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# Best Practices for U.S. Academic Library Consortia

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# Best Practices for U.S. Academic Library Consortia

**Judi Guzzy, Technical Services Librarian  
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**Kansas Library Association – April 8, 2010**

# Project Scope

- Two-year college library consortia
  - Exclusive
  - Joint with four-year
- Purchases/licenses electronic resources and/or databases as part of services

# Timeline

Aug 09

- Solicited consortia names
- Created questionnaire
- Contacted consortia

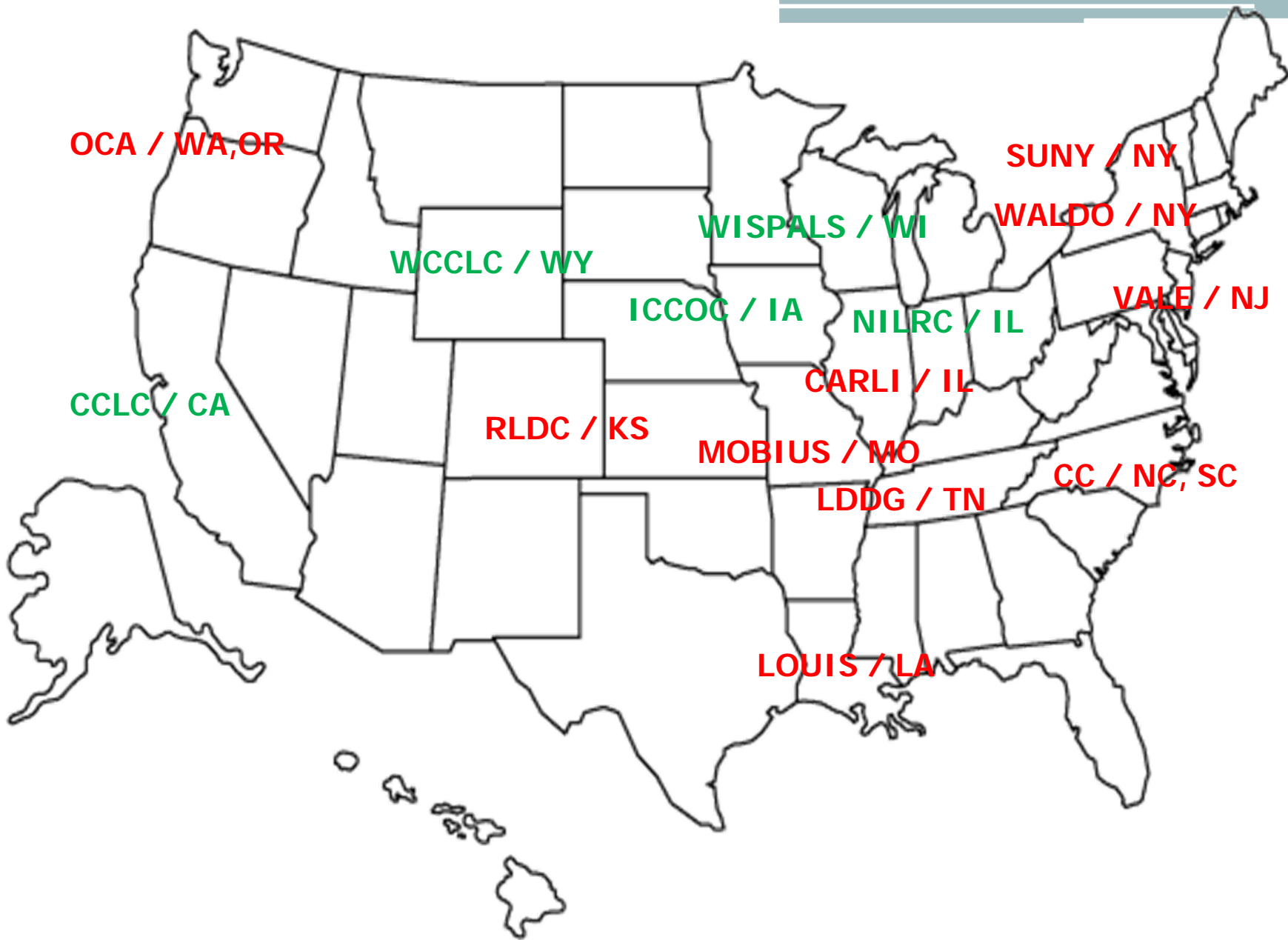
Sept 09

- Scheduled interviews
- Searched websites
- Interviews

Oct/Nov  
09

- Compiled information
- Writing phase

CARLI (Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois) - Illinois  
Carolina Consortium - North/South Carolina  
Community College Library Consortium (CCLC)\* - California  
Iowa Community College Online Consortium (ICCO)\* - Iowa  
Kansas Regents Library Database Consortium (RLDC) Kansas  
Library Deans and Directors Group of the State University and  
Community College System of the Tennessee Board of Regents  
(TBR Library Deans and Directors Group) – Tennessee  
