

American Library Association  
Committee Information Update

Please note: ALA and Council committees are required to **submit an update of their activities within one-month after each Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference.** This form will be sent to the ALA Council and the ALA Committee on Organization.

Report for Midwinter 2016

Name of Committee: ALA Committee on Professional Ethics

Committee Chair: Mary Jane Santos

Committee Members Present: Mary Jane Santos, Chair  
Rosanne Cordell; Sara Dallas; Scott Muir; Steven Phalen; Jamie Lyn Segno; Ivy Weir, Intern

Committee Members Absent: Kaetrena Kendrick

Others Present: Audra Caplan, PLA; Danise Hoover, RUSA; Beth Schuck, ACRL; Jodi Spillane, ALCTS;  
Hilda Weisburg, AASL; Kristin Pekoll, OIF Staff; Jamie LaRue, OIF Staff

Accomplishments [at this meeting], a concise account:

- LIS Ethics Education Survey Update -- COPE is investigating how professional ethics are taught in LIS programs and will be conducting a survey of all ALA-accredited and CAEP-accredited LIS programs regarding the inclusion of this topic in their curricula. Martin Garnar is leading the charge on this survey and because of his change in positions to a different university the IRB approval had to be reapplied for. A third of the results have been submitted and Martin will continue to invite LIS programs to participate. COPE will have a more detailed report for annual.
- Educational Programming -- In support of ALA's multiyear campaign of Libraries Transform, COPE is developing a program for annual titled, No room at the Library: the Ethics of Diversity with key speaker, Loida Garcia-Febo. She will moderate a panel of thoughtful speakers and engaging skits to promote libraries transforming to a global space. Reflecting on the recent resolution to ALA council, a skit will address potential Islamophobia and the ethical responsibilities of librarians.

Planned activities for upcoming year, a concise account:

- Plans are underway to develop and present a webcast that will educate leadership on the charge of the ethics committee and how to improve communication between divisions and COPE. A side benefit of this project is to create a model for other ALA committees to efficiently and creatively on-board new leadership on its role within the ALA organization.  
In addition to program planning, the committee is investigating the feasibility of creating an Ethics toolkit to help libraries train staff and to archive COPE publications and programs for continual use.

Issues that affect the committee's work and their implications for the future:

The committee is excited to embrace all the ways technology can further their reach and their communication with the thousands of ALA members the importance of Ethics with the library profession.

Interactions with other units within ALA:

The committee's staff liaison has personally connected with unit leadership to encourage appointments for division representatives on the committee. There has been mixed response but we are optimistic that continued dialogue will produce stronger involvement. The committee hopes that with more communication about our purpose to division leadership there will be more enthusiasm.

Relationship of the committee's work to the ALA strategic plan:

Not much attention was devoted to the ALA strategic plan this year but we will reflect on the committee's role and how to strengthen the mission of ALA in the future.

Current level of committee members' involvement:

On a whole, the members of COPE are extremely motivated and engaged. They are active in discussion and quick to volunteer for tasks. The email list is active with ideas and updates. Programs are well attended at conferences because membership takes pride in creating engaging thoughtful presentations.

Specifically, the interns designated for this committee have been enthusiastic and helpful. There has been a tradition of members who start as interns, serving as committee members, and continuing to leadership positions within ALA.

Committee self-check on its value and viability:

The general consensus is that the committee is undervalued and unknown. The representatives from units across the Association bring up valid concerns that the Ethics committee is willing to work on but there is little awareness of the committee and its charge to the greater organization. A few members that were appointed to the committee were not aware of its existence prior to appointment.

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

COPE chair, Mary Jane Santos, is reaching out to ALA unit managers, division leadership, and staff liaisons to promote the charge of the Ethics Committee as designed by the Association.

***The council committee on professional ethics shall augment the Code of 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.***

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Submitted by: Kristin Pekoll

Date Submitted: 1/20/2016

Please return the completed form to Kerri Price, ALA Executive Board Secretariat, Governance Office, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611, kprice@ala.org.