

TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: International Relations Report

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:

Informational

ACTION REQUESTED BY:

N/A

CONTACT PERSON:

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DRAFT OF MOTION:

N/A

DATE: June 7, 2021

BACKGROUND:

An update of ALA's International Relation activities for the ALA Executive Board Annual Meeting 2021.

ATTACHMENTS:

N/A

International Relations Report
Submitted by Michael Dowling-Director, International Relations Office
June 7, 2021

International at Annual

As of June 7, two hundred and fifty-one international librarians and library workers from thirty-two countries had registered for Annual. This is 3.8% of the overall registrations. The goal is to reach five hundred international registrants. In addition to attendees, there are fifteen international exhibitors, from Canada, China, France, India, Singapore, and the United Kingdom.

After a hiatus last year, there is again a robust number of international programs and presentations. Programs include:

- “Central American Library Successes in the Face of a Humanitarian Crisis”
- “African Libraries Resources: Access and Equity During Covid-19”
- “Asia and Oceania Libraries: Rewriting the Future of Libraries”
- “Libraries in a Rapidly Changing World: Working Toward Access and Equity”
- “Leaning International: Stories from the Field”

In addition, there will be fifteen international focused poster sessions about aspects of libraries and library services in: China; Ethiopia; Maldives, Pakistan, South Korea, Serbia, Taiwan, and Zambia.

President Jefferson will present the *ALA Presidential Citation for Innovative International Library Projects* recognizing innovative contributions to international librarianship. The IRRT assists the ALA President in the review and selection of these awards. This year’s winners are:

- *Virtual Library Infolit Race Challenge, Nazarbayev University Library (Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan),*
- *Caring Calls Project, South Shore Public Libraries (Nova Scotia, Canada),*
- *Lighthouse Heritage Research Connections Project (Kowloon, Hong Kong),*
- *VIRL Connects Team, Vancouver Island Regional Library (Nanaimo, BC, Canada),*
- *Red River College Library (Winnipeg, Canada).*

ALA International Membership

International membership has continued to dip at a similar rate to overall membership. At the end of May there were 1,549 members from 92 countries outside the United States. IRO staff has met with new Membership Marketing Manager Judy Czarnik who will be joining the

International Cross-Functional Team. Membership engagement and recruitment will be a key focus of this Team. The International Team will be working to integrate international contacts from across the association into Salesforce for membership recruitment and marketing of services and products.

ACRL Strong International Participation

ACRL Virtual 2021 attracted a large number from outside the United States. One hundred and seventy-four attendees from twenty-one countries participated. And the exhibition was enhanced by exhibitors from Belgium, Canada, France, Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

IFLA Elections

Despite strong candidacies, neither ALA Past-presidents Loida Garcia-Febo nor James Neal were elected as IFLA President-elect and IFLA Governing Board Member, respectively. In a three-way contest current IFLA Treasurer, Antonia Arahova from Greece, was elected President-elect. IRC will be debriefing on all the IFLA elections at Annual to strategize for next election cycle.

ALA President Julius C. Jefferson Jr. was one of ten U.S. candidates, nine ALA members, elected to the new North American Regional Division Committee. Ten Canadian colleagues, including four ALA members, were also elected.

In total, ALA through the Executive Board, nominated forty-nine members for IFLA positions. The majority for various IFLA Sections. The results of these elections will not be announced until June 14.

IFLA Virtual World Library Congress August 17-19

IFLA will hold a Virtual World Library Congress this August 17-19 after canceling last year's Congress. The IRRT has launched a pilot program to promote and enable support for IRRT member attendance and participation in international library conferences. The first initiative will provide competitive grants to cover the early bird registration for the virtual IFLA Congress to be held August 17-19, 2021. Preference will be given to IRRT members and those who would be attending their first IFLA conference.

Disaster Assistance to University of Cape Town Library

Thanks to support from ALA members a \$5,000 a donation from ALA's Disaster Relief Fund is being sent to assist in rebuilding and re-establishing the Jagger Library and its Africana collection after the devastating fire that swept through on April 19.

U.S. Russia Dialog

On June 3, The U.S. Russia Dialog team organized the "Russian and US Libraries Supporting the Well-Being of Individuals and Communities" webinar, which attracted attendees not only from the U.S, and Russia but also seven other countries. President Jefferson and Russia Library

Association President Mikhail Afanasyev welcomed attendees. Nicole Cook and Loida Garcia-Febo served as panelists from the United States.

ALA Task Force on United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)

February's *ALA Connect Live* with ALA President Julius C. Jefferson, Jr. was on Sustainability, and featured the Task Force, which presented a set of resources, new downloadable bookmarks for libraries to use. The first set of bookmarks focus on SDG goals 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

International Webinars

Following up on Council's Midwinter "Resolution in Support of Broadband as a Human Right" a joint IFLA/ALA webinar was held on the topic on May 4th. "Broadband as a Human Right" attracted over a hundred attendees from twenty countries.

"Resolution on U.S. Enterprises' Abridgement of Free Speech"

Since Midwinter, the IRC Chair and two members continued as part of the Joint Task Force with the IFC and the movers of "Resolution Condemning U.S. Media Corporations Abridgement of Free Speech," 2019-2020 ALA CD #46, to create a revised resolution to bring to Council.

ALA Leader International Presentations

President Jefferson provided a presentation and participated on the "Library Associations of the World" panel at All-Russia Library Congress (May 16-20), sharing how ALA and the U.S. library community have responded during the pandemic.

On April 4 Executive Director Tracie Hall participated in "Experiências de advocacy para música e bibliotecas" virtual program in Brazil co-sponsored by the U.S. Embassy.