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# ALA Full Membership to Vote on Executive Director Qualifications

By [Lisa Peet](http://lj.libraryjournal.com/author/lpeet/) on January 12, 2018 [1 Comment](http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2018/01/shows-events/ala/ala-full-membership-vote-executive-director-qualifications/#comments)



Photo credit: vicky\_81 courtesy of Thinkstock

When Keith Michael Fiels, the former executive director (ED) of the American Library Association (ALA), announced in September 2016 that he would retire the following July, ALA leadership began considering its requirements for the role. As ALA convened a search committee and engaged a search firm to find the next ED, the question arose as to whether potential candidates should be required to hold an MLIS—or the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)/school librarian equivalent—or whether the degree should be merely preferred.

For most of ALA’s existence, its ED has been a degreed librarian, and in 2000 ALA Council voted that an MLIS must be a requirement for anyone holding the position. Fiels, who served as ED from 2002 through 2017, holds an MLS from the State University of New York, Buffalo, and has served as a public and school librarian as well as an independent library consultant and the president of the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA). In January 2017, the ALA Council again voted (78–75) to require that his successor hold the degree.

But although the organization began its search with that provision in place, it has not yet turned up candidates who the search committee felt satisfied all the role’s requirements. At the committee’s suggestion, the executive board and ALA Council have since voted to change the job description wording to “MLIS preferred”—but a recent member petition has placed a measure on the spring ballot to overturn that action, changing the language of the job announcement from “MLIS preferred” back to “MLIS required.”

**CHANGING COURSE ON DEGREE REQUIREMENT**

Must candidates for the ED position hold an MLIS? [The question has proved to be contentious](http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2017/02/opinion/john-berry/the-devalued-mlis-alas-leader-must-be-a-librarian-blatant-berry/). Many who voiced their opinion felt that the degree represents a crucial knowledge of and commitment to ALA’s core values. (See Blatant Berry, Feb 1, 2018, p. 10) Others stated that the role of ED calls for a strong management background that should include a familiarity with ALA’s mission, but not necessarily a library degree—and that perhaps an organization with as many diverse components as ALA could benefit from more management-based experience.

A “Pros and Cons” fact sheet issued at Midwinter laid out a number of concerns, including the possible public perception of ALA devaluing its own professional degree if it were not mandated—countered by the fact that a number of professional organizations are run by individuals with executive certifications that don’t include the degrees required by those professions, and that a larger, more diverse pool of candidates could be attracted if they were not limited to MLIS holders. However, the counterargument ran, the breadth of experience and knowledge within the profession should ensure a robust applicant pool with the degree requirement in place.

Before ALA’s 2017 Midwinter meeting in Atlanta, as the ED search was being organized, the ALA Executive Board introduced a draft resolution which would have changed the MLIS requirement clause in the job description to “a strongly preferred but not required educational qualification.” The resolution noted that none of the ALA positions advertised over the prior five years had included the requirement of an ALA accredited degree, but 56 percent had identified the degree as being preferred. It also pointed out that many of the needed management knowledge, skills, and abilities for the ED role are not part of most MLIS curriculums.

A number of ALA divisions, affiliates, etc. supported the resolution, including the Library Research Round Table, United for Libraries, Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), and the Public Library Association (PLA). In the end, Council voted 78­–75 in favor of keeping the requirement as it was originally written, and the search proceeded on that basis.

A 13-member search committee was formed, headed by ALA past president Courtney Young (2014–15). The executive recruiting firm of Isaacson, Miller, was retained in May 2017 to help with the search, and the position announcement was finalized. ALA conducted outreach to prospective candidates at the Annual conference in Chicago.

Applications were reviewed in August and September 2017, possible candidates were identified, and a small number of preliminary interviews were conducted. On the basis of those, however, the search committee recommended that no names be presented for the executive board’s consideration. The committee also recommended that the board again re-evaluate the question of the degree requirement.

The board discussed the matter and agreed to proceed with an online resolution, an online debate among council members—“with sufficient time built in for extended input and thoughtful exchange,” ALA president Jim Neal told LJ—and an online vote. In fall 2017, the question was brought to ALA’s online platform, ALA Connect. Ten divisions signed a letter stating support for the “MLIS preferred” language.

In November 2017, the resolution received 77 percent approval by council—75 percent or higher was required to pass—and the wording of the job requirement was changed. The board and search committee prepared to reactivate the search on that basis.

http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2018/01/shows-events/ala/ala-full-membership-vote-executive-director-qualifications/

# 2. Libraries Can Help Disrupt School-to-Prison Pipeline

By [Christina Vercelletto](http://www.slj.com/author/cvercelletto/) on January 9, 2018 [Leave a Comment](http://www.slj.com/2018/01/programs/libraries-can-help-disrupt-school-prison-pipeline/#respond)

“The beast of mass incarceration is a many-headed Hydra.”

