TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Updates

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:
Update on equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts of the Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services (ODLOS), ODLOS Advisory Committee, and other key stakeholders

ACTION REQUESTED BY:
Martin Garnar, Chair, ODLOS Advisory Committee
Kristin Lahurd, Interim Director, Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services

CONTACT PERSON:
Kristin Lahurd
(312) 280-3275
klahurd@ala.org

DRAFT OF MOTION:
No motion proposed – informational only

DATE: January 15, 2019

BACKGROUND:
The report details efforts related to equity, diversity, and inclusion by ALA units and member groups, from the end of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Implementation Working Group’s tenure and looking ahead to the coming year.
EDI-IWG Final Report and Ongoing Work
The Implementation Working Group expired as planned after three years of existence. Its final report focused on the culture changes ALA needs to make if it wishes to dismantle the structures of oppression within the association and the profession. As it has for the past three years, the Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services (ODLOS) will continue to report on progress towards the individual recommendations, but we should be mindful that the adoption of EDI as the 4th strategic direction shifted the focus of ODLOS and association efforts to a different level of change, which is why the EDI-IWG final report made connections between the various recommended cultural changes and the specific goals of the strategic directions.

As for the ongoing work, the ODLOS Advisory Committee can best serve as a communication conduit for responsible parties within the association and the profession. A big challenge continues to be the coordination of efforts among ALA units and divisions, as there is much activity happening in isolation that may eventually result in disjointed or duplicative work. The ODLOS Advisory Committee could be well-positioned to assist with that coordination and communication but would need to include representation from units and divisions not currently on the committee. The “assembly” model used for other areas of interest could be a good option in this instance, but it might be premature to explore structures for facilitating the work when we are uncertain how the association’s organizational structure will change in the next few years. Additionally, the ODLOS Director vacancy, combined with not knowing how the new ALA Executive Director will view and prioritize EDI initiatives, makes it premature to determine next steps.

Challenges Facing ODLOS Advisory Committee and Represented Groups
The challenges faced by the ODLOS Advisory Committee include a rotating membership, with many liaisons serving just one year; as such, continuity can be an issue. Another issue is how best to leverage our relationship with the Committee on Diversity so that we can support each other with our shared charges and initiatives, but uncertainty about the future organizational structures within ALA (as mentioned above) makes it difficult to know how much time we should invest in building those committee relationships, or how best to go about building partnerships that would be sustainable.
Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services’ Key EDI Efforts

While ODLOS has many ongoing initiatives around equity, diversity, and inclusion, such as our continuing education offerings and flagship “EDICon” workshop, we are highlighting three key efforts that have emerged since the last Executive Board report. First is the equity, diversity, and inclusion orientation for Councilors and other member leaders. Recognizing that equity, diversity, and inclusion have long been key priorities of the association, this recorded webinar focuses primarily on leadership drawing together a strategic direction and recommendations for ALA to advance that work. It covers the role of ODLOS; the recent history leading up to our strategic direction on equity, diversity, and inclusion; the history of the Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (TF-EDI) and the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Working Group (EDI-IWG); definitions and frameworks; various member groups with an equity, diversity, and inclusion charge; guiding principles from the EDI-IWG’s final report; and resources for further exploration. This resource is being shared by Council Orientation Committee Chair Rodney Lippard at the Council Orientation Session at Midwinter.

Second, the Office is partnering with the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), the Public Library Association (PLA), and the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) in working with a volunteer task force to develop a framework for cultural proficiencies in racial equity. The Building Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity framework will serve as a foundational resource to help public and academic libraries build inclusive cultures, within libraries and their broader communities, through guidelines on the development and implementation of organizational policies and professional practices that support diverse libraries with a diverse workforce. ODLOS Interim Director Kristin Lahurd and ARL Director of Diversity and Leadership Programs Mark Puente led the task force selection process, and we have a group with diverse representation in terms of race, geography, and library type. We are also engaging an external facilitator and expert advisors from a range of professional and civic contexts who have deep knowledge regarding racial equity. We are beginning our work with the group in January 2020 and plan for an in-person meeting in April.

Finally, among the goals for the Office in 2020 is to facilitate opportunities for collaboration among ALA member groups, units, and affiliates. To that end, we are hosting a series of webinars with the ethnic and outreach affiliates ODLOS liaises with to highlight their collaborative work and partnerships, across ALA and beyond, and to explore possibilities for new alliances and joint efforts. The first planned webinar is “Census 2020 Outreach to Communities of Color,” a collaboration among BCALA, REFORMA, and ALA. The webinar will address key tools and recommendations for Census outreach geared toward communities of color and will include ALA’s Counted In toolkit, designed for libraries to encourage a complete count among New Americans.
EDI In Our Libraries Video Series

The Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services continues to promote the “EDI in Our Libraries” initiative of Immediate Past President Loida Garcia-Febo and her Diversity Advisory Board. We are doing so through both our own channels and those at the wider association level. The video series is included on the Office’s Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion page under “Major Initiatives.” The series is also featured in the EDI orientation for Councilors, and the orientation includes a clip from the video on Multnomah County Library. At the same time, we are working with the Communications and Marketing Office on a higher-profile plan for promoting the initiative, including National Library Week. The theme of this year’s National Library Week, “Find Your Place at the library,” lends itself to equity, diversity, and inclusion. We recommend also including a feature on the video series in the State of America’s Libraries Report, whether on its own or as part of a larger piece on equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Submitted by Martin Garnar, Chair, ODLOS Advisory Committee and Kristin Lahurd, Interim Director, Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services