

**American Library Association
President's Report—James G. Neal
New Orleans, LA**

My service as President of the American Library Association b-3 (A)12.8 eyAMCID 12.8 (m)-6.4(m)-(F)_ft (e)-6 heyAMC7 j

A key focus has been the recruitment of a new ALA executive director. I served as an Executive Board representative on the search committee. The committee, working closely with a search firm and with the ALA director of human resources, reviewed applications, interviewed candidates over two rounds, but decided not to recommend finalists to the Executive Board. The Executive Board recommended to the ALA Council a change in the educational requirements for the position to a preferred MLS. This change was approved by an electronic vote of Council. A member petition secured the required number of signatures, and the question of the educational requirements was on the spring membership ballot. The majority of those voting supported the required MLS, but an insufficient number of votes were cast to overturn the Council vote. The Executive Board has appointed Mary Ghikas as executive director through midwinter 2020. This will allow several key association initiatives to proceed under her leadership. The Executive Board will be reviewing the membership of the search committee, the work

programs, the Center for the Future of Libraries, fundraising and resource development, and member engagement and participation for example. I meet and consult on a regular basis with the Washington Office, the Public Awareness Office, the Office for Library Advocacy, the Chapters Relations Office and the International Relations Office.

Working and consulting with the leaders in other national and international library associations, in national libraries and federal funding agencies, and in various organizations that share our core values and professional interests has expanded over the last year.

Key Initiatives

During the past year, planning and implementation for several initiatives have advanced:

ALA has launched a new Policy Corps to expand our ability to advocate on key policy issues on behalf of the library community. Participants will focus on issues for which deep and sustained knowledge are necessary and on skills needed to be effective in targeted policy advocacy work. This may include testifying before legislative committees, meeting with legislative leaders and their staffs, being interviewed by the national media, participating in national forums, and working with policy partners. The first cohort of participants has been selected and has been working for the past six months. The working group includes representatives from the ALA presidential advisory committee, OITP, AASL, ACRL, PLA, and United for Libraries. All of these units have invested in the pilot programs. Sub-groups were formed to work on selection, curriculum and assessment. We will be developing the plan of action for the second year of the Policy Corps. An additional idea in development as part of the Washington Office's strategic plan is to expand the number of ALA advocates working in congressional districts across the US. These local advocates can demonstrate to Senators and Representatives the positive

The President's Program at Midwinter in Denver on February 11 focused on: Are Libraries Neutral? Have They Ever Been? Should They Be? A formal debate, commentary, and conversation on libraries as neutral organizations and library staff as neutral individuals. Can libraries be neutral as part of societies and systems that are not neutral? Are libraries through their processes, practices, collections, services and technologies able to be neutral? Can libraries be both neutral and a force for good? Planning also proceeds on the speakers and programs for the annual conference in New Orleans.

The following five initiatives were being held pending the arrival in early 2018 of the new ALA executive director. As that appointment has been postponed and the search process is on hold, I have decided to work on these projects over the next several months in partnership with the presidential advisory committee, the division presidents, the executive board, the executive director and key ALA staff:

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: advancing the work of the Task Force, focusing on our (b) (5) - (A), (b) (5) - (D), (b) (7) - (C), (b) (7) - (D), (b) (7) - (E), (b) (7) - (F), (b) (7) - (G), (b) (7) - (H), (b) (7) - (I), (b) (7) - (J), (b) (7) - (K), (b) (7) - (L), (b) (7) - (M), (b) (7) - (N), (b) (7) - (O), (b) (7) - (P), (b) (7) - (Q), (b) (7) - (R), (b) (7) - (S), (b) (7) - (T), (b) (7) - (U), (b) (7) - (V), (b) (7) - (W), (b) (7) - (X), (b) (7) - (Y), (b) (7) - (Z)

Another important area of focus is the financial health of the Association. The Executive Board working with ALA staff and with BARC is exploring several critical actions, including: a study focused on marketing and communication, a study focused on new models of membership and engagement, the continuing review and improvement of ALA conferences, internal reorganizations, governance organization review, investment of endowment funds in infrastructure improvements, expansion of division partnerships, commercial loan options, real estate options, new business development, expanded fundraising and grants, assessment of new tax code impact, and need for more rigorous national library data collection and analysis.

Participation

Over the past year, I have attended several professional conferences and meetings, and have made several presentations:

“Fair Use Is the Most Important Library Exception for Libraries,” International Federation of Library Associations, Wroclaw, Poland, 21 August 2017.

“How Do We Measure Library Impact, Relevance and Value In a Period of Radical Transformation and Turmoil?” International Federation of Library Associations, Wroclaw, Poland, 23 August 2017.

“Measures That Matter 2017 Data Summit,” COSLA/IMLS, Baltimore, 19-20 September 2017.

“Sometimes a Scream Is Better Than A Thesis: Library Leadership In a Time of Disruption and Turmoil,” Kentucky Library Association, Louisville, 21 September 2017.

“You Can Count the Seeds in the Apple, But You Can’t Count the Apples In the Seed: Library Leadership In a Time of Transformation and Turmoil,” Missouri Library Association, St. Louis, 6 October 2017.

“Libraries and Schools: A Study of the Impact of the American Library Association on the American Library Association,” Institute for Museum and Library Services, Washington, D.C., 17 October 2017.

“Building E.0032 (q)-0.7 (u)-0.7 (i)-3.3 (t)-5.9 (y)-7.6 (a)-3.3 (n)-0.7 (d)-0.8 (A)-1.1 (c)Tj-0.5 (e)-6 (s).9 Tw - 5.1 ()10.6 (20)11 (17.)Tj0 Tc 0 Tw 18.783 0 Td ()TjEMC /P AMCID 22 BDC -18.783 -1.217 Td ()TjEMC /P AMCID 23 BDC -0.001 Tc 0.003 Tw

"Advancing to Phyletic Extinction: Library Leadership in a Time of Transformation and Turmoil," Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 4 December 2017.

"The 21st Century Researcher: Does the Library Still Matter?" Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 5 December 2017.

"Library Leadership in a Period of Transformation" (panel member), Re-think It: Libraries for a New Age Conference, Austin, University of Texas, 10 January 2018.

"Libraries In the 21st Century: Transformation and Turmoil", New York State Library, Bicentennial Celebration, Albany, 25 April 2018.

"Library Evolution In a Time of Transformation and Turmoil," Maryland Library Association/Delaware Library Association, Cambridge, MD, 3 May 2018.

"Berlin's Two Concepts of Liberty: The Library Context," Library Association of the City University of New York, 2018 Institute, New York, 11 May 2018.

"Commencement Address," San Jose State University School of Information, Virtual Ceremony, 19 May 2019.

"Do Students and Scholars Still Need Libraries? Academic Library Response To the Transformation of Learning and Research," Consortium of National and Research Libraries (CONUL), Galway, Ireland, 30 May 2018.

"Disruptive Changes: Transforming To Meet New Opportunities" (panel member), Consortium of National and Research Libraries (CONUL), Galway, Ireland, 31 May 2018.

In addition, I launched an initiative to visit public, school and academic libraries across the US to learn

Value and Impact

Making progress toward strengthening the future of ALA, libraries

We have
made
important