ALA Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (TF-EDI)
Report to the ALA Council and Executive Board
ALA Annual Conference, June 2015
San Francisco, CA

The Task Force
The ALA Task Force on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion was created in the spring 2014 by then ALA President Barbara Stripling. The charge of the Task Force reads as follows:

> The Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion will develop a plan and strategic actions to build more equity, diversity, and inclusion among our members, the field of librarianship, and our communities. The most important Task Force outcome is the public and honest conversation that will be generated by its plan and recommended actions. The final Task Force report will include recommendations for ensuring that a continuing focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion is embedded throughout the ALA organization.

The roster of current members, including our staff liaisons, is available at http://www.ala.org/groups/task-force-equity-diversity-and-inclusion. Since Midwinter, meetings have been held on 2nd & 4th Mondays via teleconference.

Actions and Accomplishments since Midwinter

Continuing the information gathering work started in the fall of 2014, the TF solicited input using a variety of methods.

Surveys
The first survey, which was focused on perceptions of how welcoming ALA is to marginalized groups, was closed on February 17th with a total of 1,427 respondents completing the majority of questions (1,638 respondents answered at least one question). Although not all respondents are ALA members, of those who replied, we had a total response rate of just under 3% of total ALA membership. Due to a number of factors, including the departure of the Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services (ODLOS) director, the analysis of survey data has taken longer than originally hoped. An initial report of results is available on the TF-EDI Connect site. In the future, we are hoping to work with the Office for Research & Statistics (ORS) and take advantage of their expertise as well as share the workload for supporting the TF outside of the ODLOS. Our second survey will gather input on respondents' plans for the 2016 Annual Conference in Orlando as well as the types of activities they'd like to see at that event. This survey was launched the week of June 22nd and will continue to be open for responses for three weeks.

Listening Sessions
The TF has used listening sessions to engage our professional community both within ALA and in the larger library community. We feel it is important to provide these opportunities for honest conversations about perceptions of equity, diversity, and inclusion, and we are grateful to all the participants who took the time and energy to share their thoughts, concerns, and hopes for our association, profession, and communities. All of the information gathered through these listening sessions will be carefully considered as the TF works towards its ultimate list of recommended actions.

Midwinter Conversation
Despite the weather in Chicago, over 150 people participated in a facilitated Harwood-style conversation. The group discussions covered a wide range of topics, with many suggestions for what the Association can do to better support equity, diversity, and inclusion. The themed results, available in Appendix 1, will inform the TF's final recommendations.

REFORMA National Conference
The TF hosted a discussion at the REFORMA National Conference, held in April in San Diego. Many suggestions for activities and initiatives within ALA were received, along with some ideas for engaging the local community during future conferences. Some of these include creating and publicizing a list of local minority-owned businesses, including a diversity statement as part of the conference registration process, using Bluetooth beacons to broadcast socially relevant and/or locally focused information, and a range of programming ideas. The complete notes are available in Appendix 2. These ideas, along with others shared with the TF, will be considered for recommended implementation in Orlando and beyond.

ATLA National Conference
Martin Garnar, TF co-chair, was invited to speak at the American Theological Library Association conference, held in June in Denver. Members of the ATLA Diversity Committee are very interested in establishing a relationship with ALA and other library diversity groups. Martin also gave a brief presentation at the ALA Virtual Membership Meeting, at which time suggestions were received from the meeting participants.

Future Plans

Information gathering continues, with a discussion program at the 2015 Annual Conference as well as further discussion at the National Conference of African American Librarians to be held in August in St. Louis. Additionally, a third survey will be conducted around the time of the 2016 Midwinter Meeting in Boston.

As our plans for a speaker at the 2015 Annual Conference could not be realized due to scheduling conflicts, we will shift our focus to having thought-provoking speakers at both the 2016 Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference, provided that funding for this and other diversity-related initiatives is forthcoming. This will be in addition to other activities drawn from the list of suggestions we have received.

