TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Implementation Working Group (EDI-IWG)

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT: Report

ACTION REQUESTED BY: Melissa Cardenas Dow, Co-Chair EDI-IWG, and Martin Garnar, Co-Chair EDI-IWG

CONTACT PERSON:

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DRAFT OF MOTION: NA

DATE: June 10, 2019

BACKGROUND:

The final report of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Implementation Working Group. Report shares reflections on the journey, presents principles to guide the work of the association, and offers final thoughts on the association's next steps.

ATTACHMENTS:

Final Report of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Implementation Working Group

Introduction

In 2016, the ALA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Implementation Working Group (EDI-IWG) was formed with a charge to "implement the recommendations of the Task Force on EDI with the units designated by the Task Force final report." The EDI-IWG membership was composed of representatives from units with major roles identified in the recommendations, including the Committee on Diversity; the Conference Committee; the Training, Orientation, and Leadership Development Committee; the ODLOS Advisory Committee; the Librarians Build Communities Membership Initiative Group; and, for the sake of continuity, a few at-large members who had previously served on the Task Force.

Over the last three years, we, the members of the EDI-IWG, have worked closely with the ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services (ODLOS) to monitor the implementation of those recommendations, and we are pleased to present this final report. This report builds on and is a capstone to prior EDI-IWG updates from ODLOS. Here, we share reflections on our journey, present principles to guide the work of the association, and offer our final thoughts on the association's next steps.

Reflections

Members of the EDI-IWG were asked to reflect on three questions about the process of working towards the Task Force's recommendations:

1. What did you learn?
2. What barriers and/or successes existed?
3. How do you think the work should progress?

When all our responses came together, we identified the main points highlighted below. We offer some selections from our individual responses to help provide context for these main points and hope they will help frame the principles and recommendations that follow.

Silos within ALA present potential barriers to implementation across the organization, but there's interest and momentum to cross those barriers.

"The association is so much more siloed and segmented than I could have ever imagined, but there are a lot of people who are willing to do the work and who want to do the work to make the association and librarianship better."

"There are some siloed conversations and movements that have the potential to become dynamic and inclusive of all types of libraries. [We] almost need a "One Purpose" approach that all divisions can buy into and work collaboratively on together."

"If we work on building trust and relationships within the larger association, that could help lay the foundation for any coordination efforts."

"The ultimate success is in the visibility of the topics at this point, and we just need to keep the momentum in a forward motion and work as a unit across the association, not just in our silos."

"Many of us discussed the barriers within ALA related to the complexity of the organization (multiple mentions of silos), and we're heartened by the embracing of EDI by the membership as well as the organization. ODLOS will be key to future success and needs to be properly resourced. We are so used to having few resources that we've become accustomed to scarcity. We are concerned about the fragmentation of the work, so how do we support a core community of EDI practice? The challenge is to offer coordination without being viewed as controlling, and we need to work on building trust within the association and the profession."

Shared definitions and positive (re)framing lay the groundwork for change. Truly lasting change takes time and patience.

"I have learned that focusing on definitions is foundational since most people use these as driving forces of the varying work in equity, diversity, and inclusion."

"I think we still need to figure out how to reframe this discussion away from being a problem to solve, as it stigmatizes the very communities being ignored as being problematic."

"I've learned that this work will be ongoing, slow, and incremental-- but that people are deeply interested, especially in this political climate, where racism, misogyny, and polarizing viewpoints around issues of EDI have been nakedly on display."

"We are a large organization, and change comes slowly. There are some structural issues within the association and the profession that favor dominant cultures/communities, and I don't know how to fix them, but the good news is that I'm not trying to do this by myself."

Existing communication channels provide a good starting point, but success will require a commitment to ongoing, relationship-based leadership.

"I think the single most important thing is to strengthen the nascent communication network we've developed to make sure all the groups involved in EDI continue to talk to each other so that they can (1) build on each other's work, (2) build each other up when times are tough, and (3) work together with ODLOS instead of in their silos."