LOUIS (The Louisiana Library Network) – Louisiana  
MOBIUS – Missouri  
NILRC (Network of Illinois Learning Resources in Community Colleges)\* - Illinois  
Orbis Cascade Alliance -- Oregon/Washington  
SUNYConnect (State University of New York) - New York  
VALE (Virtual Academic Library Environment of New Jersey) - New Jersey  
WALDO (Westchester Academic Library Directors Organization) - New York  
WISPALS Library Consortium (Wisconsin Project for Automated Libraries)\* - Wisconsin  
Wyoming Community College Library Consortium\* - Wyoming



OCA / WA, OR

SUNY / NY

WALDO / NY

WCCLC / WY

WISPALS / WI

VALE / NJ

ICCOG / IA

NILRC / IL

CCLC / CA

RLDC / KS

CARLI / IL

MOBIUS / MO

CC / NC, SC

LDDG / TN

LOUIS / LA

# Questionnaire/Interview Topics

- Membership
- Governance
- Electronic resource  
licensing/purchasing
- Fiscal agency
- Positive qualities
- Challenges / Goals

# Consortia Formation

## Joint catalog / shared ILS

- WALDO (1983)
- WISPALS (1989)
- LOUIS (1992)
- Orbis Cascade Alliance (1993)
- SUNYConnect (1998)
- MOBIUS (1998)

## ER licensing / purchasing

- NILRC (1973)
- RLDC (1996)
- CCLC (1998)
- VALE (1998)
- Carolina Consortium (2004)
- WYCCLC (2006)

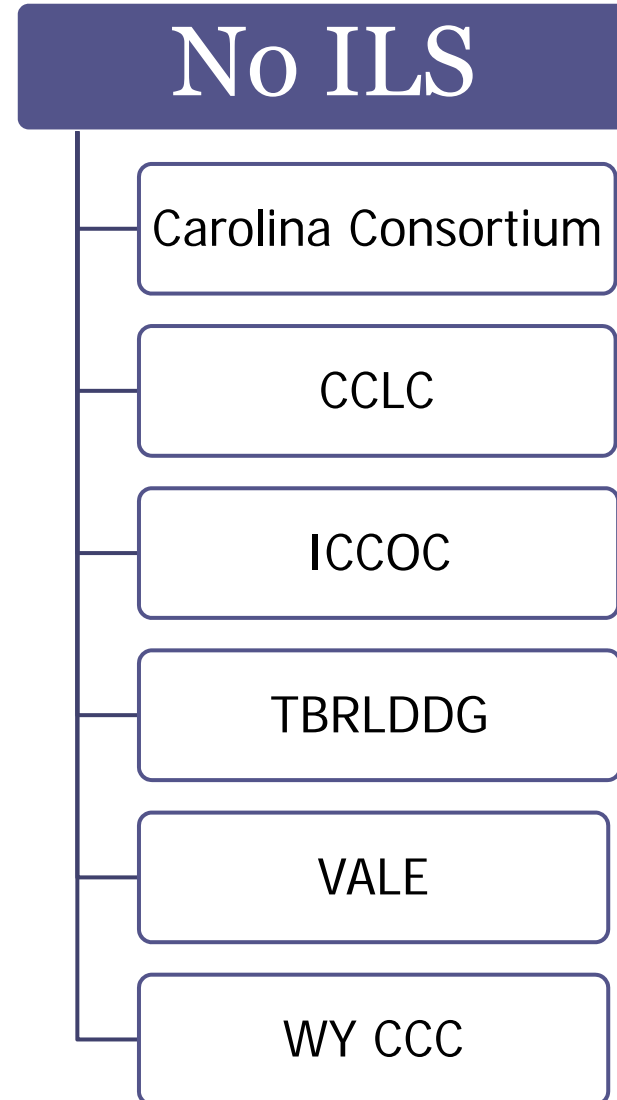
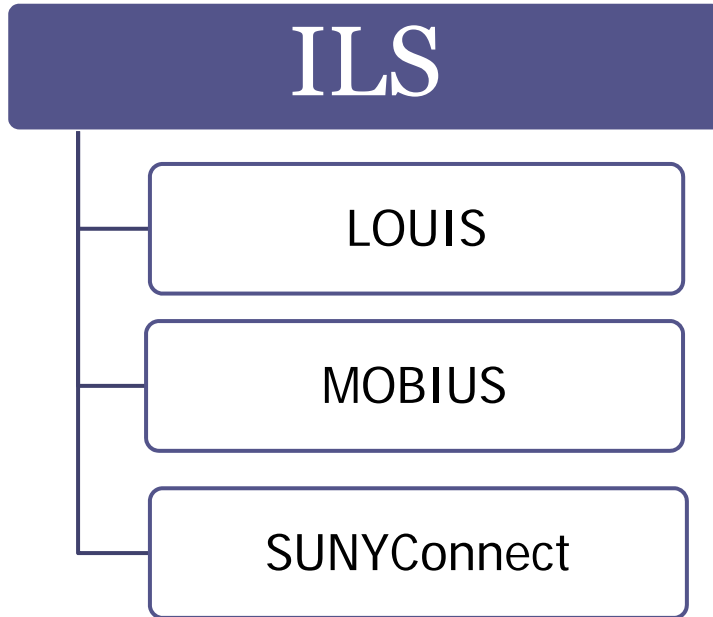


