

Committee on Diversity
REPORT TO COUNCIL
2017 Annual Conference — Chicago, Illinois

As Chair pro tem of the Committee on Diversity, it is my privilege to present two action items:

ACTION ITEMS

The Committee on Diversity moves the adoption of the following action items:

CD # 44.1, Definitions of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

CD # 44.2, Resolution on Libraries as Responsible Spaces

The Committee on Diversity thanks the affiliated round tables, ethnic affiliates, the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Working Group, the ODLOS Advisory Committee, and the ODLOS staff for their commitment, assistance, and hard work as we labor together to advance the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Respectfully Submitted,

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DEFINITIONS OF EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

RECOMMENDATION 4.2 FROM THE FINAL REPORT OF THE ALA TASK FORCE ON EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION: Add the definitions of EDI developed by the Task Force to the ALA Policy Manual. 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.

Preface to the definitions from the ALA Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:

*In framing the definitions of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for our work as a task force, wanting to change the world by and beyond the Annual 2016 Conference, and realizing we ***may*** fall short of that goal, we offer the following definitions for consideration. We have decided to maintain a fairly global perspective in these definitions, i.e. not to attempt an exhaustive list of descriptors or qualities of disenfranchised groups comprising ALA membership and by extension our various stakeholders and patron populations. We are striving for social justice for ***All*** - and with these definitions desire to achieve a larger rather than smaller common and inclusive denominator.*

Equity

Equity is not the same as formal equality. Formal equality implies sameness. Equity, on the other hand, assumes difference and takes difference into account to ensure a fair process and, ultimately, a fair (or equitable) outcome. Equity recognizes that some groups were (and are) disadvantaged in accessing educational and employment opportunities and are, therefore, underrepresented or marginalized in many organizations and institutions. The effects of that exclusion often linger systemically within organizational policies, practices and procedures. Equity, therefore, means increasing diversity by ameliorating conditions of disadvantaged groups.

Diversity

Diversity can be defined as the sum of the ways that people are both alike and different. Visible diversity is generally those things we cannot change and are external. However, diversity goes beyond this to what we call 'invisible' diversity. Invisible diversity includes those attributes that are not readily seen. So, when we recognize, value, and embrace diversity, we are recognizing, valuing, and embracing the uniqueness of each individual.

Inclusion

Inclusion means an environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully; are valued for their distinctive skills, experiences, and perspectives; have equal access to resources and opportunities; and can contribute fully to the organization's success.

Notes on the definitions:

Equity: The Task Force believes that everyone deserves equitable rights and opportunities. Our 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. The definition was adapted from the University of British Columbia (<http://diversity.ubc.ca/valuing-difference/equity-and-diversity-%E2%80%93-definitions-and-philosophy/>), the ALA Office for Diversity “Strategic Planning for Diversity” (<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/diversity/workplace/diversityplanning>), and the National Association of Social Workers (http://www.socialworkers.org/practice/standards/cultural_competence.asp).

Diversity: The Task Force 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. The Task Force also agrees with the National Education Association that, “While diversity itself is not a value-laden term, the way that people react to diversity is driven by values, attitudes, beliefs, and so on. Full acceptance of diversity is a major principle of social justice.” The definition was adapted from the National Education Association (<http://www.nea.org/tools/diversity-toolkit-introduction.html>).

Inclusion: The Task Force 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. The definition was adapted from the Society for Human Resources Management (<http://www.shrm.org/diversity>), Hewlett Packard (<http://www8.hp.com/us/en/hp-information/about-hp/diversity/meaning.html>), and Ferris State University (<http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/administration/president/DiversityOffice/Definitions.htm>).

This resolution was adopted by the ALA Council on Monday, June 26, 2017

RESOLUTION ON LIBRARIES AS RESPONSIBLE SPACES

Whereas a study from the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism has documented a 20% increase in hate crimes in 2016¹;

Whereas the ALA Offices for Intellectual Freedom and Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services (ODLOS) are now collecting statistics on hate crimes in libraries after a rise in the number of incidents in libraries²; and

Whereas Article V of the Library Bill of Rights states “A person’s right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the American Library Association, on behalf of its members:

1. urges libraries to embrace the mantle of responsible spaces by adopting and enforcing user behavior policies that protect patrons and staff from harassment while maintaining our historic support for the freedom of speech;
2. encourages libraries to develop community partnership programs with and promote services to underrepresented and unacknowledged community members;
3. encourages libraries to sponsor programs fostering meaningful and respectful dialogue in community; and
4. directs the Committee on Diversity, with the support of the Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services and the ODLOS Advisory Committee, to develop, provide, and disseminate materials and programming for libraries that deter hate, foster community, and oppose bigotry toward or oppression against any group.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association
Monday, June 26, 2017, in Chicago, Illinois



Keith Michael Fiels
Executive Director and Secretary of the ALA Council

¹ California State University, San Bernardino: <https://csbs.csusb.edu/hate-and-extremism-center>; <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/u-s-hate-crimes-20-percent-2016-fueled-election-campaign-n733306>

² <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/08/us/libraries-hate-crimes.html>