**ACRL Chapters Council Meeting**

**June 15, 2023**

**10:00-11:30 AM EDT**

**Virtual via Zoom**

1. Welcome. Interim Chair Eric Edwards called the meeting to order.
2. 10:00-10:30 AM: Presentation with Time for Questions (Kathryn (Katie) Kehoe—North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University)—"An Introduction to Digital Inclusion for Libraries”

Interim Chair Edwards sent out Ms. Kehoe’s slide deck prior to the meeting:

<https://connect.ala.org/HigherLogic/System/DownloadDocumentFile.ashx?DocumentFileKey=ef477855-25d2-48fb-8c1f-0188ba276256>

Ms. Kehoe started the presentation by asking the participants to respond in the chat how their academic libraries supported their university communities with computer and internet resources and how the pandemic may have changed what they offered. There were varied responses such as more e-books, computer lending, chat services, and virtual consultations. She then moved on to defining terms that are essential to this discussion. She defined the digital divide as “the gap between those who have affordable access, skills, and support to effectively engage online and those who do not.” Digital equity is “a condition in which everyone, all communities, have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in democracy and the economy and telehealth…[it] is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, learning, and being able to access the central services.” Digital inclusion is the “activities that ensure all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to use information and communication technologies.” If you want to know more about these definitions, the National Digital Inclusion Alliance, which is linked in the slide, can help.

In order to reach digital equity, people need several sorts of access. First, users need access to a device that meets their needs. For example, one may not really be able to write a resume on a cell phone or do homework for an engineering class on a regular laptop. Second, people will need access to digital literacy training to sue this technology well. Third, people will need access to affordable home broadband that will meet their needs, such as internet that is fast enough for a Zoom meeting with hundreds of participants. Finally, they need access to affordable technology support to help with these other three aspects.

The digital divide disproportionately affects people of color and indigenous communities, and their access to affordable broadband and laptops is significantly lower, Sixty-nine percent of Black households and 76% of Hispanic/Latinx households own a laptop or desktop computer compared to 80% of white households. Seventy-one percent of Black households and 65% of Hispanic/Latinx households have access to broadband compared to 80% of white households. Only 67% of homes on tribal land have broadband access, making it one of the least-connected places in the continental U.S.

For those academic libraries that would like to do digital inclusion work, Ms. Kehoe has provided links to funding opportunities in her slides. She included this additional link in the chat:   
<https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/funding-programs/connecting-minority-communities>

In her next slide, Ms. Kehoe provided links to tools to learn about the digital divide in our own communities. However, she cautioned that the data tools to which she has linked may not give the complete picture of the digital divide in a community and that it is very important to survey and talk with community members to learn more.

Ms. Kehoe gave an example of digital inclusion work in a public library system and an academic library. During the pandemic, people in Durham County, NC needed access to the internet, laptops, and digital literacy training, and this support needed to be provided in a way that didn’t spread COVID-19. The Durham County Libraries, along with Digital Durham, a digital equity collaborative, wrote a grant to pilot a digital navigator program. The navigators provided individualized one-to-one help to users. This help could be finding low-cost internet access, assistance with using devices, and digital literacy training. Durham was also able to provide free laptops for those who needed them.

The F.D. Bluford Library at North Carolina A&T just won a grant to support digital navigators. While NC A&T is the largest producer of Black engineers and a top STEM school, a survey revealed that 33% of students did not own a computer and 56% did not own a device that met their needs. Fifty percent of the students were eligible for Pell grants. So, the library wrote a grant to expand their laptop loan program. They’ve also partnered with Trio, a federal outreach program, to identify and find services for those from a disadvantaged background. They are working to pay students to be digital navigators to provide technology support on campus, help people connect to lower-cost internet, and to help advertise the availability of the laptops.

There was a question from the audience as to whether the program Ms. Kehoe spoke about was at her institution or if it was an ACRL chapter project and if anyone else’s chapter has done a project like this in a state or region. Ms. Kehoe said that the project was initiated at her institution because they have a semester-long laptop loan program with more than 200 persons on their waitlist. They need to reach more of these students.

Another question from the audience: Can you talk about the amount of uptick there is when new reduced-cost or free services are provided in areas which previously lacked quality connectivity?

A couple of things about this. One, trust needs to be built in the community with the affordable connectivity programs. Some people are afraid that they’ll sign up for the program and then the money for the program will disappear and they’ll be locked into plan with an ISP that is going to charge them more.

Also, sometimes the reason places have lacked internet connectivity is that there is literally no infrastructure in place. Even though billions of dollars have been allocated for building this, it will take many years before it is all in place.