# Consortia Formation - Other

- CARLI (2005)
- ICCOC (1999)
- TBR Deans and Directors Group (mid-1980s)

# Membership

# Single Membership Level



# Carolina Consortium

- Open virtual consortium
- No membership fees
- No voting membership

# CCLC

- 112 community colleges in CA (participants)
- Others in AZ, TX, OR
- Only reps from CA colleges may serve on Council of Chief Librarians (governing body)
- Annual fee of \$125 for Council of Chief Librarians

# ICCOC

- No membership fees
- 7 community colleges (some multiple campuses)
- Each member has one vote (chief academic officer)
- Funded through portion of tuition payments

# TBR LDDG

- Based on collaboration and communication
- Not focused on electronic resource licensing
- No membership fees
- One vote per institution

# VALE

- Council made up of chief library administrator from each campus
- One vote regardless of institution type
- No membership fees
- Service fee attached to annual invoice based on previous year database expenditures



# Wyoming CCC

- 7 member colleges represented by library director
- No membership fees; funding provided by state!
- Each has one vote

# LOUIS

- Formerly only public academic colleges
- Now includes museums and archives
- Has ILS component but not required
- Members may vote on electronic resources
- Membership fees depend on services and FTE
- No member requirements

# MOBIUS

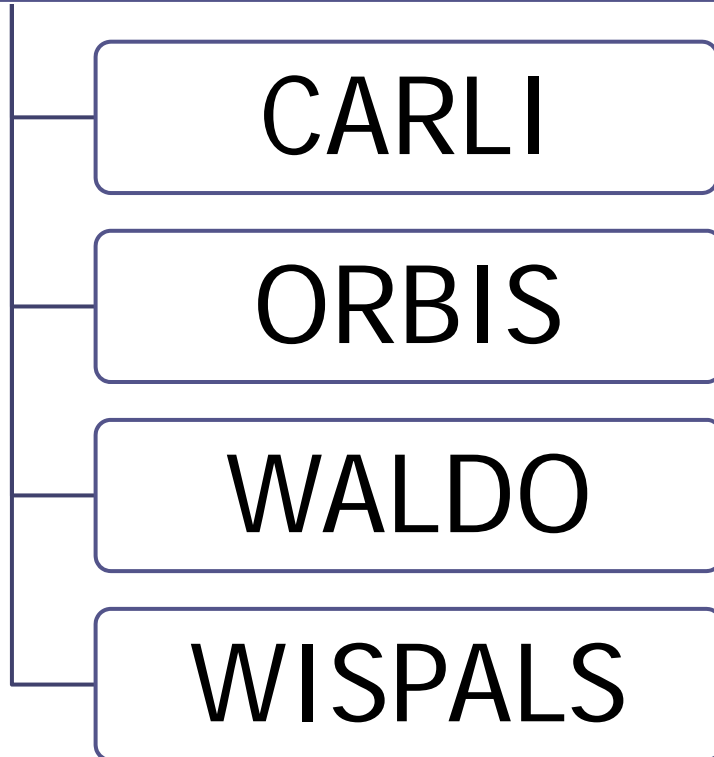
- ILS based
- Membership fees = \$10,000 per institution (incl. community colleges)
- Assessment fee (multiple factors)
- Cooperating Partners
  - No membership fees (run own servers)
  - Assessment fees
  - Now voting privileges with equal vote

