU also outlines the circumstances under which membership may be terminated either by the Alliance or by the member.

In addition to these responsibilities described in the MOU, member institutions are expected to participate in all other core (all-in) programs and services of the Alliance (see [Alliance Programs](#)). Programs and services are designated as core (all-in) by the Alliance Council.

Alliance Structure -- Staff, Board/Council, Teams/Groups

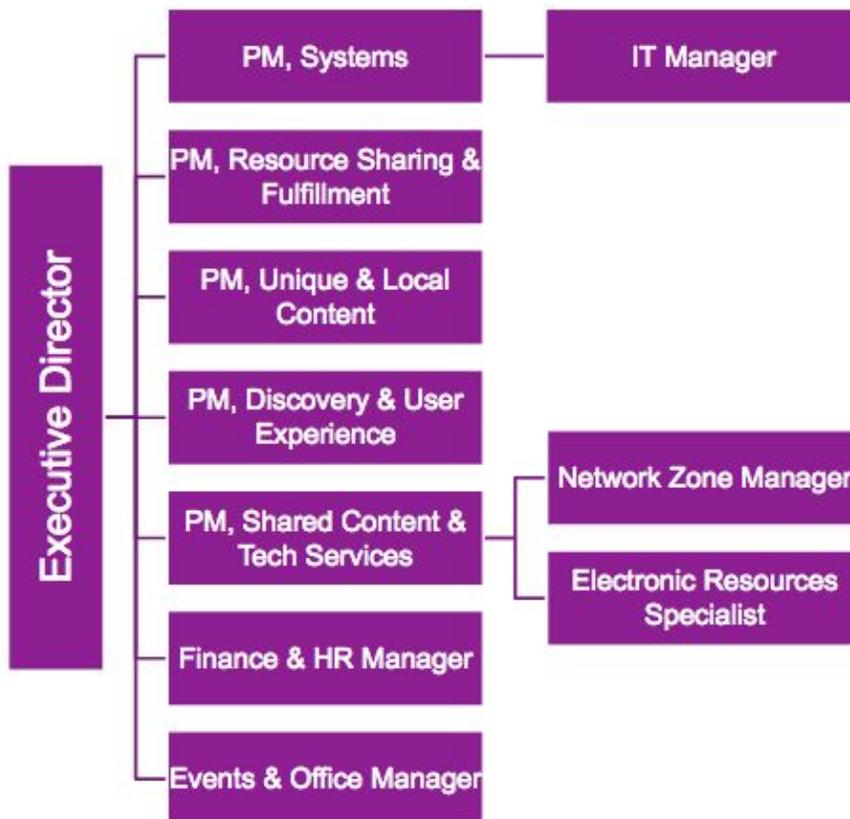
The Orbis Cascade Alliance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. The Alliance is governed by the Council of member library leaders, from which a Board of Directors is elected to provide overall guidance to Council, Alliance operations and paid staff, and the organization as a whole. Activities of the Alliance are organized into five program areas, each served by a program manager and team composed of member library staff: Discovery & User Experience, Resource Sharing & Fulfillment, Shared Content & Technical Services, Systems, and Unique & Local Content. In addition to these program areas, there are teams dedicated to Finance and Policy & Coordination. Each team designates standing and *ad hoc* work groups drawn from member library staff as needed for ongoing and project work.

Alliance operations and paid staff (program managers and other functional specialists; currently 11.0 FTE) are led and supervised by an Executive Director. The Executive Director collaborates

closely with the Board and Council to guide the development of current and long-range goals and strategies and their implementation. The Executive Director is an *ex officio* non-voting member of the Board and Council and an officer of the corporation. The position reports to the Chair of the Alliance Board.

Alliance Staff

For up-to-date staff information, refer to the Alliance Staff [webpage](#).



Board

The Board of Directors is elected by Council from within the Council membership. Board members serve 2 or 3 year terms, depending on the position. The Board meets regularly in person and virtually to provide overall guidance to Council, Alliance staff, and the organization.

Roles

- Chair ([position description](#))
- Chair-Elect
- Past Chair
- Treasurer ([position description](#))

- Secretary ([position description](#))
- Members-at-Large (position description)

Election process

The election process for Board position begins in January or February. Every year, a Chair-Elect and Members-At-Large are elected. Other officers (Treasurer, Secretary) are elected every other year. Interim members of Council (those holding interim status at their institutions) are not eligible to serve on the Board.

See the [Alliance Board Elections webpage](#) for the complete election process.