Recommendations

While it is in a librarian's nature to focus on information gathering and organization, ultimately we must act if we are to see any changes in our association, profession, and society. To that end, the TF is issuing its first recommendations, with more to come in subsequent reports. Our initial recommendations include:

1. The ALA Executive Board, Council, or appropriate body should direct the Policy Monitoring Committee to collect all ALA discrimination policies into one document in order to point vendors and others with whom ALA does business to a single policy related to equity, diversity, and inclusion.
2. ALA should include language in all future contracts that assures all vendors, conference sites, and others with whom the Association does business have policies that complement ours.

Every week seems to bring another report of a shooting or other confrontation that is motivated by race or other differences. As members of society, we cannot afford to stand silently by as our communities struggle with these tragedies and other incidents. We must take action in order to demonstrate our profession's commitment to the common good.

We welcome your continued feedback on the work of the task force and look forward to your participation in our activities.

Respectfully submitted,

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Andrew P. Jackson (BCALA Representative)
Majed J. Khader (Chapter Relations Committee Representative)
Max Macias (REFORMA Representative)
Mike L. Marlin (ASCLA Accessibility Assembly Representative)
Alanna Aiko Moore (Committee on Diversity Representative)
LaJuan Pringle (SRRT Representative)
Mark A. Puente (Member-at-Large)
Lian Ruan (CALA Representative)
Teri Sierra (Membership Meetings Committee Representative)
Nancy J. Snyder (Member-at-Large)
Barbara K. Stripling (Executive Board Liaison)

Appendix 1: Themed Notes from Midwinter 2015 conversation

Aspirations (for the community):

- ALA membership will increase in diversity to reflect U.S. demographics
- ALA staff, members, and the communities they serve will be informed and aware of 1) what equity means, 2) how to be inclusive, 3) where to find basic information about diverse groups, 4) how to build connections between members of diverse groups.
- ALA will retain members from diverse groups.
- Local user populations will be served by informed, inclusive library staff, management, and services.
- Communities will be strengthened by ALA members who take an inclusive approach.
- ALA staff, committees, and leadership will reflect U.S. demographics
- The ALA community will be informed and inclusive in its approach to decision-making.
- A professional organization where participation respects individuals so they can speak individually, where everyone feels safe and encouraged to be their authentic self
- Community built on respect, including peers in other libraries, not devaluing and dismissing each other's work if it differs from our own

- ALA community will identify clear pathways to professional success
- ALA will communicate how people can get involved with the association
- ALA will be an accepting and welcoming environment

- ALA will be an all-inclusive organization that actively acknowledges those who are missing
- ALA will be affordable

- **ALA will be a welcoming and non-judgmental environment**
- **Diversity and inclusion is central to the operation of ALA**
- **ALA is open to new ideas beyond committees and those ideas will be integrated into the larger culture**
- **ALA will be welcoming, connected, and advocates in our communities**

- **ALA will be respectful, engaging, trustworthy, inviting, welcoming and interesting**
- **The path to success within ALA will be made clear**
- **Everyone should feel welcome in ALA. Consideration should be given to language and economic barriers.**
- **ALA will be a welcoming space that values the diverse talents of people**
- **ALA will seek to understand the nature of privilege**
- **ALA will be a safe space in which to say "I don't know"**

- **ALA will provide service to all subgroups, less rigid borders between groups**
- **All people within the ALA community should feel valued and included, welcomed and heard.**
- **ALA will increase proactive programs**
- **ALA conversation will be open and non-judgmental**
- **ALA will be less hostile and have more inclusion**

Leaders in the local community acknowledge libraries and librarians

Main concerns (top-of-mind concerns about the larger community):

- Inclusion is essential - in ALA, in our local communities
- ALA membership doesn't reflect the diversity in U.S. demographics, and that's a concern.
- ALA will take actions to increase diversity in the membership; not just host conversations.
- ALA members from non-dominant cultural groups will have opportunities to serve within all levels of ALA.
- Need for growth and prosperity in our communities and keeping that in a positive direction

- People don't know statistics regarding racial make –up of all library workers
- Expectations set by different generations are not applicable to today

- There are multiple divisions within the profession
- Librarianship should be a profession that is accepting of all people
- Our library community doesn't reflect the community we serve. Patrons needs to see people of color as agents and not just recipients of services.

