

**TO:** LITA Board of Directors

**TOPIC:** LITA Programs Opening Statements & Allyship Training Resources

**ACTION / INFORMATION / REPORT:** Action

**SUBMITTED BY:** Jennifer Brown, Chair, LITA Diversity & Inclusion Committee

**DATE:** April 9, 2019

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### **SUMMARY**

As part of the Diversity Committee's ongoing work, and in response to the racism and harassment reported at ALA Midwinter 2019, Committee members have drafted an opening statement we'd like the Board to consider asking future LITA program moderators to affirm at the beginning of presentations. Additionally, the Committee compiled links to resources for possible allyship trainings that we hope the Board will consider when planning future workshops or programs around this topic.

### **BACKGROUND**

After hearing about the harrowing racism and harassment experienced by marginalized librarians at ALA Midwinter, Diversity and Inclusion Committee members felt compelled to respond by crafting concrete measures to stem macroaggressions from ever occurring at LITA-sponsored programs. To that end, the Committee hopes that the Board will consider asking any and all LITA presenters (either at future ALA conferences or LITA Forums) to open any panel, round table, or other conference program by reading our draft language of a proposed "opening statement" out loud to attendees, so that it's made clear where LITA stands on this issue.

Furthermore, the Committee considers this statement as being about more than just language; we see it as a call to action for LITA program moderators to both name the injustices we seek to prevent, and to hold all attendees accountable for racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, and/or xenophobic, language or behavior during sponsored programs, to protect presenters and other attendees from experiencing what so many library workers of color experienced at Midwinter and in our profession, at large.

Furthermore, the committee was made aware that LITA will be offering allyship training workshops in the following months. We conferred to locate potential resources and offer suggestions for approaches we'd love to see in any possible allyship training moving forward.

### **ACTION REQUESTED**

1. Diversity and Inclusion Committee members would like to request that the Board consider incorporating the following statement into LITA-sponsored programs at any and all associated conferences:

- a. “As LITA’s further commitment in upholding the ALA Code of Ethics, we want to remind everyone present of the value of dismantling system oppression within the profession, understanding differences, valuing those differences, and ultimately, learning how to communicate and innovate in an inclusive manner that welcomes diverse perspectives. In order to empower active and effective allyship, recognize and undo oppressive behaviors and systems, and promote the practice of cultural humility, moderators and facilitators are prepared to call out or speak up against any form of behavior contrary to these statements. And with reflectiveness and justice in mind, we’d like to first acknowledge the land on which we gather, and the [Indigenous Tribe] peoples who occupy(ied) it. We encourage you to explore resources and works from Indigenous voices in this community while here. *(Some of these words were pulled from [LITA’s Statement in Response to Incidents at ALA Midwinter 2019](#) to be consistent in our resolve.)*”
2. Diversity and Inclusion Committee members would like to request that the Board consider the following resources when planning allyship-specific trainings or events:
  - a. **Racial Equity Institute.** “The process is designed to help leaders and organizations who want to proactively understand and address racism, both in their organization and in the community where the organization is working. The Racial Equity Institute, LLC process is just that: an 18-month to two-year process. Our experience is that the goals of understanding and addressing racism can rarely be achieved in a three-hour or one-day workshop. Racism is a fierce, ever-present, challenging force, one which has structured the thinking, behavior, and actions of individuals and institutions since the beginning of U.S. history. To understand racism and effectively begin dismantling it requires an equally fierce, consistent, and committed effort.” <https://www.racialequityinstitute.com/>
  - b. **DeEtta Jones and Associates.** “DJA is a minority and woman-owned business founded in 2005. We are a leading force in shaping contemporary thinking and practice around integrated and sustainable approaches to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, leadership development, individual and organizational transformation.” <http://www.deettajones.com/>
  - c. **Other General Recommendations:**
    - i. The Committee suggests invited facilitators try to make any workshops, regardless of delivery (whether electronic or in-person), as hands-on as possible. We hope such sessions might feature activities that allow attendees to acknowledge their positionality and explore how they’d respond to situations in simulated “real-time” activities.