

**American Library Association
2022 January LibLearnX Meeting
Report of President, Patty Wong**

The American Library Association supported school libraries and librarians and all libraries facing intellectual freedom challenges throughout the country. We wrote many letters to share our concerns and to demonstrate our core values and commitment to intellectual freedom and education, collection development and the individual's right to read and learn in this very chilling political environment.

Thankfully there are wonderful moments in the media that continue to support our library communities and the work we do. I shared these moments in conversation with PLA President Melanie Huggins who would be interviewed by NPR about the role of public libraries during COVID. The Washington Post article on January 1, 2022 ([“The golden age of public libraries dawns again”](#)) shared so many examples of libraries providing exceptional service through their new buildings. These opportunities also bring to light the great need we have as an Association to also shed light on those libraries who so desperately need infrastructure and library staff who are doing their utmost to stay afloat and bring the best programs they can to their communities with limited resources but with hearts committed to service.

During this quarter I spent much of my time dedicated to the future of our Association, working with the Transforming ALA Governance team, capably led by Chair Amy Lappin. It has been many decades using similar processes for our Association to govern. We hope to bring about options to address the needed change to be a more inclusive, mission driven and member engaged organization, while working towards efficiency AND effectiveness. We hope that the upcoming conversations in and out of Council will lead towards that effort and we thank everyone who has worked on this effort for the past several years – SCOE, Forward Together and so many informal conversations – that has led us to today.

Together we are:

- Working with ALISE leadership, led by President Lisa O'Connor to begin work on a survey that will assist the Committee on Accreditation to identify EDI needs within the LIS environment. Dr. Nicole Cooke will lead this work representing ALA.
- Working with ALA leadership to establish core ways of creating sustainability measures in our local practices as well as integrating our values in programmatic and operations in many corners of the Association – thanks to Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, the Sustainability Committee and the Sustainability Round Table for these coordinated efforts.
- Working with ALA leadership and the Executive Board to establish sustainable EDI practices and outcomes – regular discussion and planning will elevate and integrate our ideals and operations.

- Supporting work with Executive Director Tracie Hall to update and revise the outdated Standards of Library Service for the Incarcerated and Detained. Executive Director Tracie Hall is leading efforts with a strong group of individuals representing librarians, library users and advocates to review current services and update this critical area within our profession.

Digital equity continues to be of concern. A special issue of *American Libraries* will feature our ongoing and collective work throughout the country on digital equity and universal broadband. Thank you to two members of my Presidential Advisory Team – Stacey Aldrich and Lynn Silipigni Connaway for their work on this issue, and in developing LibLearnX programs on this need.

Recently, much of this time has been meeting with dozens of librarians and library workers internationally. The Sharjah International Book Fair (SIBF) and the Sharjah International Library Conference was a highlight to meet library staff from many countries as well as many local and regional school, academic and public library teams. ALA celebrates the eighth year in partnership to bring about the successful International Library Conference associated with the Book Fair. SIBF is the largest of its kind in the world, drawing hundreds of thousands over the ten-day engagement. The community has a long-held commitment to literacy – it is easy to recognize through the many banners and promotions that line the streets and are even posted within the Emirates Airlines inflight features. Thousands of school children populate the aisles in search of books that they might bring home and hundreds of vendors are attentive to the actual book sales that take place daily. The Book Fair is one of the most comprehensive markets for materials in Arabic and Arabic to other languages. I was pleased to be one of our ALA representatives that included Executive Director Hall and Immediate Past President Julius C. Jefferson, Jr. I spoke on adaptive leadership and a responsibility for all library workers to share their voices in equity of service. The US delegation included Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden and I was honored to introduce her to our international audience. Thank you to ALA staff Michael Dowling and Delin Guerra for their leadership and tremendous work on this valuable partnership.

In December I met with the US-Russia Library Dialogue community to discuss and share ideas and library programs and services in Sustainability. This is a partnership that has met for close to 30 years beginning with academic institutions through Vassar and then moving and including many others in various library sectors. Many thanks to Nancy Kranich and Ellen Knutson for their leadership and kind invitation. I hope that ALA leadership will continue this valuable engagement and others where we have had a strong international commitment. A special thanks to Past President Julius C. Jefferson Jr. for representing ALA at the Guadalajara Book Fair that took place in person in November.

Libraries Connect Presidential Initiative

Amplifying Asian American and EDI support of ALA efforts: Part of my commitment is to generate attention on Asian American voices and communities during my Presidency, the LibLearnX event will feature interviews with Asian American leaders.

I was fortunate to have a conversation with Senator Mazie Hirono, author of *Heart of Fire: An Immigrant Daughter's Story*. Senator Hirono is the first Asian American female Senator and the only immigrant currently serving in the Senate. Her story has so much personal and professional resonance for all of us beginning with her immigration from Japan to Hawai'i as a young child and growing up in Waipahu, then a small plantation town. Her commitment as a public servant grew out of her own experience with the diversity of Hawai'i but also the extreme poverty within her family and in the communities where she has served. Her book takes us to the politics of today, experience with the Trump administration and her conviction to be the voice of the people along with her colleague then Senator Kamala Harris. Thanks to the Penguin Random House team and especially Miriam Tuliao for arranging this.

Connect Live: The November 18 Connect Live was one of the most stirring conversations that brought our work within EDI front and center. Dr. Nicole Cooke, Ray Pun and Pambanisha Whaley urged our profession to move from transactional to transformative and called all of us to take and make responsibility as community leaders.

[November 2021 ALA Connect Live Links from Chat \(pdf\)](#)

[November 2021 ALA Connect Live Recording - DEI Perspectives](#)

Future Connect Live programs will feature Sustainability on February 24th and Library Services to American Indian communities in April.

Speaking Engagements, Interviews and Invitations (since October 23 2021):

October 2022 Korean Library Association greeting

November 4-7 REFORMA National Conference: Greeting and Welcome

November 9-11 Sharjah International Book Fair: Adaptive Leadership for Today's Leaders

November 18 ALA Connect Live: DEI Perspectives featuring Dr. Nicole Cooke with Ray Pun and Pambanisha Whaley

December 2 Lithuanian Library Association: The Value of Librarians and Library Workers

December 7 Washington State Libraries: Transformation Action for Today's Leaders: an EDI Approach