# SUNYConnect

- ILS fees
- Additional fees for databases
- Recently introduced
  - Core services (everyone pays)
  - Optional services (buy into)
- Membership votes through elected Council
- State pays 35%; 65% paid by campuses

# Multiple Membership Levels

**ILS**



**No ILS**



# NILRC

- Full Member
  - Only two-year colleges
  - Voting privileges
  - Fees \$900 annually
  - Now includes Missouri
- Associate Member
  - Electronic resource purchasing
  - Fees \$400 annually + \$100 per database
  - Includes four year colleges

# RLDC

- Full Members
  - Participation in core database (removed 2009)
  - Staff salary
  - 10 two-year colleges; 8 four-year colleges
  - No membership fees; no formal voting
- Affiliate Members
  - Participate in electronic resources
  - No staff salary contribution

# CARLI

- **Governing Membership**
  - Annual Fees: \$1,000-\$10,000 (FTE and type)
  - Vote in governance
- **Associate Membership**
  - Annual Flat rate \$500
  - Participates in governance as group
- **Basic Membership**
  - Annual Flat rate \$100
  - No participation in governance



# Orbis Cascade Alliance

- Full Members
  - Participation in shared catalog – (OCLC Navigator), courier service and electronic resources
  - Membership dues (40% same; 60% FTE)
  - Distinct way of counting FTE for community colleges
  - Vote on Alliance Council
- Program Members
  - Northwest Digital Archives
  - No governance participation
- Contracted Services Members
  - Electronic resources, courier service
  - No governance participation

# WALDO

- Full Membership
  - Shared ILS, reciprocal borrowing, ILL
  - Flat membership fees
  - Two votes
- Associate Membership
  - No participation in ILS
  - Some membership fees
  - One vote
- Limited Membership
  - Contract for ER and services
  - No vote

# WISPALS

- Full Members (10/11)
  - Participates in ILS, staff salary, e-reserves, electronic resources
  - No membership fees – split ILS and staff salary
  - Voting member
- Participating Members (1/11)
  - E-reserves and electronic resources
  - Representation on Consortium Board but no voting rights
- Cooperative Purchasing Member
  - Recently added
  - No members

# Membership Wrap-up

- Membership structure varies; specific to consortium purpose and foundation
- Membership fees/requirements/services are varied
- Tied to governance
- Inclusiveness –partnerships

