ACRL DSS Virtual Town Hall Meeting Notes
June 11, 2019

- ACRL DSS Exec prioritized this Virtual Town Hall to make sure equity, diversity, and inclusion is integrated into the section.
  - What do members think?
  - We want to hear from you!
  - Opportunity to meet virtually and test this platform out (Zoom)
    - Provide safe space to talk about these important topics
  - Acknowledge work of EDI Committee
  - What programming did we want to put together for Midwinter, Annual Meeting, Virtually, and EDI Committee has started to put programming together on EDI topics.
  - We are not recording session so everyone can feel comfortable
    - “be open to being wrong”
  - Group norms
    - Be present during town hall
    - Speak for yourself, not for others
    - All voices count
    - Balance your participation: both speak and listen
    - Ask questions for clarification to avoid making assumptions
    - Offer the reasoning behind your thinking
    - Questions for clarification are welcome
    - Offer the reasoning behind our thinking, so we can all understand where each is coming from

- Discussion of draft DSS Community Agreement moderated by Kristin Mapes
  - Intention of committee
    - Framing things positively and aspirationally for who we want to be as a section, not punitively. Holding ourselves to a high standard of professional engagement.
    - Embolden member to use this agreement to resist oppression
    - Embed it into fabric of session’s practices as a whole, at every virtual and in-person meeting or social event
    - Embed it into digital scholarship work writ large
  - Seeking your feedback
    - Are there aspects of allyship and anti-oppressive behavior we overlooked?
    - What questions and concerns do you have about the community agreement?
What sorts of processes would DSS members like to see for us to address problems?

What questions or concerns do you have more generally related to diversity, equity, and inclusion?

○ Community comments, Q&A

What is the process in the future for amending the community agreement? We should establish a mechanism.

Were there discussions about the role of ACRL versus the role of the section? This is a community agreement for members of the section, not a code of conduct, which ALA already has, and which ACRL (as a division) follows. This is a supplement to the ALA statement of appropriate conduct.

Reviewing whether to have a form/email address available for members to provide feedback/reporting to section

Seeking to provide leadership in these areas as a section to ACRL at large.

What is the training for individuals enacting the community agreement

EDI Committee as “first responders” when there is a breach of the community agreement

DSS represents a wider community beyond those that are members of section but individual members may not feel they can represent the broader “digital scholarship” community

Does the community agreement speak only for DSS as a section of ACRL or does it also represent, in some form, the larger digital scholarship community?

Request for link to DSS community agreement to become publicly available and linked from section/EDI committee charge. It will also be posted to ALA Connect.

Process for reporting incidents: Wanted to provide a form for feedback but we were informed by ACRL we could not provide such a form. Possible mechanisms of reporting include:

● form somewhere (through ACRL) that is monitored for members to provide feedback/report incidents
● general feedback form, not exclusive for incident reporting

Role of DSS as an advocate, work with ALA/ACRL, for there to be a formal process for reporting incidents/provide feedback.

Call for feedback from DSS membership on what they would like to see in this process and what role DSS should play

Mary Jane Petrowski asks whether we have seen the ALA crisis management plan April 20, 2019, 16 pages long? No, the committee has not seen this document.

● Includes definition of crisis
● Tips for responses
• Checklist
  • Provides an idea of how communication process works
  • Question: Does this document include information on process for incidents that do not occur in person/at conferences
  • Document includes information on:
    ○ Serious crisis, internal crisis, industry crisis
  • Participants expressed via Q&A that “It would be ideal for ACRL to provide a reporting/communication process to all Sections and Committees, if there is a preference to keep a unified approach.” Additionally, participants expressed desire for strong formal reporting mechanisms, as well as clarity that statement of appropriate conduct covers virtual as well as in-person spaces.
  • Wanted to balance tone in community agreement between framing it as positive/aspirational but include information on consequences for a breach, such as incidents of harassment and oppressive behavior.
  • Goal is to disclose community agreement before meetings as the framing document for those meetings while also addressing incidents with real impact and outline what the section can do to deter/address those violations in compliance with ACRL/ALA policy.
  • Current process: Official reporting has to go through ALA ("inform conference services"), section is pushing to serve as advocates for members in instances where community agreement is breached.
  • If ALA statement of appropriate conduct is primarily for in-person environments, we as a section could lead in developing a community version for digital environments.
  • There is a policy/code for using ALA Connect that may serve as a model for digital interactions: https://connect.ala.org/codeofconduct