- **A balanced approach would include diversification of collections and staffing**
- **ALA has stopped acting on economic and race striations**

- **The library profession should more closely resemble the population it serves**
- **The library should be a place where the community goes to learn informally and freely educate themselves**
- Librarianship is a contradiction. Mainly open minded but the image is inaccessible. This image problem is harming diversity because it isn't brining in other people.
- **Communities need to understand that the library is for and by the community**
- Is our emphasis in the wrong area and are we confusing goals with tactics? Can diversity be tired directly to achievement of goals and objectives?
- **Libraries should be reflective of student population / community served**
- Diversity is not just skin color – it's the way we grew up, where we grew up, and what we eat. Diversity is more than gender neutral bathrooms. It's about networks, relationships, knowing who we are authentically – the whole person.
- **Job issues and equity issues are connected to diversity and inclusion**

- **There is a lack of diversity in the profession**
- **Librarianship is perceived as a "dying profession"**

People are essentialized based on social identity categories including demographics

Library profession is too passive

Specific issue concerns (those concerns related to the issue you're exploring):

- Membership retention and development
- Attracting people from diverse backgrounds to the profession of librarianship
- Include socioeconomic diversity in the discussion
- Tensions sometimes exist between groups served by a library. How can libraries promote positive interactions and connections between people and groups who don't typically relate to each other?
- Those from one group don't necessarily understand when they are being insensitive to those in another groups. How do we build cultural competency in staff, management, end users?
- We're not in an overly paid profession. How do we incentivize students who are first generation college grads to enter a low-paying profession, when other fields offer more financial opportunity?

- Association does not actually achieve inclusivity
- Seeing some positive changes disappear over time makes you wonder what the original intent was behind them
- If we aren't thinking about this every day, reaching out to the people who are coming AND the ones who *aren't* coming, we are not doing this right
- Diversity and inclusion are currently optional, not mandatory
- ALA registration is the same cost for ½ time librarians as it is for full time librarians and librarians from smaller communities. This is unfair.
- Library clerks, assistants and support staff need to be represented within ALA
- We need to acknowledge that there are cliques within the profession which makes it harder for new people to enter

- Resolutions are just words and aren't enough if not followed by action

- **In some libraries diversity is out of sight and out of mind**
- **Differences in salary can be an influence as to why people of color don't come into this profession. It is difficult to be upwardly mobile without adequate pay.**
- **Need a discussion around librarians vs non-credentialed library workers. Does ALA only serve librarians?**
- **Librarianship is not seen as a lucrative profession**

- Without libraries it is harder for the underprivileged to gain skills and knowledge that they need. If they don't see people that look like them or understand them then they may not want to ask for help.
- There is too much jargon within the profession
- **ALA membership fees are a barrier**
- **There are systematic barriers to success such as promotion and tenure standards**

- **Even diversity committees are sometimes mostly white and not entirely diverse**
- **We hire what we are familiar with and that affects some of the stratification of librarians, especially in leadership**
- **Diversity by itself is inadequate, we must address social inequality**
- **There is arrogance in LIS institutions and leadership has not changed**
- **The audience attending this diversity conversation does not look like the rest of ALA**

ALA needs to avoid being an echo chamber
People hire those who are like themselves
Invisible diversity, diversity fatigue, and token diversity are problems
Currently, our profession replicates oppressive power structures that exist in our society at large
Expand definition of diversity beyond race - background, income, religion, sexuality, ability
Promotion criteria gives priority to "top tier" journals that tend to address more conservative issues
More diverse voices and opinions are being expressed but there needs to be more active listening and responses

Actions that would make a difference:

- Develop and implement an action plan to increase membership diversity.
- Provide resources so ALA members can easily educate themselves about 1) diverse groups, 2) building connections between people who are not like themselves.
- Develop and implement a long-term library profession recruitment plan. Increase chances of recruiting professionals from diverse backgrounds by providing library experiences and career information early -- from childhood forward.
- Reaching out to people who have not engaged in conversations about diversity, equity and inclusion
- We not only need a change, but to sustain accountability and structure to keep the light on these efforts and not backslide
- Work together better: attitudes, aspirations, perceptions need to continue to change, and we need to not let groups form that continue to exclude each other in the name of celebrating uniqueness
- **Work on recruitment in high schools and undergraduate institutions to increase LIS school retention**
- **Create more mentoring and support**

