

Meet the candidates for ALA president

Vote in the election this spring



Stacey Aldrich



Ed Garcia



Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada

The ACRL Board of Directors posed the following questions to the candidates for ALA president, and *C&RL News* is pleased to publish their responses. Each candidate was given 1,500 words to respond to seven questions and contribute an optional opening statement. The responses are identified under each question.

Opening statements

Aldrich: Aloha, I'm Stacey Aldrich, I am the State Librarian of Hawaii, and I am honored to be a candidate for ALA president for 2022-2023. I appreciate the opportunity to answer a few questions posed to us by ACRL.

If you'd like to find out more about my candidacy, please visit bit.ly/ALAAldrich or listen to my podcast *The Future Curious Librarian* (<https://open.spotify.com/show/5z3Bd14k8LnLaMjMyPvWH>). Mahalo!

Pelayo-Lozada: Thank you, ACRL, for the opportunity to meet you all via *C&RL News*. My name is Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada, and I am a 14-year ALA member, the Adult Services assistant manager at the Palos Verdes Library District in Southern California, and a candidate for ALA president. I've had the pleasure of serving our association in a number of capacities, including ALA Executive Board member, councilor, and Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness (SCOPE) chair. I have also served our profession as past-president of the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA) and am currently its executive director. Growing up as the daughter of a community college library services technician and working my own way up through libraries starting as a page, I've seen the varied experiences essential to the library ecosystem and ALA. I believe ALA belongs to all of us, regard-

less of our library worker status or type or where we reside and by embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion (EDI), we can ensure our members feel ALA belongs to them, too.

I see the transitions and changes ALA is going through and believe I represent the hands-on work so many of our members do every day in an ALA position typically held by administrators. Changing expectations for member engagement, financial instability, and the call to become a truly equitable institution are all areas I intend to address as your next ALA president. Leading together for change, we can face these challenges head on, coming out stronger together. I invite you to learn more about me and my vision for ALA at lessaforlibraries.com and look forward to leading together with you all in the future.

1. As the future ALA president, what do you see as the benefits of the proposed changes to the ALA governance model? What challenges do you see in enacting these changes? How would you help the membership overcome these challenges?

Aldrich: I appreciate the work that was done on the Forward Together initiative to review and imagine new structures to support ALA. I think the proposed changes to create a less heavy structure that reaches to all members is good. If we are concerned about the financial viability and nimbleness of the organization, we must be open to a less heavy structure. We must also have a structure that creates opportunity for members to be a part of the large organization and smaller groups of interest and expertise. There are many members who have dedicated their time and energy to the current structure and the change would mean a change in roles. Having been through reorganization processes, it is imperative to create opportunities for discussion that lead to action. It's important to work with all stakeholders to identify the areas of agreement and the areas of concern. Where there is agreement we can prioritize implementation. Where there are areas of concern, we can work together to clarify the issues and seek to find solutions for moving forward. Once we have agreements for priorities for implementation, we can work together to build a timeline and move forward together.

Garcia: As a member of the Executive Board and the Forward Together Working Group, I have been engaged in the ongoing work of designing a more effective and responsive governance structure for ALA. As ALA president, my role would not be to guide the process with my views but in presiding over the Council to make sure the process moves forward with members having the opportunity to have their voices heard. We currently have recommendations for change, but no actual proposals have been brought before Council and the membership to consider.

In my view we need a governance structure that focuses more on action than on process, that can be nimble and responsive, and that is more equitable in its representation. We should also realize that governance is only one path to engagement within ALA. We need to also focus on providing engaging pathways within ALA for our many members not interested in governance.

One major decision to be made is what size will our policy making body be. Do we want the policy making power of the association concentrated in a small Board of Directors with advisory assemblies or in our current larger Council structure? After several years of discussions, I believe that the association is better served by having a larger more representative policymaking body modeled on our current Council. In our current structure, any member through the membership meeting or Council can affect policy change by convincing enough councilors of their position through rigorous debate. With policymaking power concentrated in a 12-17 member Board, that opportunity will be lost.

