

**Committee on Professional Ethics**  
**REPORT TO COUNCIL**

2019 Annual Conference – Washington D.C.

As chair of the Committee on Professional Ethics (COPE), I am pleased to report on the committee's activities since the 2019 Midwinter Meeting in Seattle, Washington.

### Charge

The council Committee on Professional Ethics shall augment the Code of Ethics by explanatory interpretations and additional statements, prepared by this committee or elicited from other units of ALA. When units of the association develop statements dealing with ethical issues, a copy will be sent to the committee on professional ethics for review so that it may be compared to the existing ALA code of ethics in order to determine whether or not conflicts occur.

### Endorsements

The Committee on Professional Ethics endorsed "Privacy: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*" and "Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*." The committee endorsed in principle the "Resolution on Library Service for Children in Detention."

### Intellectual Freedom Advocacy and Education

This spring COPE collaborated with the Intellectual Freedom Committee to develop a policy statement on the importance of supporting education and raising awareness of intellectual freedom within the library profession. The policy statement was circulated widely, and each comment was taken into consideration. The statement is included in this report as an action item.

### Review and update of Ethics Documents

Members of COPE and volunteers worked diligently from June 2018 until April 2019 reviewing and revising five documents. Some of the documents will be included in the updated 10th edition of the *Intellectual Freedom Manual* edited by Martin Garnar and Trina Magi.

The committee adopted revisions to the “Conflicts of Interest Q&A” and the “Speech in the Workplace Q&A.” The revised documents are uploaded to the ALA website. ([ala.org/tools/ethics](http://ala.org/tools/ethics))

## COPE Liaisons in ALA

Andrew Harant continued to serve as COPE liaison to the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee. He has actively raised ethical issues and concerns in email conversations, in comments on documents, and in virtual and in-person IFC meetings.

As COPE incoming chair, Andrew discussed the committee’s charge, current projects, and how to get involved at the “Intellectual Freedom 101” program at ALA’s 2019 Annual Conference.

## Action Item

The Committee on Professional Ethics moves the adoption of the following action item: ALA CD #24.3\_act “Intellectual Freedom Advocacy and Education.”

## Thank You

COPE members dedicate time and energy to leading working group meetings, planning programs, and offering guidance on resources and emerging trends. The committee would like to recognize the work and advocacy of its outgoing members: John DeSantis, Scott Muir, Steven Phalen, Leigh Rifenburg, and chair, Sara Dallas.

The Committee on Professional Ethics thanks the division representatives and the OIF staff for their commitment, assistance, and hard work. COPE thanks President Loida Garcia Febo and the Executive Board for their confidence in the committee and for allowing them to serve ALA.

Respectfully Submitted,

**ALA Committee on Professional Ethics**

Sara Dallas (Chair)  
Miranda Bennett  
John DeSantis  
Sonja Eyster  
Andrew Harant

Scott Muir  
Steven Phalen  
Leigh Rifenburg  
Hilda Weisburg  
Tiffeni Fontno (Committee Associate)  
Rachel Turner (Committee Associate)

## Intellectual Freedom Advocacy and Education

As members of the American Library Association, we recognize intellectual freedom as a universal human right.<sup>1</sup> This right ensures free access to seek and receive information and expression of ideas from all points of view without restriction for every individual of any age, ability, socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other form of identity or status. The *Library Bill of Rights* and *Code of Ethics of the American Library Association* express core values of our profession and affirm the primacy of intellectual freedom for full participation in a just, equitable, and informed society. We acknowledge our professional obligation to actively defend intellectual freedom rights and to protect the privacy and confidentiality of library users. We advocate for intellectual freedom and strive to educate ourselves, library users, the communities we serve, and the broader society about intellectual freedom and related topics, including privacy, information literacy, and inclusion.

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<sup>1</sup> ALA Policy B.2.1.13, Universal Right to Free Expression