

American Library Association President-Elect Report Lessa Kanani‘opua Pelayo-Lozada Fall 2022

Leading in times of change and turmoil is never an easy one, and this Fall has proven to be a challenging one as our library workers and libraries continue to face unprecedented numbers of book challenges, threats to physical safety, and continued adjustments to living through a pandemic. While things seem bleak, however, I continue to be impressed and inspired by our brave communities and the work being done across the nation and the world. I've had the opportunity to visit libraries across the U.S. who are leveraging the ability to connect with one another again to create spaces for celebration, learning, literacy, and grieving. Library workers are assessing the new needs of our communities and we as an association are doing the same. This report covers my activities from July 2022 through September 2022.

ALA-Allied Professional Association

Within ALA, the time is now – as we approach 150 years – to make changes to how we show up for our members and to really listen to those needs. It has been a pleasure to work with and identify the connections and collaborations possible between my presidency and that of ALA President-Elect Emily Drabinski. Building upon the work done by our predecessor Immediate Past President Patty Wong in particular, but also those who have come before, we are excited to engage in re-visioning and re-imagining our companion organization, the ALA-Allied Professional Association over the next few years, bringing the resources needed for supporting library workers in today's workplace. We hope to have a bigger update after the Fall Executive Board meeting.

Constitution & Bylaws

Part of preparing for that work, this first quarter has been one of normalizing how we work together as an association, normalizing my approach to the presidency, and bringing together our Executive Board, Committees, and Council to modernize ALA while focusing on our mission, vision, and core values to unite us. The constitution and bylaws work created the need for what may have been the shortest Council meeting in the history of the Association – less than one hour to ratify the vote made by Council in June 2022 to rescind the constitution and bring forth a re-write for Council and members to vote on in 2023. More information about what is in store and how to participate in this historic work can be found at [the homepage](#) of the Constitution & Bylaws Committee. My role in this has been to communicate with the committee, our governance staff, and our parliamentarian to prepare for the debate and vote on the final draft of the newly revised bylaws at our January 2023 Council meetings.

2022-2023 Presidential Advisory Committee: Our Brave Communities

My Presidential Advisory Committee continues to focus on “Our Brave Communities” around labor and workers' rights, partnerships, membership growth, and the ALA-Allied Professional Association.

Members of the committee have been working with the ALA Membership Office's Tina Coleman to create a fun “BuzzFeed” style quiz to help individuals find their home in an ALA

Round Table. Much work was done laying the groundwork for future presentations, creating proposals and coordinating panels for the Joint Conference of Librarians of Color, LibLearnX, and the California Library Association Conference. In the realm of partnerships, members of the committee have been hard at work to develop a limited series podcast to be released in Spring 2023 that will feature a series of conversations with excellent library partners.

The committee also worked to put together [two \\$2500 travel grants](#) for underemployed library workers to attend the Library Learning Experience, putting tangible member benefits into action as promised.

Much of the work around my theme has been reflected in my two American Libraries President's Messages: [Our Brave Communities](#) and [Representation Matters](#)

Branding Working Group

Work continues on the ALA Branding Working Group under the leadership of co-chairs ALA Past President Julius C. Jefferson Jr. and United for Libraries Past President Skip Dye to explore expanding ALA's brand to include public library supporters and lovers as well as to explore a replacement to the Libraries Transform Campaign. Building off of the work from our previous consultants, Mission Partners as presented at the June Executive Board meeting, the co-chairs are leading the working group in some continued data collection and member engagement mapping to move the group forward. I continue to be their Executive Board liaison and advise as necessary.