"There is strong will to see that this conversation is sustained and impactful to the organization, which is helpful in ensuring the conversations will continue."

"Since EDI is part of ALA's Strategic Plan and part of its core values, ALA needs to put money where its mouth is and designate more financial and staff resources to this endeavor."

"I think the key to initial success will be leveraging existing communication channels and organizational structures."

"We need to think about our desired end result and then think about what it would take to get there. One possible vision of the future: ODLOS is respected as the home of EDI expertise and is the first-place people go when thinking about EDI before starting on their own projects. We also need to figure out how best to coordinate efforts across the association and to develop trust through relationship-building."

Guiding Principles for the Association

ALA American Library Association

ADVOCACY   INFORMATION POLICY

OUR CULTURE

Caring
Centralization
Change
Commitment
Communication
Consistency
Cooperation & Collaboration
Coordination
Courage
Cultural Competency
& Humility

PROFESSIONALISM AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

The following principles encapsulate the rigorous intellectual, reflective, and anecdotal work conducted over the past five years by both the Task Force and the Implementation Working Group for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. We invite all staff and members of the American Library Association to adopt and embrace the following principles, in order to foster and sustain a culture of EDI in perpetuity.

- Communication
  - Proactively share information across the association, keeping members and staff informed about our work related to EDI.
  - Model EDI in our communication methods by using accessible technology and inclusive language.
  - Find, share, and publicize gaps concerning EDI issues within the Association, and communicate progress made towards addressing these gaps.
  - Enlist feedback from groups within and members at all levels throughout the association, soliciting perspectives and ideas for projects that serve to address EDI concerns.
- Courage
  - Accept and acknowledge our own implicit biases as well as those of others that can surface during exploration of EDI issues within our association.
  - Confront unconscious bias, power dynamics, microaggressions, white privilege, and other forms of discrimination with respect for one another.
- Centralization
  - Recognize the importance of not duplicating efforts and pledge to work with ODLOS to ensure that our EDI initiatives are not isolated.
  - Commit to work in partnership with ODLOS to capitalize on our shared expertise.
- Cultural competency/humility
  - Acknowledge that our ability to be of best service to our patrons and coworkers is strengthened by our quest to understand our differences.
  - Affirm that a critical component of cultural competency is a mentality and holistic approach that is imbued with humility.
  - Recognize that cultural competence must be understood as never complete and must continually adapt to situations and circumstances.
  - Respect each patron and colleague as the expert on their own life, knowing that we bring our whole selves to every interaction.
- Consistency
  - Make decisions informed by our principles, not based upon our resources.
  - Expect consistent messaging and actions around EDI across all ALA units.
  - Depend on the same level of responsiveness related to EDI issues no matter where we are in the association.
- Cooperation & Collaboration
  - Foster a sense of cooperation and collaboration by reaching out from our various siloed units to connect and engage with other divisions, round tables, ethnic affiliates, committees, interest groups, and all other units.
  - Incorporate EDI principles into our respective unit's charges for this shared work.

- o Collaborate with Library and Information Science (LIS) programs to educate and prepare new generations of LIS students with the tools and resources needed to make equity, diversity, and inclusion driving factors throughout their library careers and beyond.
  - o Honor and amplify the work of our ethnic affiliates and collaborate when appropriate.
- Coordination
  - o Continue to embed the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion in all facets of ALA operations, programs, and business ventures.
  - o Hold ALA leadership accountable in coordinating EDI principles as a matter of everyday business.
- Commitment
  - o Demonstrate our association's focus on EDI by committing financial and staff resources to this endeavor.
  - o Enhance recruitment, mentoring, and networking activities by and within all parts of ALA to build a diverse and inclusive profession.
  - o Review information policy positions and strategies revising them as needed to clearly articulate the values of equity, diversity and inclusion.
  - o Celebrate EDI principles as part of our everyday work.
- Change
  - o Review our own internal structures to see where our organization creates barriers to access, professional development, and leadership growth.
  - o Embrace and ensure flexibility, openness, and responsiveness to new voices and ideas for individual members and the association as a whole.
  - o Stay engaged and active and encourage members in the organization by welcoming and implementing sustainable changes.
- Caring
  - o Celebrate our differences, encourage contributions by all, and affirm the grace, dignity, and worthiness of each of us within the association and library profession.
  - o Extend our deepest gratitude, respect, and affinity for all of our past, present, and future colleagues throughout the association and profession who experience, confront, and/or propose solutions for challenges and barriers to equity, diversity, and inclusion.
  - o Nurture sustainable practice, recognizing that we all need space for reflection and healing from the emotional labor of empathizing with patrons and each other.