Informal surveys during our Forward Together Working Group sessions with Council showed there was overwhelming support to make changes to the current Council structure.

The Council should be evaluated and remodeled to be more effective and responsive. To remove barriers and make Council more equitable, the requirement to attend Council meetings in person and allow for virtual participation could be implemented. Instead of meeting only twice a year, Council could meet virtually several times throughout the year to be more responsive to evolving issues in our profession. We also need to make sure we do not create more silos in our governance

and ensure we have equitable representation for our chapters, divisions, roundtables and from all types of librarians and library workers.

It is clear from member feedback that there is a need for more periodic review of our existing committees to make sure they reflect our current needs, strategic directions, and core values.

The new Resolutions Working Group will now begin the work of crafting resolutions to bring to Council (and ultimately to the members) and creating our new governance structure. I look forward to the results of their work. As ALA president, I would work towards effective communications of these actions so that when there is a vote, our membership is fully informed and engaged. If the proposed structure is already in place by the time I take office, then I would work with the Executive Board and our member leaders to create metrics for engagement to make sure the new structure is effective and working for our members.

Pelayo-Lozada: As SCOE chair, the first group that worked on the Forward Together recommendations, I find the biggest benefit to be the regular assessment and fine tuning of ALA structures, currently occurring through the continued Forward Together process. As our association progresses, we need to continually evaluate what is and is not working and improve. I believe this model, and this process requires us to do so.

The input process and the collaboration between all facets of ALA to create these recommendations and continued assessment are also a benefit of this process, breaking open and seeking collaboration between our silos.

As we await to see the proposed initial stage of resolutions from the Forward Together Resolutions Working Group, I know one of the biggest challenges for us as an association will be shepherding our members through these changes, some which are closely tied to our identities as ALA members. By leading with empathy and recognizing the challenges our members may have, I seek to guide our association through this transition to an ALA that practices and models all of its core values by continuing to keep lines of communication and improvement open.

2. How will you assess the impact of the changes from the Midwinter Meeting to LibLearnX on ALA membership?

Aldrich: I would first work with leadership to identify the measurements that would help us understand the impacts of the change. I think there are three areas we would want to measure: outputs, outcomes, and feedback from membership. For example, there are the standard outputs of the number of sessions offered and the number of members that attended. Then there are the outcomes of perception. We would want to know from membership whether or not they had a change in knowledge, skills, and/or attitude. We would also want to know if the new format was what they expected, and what would make it better in the future. These measurements could be done through surveys, focus groups, and as a part of participation.

We would build the measurements, the processes for collecting the data, and then evaluate.

Garcia: As your president, I would work with the Executive Board, Conference Committee, Membership Committee, and ALA staff to create metrics to track member engagement with LibLearnX. Some important questions to ask would be:

- Did registration and revenues increase over the Midwinter format?
- Did members give high satisfaction marks to the new format?
- Were we able to attract members who did not typically attend Midwinter?
- Were we able to attract student members?
- Were we able to attract nonmembers to attend and then convert to membership?

I would also engage with leadership from our divisions that hold successful conferences, such as ACRL and PLA, for insights on ways to improve the LibLearnX experience.

Pelayo-Lozada: As ALA president, I will work closely with the Conference Committee and Conference Services to assess the impact of the transition from the Midwinter Meeting to LibLearnX. Our staff and members have been working on this initiative for a number of years now and through surveying and gathering of feedback, I believe we can continue to improve upon our new endeavor for years to come as another area of member engagement and revenue generation.

We will look for high participant satisfaction with LibLearnX and a desire for participants to

return and share their positive experiences. We will look for increased member engagement and fulfilled learning objectives for participants as we move from a meeting-based event to one full of learning and networking experiences. The success of LibLearnX will depend on revenue generation through high participation and providing relevant and timely content, meeting the current and future needs of our members.

3. Please share your thoughts about supporting equity, diversity, inclusion (EDI), and accessibility in libraries. Describe steps you have taken to ensure that these fundamental principles have moved from idea into practice.