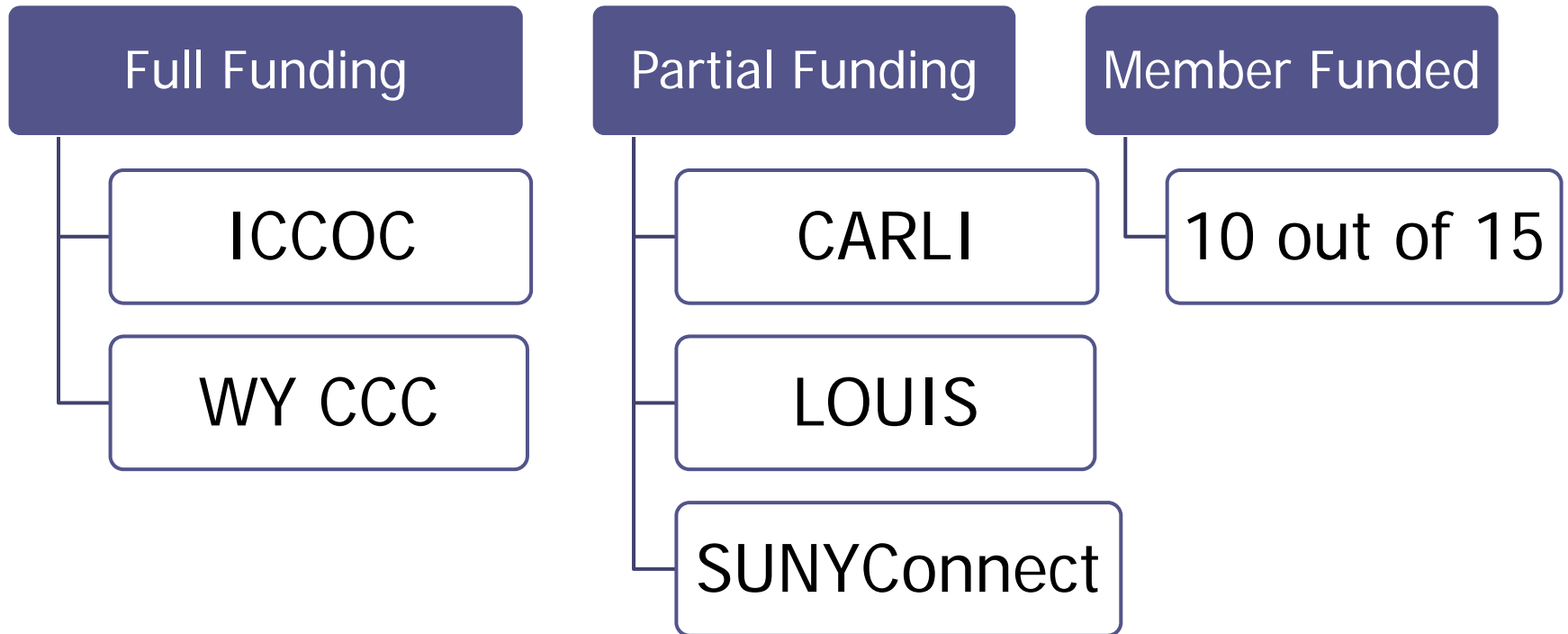
# GOVERNANCE

# Findings

- Most have staff (12/15) (TBR, WY, CC)
- Staff focuses on day-to-day operations
- Members focus on governance
- 9 out of 15 have smaller subgroups or councils
  - Consortium administration
  - Set strategic directions
  - Make recommendation to larger membership bodies
- Varied voting structures
- 4 out of 15 are reviewing shift to 501C3

# ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

# Funding for Electronic Resources





# Electronic Resource Pricing

- Use vendor pricing
- Primarily FTE
  - Two-year colleges often pay 50% of four-year college price
- Some formulas and minimum and maximum caps to address pricing issues
- Work with all pricing models from vendors
- Time intensive but worth it.