There’s an LSTA program in North Carolina in which multiple universities have gotten together to lend hotspots. Hotspot lending is very expensive as you have to buy the hotspots and then pay for the internet subscription for a year. Because they’ve done this as a consortium, they have been able to meet people’s needs. One of the reasons the affordable connectivity program got started was because of the exorbitant cost of connecting people to the internet.

1. 10:30-11:30 AM: Business Meeting

a. Introductions. Interim Chair Eric Edwards asked everyone to type their name, institution, and chapter info into the chat box: Jane Suda, Fordham University, ACRL/NY; Brian Maass, University of Nebraska Medical Center, Nebraska Chapter; Marliese Thomas, University of Alabama at Birmingham, Alabama ACRL; Jess Denke, Muhlenberg College, Delaware Valley Chapter (PA); Leslin Charles, Rutgers University. Editor, Chapter Topics Newsletter; Allison Payne, ACRL Interim Exec. Director, Chicago; Dawn Behrend, ACRL-NC Chapter; Julie Garrison, Dean of Libraries, Western Michigan University, ACRL Past President; Linda Miles, Hostos Community College-CUNY, ACRL/NY Chapter (Greater Metropolitan Area Chapter); Laurie Neuerburg, University of Iowa, Iowa Chapter; Kate Langan, Western Michigan University, Michigan Chapter; Mark Shelton, College of the Holy Cross, ACRL-NEC; Eric Edwards, Illinois State Library--Chapters Council Interim Chair; Jill Crane, University of Dayton; Dave Baca, Director of Williams Library, Texas A&M University at Galveston, chair of the College and University Libraries Division of the Texas Library Association; Elizabeth Sanders, Mary & John Gray Library, College & Universities Division of Texas Library Association; Rachelle Brandel, Missouri Baptist University, Missouri Chapter Rep. (MACRL); Delores Carlito, University of Alabama at Birmingham, Alabama ACRL; Laura Hall, University of Kentucky, Kentucky ACRL.

