

Committee on Diversity (COD) Report to Council
2018 Annual Conference
New Orleans, LA

Submitted by Martin L. Garnar, Chair

Committee members: Martin L. Garnar (Chair and ODLOS Advisory Rep), Mrs. Shauntee Burns-Simpson, Ms. Virgen Milagros Gonzalez, Sukrit Goswami, Ms. Amiya P. Hutson (PBA Rep), Rebecca J. Kemp, Kelsey Dawn McLane, Ms. Ella Mae Mulford, Miriam C. Nauenburg, Ms. Satia Marshall Orange, Mr. Jose Miguel Ruiz, Mr. Jesse Bernard Sanders, III, Ms. Nichole Lynn Shabazz, Mr. Stewart A. Shaw, Ngoc-Yen Tran, Ms. Tinamarie Vella, Sara Ahmed (Intern), Tiana Trutna (Intern), Gwendolyn Prellwitz (Staff Liaison)

Accomplishments:

- COD has voted to endorse the following resolutions coming to Council at the Annual Conference: Resolution honoring African Americans who fought library segregation and Resolution on Cessation of Family Separations for Refugees Arriving at the United States Borders (endorsed in principle)
- **ALA CD#44.1, Definitions of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** ALA Council, VOTED, to add the definitions of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion developed by the Task Force (2015-2016 ALA CD#38_61316_INF, Recommendation #4.2) to the ALA *Policy Manual*; and to audit all definitions of equity, diversity, and inclusion across the association to ensure the broadest possible understanding; and explore core values and roles and responsibilities statements to assess equity, diversity, and inclusion. The Policy Monitoring Committee (PMC) decided to place the language below in Section of B.3.1.1 of the Policy Manual which will be updated after Annual Conference. PMC also distributed a survey in June to all ALA units asking to review any definitions of these terms in their materials.

Definitions of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

The American Library Association believes that everyone deserves equitable rights and opportunities. The goal is to create a just and equitable Association, profession, and society where everyone has access to social power, resources, and physical and psychological safety. ALA has chosen to define “diversity” in all its complexity in order to recognize and honor the uniqueness of each ALA member, all members of our profession, and our very diverse communities. ALA believes that, to be inclusive, our association, profession, and society must recognize the inherent worth and dignity of

every member of the community; involve and empower all members to participate and contribute; promote and sustain a sense of belonging; and value and practice respect for the talents, beliefs, backgrounds, and ways of living of all members.

- **ALA CD#44.2 Resolution on Libraries as Responsible Spaces:** the Committee on Diversity presented Transforming Community Relationships through Dialogue on 6/23/2018 from 10:30 to 11:30am and will work on creating an online resource.
- A group of members currently editing the Extending Our Reach toolkit has requested COD's review and **revision of ALA Policy B.8.10, the old Policy 61, "Library Services to the Poor"** for more inclusive language. The Policy was written in 1990. A draft of a revised Policy was shared with COD for initial feedback in May. COD will work to finalize the revision over the summer to share for member feedback before a Council vote.
- At the 2018 ALA Midwinter Meeting, Council proposed **ALA CD#37_21218_INF Resolution on Addressing Roadblocks to Diversity in the Leadership Pipeline.** The resolution calls for the American Library Association, on behalf of its members to "1) Commission a research study to determine barriers to producing a diverse leadership pipeline within the field of librarianship, 2) Explore external opportunities for funding such a study, and 3) Communicate strategies and best practices for breaking down said barriers in effective and timely ways." On Tuesday February 13, 2018, the ALA Council after discussion moved to refer the Resolution on Addressing Roadblocks to Diversity in the Leadership Pipeline to the Committee on Diversity (COD) and to BARC.

BARC ACTIONS: For the primary parties involved in the work, an initial investment of \$400,000 was identified as being necessary to address the issue. Much of the work and research highlighted in the resolution already exists and or is currently being addressed in various units across the Association. Since much of the work already exists, the committee suggests that a communication piece be developed to inform the membership of the work that is currently being done to address the issue. BARC presented this summary at the Saturday 6/23/2018 Information Session.