Aldrich: I think all those who work in libraries and with libraries want to create organizations and spaces for everyone to feel heard and to have a place to belong. Former ALA President Loida Garcia-Febo had a focused initiative on EDI in our libraries in 2019, and I appreciated her efforts to connect with libraries across the country who were working to break down barriers. I think in order for us to move forward, we must make sure that everything we do from conferences to the companies we invest our time and energy with reflect our value for EDI and accessibility. We must all work together to make sure we are listening to each other's stories and working to continually improve our organization. I think we need to focus energy for the whole organization to have a focused conversation on what is the future we aspire to and how do we get there together.

As a member of the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, we recently went through a process with an amazing company from Minnesota called NCXT to help us think about EDI and how we will support our organization, libraries, and communities through the United States and Territories. We developed an EDI statement and core commitments. We now use it as our lens for all that we do to ensure that we are staying true to our beliefs.

At the local level, we continuously strive to create an organization that supports EDI. Currently, the Hawaii State Public Library System (HSPLS) has been part of a University of Hawaii IMLS grant called Hui eKolu (three groups), which was designed to bring HSPLS and Native Hawaiian

libraries together to share culture and expertise. Staff from HSPLS have been learning more about the Native Hawaiian culture and finding new ways to be more thoughtful in services, programming, and the importance of place in our communities.

Garcia: We, as an organization, should strive for a more inclusive library community, which means continuing to promote EDI, and accessibility at all levels of ALA and our profession. I have worked my entire career to advance these principles within ALA and in my community. I served on the Committee on Diversity, served two terms on the Spectrum Scholar selection jury, and have been a member of the Diversity Caucus of ALA Council since 2011. I was honored to have been part of the most diverse Executive Board in the history of our association. While on the Executive Board, I supported the formation of the EDI Assembly and helped craft several statements on EDI and anti-racism.

In my community, EDI has been a major focus of my work. I was awarded a diversity scholarship at the University of Rhode Island GSLIS. In 2016, I helped create a partnership between the Cranston Public Library, community groups, and residents to work on EDI, social cohesion, and anti-racism in our city. Called OneCranston, the initiative received a \$400,000 grant from the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston for this important work. The library received a \$10,000 grant from the Rhode Island Foundation to host racial equity training for our city leadership, including politicians, city department heads, and community leaders. I was appointed to the Cranston Diversity Commission to review hiring practices in our city. I was also named chair of the Cranston Census Complete Count Committee by our mayor and worked to build trust and to increase response rates in our underrepresented communities. I also led the effort to change the "illegal aliens" subject heading to "undocumented immigrants" at all Rhode Island public libraries. These community outreach and EDI efforts over the past six years were acknowledged as our Cranston Public Library team was awarded the 2020 Jerry Kline Community Impact Prize.

Pelayo-Lozada: Supporting EDI needs to be the core of everything we do in our home libraries, as well as within our association, and has been a

core to all of my work. ACRL has been a model with multiple EDI initiatives as well as being responsive throughout the pandemic by supporting BIPOC members with membership dues and increased webinars and opportunities to educate and engage. Within ALA, I have participated on a number of EDI-based committees, including the Committee on Diversity; the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group; and chair of the Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services (ODLOS) Advisory Committee. In the Asian Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA,) I served as a past-president and am the current executive director. I also served as cochair of the Program and Fundraising Committees on the 2018 Joint Conference of Librarians of Color (JCLC) Steering Committee.

In all of these roles, my focus has been on intentional action informed by member needs. With every EDI conversation, we need to identify the end goal and an action item to work towards that goal. The work I have done is built upon the work of generations of librarians before me to move us out of segregated libraries and a segregated association to one intentionally and actively equitable, truly inclusive, and practices antiracism. How we go about this work changes as our communities and our situations change, but the foundational goal is always the same, and I have a proven track record of working towards these goals.

4. ALA and ACRL must demonstrate their value to recruit, engage, and retain their membership. How can ALA remain a relevant, vital, and financially sustainable association to academic and research librarians? To those new to the profession?

