

## Committee on Professional Ethics

# REPORT TO COUNCIL

As chair of the Committee on Professional Ethics (COPE), I am pleased to report on the committee's activities since the virtual event in June 2021.

### Charge

The council committee on professional ethics shall augment the *Code of Ethics* ([ala.org/tools/ethics](http://ala.org/tools/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.

### Q&A on Ableism

The Q&A on Ableism group is charged with drafting a formal document to provide probable answers to concerns and questions related to accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities, particularly inspired by the *Code of Ethics*' ninth principle. To date, the five working group members have reviewed an outline; invited committee liaisons representing various ALA units, roundtables, and committees; and are preparing a submission form to gather input from the broader library community about ableism in the library profession and the Code of Ethics.

### Q&A on Sexism

The Q&A on Sexism group, composed of 5 committee members and liaisons from various ALA units, roundtables, and committees, is drafting a document to provide guidance to ethical issues on sexism through the ALA Code of Ethics. The group has developed a submission form to collect input from the following groups via Connect: Core Diversity and Inclusion Committee and Core Leadership and Management Section, ACRL Committee on Professional Values, Joint Professional Values Programming Subgroup, COPE liaison/representative groups, Social Responsibility Round Table (SRRT), Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship, Intellectual Freedom Committee, and the Committee on Diversity. The working group will receive additional input from the library community and draft potential questions simultaneously.

## Outreach

The Outreach group, composed of 5 committee members and liaisons, has focused on creating programming for LibLearnX and contributing to collaborative programming for ALA Annual Conference 2022. The group has plans to create template presentations on timely ethical issues to make available to other professionals to tweak and present at their local level. This is an attempt to continue to create ethics education on a larger scale and make COPE more accessible to library workers. The group is in the process of reaching out to other ALA units and chapters to present at upcoming conferences.

## Preamble

The Committee, upon the suggestions in the Report of the COPE Working Group on Social and Racial Justice, has begun to revise the Code of Ethics preamble to add context for the newly added ninth principle. The group prepared a preliminary draft to add to the *Code of Ethics* preamble with contributions from the OIF staff before inviting committee liaisons to further contribute to the final revision.

## Skits Digitization

Kristin Pekoll, ALA OIF staff member, scanned 34 ethics skits from COPE's archives into a 112-page PDF and sent it to the Skit Digitization group. These skits presented ethical situations presented from the 1980's to the 2000's. The group ran Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software on the PDF so that it is keyword searchable, and then cleaned up the scans. Since many of the skits were faxed versions or were early emails, the group also created a Microsoft Word version of the document, which is more visually appealing and is easier to edit. During this process, the group discovered several of the skits were missing parts, and they are currently working with Pekoll to find the missing texts. These skits will be available for future use by the library community and for additional projects by the Committee on Professional Ethics to increase ethics education.

## Ethics Bibliography

The Associates Entry Point project is led by two COPE associates, Dr. Sheri Edwards and Richard Wade, as an introduction to prospective librarians and library workers, providing various resources about ethics, its meaning, and application. The purpose of the project is to familiarize librarians with ethics in both general and professional contexts, and particularly those librarians who might not have access to the topic by way of formal education (e.g., rural librarians who aren't required to hold a professional library degree and paraprofessionals in leadership positions). Collected resources include carefully analyzed articles, videos, and websites. The associates are presently reviewing and analyzing book titles as additional resources. Their work will be another critical component for increasing ethics education and awareness.

## Professional Ethics Liaisons

COPE committee members and associates have demonstrated further commitment to the ALA core values by serving as liaisons to other working groups and projects.

One committee member currently serves on the Core Values Programming Subgroup and has contributed to drafting, collaborating, and presenting programs at ALA conferences. The group has representatives from representatives from IFC, IFC Privacy Subcommittee, COPE, IFRT, and FTRF. COPE, with the help of the subgroup, submitted a program proposal to the LibLearnX conference and was accepted. The subgroup is awaiting communication regarding program proposals submitted for the ALA Annual Conference.

One committee member and one associate currently serve on the Critical Race Theory Toolkit working group. The charge of this group, “comprised of ALA staff and ALA members — is creating a toolkit to prepare library workers for censorship challenges to critical race theory in curriculums, anti-racist materials, and diversity staff trainings. The subgroup's goal is to create a resource that will prepare library workers to defend their collections, counter falsehoods, and engage their communities in important conversations about racial injustice and empowering everyone to fully participate in our democratic society.” COPE members are contributing revisions to the second draft of the toolkit, participating during upcoming meetings, and reporting back to COPE members on the subgroup progress.

