



Thank you for participating in ALA Connect Live. Here are the answers to the questions we didn't have time to answer. We look forward to seeing you at next month's event: <https://www.ala.org/membership/ala-connect-live-series>

Is there an area you are focusing on as an MLIS student? If so, why that area/track/focus?

Yes, my focus is Administration and DEI. My goal is to expand my reach for change. Perhaps with more experience I'll one day be able to work in library administration. - Randy

I have shifted my focus towards information policy, reference, and instruction, opting to take courses that align with these areas so that I can eventually be a job candidate with a broad and diverse range of expertise. My previous work at a public library has positioned me to do some of this work already, but the coursework I'm taking now allows me to gain more fluency and nuance in these subjects. I am interested in these areas because I think it takes a high level of attention and inquisitiveness to act as a support and guide for others' research and learning, whether one is working with youth or with academics. I have always enjoyed connecting people to ideas, resources, and above all to one another, and I see my interests in reference, instruction, and information policy as an extension of my work. As libraries gradually move away from traditional reference service models, I also think about what possibilities exist for continuing to build upon critical information and cultural competency skill-sets. Such skills are crucial for an informed, engaged, and progressive society, and library workers everywhere can support this learning while staying grounded in values of equity, inclusion, accessibility, and social justice (EDISJ). - Mimosa

What suggestions do you have for those of us dedicated toward creating truth-filled programming and projects that will provide representation and equity within community library and museum space in the South?

What is meant by the term 'truth-filled'? Whose truth are we attempting to uplift, and why? How does what we develop, schedule, and promote shape narratives around what a community desires to know? What steps will we take to effectively integrate community feedback and critique? And how might we continue to strive towards and sustain community co-creation of programming? These are the types of questions I would ask myself - regardless of what region I reside and work in - when thinking about how to develop meaningful programs and projects that promote equity and representation in library and museum spaces.

Being mindful of how we approach programs by integrating community members earlier in the process of our work is one step towards being representative. It's also imperative for us to consider who is not at the table or in the room providing their concerns, and why. How can we as library workers be more welcoming and supportive of people's learning and curiosity, especially if they have not felt included in our spaces previously? Working gradually towards these relationships is one part, though. Another part is crafting an organizational ecosystem in which community members' feedback and interests are regularly shared and explored in tandem with program development, evaluation, and promotion.

Finally, here's the fun part: be curious about what is missing from the slate of programs that your organization shares. Consider how to partner with other local and state initiatives that explore community stories from move away from

dominant (white, cis-male, heteronormative, Christian) perspectives, and reflect on why (or why not) such approaches are effective for patrons coming to your library and/or museum. I personally find a lot of inspiration in the efforts of smaller, grass-roots organizations that have been instrumental in getting people more invested in public programs (i.e. the workshops, discussions, screenings, gatherings, and more that allow one to connect with people and collections). –

Here are a few additional links:

- [Nedra Deadwyler](#) is the founder and principal of [Civil Bikes](#) in Atlanta, Georgia. She has done some fantastic work around community tours and working with local businesses that are part of the neighborhoods in which she conducts tours.
- The recently opened [First Americans Museum](#) of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma is home to the collective histories of 39 distinctive First American nations in present-day Oklahoma. I'm excited to see their [offering of programs](#), and how they may partner with other local and governmental organizations.

Mimosa

I recommend finding a way to collaborate with others who share your vision. Try not to do it alone. Try to be authentic and true to your convictions. Focus on long hanging fruit (not easy) but doable efforts that can help push the needle forward. Do your research, learn from other organizations, come up with a plan, and use some form of project methodology. Determining goals and desired outcomes can prove the value of your work, in some cases. Feel free to reach out to me if I can be of assistance or encouragement. Randy

How do you think the field has progressed as a profession and has it been tailored or designed to a particular gender, nationality, race, or type of being or not? What do you think the projected face and mind of the "Library" and "Librarian" is? I recently read a blog titled "There is an Archivist for that" and a interviewee stated, "Today, the archival profession's biggest problem is having too many archival education programs training far too many people to be archivists, who then have great difficulty finding jobs; this is our profession's great tragedy" Do you see this as a tragedy or opportunity and how has this changed the view of the field?

My responses are from my perspective. I think the field, like so many other professions, is continuing to respond to the changing needs of our respective communities, but these different skills sets and experiences are often "additions" to an existing structure. We need to begin recognizing the need for a comprehensive approach to redesign curriculum, knowledge, skills and abilities, minimum qualifications, job descriptions, job titles, recruitment and selection processes, coaching and mentoring, professional expectations, evaluation and performance appraisals, and retention from an equity and inclusive lens. If we make these changes internally, at the practitioner level, at the LIS level, at the administrative level, I think we will see a change in the face and mind of both the Library and the Librarian. Competencies and our core values and what we identify as professional will remain important to our continuing conversation. This will require a cultural transformation in the profession, beginning at all levels. ALA is undertaking a Diversity Counts update and a Retention Study to bring current data to enhance this dialogue and advancement in thinking.

(<https://www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/diversity/diversitycounts/divcounts#:~:text=Diversity%20Counts%20is%20a%20comprehensive,2010%20American%20Community%20Survey%20analyses>)

Regarding the archivist world, I personally have limited experience as the former leader of an organization with no professional archival training. However, I surrounded myself with a trained and certified professional, recognizing the value of such a position. Together we developed policy and process and trained a large volunteer group and worked with an independent advocacy board. I believe that archivists, like our MLIS degreed colleagues, can and do serve in

many diverse roles including the nonprofit and business sectors and we can expand and do more to advance perception of that important role. I look forward to working with archivist organizations to champion this work. – President Wong

Maurice Wheeler: you talked about having control, dream, diversify as librarian. Are there more opportunities for upcoming graduates to venture beyond librarianship into information-related fields e.g. data science, information architecture?

The broad range of career options in the profession is what drew me to and keeps me in this profession. Perhaps now more than ever, the broad skillset and knowledge base the students develop enable them to successfully operate in a variety of information related fields, which are no longer restricted to libraries and archives. Although, because of the ubiquity of technology and the use of data in library operations, graduates with a focus in information technology are finding equally exciting options in libraries that align with industry and entrepreneurial ventures. Few successful organizations can attain and maintain a high level of success without the understanding of how information and technology affect their services and customers and facilitate the success of their enterprises. That is a bonus for our students because they graduate with those skills and knowledge. Developing that knowledge base, regardless of whether it is highly technical, or policy and services focused, will open new career opportunities. Many LIS programs have now created degrees and concentrations in data science. For potential students with interest in this area of the profession, there are faculty who can provide valuable career guidance and mentoring. – Dr. Wheeler