Aldrich: ALA is a big organization, and it is often not easy to navigate or feel connected. ALA and ACRL must be accessible and easy for members to navigate. They must be able to see the map of opportunities and find ways to participate at the levels they are most comfortable. There must also be opportunities for members to connect, learn, grow, and be heard. First, we need to find new ways to welcome new members and help them find all of the pathways to participate. Second, we must have programs and learning activities that are identified as important for membership and their continued growth in the profession. Third, we must find new ways for library staff to participate in terms of

membership fees and/or opportunities to pay for the content that is most beneficial for the individual.

ALA's biggest growth in membership is students and those coming into the profession. We must continue to find new ways to connect those new to the profession, and it might begin at the local level with our state Chapters.

Garcia: The pandemic has only exacerbated the internal and external challenges our association is facing. We need to strengthen our financial infrastructure and have more accountability and transparency in our finances. With our pivot strategy, we must develop new revenue streams and increase our individual donor base. ALA and ACRL must continue to provide value to our members by providing opportunities for our members to participate in meaningful committee work, continuing education, and engaging programs and conferences. By providing these opportunities, ALA and ACRL can not only retain our current members but show the value of membership and recruit new members. ALA must continue to advocate for our profession and provide the tools to teach our members how to become advocates. Together we must all work on increasing member engagement, effective governance, and continue our efforts to transform ALA into a more responsive, sustainable, and modern association. As your president, I will engage with those new to our profession and help them find their path in ALA. I will visit LIS programs across the country to meet with our student ALA members. I want to learn what inspires them and how we can make ALA more responsive to their needs. We need to make sure we are listening to our members and providing the experiences they are looking for from a professional association. Because ALA is the profession's association. It should reflect all those who ensure its continued success.

Pelayo-Lozada: ALA needs to demonstrate it is capable of change, especially during these tumultuous times, when budgets are being cut and staff are being furloughed and laid off. ALA members need to feel supported during this time and need to know ALA will advocate for them. By listening to members and taking action on member ideas at all levels, we can strengthen ALA to be the association we need today and prepare for the changes we will need to make to ensure a nimble and action-oriented ALA for our members in the future.

This includes listening to all of our members: library workers of all types, library supporters, and those new to the field. This also includes working closely across ALA units and divisions and collaborating in our areas of strength, something all of our members benefit from. Through listening and action, we can retain our members and demonstrate to potential members we are a member-driven organization with exciting opportunities and a strong advocacy base. By building a truly inclusive association and meeting the needs of our current members, we are better positioned to recruit new and returning members. We can do this by meeting the specific needs of our members' professional paths, such as tenure track positions, which often include committee service and a need for publishing opportunities, and we can ensure we are meeting these needs through regular assessment. By including more voices at the table, especially those new to the profession, and taking action on input and feedback, we can thrive for another 145 years.

5. What does a successful term as ALA president look like to you? How will you know you have been successful in the role?

Aldrich: A successful term as ALA president would be one that includes a year of future curiosity with many conversations and opportunities for members to think, discuss, and form affinity groups around trends and the future. Hopefully, I would also be able to support transitions that benefit the organization and help us to be nimbler and more financially stable.

Success would be a culmination of future documents that would be helpful for all libraries and members to use as they build the future. And, there would be standard foresight practice integrated into the work that we do together.

Garcia: Success as your ALA president will include:

- Continuing our work of making ALA a more sustainable and modern association, alongside the Executive Board and our member leaders, by implementing our pivot strategy to grow membership and develop new revenue streams.
- Visiting with and inspiring new members of our profession to find a path within ALA and become leaders in the association.

- Improving our communication and collaboration by building stronger relationships with our divisions, round tables, chapters, and affiliates.
- Helping to make ALA a more equitable association, where the voices and contributions of all our members are valued.

Pelayo-Lozada: A successful term as ALA president looks like engaging as many members as possible across the association both virtually and in person, highlighting our successes and sharing our challenges, and learning from them. I see this base as creating opportunities for bringing so many of us to ALA, the desire to learn and grow. I also see a successful ALA term as continuing the work set forth by my predecessors to move ALA towards a truly equitable, inclusive, and diverse association practicing anti-racism. This work will never be finished, and by continuing to ingrain these core values into every avenue, we can guarantee the success of ALA.