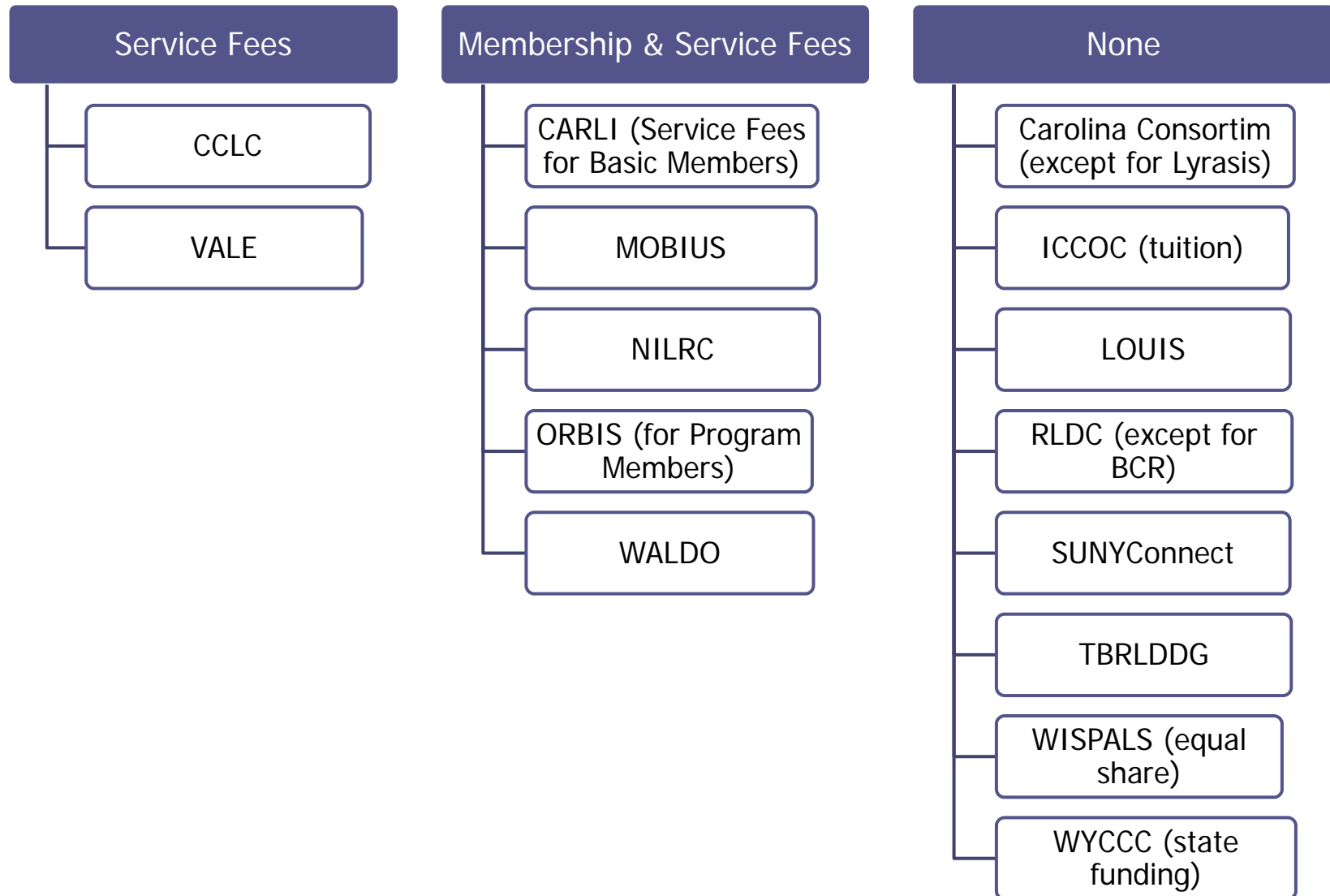
# Desired Model

- Tiered (e.g. 0-1500 FTE)
- Additional discount based on participation
- FTE model