- **Be explicit about the norms and expectations of the profession**
- **Have the difficult conversations and remove of fear mentality that separates us**

- *ALA conference should have a pre survey in addition to a post survey. Exit interviews should include grading the conference on accessibility and inclusion*
- *When members register for conference for the first time, they should be provided an outreach packet with suggestions for involvement*
- *ALA needs a social justice group*
- *High school students need mentors to become librarians*
- *ALA should advocate for our own profession outside of our profession*
- *There is a need for cultural competence and intercultural communication*

- *ALA needs to advocate for higher salaries for librarians and library support staff*
- *ALA needs to have more boxes to check for racial identity or provide an open text field*
- *ALA needs to offer ally training*
- *ALA needs opportunities to build capacity for leadership and have more diverse leadership*
- *ALA needs forums where all opinions can be voiced. We need facilitation for hard conversations.*

- *Libraries should convert shared values on diversity into recruiting practices*
- *We need larger conversations about what can be offensive*
- *Need internships and programming about librarianship for young people*

- Equity, diversity, and inclusion needs to be a part of every library school class and training – not separate training
- ALA needs to address physical disabilities and accessibility for workers and patrons
- Participation in ALA needs to be more affordable
- Crucial conversations should extend to social media
- We should take a careful look at attrition and retention issues

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- Consider if it is too much to require a master's degree. Perhaps we could have different ways to prepare for the career other than the LIS graduate degree.
- Recruit future LIS students at an early age
- Advocate for librarians, not libraries

- We need more mentorship in LIS programs, specifically to help people find permanent positions.
- We need training on explicit communication – how can one be explicit without being insensitive?

- Recertification and continuing education could be required for the profession and directed towards issues of diversity and inclusion
- Need leadership opportunities for diverse perspectives
- Cultural competency needs to be a core piece of LIS education
- Organizations should incentivize inclusion and evaluate performance across diversity and inclusion in annual review.

- We need to deliver training in cultural competency and awareness of microaggressions
- We need a pipeline/pathway for finding paraprofessionals of color
- We need to define language for inclusion: equity, diversity power privilege marginalization

- Need training in intercultural competencies
- Need to integrate diversity into all areas of ALA.
- Need nexuses for diversity work within the association.
- Need to ask the question during decision making - "which voices/perspective have not been included?"
- Need more learning initiatives across differences
- Need to address "diversity fatigue"
- Need more time and opportunities to work across intersectionality rather than all going into our own groups

- *We need to teach people how to advocate*
- *GLBTRT meetings should not be scheduled during Pride*
- *We need sociological analysis*
- *We need assessment connected to diversity*
- We need ALA advocacy in pay equity.

More diversity at administration level

Greater collaboration between diversity groups

Joint programming between all different communities that goes beyond lectures

Ensure that diversity related programming at conferences is not overlapping in times

Encourage diverse collection development

Recognize leaders who have already made achievements in library diversity

Inclusion as a value vs diversity as representation

More nuanced language – the word "diversity" is often used without being defined in context

Chang e mindset of "just let the minorities handle the diversity issues"

Librarians should take on the explicit mission of helping to redress the injustice occurring in society at large, not just avoid replicating it

More funding and support for ALA Spectrum Scholarships

More internships and residency programs for diverse populations

More funding for the ALA Office for Diversity. It needs more personnel and perhaps an advisory board like OLOS to advocate for it.