1. Elections for 2023-24 Officers
   * 1. Secretary—Sarah McHone-Chase, Aurora University (running unopposed). Ms. McHone-Chase is the president-elect of the Illinois chapter. Though Ms. McHone-Chase ran unopposed, Lauren Carlton of ACRL said that we did need to do a vote, just to make things official. A vote was done in the chat, and Ms. McHone-Chase was elected as the incoming secretary.
     2. Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect—Leslin Charles, Rutgers University; and Kathleen (Kate) Langan, Western Michigan University. Ms. Charles is the current editor of the Chapter Topics Newsletter. Ms. Langan is from Western Michigan University. A poll was set up in Zoom, and Leslin Charles was elected as the incoming chair-elect with seven out of thirteen votes. She will become the chair-elect in July, will serve as chair next year and past-chair the year after that. Interim Chair Edwards thanked Ms. Charles for her six years of service as the Chapter Topics Newsletter editor.
2. ACRL Leadership Updates
   * 1. Allison Payne, Interim Executive Director. Interim Chair Edwards introduced Allison Payne, who is the Interim Executive Director of ACRL, taking over from Dr. Robert (Jay) Malone, who stepped down last week. Ms. Payne has spoken with Lauren Carlton and is up to speed on the work of the Chapters Council. She wanted to do a quick promotion for the ALA Annual Conference, which will be in Chicago next week, June 22 -27. There will be a lot of valuable programming, including a lot of programming on EDI. There’s a great lineup of speakers, including Amanda Gorman, Matthew Desmond, and Carla Hayden, to name a few.
     2. Erin Ellis, President. The ACRL Conference was a great success. There were nearly 3, 000 registrants and 149 exhibitors. During the past several months those on the board have talked about the legislative issues and challenges in many of the states. They have fielded questions from those states and have worked with ALA on any kind of communication or information needs. The board has also relied heavily on the chapters in those states to understand whether and when ACRL’s voice may help or not. The board has also spent the last few months thinking about our plan for excellence and the value of membership in ACRL. Some of you may have heard about or participated in a survey that ALA sent out. The board has seen some of the results of this membership survey, and they have been trying to think critically and strategically about how to improve the member experience and the benefits and opportunities of membership in ACRL and ALA. Membership recruitment and retention strategies was a topic of conversation at their Leadership Council meeting, and these conversations will continue at ALA in Chicago. This is a major focus for ALA and continues to be a significant focus for ACRL. As was mentioned, there has been some staff changes in the ACRL office. Thanks to Allison for stepping into the interim role. They are not sure how everything is going to work, but they are committed to making sure things go as smoothly as possible. They ask for your patience and grace over the next several months as they work through these transitions. They are anticipating some information from ALA and the task force regarding how the operating agreement between ALA and the divisions will work going forward and some of the related budget changes that will happen as a result. They hope to learn a little more at the conference and looking into the fall for some final information. They are anticipating changes to process and maybe to bylaws and policy language. They will keep the membership apprised. Ms. Ellis invited people to reach out if they have any questions.
     3. Dr. Beth McNeil, Vice-President. Dr. McNeil was unable to join the call, so she provided Julie Garrison with her update.
     4. Julie Garrison, Past President. From Beth McNeil: She has appointed the Goal Area Committee vice-chairs and members to ALA committees, and members to the 2024 ACRL President’s Program Committee. She’s continuing to appoint members to the newly formed ACRL Diversity Alliance Committee. This was formerly a task force but will now be a standing committee. She’s participated in ACRL’s EDI Committee. She participated in the planning of the ACRL Presents programs. She is participating in strategic planning (plan for excellence). There was a virtual strategic planning session of the ACRL board and the Goal Area Committee on May 30 and there will be a follow up at the ALA Annual Conference. Finally, she has completed the 23-24 board liaison assignments to sections and committees. From Julie Garrison: There was an April ACRL Insider in which she, Erin Ellis, and Beth McNeil wrote about book challenges and the potential impact on higher education. They have gotten some invitations to participate in webinars on this as there is quite a bit of interest from academic librarians regarding book challenges and threats to intellectual freedom. At 1:00 p.m. CDT on June 29 the EDI Committee will be hosting a town hall. If you are interested in learning about their work or offering input on the direction their work should take, you are encouraged to attend. At the annual meeting, the ACRL board will be taking in either the interim or final reports from some of the task forces that have been charged. Also, there are a number of standards that will be coming up for potential consideration of review, including the information literacy framework.
     5. Lauren Carlton, Staff Liaison. Ms. Carlton introduced Aleah Price, the new program coordinator at ACRL.Ms. Price will be the new staff liaison to Chapters beginning July 1. If you have any updates to your chapter’s current list of officers, please send those to Ms. Price. This way they can make sure everyone is on the roster and added to the ALA Connect discussion list. Ms. Carlton wanted to remind us that chapters are offered two free ACRL Presents webcasts each year. Reach out to Margot Conahan ([mconahan@ala.org](mailto:mconahan@ala.org)) if you want to redeem these. Or reach out to Aleah Price and she will put you in touch with Margot Conahan. ACRL offers a virtual speakers bureau, so if you have a conference coming up you can have a vice-president, current president, or past president virtually speak at your event and offer updates. More information can be found here: <https://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/directoryofleadership/chapters/officersspeakers> Finally, the Plan for Excellence Report is due July 15. This is just a form you fill out to let ACRL, the ACRL board, and presidents know what projects and initiatives your chapter has been working on. Question for Ms. Carlton: Is there a calendar where we can submit the dates of our chapter conferences? Yes. When you submit your roster updates, there is a place where you can tack on information about your conference. One last thing: the election winners need to send their email information to Aleah Price so she can send them an appointment form and add them to the roster.

Sarah McHone-Chase joined the call. Interim Chair Edwards told her she won the election and congratulated her.

