

Committee on Professional Ethics

REPORT TO COUNCIL

2013 Annual Conference — Chicago, Illinois

As chair of the Committee on Professional Ethics (COPE), I am pleased to report on the committee's activities since the 2013 Midwinter Meeting:

Explanatory Statements on the Code of Ethics

As a committee of Council, COPE's charge is to augment the Code of Ethics by explanatory interpretations and additional statements. Currently, two such explanatory statements exist: "Questions and Answers on Speech in the Workplace," and "Questions and Answers on Enforcement of the Code of Ethics of the American Library Association." COPE has revised and updated the Q&A on workplace speech and has also developed a new Q&A on Ethics and Social Media. These statements were finalized at the conference and will be posted on the ALA website.

Educational Programming

The committee presented the following program at ALA's Annual Conference in Chicago on Sunday, June 30, 2013 from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.:

"Ethics in Action: Addressing Conflicts of Interest"

Ethical dilemmas occur when values are in conflict, and librarians often find themselves navigating real or potential conflicts of interest in the course of their professional duties. This program will explore the complex dynamics of vendor relationships, book award committees, and other situations where such conflicts frequently arise. Speakers will share their own experiences, challenging attendees to grapple with real world scenarios and work together to untangle them.

The committee invited the audience to generate questions to be addressed in a new explanatory statement on the Code of Ethics on conflicts of interest, with a target publication date of the 2014 Annual Conference. The 2014 Annual Conference program will focus on libraries' relationship with law enforcement and the ethical issues that arise when balancing safety and security with privacy and access to library services.

In addition to the 2013 annual conference program, the committee presented a half-day preconference at Annual Conference on the morning of Friday, June 28. This preconference grew out of a 2009 Council-approved resolution acknowledging ethics as an educational priority of the Association. ALA contracted with the Institute for Global Ethics (IGE) to offer their Ethical Fitness® seminar. Nancy Zimmerman, former chair of the committee, is an IGE-certified trainer and was the main presenter. 24 people attended the preconference. The committee plans to offer this preconference again in a few years.

In closing, the Committee on Professional Ethics thanks the unit liaisons and the OIF staff for their commitment, assistance, and hard work.

Respectfully Submitted,

ALA Committee on Professional Ethics
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Hilary Meg Albert
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