

American Library Association
Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship (COSWL)
Annual Report to ALA Council
June 1981

Three Directions

COSWL Committee efforts had three primary directions in 1981: research, action to enhance the status of women, and development of linkages with other women's professional groups. Research efforts were concentrated on the demographic and career profile of ALA members through the COSWL study. Action included co-sponsorship with OLPR of a project to develop a resource/information kit on the Pay Equity issue; exploration of unemployment issues; reviews of ALA Council and Officers slates, affirmative action statements in Standards for Accreditation, the IFC Sexism/Racism interpretation statement of "Library Bill of Rights," and of ALA Policy vis-a-vis women; a brochure on sex discrimination; and a traveling exhibit for women's conferences. Development of linkages was both inter and intraassociational. COSWL provided a forum for ALA women's groups and worked to expand its relationships with groups outside of ALA.

ALA Goal Awards

The preliminary report of the ALA Profile analysis, known as the COSWL study conducted by Leigh S. Estabrook and Kathleen M. Heim, indicates that the status of women in librarianship continues to lag behind that of their male counterparts. The report, published in the December, 1980 issue of American Libraries, documented the fact that women ALA members continue to hold fewer administrative positions, earn lower salaries, and be less active in professional associations in numbers proportionate to their total representation than are male ALA members. The COSWL study findings provided an empirical foundation for the Committee's efforts to enhance the status of ALA's women members. The final report will be issued in August, 1981.

The joint COSWL/OLPR ALA Goal Award Project to organize resource materials on the topic of equal pay for work of equal value (Pay Equity Project) was the focus of discussion at both the Midwinter and Annual Conferences under the leadership of Project Director, Helen Josephine. The Pay Equity issue continues to be one of critical importance to the entire library field as library workers at various levels challenge standard pay scales and work compensation. A resource/information kit will be available in September, 1981.

Council Resolutions

Seven resolutions which were developed at the 1980 Preconference on Women (jointly sponsored by COSWL and the SRRT Feminist Task Force) were presented to the ALA Membership by the Committee:

a. "Resolved, that the Executive Director of the Association find the funds for two members to be trained at the University of Washington's Career Development and Assessment Center who will in turn train others to staff the ALA Placement Office at annual conferences and midwinter meetings. These people will give individual professional counseling to those seeking jobs. In lieu of payment for their services, these counselors would receive a stipend covering room and board. This program will be administered by OLPR."

b. "Resolved, that the Office for Intellectual Freedom and the ALA Washington Office work together to prevent the passage of the Family Protection Act."

c. "Resolved, that the phrase " (including discrimination and sexual harassment)" be inserted in Policy #54.13, Program of Action for Mediation, Arbitration, and Inquiry, of the ALA Policy Manual, line 6, following "fair employment practices."

d. "Resolved, that ALA provide free child care services at annual conferences and midwinter meetings and that the funds come from the Conference budget."

e. "Resolved, that the Council of the ALA direct the Committee on Accreditation to revise the 1972 Standards for Accreditation to include Affirmative Action reports with regard to faculty, staff, and students."

f. "Resolved, that the American Library Association support the worldwide Nestle boycott."

g. "Resolved, that Council charge the Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship with the responsibility for developing continuing coalitions of occupational organizations in professions in which women predominate, including unions, professional associations and organizations of clerical workers, hospital workers, teachers, etc. The coalitions should look at the area of unemployment and should propose and lobby for economic and social solutions through legislative, educational and social service programs. The Council further charges the Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship to report to Council on the development of coalition activities at the 1981 Midwinter meeting in Washington and at future conferences and meetings of ALA."

(NOTE: All resolutions were passed by ALA Membership. Resolutions b., c., and g. were passed by Council. Resolution a. on the Career Development and Assessment Center was referred to OLPR for a report at Midwinter; resolution d. on child care was referred to the Executive Director for a report at Midwinter and implementation at the annual conference; resolution e. on accreditation was approved in principle and referred to COA for a report at Midwinter and resolution f. on the Nestle boycott was withdrawn from the Council agenda).