• Discussion of allyship facilitated by Dr. Roopika Risam
  • It’s difficult to be an ally, and it’s ongoing work. As someone who thinks about oppression all the time, she herself sometimes finds it difficult to know how to respond in some moments; she, too, responds with uncertainty and anxiety.
  • Advice and tips for thinking through on how to be an ally
    ■ These recommendations are informed by Anatomy of an Ally from Teaching Tolerance and the Guide to Allyship by Amélie Lamont
    ■ Allyship is not separate from our own identities and our identities are many and intersectional
    ■ Being an ally is being able to recognize oppression when we see it and stand in solidarity with those who experience it, whether or not the ally also belong to a targeted group.
Allyship is about commitment, not about any single moment

Oppression may not be overt, must be willing to break institutional oppression, and begin professional discussions to address it.

Allyship is difficult, we will mostly all say the wrong things at times as we are all recipients of societal messages that normalize oppression.

We will make mistakes, you must own them and recognize when we have been oppressive, must be willing to change patterns of thinking

Don'ts:
- Do not expect someone else to tell you or show you how to be an ally
- Take responsibility to learn yourself about identities and experiences that are not your own
- Respond to oppression but do not attempt to set the direction unless you are part of the oppressed identities

Dos:
- Do be aware of your own implicit biases, we all have them
- Do the research about the experiences that are not your own
- Do the work on yourselves about how you participate in oppressive systems
- Do amplify the voices of those without your privilege
- Apologize if you have oppressed, even if you did not intend to do so. Good intention does not mitigate the impact on the oppressed
- Understand your role vs. the role of the institution in oppression
- Understand the compounding role of oppression on the intersectionality of identities (i.e., gender identity and socio-economic status)

Questions?
- No questions
- Scenarios that have happened and could happen in the digital scholarship section
  - Questions to guide your consideration of each scenario:
    - How does the DSS Community Agreement apply to this situation?
    - What does allyship look like in this case?
    - How might you respond to the behavior you have witnessed?
    - What are the next steps you would take?
    - What are your concerns or hesitations about responding to the situation?

Scenario 1, in a DSS session: During a discussion meeting, you witness one person verbally attacking another person in the room. The attack is not a response to ideas and professional in nature but is personal and concerns identity.
- Participant: Hard to recognize when the attack is racialized; often the language is very couched. Risam: Observe how the person
being attacked receives/experiences the attack. Center the person experiencing oppression, without centering ourselves or the attacker.

- Intervening without confronting:
  - Subtly examining the language/behavior to understand the situation
  - Participant: Sometimes confrontation can be useful, move yourself into the physical space where the incident is taking place as a form of intervention/physical allyship

- How do we balance interjecting without speaking for others? Center the person experiencing the attack, evaluate their response. Make eye contact, ask “hey you okay?”

- Scenario 2: At ALA Annual but not in a DSS session. In the exhibit hall you see a known member of DSS speaking rudely to a person in a way that seems motivated by identity-based bias.
  - The community agreement applies.
  - Strategies? Walk over to the person being attacked. You have freedom of motion in the exhibit hall, unlike, say, as an audience member of a panel presentation. Take advantage of the affordances of the space. Try to discern, or ask, what the person being attacked wants or needs. Ask that person as an aside. Also/or: “Ugh, that was shitty. Do you want to get out of here, go get coffee? Would you like someone to advocate or help you to report? Or do you want some alone time?”
  - Participant: This scenario underscores the need to have a broader reporting process connecting with ALA/ACRL where there is DSS involvement (not just an ALA-led process disengaged from DSS itself, giving DSS agency to call out this behavior.

- Scenario 3: Online interaction. DSS-L email discussion list member sends an email claiming that overtly racist practices (e.g., blackface) are not universally bad.
  - Not necessarily a clearly identifiable person who is a “victim,” but this statement would impact many members of a community.
  - “Piling on” may not be helpful in this situation
  - Hold a conversation, point to Community Agreement

- **Wrap-up by Brianna Marshall**
  - We’re working in an established and complicated structure within ALA. DSS can be an advocate within ALA for clear reporting mechanisms, and clear application to in-person and virtual spaces.