Conclusion

Gleaned from our reflections and observations through our years of work in this group and through the reports of work done by others who came before, we must first acknowledge the tremendous amount of investment of time, energy, and treasure generously provided by member leaders of the American Library Association. Since the Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion final report came out in 2016, many have stood up to help, learn, and grow the association, building upon the foundation that was set by diversity advocates in our association many years before. The work that we have done is not new and many have been doing this work for a long time, for small gains along the way. Though the work and efforts given by many have been numerous and plentiful, especially in the last three years, we must also acknowledge that the

work of infusing ALA's structure and practices with social justice perspectives that center equity, diversity, and inclusion is still ongoing.

The years-long investments by ODLOS and ALA's members have resulted in beneficial, yet surface-level changes. The lasting change we desire is unevenly realized. Without our collective acceptance of our individual unconscious biases and their deep connection to well-meaning, yet still racist and discriminatory actions, we will continue to struggle and obtain needed, yet less-than-hoped-for results.

Still, our collective acknowledgements give us great and ample reasons to recognize and celebrate the positive impact of our collective, cumulative efforts.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Cardenas-Dow, Co-Chair, 2016-2019
Martin Garnar, Co-Chair and Committee on Diversity Representative, 2016-2019
Libby Holtman, Training, Orientation, and Leadership Committee Representative, 2017-2019
Mike Marlin, Executive Board Representative and Member, 2016-2019
Hannah Lee Park, Conference Committee Representative, 2016-2019
Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada, ODLOS Advisory Committee Representative and Member, 2016-2019
LaJuan Pringle, Member-at-Large, 2016-2019
Sara Kay Zettervall, Librarians Build Community MIG, 2016-2019
Jody Gray, ALA Staff Liaison, 2016-2019

We would also like to thank Max Macias (At-Large, 2016-2018), Leslie Scott (TOLD Representative, 2016-2017), and Julie Todaro (Executive Board Liaison, 2016-2017) for their service and contributions.

Reports

- Equity at Issue: Library Services to the Nation's Four Major Minority Groups, Report of the President's Committee on Library Services to Minorities, 1985-86 CD#30
  http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/diversity/EquityatIssue_FullReport_1985.pdf
- Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Final Report, June 2016
  http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/TFEDIFinalReport_ALA_CONNECT.pdf
- Strategic Direction: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Implementation Plan, October 2017
  http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/diversity/EDI-SD-Implementation-FINAL.pdf
- 2016 Report on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Recommendations, EDI-Implementation Working Group, Midwinter 2017
  http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/diversity/EDIRecommendationsReportJune-December2016-Final%20Version.pdf
- 2017 Report on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Recommendations, EDI-Implementation Working Group, Midwinter 2018
  http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/diversity/EBD_5.8_EDI%20Recommendations%20Report_MW2018_Final.pdf

- 2017 Report on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Recommendations, EDI-Implementation Working Group, Midwinter 2019
  http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/diversity/EBD%2012.16_2018%20Recommendations.pdf

Appendix A: Map of Guiding Principles to Implementation Plan Strategies

Each of the Guiding Principles supports at least one of the ten strategies identified in the October 2017 implementation plan for the strategic direction of equity, diversity, and inclusion. The principles with their linked strategies are listed below, followed by the full text of the implementation plan.

