2017-2018 ALA CD#24.1

2018 ALA Annual Conference

**Committee on Professional Ethics**

**REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**2018 Annual Conference – New Orleans, Louisiana**

As chair of the Committee on Professional Ethics (COPE), I am pleased to report on the committee’s activities since the 2018 Midwinter Meeting in Denver, Colorado.

# 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 reviewed, discussed, suggested language, and endorsed:

# The Resolution to Honor African Americans Who Fought Library Segregation

# Meeting Rooms: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*

# Library-Initiated Programs as a Resource: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*

# Services to People with Disabilities: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*

# Program at ALA Annual Conference

COPE’s program “The Librarian's Dilemma: How Would You Respond?” was filled to capacity and generated lively and important discussions regarding ethical scenarios in libraries. Library workers encounter situations in the workplace when their personal and professional ethics collide. These experiences require a significant amount of thoughtful reflection about ethics, professionalism, and librarianship. These situations illustrate the need to understand the ALA Code of Ethics and the complicated nature of ethics in and outside of the library. 

The ALA Code of Ethics defines professional ethics of librarianship into broad principles that may be used by individuals in their professional and personal lives. However, ethical discussions are complex and multifaceted. What is the difference between professional ethics and personal ethics? What should library professionals do when experiencing a personal and professional ethics dilemma? In this session, these questions and others were thoughtfully examined through a series of skits which involved participation from a panel of Intellectual Freedom experts, including moderator Andrew Harant, Martin Garnar, Pam Klipsch, and audience members.   
  
The attendees walked away with a deeper knowledge of the ethical dilemmas that occur every day in the library. Topics covered were patron behaviors, free speech, hate speech, and programming.

# Intellectual Freedom Manual

As a result of Martin Garnar’s charge to COPE, work was done by the committee to review the Q&A documents, the Ethics interpretation and the ALA Code of Ethics. Committee members and liaisons will continue to update and revise the documents for the upcoming 10th edition of the *Intellectual Freedom Manual*.

# Conference Programs Proposal

Committee members brainstormed future proposal ideas for the 2019 ALA Annual Conference in Washington D.C. A program proposal will be submitted by August 31.

# COPE Liaisons in ALA

Andrew Harant continues to be the COPE liaison to the [ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee.](http://www.ala.org/groups/committees/ala/ala-if)

The Committee on Professional Ethics welcomes active division representatives who are committed to sharing information about COPE programs, materials and expertise.

# Book awards

COPE members expressed their concern about the recent decision by the ALSC board to rename the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award to the Children's Literature Legacy Award. The Code of Ethics urges librarians to fight censorship, and to distinguish between personal and professional convictions. While ALSC's statement says that "Updating the award's name should not be construed as censorship" the fact is that this action – and other award name changes that have been contemplated – hold historical authors to modern standards, and subtly disparage their works. COPE encourages divisions and units considering such changes to bring COPE into the discussion ahead of time.

# Thank You

The Committee on Professional Ethics thanks the division representatives and the OIF staff for their commitment, assistance, and hard work. COPE thanks President Jim Neal 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)

John C. DeSantis

Andrew Harant

Scott P. Muir

Steven Phalen

Leigh Rifenburg

Hilda Weisburg