

Proposal to Merge ACRL SEES (Slavic and East European Section) and WESS (Western European Studies Section) - FAQ's

1. *What is the rationale for the proposed merger?*

ACRL has established a minimum membership quota of 400 members for all sections. Any section falling below this threshold has the option of either being converted into an interest group or discussion group, or merging with another section. SEES has had fewer than 400 members for a number of years, but the executive board and the membership feel strongly that it is important for the profession of SEES librarianship that the work of the Section and all of its constituent bodies continue. A proposal was therefore advanced to merge SEES and WESS and create a Pan-European section as a measure to provide for the immediate survival of SEES and secure the longer-range future of WESS. A combined Pan-European section with a membership in excess of 400 should be easily sustainable in the long term and its establishment should ensure that the work of the two Sections will continue for the foreseeable future.

2. *If the merger takes place, what will be the implications for individual SEES and WESS committees?*

ACRL sections are free to establish and configure sub-section level bodies as they determine appropriate. ACRL does not impose any restrictions on this function of its sections. The newly constituted European Studies Section would therefore be free to make determinations in re the reconfiguration of committees and other sub-section level bodies on an ad hoc basis, merging some and retaining others in their original form as deemed appropriate.

3. *At the time of the merger there would be two sitting section chairs - a SEES chair and a WESS chair. How would the chairship of the newly formed European Studies Section, effective as of the merger, be determined?*

Effective immediately following the merger the sitting SEES and WESS chairs would become co-chairs of the new European Studies Section pending the next regularly scheduled election cycle when a single chair for the new section would be elected.

4. *How would the extra-European regions covered by SEES librarianship (and in particular Central Asia) fit into a new European Studies Section?*

The Executive Committees have determined that a Pan-European scope is as broad and diverse a geographical purview as a single section can manage, and that

including extra-European languages and territories of the Former Soviet Union would stretch the boundary beyond the point of cohesion. The geographic purview of the new European Studies Section will therefore be restricted to the European continent (including European Russia). Librarians with substantial interest in Central Asia should be aware of the Eurasia and Central Asia Subcommittee within ALA's International Relations Committee.

5. How will the decision whether or not to proceed with the merger be definitively determined?

The Executive Committees of SEES and WESS will vote on whether or not to proceed with the merger. The merger will take place only if the Executive Committees of both sections vote in favor of merging. Voting will be carried out before the end of summer, 2016.

6. What is the proposed timeline for the planning and execution of the merger?

- **September 2013-September 2015 (Years 1-2):** Sections discuss options for transition, working with the ACRL Board and staff liaisons. Any Section whose membership is below 400 at the end of August 2014 and August 2015 should begin planning no later than May 2016. (SEES membership has been below the 400 threshold for a few years running, and in September 2013 discussions between SEES and WESS about the possibility of merging the sections began).
- **May 2016 (Year 3):** The Section starts transition planning.
- **April 2017 (Year 4):** Transition plans are due for consideration at the Spring Executive Committee Meeting. This date is the deadline for submitting transition plans. Encourage submission of transition plans in December 2016 for consideration at the 2017 Midwinter Board meeting to allow time for review and discussion. The Board may approve the transition plan proposed by the Section at their 2017 Midwinter Meeting or their 2017 Spring Executive Committee Meeting.
- **August 31, 2017 (Year 4):** Transition complete: as of September 1, 2017, the section officially becomes an interest group, a discussion group, or merged with another section depending on the transition plan approved by the Board. If no transition option is desired, the section will be dissolved as of August 31, 2017.

7. If the merger takes place, what will be the name of the new section formed as a result?

The working name of the new combined section is "European Studies Section," but this is subject to review following a definitive decision to merge SEES and WESS.