Board/Council governance relationship

The Council governs the Alliance, and holds the responsibility for adopting an annual budget and determining the strategic direction of the Alliance. As part of its strategic authority, Council reserves the ability to approve: the terms of membership, the creation or revision of all major policies, new initiatives and programs, significant financial commitments (as part of the annual budget or during the fiscal year), and any formal partnerships between the Alliance and other entities. Council meets formally three times a year to consider new and ongoing business, and to adopt the Alliance budget..

The Board holds fiduciary responsibility for the Alliance, meets more frequently than Council and previews and shapes recommendations and agenda items for consideration and action at Council meetings, including proposing an annual budget. The Board also provides oversight for, and evaluates, the Executive Director of the Alliance.

Teams / Groups

Teams are appointed each year to fulfill the mission of the organization. Teams are led by and made up of staff from member libraries, and staffed by Alliance paid employees. It is unusual, but not unprecedented, for Council members to serve on Teams. However, each Team is assigned a [Council liaison](#), whose primary responsibility is to enhance communication between the Team and Council and the Board.

Current Teams are:

- [Discovery & User Experience](#)
- [Finance](#)
- [Policy and Coordination](#)
- [Resource Sharing and Fulfillment](#)
- [Shared Content and Technical Services](#)
- [Systems](#)
- [Unique and Local Content](#)

Each team creates both Standing Groups (to perform ongoing tasks) and Project Groups (to complete time-limited projects) to provide functional support for its program area.

See the [Alliance's Team and Group Structure](#) for up-to-date information.

Team roles/expectations of member participation

Team members are appointed by the Board, following either nomination or self-nomination. The Board makes every effort to appoint teams that reflect the diversity of the Alliance member institutions in order to ensure that all perspectives are considered. However, Team members do not represent their institutions, but are expected to use their experience to inform the teams' efforts for the good of the entire membership.

Council members should encourage their staff to participate in Teams (as appropriate; [criteria for Team members](#) should be consulted prior to nominations) to the extent possible. Council members are expected to manage Team members' workloads at their institutions so that the work of Team members--especially Team and Group chairs--is not seen as "extra" or "as time allows," but rather an important formal assignment. Thus local member work should be adjusted as possible so that consortial work is not an infringement on personal time.

Council members may nominate their staff members for Team positions. If a staff member is nominated by someone else (or via self nomination), the Council member will receive an automated email with the nomination information so that they are aware of potential participation within their organization.

In addition to Team members, each member institution is expected to appoint a representative to every Team. Representatives do not participate in the work of Teams, but are institutional liaisons who receive communication from Teams and are often responsible for gathering institutional feedback on Team projects. Representatives are considered as speaking for their institution and are consulted by the Team and assigned program manager as needed.

Group types/roles/expectations of member participation

Teams form and create charges for Groups to achieve Alliance goals. Teams issue calls one or more times a year to staff Groups. Criteria for choosing members are similar to those for Teams, plus specific skills and expertise identified by the Team.

Similar to Team members, it is expected that Council members will encourage their staff to participate in Groups, and should manage Group members' workloads to recognize the needs and impact of Alliance work for Group members. Group participation may be more time-limited than Team participation, but is usually more work-intensive.

There are two types of Groups:

- Standing Groups: These Groups serve a similar function each year and members are appointed each year. (e.g. E-Book Working Group; Norm Rules).

- Project Groups: These Groups serve for fewer than 6 months, and conduct specific, limited tasks. (e.g. NZ Manager Support Group).

The chart below should help identify the differences between Teams, Standing Groups, and Project Groups.

	Team	Standing Group	Project Group
Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Advise Program Area · Set and manage strategic priorities within Alliance framework · Set annual tasks 	Perform ongoing tasks that support a program area but that do not meet criteria for W1 work	Complete a time-limited discrete project in support of a program area
Number of Members	5-7	6-8	Varies according to need
Expertise Level of Members	Interested and have some experience, but not experts	Interested and have some experience, but not experts	Varies according to need
How are members recruited?	Posted on announce list	Posted on announce list and relevant community lists	Discretion of Sponsor
How Appointments are Approved	Board	Team	Sponsor determines
Member Term	2 year; Chair-elect may serve longer	1 year, up to 3 consecutive terms	Length of group
Sponsor	Board	Team	Team(s), Standing Group(s), PM(s), ED
Who do they report to?	Council / Board	Team	Sponsor
Level of Authority (on scale of Operational / Functional; Recommend; Set Policy; Enforce Policy)	All levels	All levels	Operational / Functional OR Recommend only
Role of Council	Liaison appointed by Board Chair	No formal role	No formal role

General communication methods

Listservs

See [Alliance's Email Lists](#) for up-to-date information.