Appendix 2: Notes from the REFORMA listening session

I.   Suggestions for how to affect landscape in Orlando and at future conferences

       A.   Internally—Annual Conference

       1.   Create a list of local minority owned businesses for conference attendees to frequent

       2.   Create code of conduct or statements of diversity /inclusion into registration process.

- *By clicking "Accept" you acknowledge and adhere to the following codes of conduct during your participation at ALA conference…"*
- *Another option: Task force could develop a statement and include it with TF-EDI definitions, etc.*
- *Staff an informational kiosk to deliver the statement or print out a handout for attendees to pick up on their own at registration area*
- *From Gwendolyn (ALA): The ALA lawyer has advised that a "I have read this/check mark required to continue" cannot be legally done.*

       3.   Bluetooth Beaming Beacons: using the beacon technology that was introduced at Midwinter to push socially relevant or locally focused information out to mobile devices.

- *From Gwendolyn (ALA): Possible Annual Conference 2016 action: Conference services is open to giving us one beacon (can push for a few more if TFEDI supports idea) in a high traffic location that TFEDI could write the content for (of their choosing) – would need content by MW. These are beacons that if you have Bluetooth enabled push content out to your device when you walk by.*

       4.   Find a way to reach beyond the "converted" and ethnic caucuses

       5.   Programming

- *Discussion on definitions of diversity. Folks who are doing diversity programming should have a consistent message.*
- *Educational session on Stand Your Ground laws, could also look at militarization of police, and border.*
- *Session on youth who are affected by Stand Your Ground laws*
- *Session on archival projects that provide context to history of local areas—"wherever there's a fight…"*
- *Build in a thoughtful reflection at the start of every program*
- *Scenario based session on microaggressions: on how people who are the targets can use the situations as teaching moments to help change behavior, perhaps combined with interrupting behaviors by allies.*

- *From Gwendolyn (ALA): Melissa is willing to shift the event that was Human Library to this session and propose to the task force to use this as their sponsored program during the call. We currently have space on Sunday, June 28, 2015, 3-5pm and we could also identify and support (ie pay) facilitators from the community if the TFEDI wishes to move this idea forward in lieu of the speaker.*

- *Create an "experience"—an entry gall, registration line, etc. that would force exposure to a thought provoking encounter with diversity.*
- *Free pre-conference on diversity issues*
- *From Gwendolyn (ALA): Possible action plan for Annual 2016: Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services could sponsor and promote. Could the member groups represented by TF-EDI be approached to convene, plan and implement? (Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach does not have the capacity to do this) There may also be an open call for proposals for Annual 2016 (I'm trying to push for there to be a unified one for ALA outside of Divisions if nothing else, some Divisions have already launched their proposal system for AC2016) so TFEDI might ask for a roll in that selection process or flood via advocacy the proposal system. Or help advocate for a unified across non-Divisions system.*

- *Let ALA know we want more diversity in the "big name" speakers, have speakers represent our constituencies. Speaker suggestions: Angela Davis, Christopher Hedges*

- From Gwendolyn (ALA): In talking with conference stakeholders two strategies for this emerged (note there is effort to include a diversity of speakers, but as we have been told the publishers drive these featured speakers) – 1) TFEDI could draft some sort of vision statement that is shared as part of invite to publishers and can also be shared with the conference coordinating/planning committee (would need to be drafted over summer to be in place for AC2016); 2) TFEDI could move to have a COD rep on the conference planning committee I think via COO, probably draft in conjunction with COD.

- What I didn't hear anyone say per se but I thought – more grassroots efforts to influence total conference landscape could be outreach to incoming Division presidents around their President's programs and outreach to all groups submitting conference program proposals via Division etc. about programming ideas.

- *Develop a theme related to issues of that region/area. Really engage issues.*
- *Honor local culture (Native and other) by inviting them to be   part of the opening of the conference*

6. Make entire conference more participatory—examples included walk through museum type exhibits (Tunnels of Oppression—at George Mason) (suggestion from Mario Ascencio)

7. Hold an organized protest around Stand Your Ground laws, creating a coalition of ALA groups to do this and work with local groups.   Not static, something visible.

B. Externally—the local community

1. Research local community organizations who are doing work on the ground. Ask them what types of support they want. Understand the local community perspective before going to a city for a conference.

2. Collaborate with local organizations who are engaging with the issues.

3. Make connections to local media outlets, let them know we support the local organizations