

Committee on Professional Ethics

REPORT TO COUNCIL

2015 Midwinter Meeting – Chicago, Illinois

As chair of the Committee on Professional Ethics (COPE), I am pleased to report on the committee's activities since the 2014 Annual Conference.

Copyright: An Interpretation of the Code of Ethics

Following Council's adoption of Copyright: An Interpretation of the Code of Ethics, COPE prepared an abstract for the statement's inclusion in the ALA Policy Manual as B.1.4. We eagerly await publication of the 9th edition of the Intellectual Freedom Manual (scheduled for April 2015), which will include a chapter on copyright that features the new Interpretation.

Ethics Education in LIS Programs

As part of the revision process of the *Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies*, COPE submitted comments to the Committee on Accreditation suggesting specific language regarding ethics education. Though the recommendations were not included in the final draft of the standards presented to Council at the 2015 Midwinter Meeting, COPE is hopeful that the inclusion of ethics and values as desired student learning outcomes will enhance the treatment of these concepts in LIS curricula. As COPE is still interested in investigating how professional ethics are taught in LIS programs, the committee will be conducting a survey of all ALA- and NCATE-accredited LIS programs regarding the inclusion of this topic in their curricula. The committee will report its findings at the 2015 Annual Conference.

Professional Conduct in the Association

From time to time, issues arise within the Association that can be divisive. Occasionally, discourse and/or behavior strays from the norms of professionalism and descends into personal attacks, unproductive areas, or unacceptable actions. As a friendly reminder, COPE would like to highlight two sections of the Code of Ethics. Article V states "we treat co-

workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith,” while Article II states “we uphold the principles of intellectual freedom.” As professionals committed to intellectual freedom, we should exercise our rights to free speech on all subjects when we come together as a community, all the while remembering our duty to treat each other with respect, fairness, and good faith when our views are in conflict.

Educational Programming

The committee is planning the following program at ALA’s Annual Conference in San Francisco on Sunday, June 28, 2015 from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.:

Ethical Lapses: Many Shades of Grey

How does your institution handle ethical issues? If there are policies in place, would you know how to apply them? In the second installment of the “What Would You Do?” series, we will tackle some of the ambiguous situations surrounding ethics in the field. Even if you think as professionals and librarians we know right from wrong, unintended and unforeseen ethical lapses can still occur. Join us to hear from a panel, review model policies, and role-play scenarios to help with decision-making in the face of real-life ethical grey areas.

Other Future Projects

In addition to program planning, the committee is investigating whether recent court cases on workplace speech will require the update of our Q&A document on that subject. If updates are required, they will be prepared by Annual 2015.

In closing, the Committee on Professional Ethics thanks the unit liaisons and the OIF staff for their commitment, assistance, and hard work. In particular, we would like to thank Deborah Caldwell-Stone for serving so ably as our temporary staff liaison and we welcome Kristin Pekoll as our new liaison supporting the work of this committee.

Respectfully Submitted,

ALA Committee on Professional Ethics

Martin Garnar (Chair)
Helen R. Adams
Hilary Meg Albert
Kaetrena Kendrick
Leigh Rifenburg

Mary Jane Santos
Jamie Lyn Segno
Emily Lawrence, intern
Steven Phalen, intern