# Unpopular Vendor Pricing Models

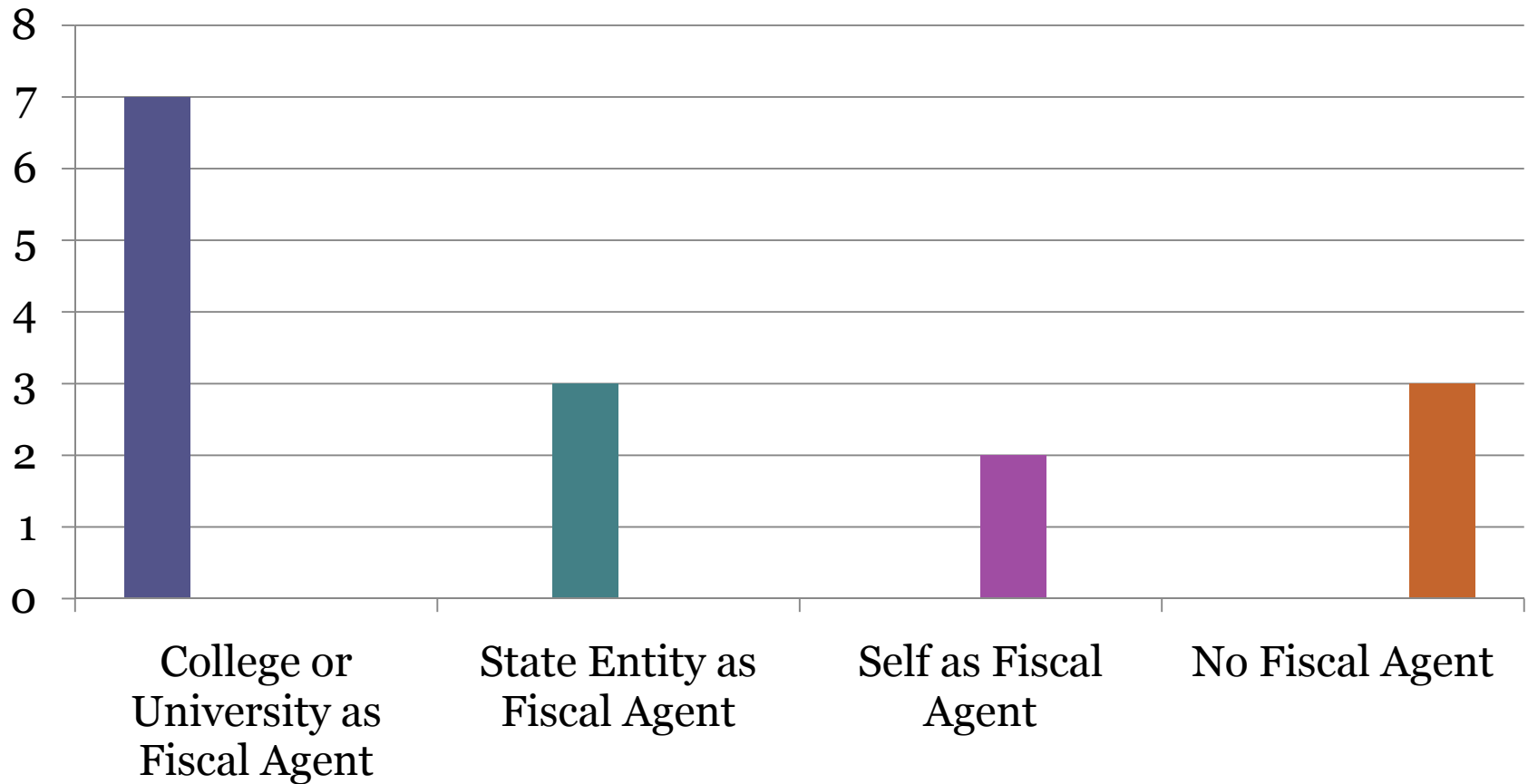
- Volume based (certain number of institutions must participate)
- Usage based (disincentive to use product)
- Package extended only to new participants
- Packages based on total dollar amounts (difficult if members drop out)

# Membership Fees vs. Surcharges



# FISCAL AGENCY

# Fiscal Agency



# Cost of Fiscal Agency

- Difficult to determine
- Operational expenses 2-10% of consortium's expenditures
- Average of \$100,000 for staff and services (calculated from 4 consortia) - not just fiscal agency
- Some colleges, state entities do not charge consortium

# POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES



# Positive Attributes

- Ability to leverage size to reduce prices for electronic resources and systems
- Community, commitment, collaboration
- Professional development component (training and conferences) (MOBIUS, LOUIS, VALE)

# Positive Attributes contin.

- Consortia staff members
- Consolidate invoicing, licensing services, vendor negotiations
- Flexibility in addressing needs and concerns of members

# CHALLENGES / GOALS

# Challenges

- Funding
  - 4 consortia considering 501C3 status



**Underlying  
challenge is  
always money but  
you don't operate  
under fear of that.**

# Challenges contin.

- Organizational structure or governance
- Membership issues
  - Technological change will drive membership
  - Retiring deans and directors
  - Merging different membership groups into new structure
  - Moving members forward in rapid technological change

# Challenges contin.

- Provision of Electronic Resources
  - Funding
  - Finding resources to meet both 2- and 4- year college needs
  - Time spent on coordination exceeds money saved
  - Vendors (too much time, lack of standards and organization in how they approach pricing, adjusting pricing expectations)

# Challenges contin.

- Ability to come to consensus and communication
- Empowerment (relinquishing local control for security )
- Competition with other consortia





**The bottom  
line is to  
provide  
libraries with  
options**

# Goals

- Many linked to funding
  - Survival
  - Maintain status quo
- Organizational restructuring
- Continue providing service to academic libraries, cost savings for members, identify new services or resources that will help libraries save time.
- Cooperative shared models – continues as theme

# BEST PRACTICES

# Best Practices - Critical Features

- Membership – definition and management
- Governance structure
- Services offered

# Best Practices - Critical Features

- Fiscal agency
- Online distance education consortia
- Continual review of practices and relationships

**The way a consortium did things when it started may not be the best way to do things today.**



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