Open lists can be joined by any individual at a member library. Please contact Elizabeth Duell or the Program Manager for the area to be added to an open list.

Closed lists are maintained for various Council and Board communications. All Council members belong to a general Council list.

Open Lists

- General
 - Announce
 - Alliance Exchange
- Shared Content and Technical Services
 - Tech Services Discussion
 - OCLC Implementors
 - Tech Services Acquisitions
 - Tech Services Electronic Resources
 - Tech Services Resource Management
- Unique and Local Content
 - Archives and Manuscript Service
- Discovery and User Experience
 - Discovery & User Experience (DUX) Discussion
 - New Primo UI
 - UX & Accessibility
- Resource Sharing and Fulfillment
 - RSF Discussion Courier
- Electronic Resources
 - ER
 - ER News
 - ER Non Member
- Systems
 - Systems Discussion
 - PCI Updates

Virtual meetings

The Alliance uses virtual meeting software to support the work of staff, Council, Board, and Teams/Groups. Many Alliance meetings are held only virtually in order to make it possible for participation from members across the region.

Alliance staff assists Council and other groups with scheduling and trouble-shooting use of the virtual meeting platform. If a Council member is unable to attend an in person meeting, a virtual meeting option will be made available. The Council member should communicate the need for this option as far in advance as possible.

Alliance Programs

Activities of the Alliance are organized into five program areas: [Discovery & User Experience](#), [Resource Sharing & Fulfillment](#), [Shared Content & Technical Services](#), [Systems](#), and [Unique & Local Content](#). Within these program areas, there are both **core (all-in)** programs and services which all members use and/or benefit from and **opt-in** programs and services in which participation is voluntary.

In addition to the fees paid, all members are expected to support core programs and services through commitment of staff time. Commitment of staff time in support of opt-in programs will vary based on the participants and needs of the program.

Core programs

- **Shared ILS:** The Alliance operates a Shared ILS service, currently using Ex Libris' Alma for resource management and Primo for discovery, for all member libraries. The shared system is intended to facilitate collaborative technical work and realize workload and resource sharing efficiencies.
- **Resource Sharing:** The Alliance's [consortial borrowing system](#) for generally circulating physical collections is called Summit. Every member library agrees to follow the same procedures and policies to achieve efficiency and predictability.
- **Courier Services:** To facilitate efficient resource sharing via Summit and interlibrary loan, the Alliance maintains a growing [physical delivery network](#) for exchanging library materials across nearly 200 libraries in 3 states. Alliance member libraries use the courier for, at minimum, Summit resource sharing requests.
- **E-Books:** The Alliance has taken a comprehensive, innovative approach to providing a core set of e-books to Alliance libraries and their patrons. At this moment, the Alliance manages an e-book subscription package and an evidence-based acquisition pilot on behalf of the consortium. All members participate in the program, with institutional budget, FTE, and usage factored into a variable required fee.

Opt-in programs

- **Electronic Resources:** The Alliance works with its members and other academic libraries in the Pacific Northwest to [purchase electronic resources](#). Libraries identify resources of interest and the Alliance works with the vendor, negotiating discounts, coordinating trials, licensing, and invoicing. The process and the criteria applied for selecting products for licensing, as well as information on the management of invoicing, are available through the Alliance [Shared Content & Technical Services Team](#) and Program Manager.
- **Archives & Manuscripts Collections:** This [service](#) provides enhanced access to thousands of archival and manuscript collections in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, and Washington through the [Archives West](#) website, and support for archival collection management through the [ArchivesSpace](#) platform.

- **Digital Collections:** This service supports the creation, maintenance, and aggregation of unique digital content held by Alliance libraries. This includes maintenance of the Alliance's [Dublin Core metadata standards](#) as well as a sustainable aggregation infrastructure that supports delivery of member content to both the Alliance's discovery system (Primo) and the [Digital Public Library of America](#) (DPLA) (the Alliance is a DPLA service hub).

Awards and grants

[John Helmer Professional Development Award](#)

This annual award was established in honor of John F. Helmer, former Executive Director of the Alliance, and is intended to support professional development programs associated with the Alliance's strategic agenda.

Serving on Council

Council Member Position Description

The expectations for Council member participation are described in a [position description](#).