- Communication: Strategy 5
- Courage: Strategies 1, 3, & 9
- Centralization: Strategies 8 & 10
- Cultural competency/humility: Strategy 9
- Consistency: Strategy 5
- Cooperation & Collaboration: Strategies 2 & 6
- Coordination: Strategy 10
- Commitment: Strategies 5 & 7
- Change: Strategies 4 & 5
- Caring: Strategy 9

Summary

The American Library Association recognizes that equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) impacts all aspects of work among members of the Association, within the field of librarianship, and within the communities served by libraries. This work includes addressing, dismantling, and transforming policies, structures and biases throughout the organization and the field of librarianship. ALA, through its actions and those of its members, is instrumental in creating a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive society.

Goals

Goal 1: Commit to ameliorating marginalization and underrepresentation within the Association and the communities served by libraries through increased understanding of the effects of historical exclusion.

Goal 2: Expand the work of ALA and its allies in building a diverse and inclusive profession.

Goal 3: Provide context and understanding of the concepts of equity, diversity, and inclusion and recognize their intersectional and complex nature.

Goal 4: Empower ALL ALA members to participate in the life of their organization.

Goal 5. Establish resources and support so libraries and librarians can be effective advocates for the inclusion of all individuals in the life of their community.

Goal 6: Establish ALA as a major voice for the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion in all areas of information policy.

Goal 7: Provide safe, respectful space for diverse voices and perspectives.

Strategies

Strategy 1: Conduct or provide professional development opportunities that address issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Strategy 2: Review ALA alliances and coalitions to increase focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Strategy 3: Build a national advocacy campaign based on existing advocacy assets which focus on the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion; empower all ALA members to advocate within their workplace, their community and beyond.

Strategy 4: Gather, develop, and disseminate research documenting the value of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Strategy 5 Review information policy positions and strategies and revise as needed to clearly articulate the values of equity, diversity and inclusion.

Strategy 6: Work with graduate programs in Library and Information Science (LIS) to increase focus on equity, diversity and inclusion within LIS programs and within the subject matter of the curricula.

Strategy 7: Enhance recruitment, mentoring and networking activities by all parts of ALA (including ALA Chapters) – building on and expanding all components of the Association (including Spectrum), as well as its affiliates and chapters – to build a diverse and inclusive leadership for the Association and the profession.

Strategy 8: Ensure that the values of equity, diversity and inclusion are embedded in all continuing education, including ALA and ALA Division conferences, relating to all aspects of the profession and its practice.

Strategy 9: Develop continuing education specifically focused on understanding and addressing unconscious bias, power dynamics, microaggressions, white privilege and other topics related to equity, diversity and inclusion.

Strategy 10: Critically examine the way that equity, diversity, and inclusion are addressed and coordinated throughout the Association.

Appendix B: Librarians Build Communities Final Report

Origins and Emerging Leaders Projects

This section is a summary of the more complete history found at http://www.ala.org/aboutala/lbc/story.
Librarians Build Communities (LBC) was inspired by a successful volunteer effort following Hurricane Katrina, in which ALA sponsored two days of volunteer efforts during the 2006 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans. Between 2007 and 2010, ALA members used the New Orleans effort as a model for volunteer events at ALA conferences in Washington, D.C.; Anaheim, CA; and Chicago, IL. These efforts shared a focus on working with libraries and schools in need of help in the conference cities. This practice continued under the Librarians Build Communities banner and came under the sponsorship of Don Wood and the ALA Chapter Relations Office.

