

## **Notes from ALA Midwinter Council Meetings**

Lauren Wallis

Delaware Chapter Councilor

### **Council 1**

Scholarships and Study Grants Committee:

Opportunity for mid-career library workers who want to get involved in ALA governance: Council voted to create the Lois Ann Gregory-Wood Fellows award to support an ALA member to attend a full cycle of ALA (Midwinter and Annual) in order to learn about and engage in ALA governance. This award will be available to anyone who is an ALA member and is a library staff member, trustee, or friend with at least five years of experience in their role. I will share details about applying for this award as they become available.

Membership Committee:

Personal membership dues were adjusted based on the Consumer Price Index from 2013-2017. The Membership Committee proposes to continue this practice by placing two items on the 2018 ALA ballot: To increase dues based on the CPI again for 2018, and to propose a dues strategy to continue increases based on the CPI from 2019-2022.

Carla Hayden was nominated for honorary ALA membership based on her service to the profession.

### **Council 2**

Committee on Diversity

Resolution on Addressing Roadblocks to Diversity in the Leadership Pipeline:

This resolution acknowledges that there is an extreme lack of diversity in library leadership positions, and proposes a research study to determine barriers to diversity in leadership, with a plan to make changes to address the results. The resolution was referred to the Budget Analysis and Review Committee.

Libraries as Responsible Spaces Toolkit: The Committee on Diversity is developing a definition of "responsible spaces" and a toolkit for library staff to use as they design services, policies, and programming. At ALA Annual 2017, Council passed the [Resolution on Libraries as Responsible Spaces](#) (see p. 4) in response to increased

reporting of hate crimes in libraries. The Responsible Spaces Toolkit will be unveiled at ALA Annual 2018.

#### Freedom to Read Foundation

Currently monitoring the following developing issues:

- the FCC vote to repeal net neutrality
- the rise of hate crimes in libraries and proposals to restrict or censor hate speech
- a new movement calling for censorship or filtering of research databases, arising from an unsupported belief that the databases allow children to access pornography
- censorship of reading materials in prisons and prison libraries
- government surveillance and the actions of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court

#### Discussion of restructuring ALA:

Council had a small group brainstorming session relating to this question, posed by ALA President Jim Neal, "How might ALA reorganize itself to continue to fulfill its mission in the twenty-first century?" This question is prompted by a need to enhance services to members, retain membership, and remain financially sound as an organization. The reports from small groups revealed that Council members and other participants value ALA's emphasis on advocacy for libraries at the state and national levels, and support ALA's programs that aim to increase diversity in the profession. In regard to potential restructuring, there was some debate about the possibility of streamlining the section, round table, and interest group structure. Some spoke in favor of streamlining the structure to eliminate redundancy, while others were in favor of the current structure because it creates opportunities for more members to participate. There were also calls for a needs assessment to get feedback from members and an environmental scan to identify opportunities and threats in the current structure. This discussion of restructuring will continue at ALA Annual.

### **Council 3**

#### Intellectual Freedom Committee

Resolutions were passed to adopt two statements: "Net Neutrality: An Intellectual Freedom Issue," and "Visual and Performing Arts in Libraries: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights." Statements can be viewed [here](#), starting on p. 9.

Resolution on Socially Responsible Investments for the ALA Endowment Fund

Proposes to exclude fossil fuel investments and continue to support socially responsible investments. This resolution was referred to the Budget Analysis and Review Committee.

Discussion of 2019 Budget (to be approved at ALA Annual)

Some council members expressed concern about deficit budgeting. There were several recommendations that the new president not take on presidential initiatives and limit travel. Other council members supported running a deficit budget in order to make the organization better for members in order to retain membership. One of the things they want to spend money on is IT infrastructure, which could provide better member experience and engagement.

Advocacy for federal funding for libraries: The fiscal year 2019 budget proposes eliminating IMLS, as it did last year. The ALA Washington Office launched [ala.org/fundlibraries](http://ala.org/fundlibraries) immediately after the budget was released. This page includes links to contact legislators to share stories about your library and advocate for continued federal funding.