To this end, COPE relies on the time and energy devoted by liaisons of divisions, round tables, and affiliates. Thank you to Mary Keeling (AASL Liaison); John Budd (LRRT Liaison); Marna Clowney-Robinson (SRRT Liaison); Lourdes Johnson (NMRT Liaison); Lea Wentworth (RRT Liaison); Leslie Campbell Hime (EMIERT Liaison); Margaret Danhof (United Liaison); Kelsey Ford (YALSA Liaison); Andrew Horbal (FMRT Liaison); Carol Leibiger (LHRT Liaison); Shatha Baydoun (COSWL Liaison); Nichelle Hayes (BCALA Liaison); Megan Oakleaf (ACRL Liaison); Kelvin Watson (PLA Liaison); and Eboni Henry (ALA Executive Board Liaison).

## Thank You

The Committee on Professional Ethics thanks the OIF staff for their commitment, assistance, and hard work. In particular, Kristin Pekoll, for serving as staff liaison, assisting with meetings, and guiding the Committee when questions arise. COPE thanks President Patty Wong and the Executive Board for their confidence in the committee and for allowing them to serve ALA.

Respectfully Submitted,

## ALA Committee on Professional Ethics

Johana Orellana Cabrera (Chair)

Kim Becnel

Nancy Bolt

Erica Freudenberger

Rory Patterson

Catherine Smith

Amy Wiggins

Sheri Edwards (Committee Associate)

Richard Ward (Committee Associate)

# COMMITTEE INFORMATION UPDATE

**Committee Name:** Committee on Professional Ethics

**Conference Year:** 2021-2022

**Committee Chair:** Johana Orellana Cabrera

**Staff Liaison:** Kristin Pekoll

**Committee Members:**

Johana Orellana Cabrera (Chair)  
Kim Becnel  
Nancy Bolt  
Erica Freudenberger

Rory Patterson  
Catherine Smith  
Amy Wiggins  
Sheri Edwards (Committee Associate)  
Richard Ward (Committee Associate)

Date of meeting(s)	Meeting format (in-person or virtual)	Number of members present	Total in attendance
August 25, 2021	Virtual	7	9
September 22, 2021	Virtual	8	11
October 27, 2021	Virtual	7	16
December 8, 2021	Virtual	8	18
January 19, 2022	Virtual		

**Committee Charge:**

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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.

**Objectives of the committee for this conference year, including any planned activities:**

1. LibLearnX program: “Advancing Social Justice Through the 9th Principle of the Code of Ethics” with speakers Andrew Harant, Emily Knox, Sarah Houghton.
2. Draft two Q&A documents to expand on the ALA Code of Ethics; Sexism and Ableism.
3. Create outreach ideas to promote COPE and create awareness of professional ethics in the association and profession.
4. Collaborate with COPE Associates to create a bibliography to serve as an entry point for new members and nonmembers. This is particularly critical for accessibility and as a resource for non-degreed librarians or administrators in rural communities.
5. PLANNED: Draft guidance for collection development practices that balance 2nd principle (censorship) and the 9th principle (social and racial justice).
6. PLANNED: Reevaluate the ALA Code of Ethics preamble to include a historical perspective and add context for 9th principle.
7. PLANNED: Translate the Code of Ethics into Spanish.

**Describe interactions with other units within ALA:**

1. Annual conference and LibLearnX program proposals with ALA’s Intellectual Freedom Committee and Intellectual Freedom Round Table.
2. Liaisons with AASL, LRRT, SRRT, NMRT, RRT, EMIERT, United for Libraries, YALSA, FMRT, LHRT, COSWL, BCALA, ACRL, PLA, and the ALA Executive Board.

**Synthesis of activities (summarize discussions, decision(s) or motion(s) reached, and note follow-up action(s) required:**

1. Sub groups formed to work on various COPE documents and projects.
2. COPE members volunteer to work with:
  - a. Intellectual Freedom and Social Justice Subgroup
  - b. Joint Professional Values Programming Subgroup
  - c. Challenges to CRT and Diversity Training Toolkit Subgroup

**If unable to achieve desired committee outcomes, what hampered the ability to achieve stated goals (lack of resources, member participation, communication issues, procedural delays, etc.?)**

Objectives are in progress.

**Priorities/recommendations for the upcoming year:**

Further expand the profession's and the association's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion with documents to enhance the new article to the ALA Code of Ethics.

**Other comments/information you believe will help the Association in its work:**

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**Submitted by:** Kristin Pekoll

**Date Submitted:** January 3, 2022