International Federation of Library Association's (IFLA) World Library & Information Congress in Dublin, Ireland

In July I had the distinct pleasure of representing ALA at my first IFLA Conference. Some of my highlights included:

- Attending the IFLA President's Luncheon hosted by IFLA President Barbara Lison with ALA Executive Director Tracie D. Hall where we made connections with leaders from library associations across the world
- Hearing from the Management of Library Associations Section, New Professionals SIG about "Empowering Library Leaders and Diversity Worldwide" and facilitated by ALA's very own past president Loida Garcia-Febo
- Learning about "Strengthening Indigenous Languages Through the Collaborations in Wikimedia Projects" from members of the Indigenous Matters Section and facilitated by our very own Mark Puente
- Exploring opportunities with the new IFLA North American section, co-chaired by ALA past president Julius C. Jefferson, Jr.
- Meeting LIANZA's first Pasikifa president and president-elect, Kim Taunga & Richard Misilei
- Working the ALA booth to meet our US based and international members with International Relations Office Director Michael Dowling
- Hearing from Ireland's first female president and climate change activist Mary Robinson

Visiting Tuscaloosa Libraries

As the invited keynote speaker of the University of Alabama's School for Library and Information Studies (SLIS)' 50th Anniversary celebration, I also had the privilege of visiting multiple libraries in Tuscaloosa, thanks to the coordination of ALA Committee on Library Advocacy Chair and SLIS Associate Professor and Assistant Director, School Library Media Coordinator, Professor Dr. Steven Yates. Highlights from each location included:

- Shelton State Community College tour by archivist Alex Smith highlighting the ways the library has changed and is being renovated as student usage increase post-COVID.
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School tour by librarian Kat Baxter highlighting the results of the school district's IAL grant and the fourth grade project to research and bring addresses in *The Green Book* to life. Both school library visits were accompanied by both Dr. Yates and Andrew Maxey, Tuscaloosa City Schools Director of Strategic Initiatives.
- Northridge Middle School tour by librarian Laren Hammond and principal Jami Rainey also highlighting the results of the same IAL grant and how the results are bringing continuity and an increased focus on literacy and reading engagement to the district. It was also wonderful to meet the library gerbil, Mr. Frodo!
- Tuscaloosa Public Library invited us to their largest ever Hispanic Heritage Month celebration featuring multiple community partners sharing facts and stories from their birthplace countries, great music, and good food. The hard work of the library to create strong community connections with new and emerging populations was evident in this fun and delicious program.
- University of Alabama SLIS Book Arts studios tour by Professor & MFA Program Coordinator Anna Embree was a wonderful highlight for one of the few programs of this type in a SLIS department, highlighting the strong connections between libraries, books, and art.

Media

- As ALA President, I have done many interviews around censorship, the Unite Against Book Bans Campaign, and other topics affecting libraries. A selection of the places my interviews have been featured include:
 - [The right in the US has a new bogeyman: libraries](#) (Guardian US, 07.27.2022)
 - [Why did Wilmington's libraries join the nationwide 'wave' to end late book fines?](#) (Wilmington StarNews, 08.10.2022)
 - [NBC2 Fort Myer](#) (Video Interview)
 - [Book Bans Surge as Advocacy Groups Wage War on Literature](#) (LA Magazine, 09.29.2022)
- A co-authored article, [Students Are Back in School With Less to Read](#) with National Council of Teachers of English President Valerie Kinloch for *Inside Sources* was released September 11, 2022
- A fun interview was with YouTuber and high schooler Kelly Yang for her series, [Historically Speaking with Kelly Yang](#) (09.14.2022)

Speaking Engagements

- Provided a call to action for the Freedom to Read's virtual symposium, "Where Intellectual Freedom and Social Justice Meet: A Call to Action" (July 2022)

- Panelist for San Jose State University's Library 2.0 virtual conference's keynote session "Urban Librarianship: Embracing Challenges and Opportunities through Innovation, Leadership and Best Practices" (July 2022)
- Long Beach Public Library Career Online High School Graduation speaker (August 2022)
- ALA Nominating Committee Panelist (August 2022)
- Los Angeles Public Library DAIA Meet and Greet with ALA and National Associations of Librarians of Color panel (August 2022)
- Panelist for the School Libraries Summit hosted by San Jose State University School of Information and Library Science, University of South Carolina's School of Information Science and Simmons School of Library and Information Science. The first of a 3-part series. (September 2022)
- Keynote speaker for the University of Alabama's School of Library and Information Studies' 50th Anniversary Celebration (September 2022)

Thanks

Finally, my thanks and gratitude as always to the ALA Staff that work in partnership with us to grow the association and our members as well as to my advisory committee for their continued guidance and work on my behalf and on behalf of all ALA members.