1. Chapters Council Leadership Updates
   * 1. Laura Hall, Legislative Representative and Interim Secretary. No Interim Secretary update. For the Legislative Representative update: The Government Relations Committee met March 27, where the first draft of the Legislative Agenda was reviewed. The items they had then were critical race theory, federal funding for libraries, net neutrality, open access to federally funded research, and the Affordable College Textbook Act. DACA, consumer data privacy, and accessible instructional materials are on the watchlist, and the FDLP Modernization Act was removed from the watchlist. Added to the watchlist was court cases to watch. (Watch list items are policy issues of concern but are not on the agenda because there is no pending legislation.) The final draft was submitted in May. The agenda items in priority order were 1) upholding intellectual freedom, 2) federal funding for libraries, 3) net neutrality, 4) open access and federally funded research, 5) the Affordable College Textbook Act, and 6) watchlist items. Each item on the agenda report included background information, the current status, impact on libraries, ACRL’s position, and links to more information. The report should be published later on this summer.
     2. Leslin Charles, *Chapter Topics* Newsletter Editor. They have received some submissions but would like to receive five or six more, enough to fill all the sections on the LibGuide. Ms. Charles has been reaching out to her colleagues in New Jersey and others in order to get more submissions. Still, they have been able to put together and distribute the two issues of the newsletter, on time, during the year.
     3. Dawn Behrend, Past Chair. No report.
     4. Paula Martin, List Administrator. Not present. No report.
     5. Amber Willenborg, LibGuide Administrator. Not present. No report.
2. Interim Chair’s Report (Eric Edwards)
   * 1. Thank you to the outgoing officers. Thanks to Dawn Behrend, who has been an officer for the last three years. She was very helpful when Kelly McAllister stepped down and Mr. Edwards became interim chair. Thanks to Leslin Charles for having served as the newsletter editor for the past six years. Amber Willenborg will be continuing her role as LibGuide administrator and will also become the *Chapter Topics* Newsletter editor. She will be serving three-year terms for both of those roles. Laura Hall will be staying on as the legislative representative. This is a one-year term. Paula Martin is also continuing as the list administrator, and that is also a one-year term.
     2. Recruiting new Chapters Council Board members, if necessary. All the board positions have been filled.
     3. Completing ACRL Committee Year-End Report and Work Plan. This document is due August 30, and it is a bit different from what the chapters submit. The Council leadership will review what we accomplished this past year and set goals for the coming year. Once the year-end report and work plan have been submitted to ACRL the final version will be posted to the Chapters Council workspace on ALA Connect.
     4. Recruiting more people to run in future Chapters Council elections, pending potential change to ACRL rules governing candidate eligibility. Fortunately, this was not an issue this year as people ran for office and one of those offices was contested. Last year Dawn Behrend drafted and submitted a proposal to ACRL for the board to consider a change in wording to the bylaws. Currently the bylaws state that one must be current officer or board member of a state or regional chapter in order to run for a Chapters Council office. The proposed change is that candidates for a Chapters Council office need only be a current member of ALA, ACRL, and the state or region’s ACRL chapter. With this change of the eligibility requirements, it is hoped this will increase the pool of candidates. Interim Chair Edwards will follow up with our ACRL liaison to see where we are regarding this proposed change to the bylaws.
     5. Possible after-hours gathering during ALA Annual. A message was sent out on our ALA Connect space to see if anyone would be interested in an informal after-hours meetup during the conference, but no one responded. It would be good for Chapters Council members to know each other a bit better, so in the future perhaps we could have a virtual social hour or have a gathering with another ACRL section.
     6. In-meeting poll to plan possible future Chapters Council activities. A poll was set up to vote on the four activities listed below to determine which activities the Chapters Council should pursue. The twice-a-year webinar got the most votes, followed by ad-hoc programming and recognizing individual chapters’ achievements. There were no votes for discussion prompts on ALA Connect. The webinars could be a way to showcase projects that individual chapters have undertaken. Interim Chair Edwards will put out a call webinar ideas soon. He will need to talk with our ACRL liaison regarding recognizing individual chapters’ achievements, to see if we can come up with an award or some sort of recognition as a way to encourage chapters to share their initiatives. If you have any other ideas to encourage engagement, please contact Interim Chair Edwards or any other members of the Chapters Council leadership.
        1. Twice-annual webinar to share interesting or unique projects
        2. Discussion prompts on ALA Connect space
        3. “Ad hoc” programming on topics of interest
        4. Recognizing individual Chapters’ achievements
     7. Reminder about keeping chapter directory of leadership (link [here](https://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/directoryofleadership/chapters/roster)) information current and signing up for ALA Connect. The main purpose of Chapters Council is to serve as a link between ACRL and the state or regional ACRL chapters, and it’s hard to do that when the leadership contact information is not kept up to date. There has been talk of creating a form to submit for leadership changes, but right now you’ll need to contact our ACRL liaison to update information.
     8. Reminder about updating chapter organization survey (link [here](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1iOui-OYDKNMG1eTWiBk3okGi_duXHWl5MA6dFeaW9Ok/edit#gid=0)) Please take a look at this and make any needed changes.
3. Open Forum (state and regional chapters may raise any topics of interest or issues of concern). Question: Have any chapters seen a change in their membership levels, especially with the impact of the pandemic? One of the Pennsylvania chapters responded that they while they offer a lot of flexibility around financial access, they have seen much less participation in their last program, about one third of the number of registrants they normally have. The Kentucky Chapter reported that their membership has declined a bit and they had far fewer attendees than normal at their March conference. A regional chapter said that their annual symposium had always been their biggest recruiting tool as members received a discount on the symposium. However, they cancelled the symposium because of the pandemic and then had only a virtual symposium the next year, so their membership is way down. Their next symposium will be hybrid, and they are hoping for an uptick in membership. The New England Chapter reported that they had a two-day joint conference with their annual conference. One day was all in person and the next day was virtual, and their attendance was strong, in line with what they had pre-pandemic.
4. Any Other Business. None
5. Adjournment. Interim Chair Edwards adjourned the meeting at 11:26 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Laura Hall, 2023 Interim Secretary, on August 2, 2023