The success of my term, which I view as the success of our members, may not be immediately seen. Much of the work doing during 2022-2023 will be transitional, potentially moving to a new governance model, establishing new streams of revenue, and having difficult conversations across ALA as change is implemented, creating areas for dialogue and action. At the end of my year, I will find success in increased member engagement and positive member experiences and, long term, I look forward to having contributed to the ongoing work of fiscal stability and organizational excellence for our association.

6. What does “One ALA” mean to you? How do you see ACRL and other divisions working together to advance ALA’s future?

Aldrich: “One ALA” is a systems approach to thinking about how we do our work together. ALA is a complicated structure with divisions, roundtables, and affiliates and often times we are all swimming in our own lanes. “One ALA” is designed to help us recognize our lanes but channel our energy and our strategies together for more powerful messaging and support the important role that each of our libraries play in all of our communities.

In order to do this, we have to create opportunities for divisions to come together for conversations about priorities. We must find the common threads and work together to design and implement mes-

sages that enable us to work together and supporting each other in one voice.

Garcia: “One ALA” means that we are all members of one association. An association that values the contributions of all of our members. An association where all voices are heard. ACRL and our other divisions and roundtables are critically important to the success of ALA. As your president, I would work for more open and frequent communication with division leadership to ensure that our goals and priorities are in alignment association-wide. As we advance together to a better future for ALA, I want to make sure the knowledge and experience of successful member engagement in our divisions and roundtables help inform how we move forward. We should all be working together learning from one another to make ALA a more sustainable association.

For more information about my candidacy please visit:

- Website: www.edforala.com
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/edgarcia401>
- FB: <https://www.facebook.com/edforala>
- #EdforALA

Pelayo-Lozada: “One ALA” to me indicates we all work together towards the same goal and share ALA’s mission “. . . to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all.” There are so many ways to achieve this, through our divisions, through our core values and committees, and through our roundtables. I see “One ALA” as all of these groups, bringing unique perspectives and expertise to promoting this shared mission. By supporting one another and leading together, we are stronger working towards this goal. Our divisions do this with opportunities for their members, such as conferences and publishing opportunities. Our divisions, such as ACRL, also do this through progressive training for their members in areas such as EDI, creating opportunities for their members to remain not just in ACRL but in and engaged with the entire association. I see all areas of ALA working collaboratively on cross issues, and supporting and promoting each other’s areas of singular interest and common interest, creating a true “One ALA.” *ZZ*

ACRL members running for ALA Council in the spring 2021 election

The following ACRL members are either nominated or petition candidates for ALA councilor. ACRL members are encouraged to vote for these candidates to increase ACRL’s voice in ALA affairs.

Kimberley Bugg, Associate Library Director, AUC Woodruff Library

Elizabeth Call, University Archivist, Rochester Institute of Technology

Fannie M. Cox, Outreach and Reference Librarian, Associate Professor, University of Louisville Libraries

Roberto C. Delgadillo, Student Services Librarian, Student Services Department, Peter J. Shields Library, University of California-Davis

Bob Diaz, Associate Librarian and Archivist, University of Arizona Libraries

Jina DuVernay, Collection Development Archivist for African American Collections,

Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library at Emory University

Linda Marie Golian-Lui, Associate Dean Library Services, Director of EAST, and Librarian Professor, Kennesaw State University

Mario M. Gonzalez, Executive Director, Passaic Public Library

Nicholas A. Lamb, Research and Learning Librarian, Cleary Gottlieb Steen and Hamilton LLP

Rodney Lippard, Director, Library and Center for Student Achievement, University of South Carolina-Aiken

Amanda Roper, Assistant Librarian 1, Chattanooga State Community College

Joan S. Weeks, Head Librarian Near East Section, Library of Congress/African and Middle Eastern Division

Christine Woods, Saint Leo University Regional Librarian Virginia, Mississippi, Texas, California, Saint Leo University