Beginning in 2011, the Chapter Relations Office fostered a series of LBC projects for ALA Emerging Leaders teams. The 2012, 2013, and 2014 Emerging Leaders teams that worked on LBC built on the foundation laid in 2011 to begin to create a replicable model for library volunteerism. This included investigating, creating, and sharing processes and platforms in two areas: individual connections between librarians willing to volunteer to help other libraries in need, and official volunteer events during ALA Annual Conferences and Midwinter Meetings. Throughout development, these resources were promoted via Chapter Relations to state library associations, some of which created LBC-based programs at their own state library conferences.

Membership Initiative Group

The 2014 Emerging Leaders team working on LBC made a goal of turning the models and platforms developed by previous groups into an official ALA effort that would have long-term sustainability. To that end, they successfully petitioned for the creation of a Librarians Build Communities Membership Initiative Group (LBC MIG). As a MIG, they established an official ALA web presence that incorporated the foundational work of previous teams (http://www.ala.org/aboutala/lbc/) and Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/LibrariansBuildCommunities/) that garnered over 1500 members.

The MIG's three-year term began at ALA Annual in Las Vegas in 2014, with commitments from members of the 2014 EL team to continue oversight and decide whether to renew the MIG in 2017. The MIG produced reports in 2014, 2015, and 2016 detailing volunteer events at the state and national level, as well as efforts to promote the MIG and recruit additional ALA members to take on LBC leadership roles. The MIG's formation happened just before the riots in Ferguson, MO, that drew attention to the key role public libraries can play in supporting communities in turmoil. This helped focus attention within ALA on the importance of the grassroots, community-building efforts of groups like the LBC.

Participation in the EDI-IWG and Legacy

In 2016, the ALA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Task Force concluded two years of work and made a series of recommendations to ALA staff and members. LBC's work was incorporated into the recommendations, leading to a member of the LBC (Sara Zettervall) to be invited to join the next phase of ALA's EDI work, the Implementation Working Group (IWG). As the sponsor of the EDI-IWG, the Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services (ODLOS) also offered financial and logistical support to the LBC volunteer effort at the 2016 ALA Annual Conference in Orlando, FL.

In spite of many successes over the years, LBC faced a number of challenges, both as an EL project and as a MIG. The name was very similar to two recent ALA presidential initiatives (Libraries Build Communities and Libraries Transform), which could be confusing for members. While LBC always enjoyed strong support from ALA staff members, it saw less success in recruiting member volunteers for ongoing leadership. EL team members moved on to other responsibilities without finding enough dedicated replacements to continue LBC oversight, in spite of multiple and varied recruitment efforts. Similarly, LBC lacked funding and found homes within ALA units that were not membership divisions. As LBC became a more official effort, it also became clear that there were potential legal risks for ALA in transporting conference attendees to participate offsite. At the same time, both ODLOS and the CRO developed their own resources for librarians to respond to colleagues in crisis: Libraries Respond (http://www.ala.org/advocacy/diversity/libraries-respond) and Helping United States Libraries After Disasters (http://www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/cro/getinvolved/helpinglibraries).

In light of these developments, and in close consultation with the EDI-IWG, remaining LBC leadership, ODLOS, and the CRO, the decision was made to allow the LBC MIG to sunset at the end of its three-year term. However, the LBC retains its official ALA web pages, which alongside the above-mentioned resources, provide guides and resources that are always available to ALA members. The LBC Facebook page was opened for members to post to the timeline about relevant issues, rather than being controlled by the MIG, and is monitored by the Director of ODLOS. In addition, the EDI-IWG has interwoven LBC values into its work. For example, grassroots community impacts during conferences are now supported through ODLOS local guides to connect conference attendees with diversely-owned businesses (e.g., https://sites.google.com/view/ala-dc-diverse-businesses/).

If ALA members rise en masse to plan, promote, and execute conference volunteer events in the future, LBC can be resurrected, or a new effort can build on this existing work. For now, the spirit of LBC lives on in its tools, resources, and influence on ALA's EDI work.

Report submitted 06/05/2019 by Sara Zettervall, LBC Representative to the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Task Force Recommendations Implementation Working Group