Conflict of Interest

Council members are required to complete a conflict of interest disclosure on an annual basis. [Conflict of interest policy and form](#)

Council Mentors

The Board chair appoints a Council mentor for each new member of Council, whether interim or permanent. Mentor duties include:

- Contacting the new director to welcome them to the Alliance. As possible, mentors and new directors often find it useful to meet in person but a phone call is sufficient.
- Offering to serve as a resource on Alliance business and history
- Making a formal introduction at the new director's first meeting
- Introducing the new director to individuals

The period for a Council mentorship is typically one year.

Council Liaisons

To support the work of Orbis Cascade Alliance committees, task forces, and teams, the Board may appoint a member of Council to act as liaison to the group.

Council Liaisons are encouraged to attend face-to-face meetings of the group and to participate in conference calls and/or virtual meetings.

Council Liaisons have the option of active participation in the work agenda of the group, and service on group subcommittees if they so desire. The term of service is two years and can be renewed.

A complete description of the role and responsibilities of liaisons is available at:

<https://www.orbiscascade.org/council-liaison>

Budget process

The Alliance Executive Director, Budget Manager, and Finance Team, in consultation with the Board, prepares an annual budget for Council consideration and approval at the March Council meeting. The budget includes full views of all program areas and line items as well as [Alliance membership fees](#) and fees associated with the Courier, Shared ILS, and Ebook program. The largest segments of the budget are the SILS fees, staff, and program budgets.

Alliance budget decisions are guided by the organization's [Financial Framework](#). Finance and budget materials are on the Finance Team page: <https://www.orbiscascade.org/finance/>

Council Meetings

All Council members are expected to actively participate in meetings. The Council meets in person three times a year, at a schedule noted here:

<https://www.orbiscascade.org/council-minutes>. Meeting formats usually are Thursday / Friday, and are purposefully scheduled this way. Core issues are generally introduced on Thursday, or at a phone call prior to the meeting. Friday is meant for follow-on discussion and voting. Issues discussed at Council include items like budget approval (March meeting), goals and strategic agenda, approval of new initiatives, and the creation of new positions at the Alliance.

In order to make the in-person meeting efficient and informed, the materials for discussion are released to Council members a week or more before the in-person meeting. This will include the items on the Consent Agenda (items that the Board believes are routine and do not require discussion or vote). There is also a scheduled conference call for all Council members in the weeks prior to the in-person meeting. This call provides a brief overview of the meeting topics and a time for any questions. Sometimes a more complex item is discussed in detail in the pre-Council call to save time at the in-person meeting.

At the Council meeting, there is time set aside to discuss major issues before voting. While not every vote will be unanimous, the goal of Council discussions is for all members to understand, and have substantial comfort with, decisions. At the beginning of the Council meeting, the Chair will ask whether or not any Council member wishes to remove an item from the Consent Agenda for deliberation. If a member requests that an item be removed, it will be removed from the Consent Agenda. The item will be put into the agenda for the Council meeting.

The Alliance Council does not follow formal parliamentary procedures but the [Voting Guidelines](#) provide an overview of how items come to the Council for decision, how members can amend these items, and how Council votes on the final recommendations.

Council members who are unable to attend a meeting may designate a proxy. A proxy may be another member of Council or a library staff member invited to attend to represent the institution. Council members (and proxies) should be fully empowered to participate in discussions and make informed voting decisions.

What to do first

Welcome to Council! Here are a few things to do immediately, as you get started in your new role:

- **Connect with your [Council mentor](#)**
This person knows the ins and outs of Council and can answer any questions you have.
- **Review Council resources on Alliance website**
The Alliance website contains many Council-only resources, placed on the [Council pages](#), including past meeting minutes. These resources are password-protected; log-in information can be obtained from Alliance staff.
- **Review institution's Alliance [program participation/fees](#)**
Alliance fees are divided into several invoices throughout the year - membership dues, e-resource payments, fee for the Summit courier, etc. A few of the Alliance programs are opt-in or have different levels of participation. Check with the Alliance staff and your faculty and staff to learn which programs you participate in and the fees that you pay, to prepare for budgeting.
- **Review institution's staff engagement in [teams/groups](#)**
Get to know the ways in which the faculty and staff of your institution participate in the Alliance. Some may be the team representative - these will be your conduit for information in this particular functional area. Others will be serving on an Alliance Team or Group and may be balancing these responsibilities with their job duties. New faculty and staff may need to be nominated for a Group, so they can begin their participation in the Alliance, or may need to know more about where their job responsibilities interact with the consortium activities.

Handbook Version & Updates

Last updated March 2, 2018. This document will be reviewed, and updated as needed, on at least an annual basis by the Alliance Board. Suggestions for revisions and updates may be directed to the Board Chair-Elect.