COD ACTIONS: Those involved with the resolution and the Committee on Diversity convened by email from February 13-20th to discuss the Council Forum feedback at Midwinter which included requests to add LGBT+ concerns to the resolution. Based on the discussion, COD unanimously upholds that actions taken in response to this resolution will focus on racial and ethnic diversity. Councilors involved with the Resolution met two more times with the Committee on Diversity. Councilors shared that they did not have a specific research question developed while crafting the resolution. COD noted that there is an existing body of research on barriers that prevent people of color from advancing to leadership roles in libraries of all types. COD identified that one way forward would be to form a group that would identify the existing research, analyze the findings, and draft the recommendations to be implemented at the local and national level. This would save time (no new study needed) and money (no new study to fund); however, volunteers would be required to

do this work. In a desire to understand better how the resolution is informed by the ongoing work of ODLOS, the conversation asked for those involved with the resolution to share more about the desired outcomes. The group recognized the work of ODLOS but identified that there is no Association-wide mandate encouraging libraries to look at the racial and ethnic diversity of their institutions; and that there is no single framework that is positioned as a requirement not a recommendation for ALA units. Planned Future Actions:

- Continue efforts to increase visibility of EDI work across association and profession to bridge divides.
- Evaluate existing frameworks (see Advancing Racial Equity in Public Libraries: Case Studies from the Field: <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/resources/advancing-racial-equity-in-public-libraries-case-studies-from-the-field/>).
- ODLOS generated report mapping existing efforts, actionable next steps and required resources will be shared with Committee on Diversity, ODLOS Member Groups and BARC at the 2019 Midwinter Meeting.

Planned Activities:

- COD will develop an online resource explaining Responsible/Safer Spaces that identifies materials, programming, marketing/outreach, and staff training and other best practices to help libraries establish themselves as safer spaces.
- COD will finalize the revision to ALA Policy B.8.10, the old Policy 61, "Library Services to the Poor" and present the revision to ALA Members for feedback by September. COD will notify PMC about the upcoming revision. The revised Policy will be taken to Council for a vote at ALA Midwinter.
- COD will review its charge. The ODLOS Advisory committee was restructured in 2015 (includes representatives from all the groups with which ODLOS liaisons, including groups that historically the Office for Diversity worked with, the Chair of COD represents the committee on it). Prior to the merger of the Office for Diversity with the Office for Literacy and Outreach Services, the Office for Diversity did not have a separate Advisory Committee hence when Committee on Diversity changed its name and last rewrote its charge (2002) the request to also serve in advisory capacity to the ALA office was included in the charge. Now that both groups work with one office and the Advisory Committee is charged with advising the office the Committee is looking its charge in the context of how COD might focus its work on its relationship to Council, ALA Policy, and the new EDI Strategic Direction.
- COD will continue efforts to assist the Diversity Councilors Caucus with convening and improve communications between the Councilors on the Caucus and the Committee between conferences.

Interactions with other units within ALA:

- Diversity Councilors Caucus: Committee meets with the Diversity Councilors Caucus. The Committee is interested in supporting new Councilors in joining the Diversity Councilors Caucuses and in hearing from more experienced Councilors about their expectations for the Committee.
- The Committee continues to support OIF's development of a Hate Speech FAQ.
- The Chair of the Committee is an ex-officio member of the ODLOS Advisory Committee and also serves on the EDI-IWG.

Relationship of the committee's work to the ALA strategic plan:

The Committee supports various strategies under the initial three Strategic Directions and is working closely with the implementation and ongoing measurement of the fourth strategic direction: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Current level of committee members' involvement:

The group is active in attending committee meetings and providing feedback as requested although the changes to ALA Connect have interrupted committee voting leading into ALA Conference.

Committee self-check on its value and viability:

- COD would like to continue to strengthen its visibility to Council and Membership.

Other issues: None at this time.