With those words, Carrie Banks of the Central Library Branch of the Brooklyn (NY) Public Library (BPL) opened a conference called “Interrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline.”

Banks, director of inclusive services at BPL, emphasized that librarians, whether public or school libraries, can play an important role in keeping kids out of the prison system—and helping those who are incarcerated.

“Libraries are in a unique position to provide the information, support, and referrals that youth need to stay out of the juvenile justice system, stay connected with the community while they are inside, and reenter the community when they get out,” she said. “They are also a neutral place to chill, read some books, play some games, and stay engaged.” The event showed how libraries can take the lead providing important information to constituents.



Colin Montgomery of INCLUDEnyc provided information to conference attendees.

The conference—co-sponsored by [Advocates for Children](http://www.advocatesforchildren.org/) and [INCLUDEnyc](http://www.includenyc.org/" \t "_blank), an organization that helps parents obtain services for their children—drew 200 attendees, including many professionals working with children with disabilities. Agencies represented included the Administration for Children’s Services, the New York City Department of Education, and the New York State Office of Children’s and Family Services and foster care agencies. About 30 parents, and a few children, also attended.

Emphasizing that race, gender, and disability are all factors in who winds up in prison, Banks noted that other issues including learning or mental disabilities often don’t receive as much attention. “Not all those in the prison system with those disabilities have been diagnosed, but enough are that we know it is a determining factor,” she said.

**BEATING THE ODDS**

Keynote speaker Khalil A. Cumberbatch, associate vice president of policy at [The Fortune Society](https://fortunesociety.org/), which focuses on helping formerly incarcerated individuals build successful lives, shared his own story. Cumberbatch said that “after a series of flawed choices,” he spent six and a half years in prison for first-degree robbery.

The United States incarcerates a higher percentage of its citizenry than any other country in the world, Cumberbatch noted. He prefers the term hyper-incarceration over the more commonly used mass incarceration, because, he said, incarceration disproportionately impacts certain segments of the population. As an example, Cumberbatch pointed to seven neighborhoods in New York City—nearby Brownsville and Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, among them—that are heavily represented in New York state prisons.

He described safety officer systems at schools in these neighborhoods, under the auspices of the New York City Police Department, as paramilitary in structure. That sets up a “them versus us” mentality, he said: “Any paramilitary system is structured around identifying an enemy, which is anyone who is not ‘us.’”

He pointed out that at least 190 of these school safety agents are armed, and that there are far more of them than guidance counselors.

Cumberbatch asked attendees to think about how it feels to walk through a major transportation hub and see heavily armed officers keeping watch with automatic weapons. “Do more police make you feel more safe or less safe?” he asked. “Imagine how a child feels seeing that in their learning environment.”

http://www.slj.com/2018/01/programs/libraries-can-help-disrupt-school-prison-pipeline/

# 3. Research Article: “Acceptance of Altmetrics by LIS Scholars: An Exploratory Study”

Filed by [Gary Price](http://www.infodocket.com/author/gprice/) on January 13, 2018

The following article was recently published by the [Journal of Librarianship and Information Science (JOLIS)](http://journals.sagepub.com/home/lis). SAGE (publisher of JOLIS) is currently (as of Jan. 12, 2017) lowering the paywall for access to the full text article.

**Title**

[Acceptance of Altmetrics by LIS Scholars: An Exploratory Study](http://doi.org/10.1177/0961000617742461)

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**Source**

Journal of Librarianship and Information Science  
First Published December 6, 2017  
DOI: [doi.org/10.1177/0961000617742461](https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0961000617742461)

**Abstract**

A survey of iSchool and Library and Information Science American Library Association accredited school heads explored their use and opinions about academic social media platforms. Results show that ResearchGate is the venue of choice, although respondents do not believe maintaining a profile on academic social media platforms influences academic careers. Respondents do see the value of academic social media sites to enhance visibility and reputation. These data are complemented with an analysis of the visibility on academic/professional social media platforms of this group. The altmetric indicators derived from the data were compared to traditional bibliometric indicators.

Direct to [Full Text Article](http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0961000617742461) ||| [PDF Version (9 pages; PDF)](http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0961000617742461)

http://www.infodocket.com/2018/01/13/research-article-acceptance-of-altmetrics-by-lis-scholars-an-exploratory-study/

# 4. New Research Article: “Measuring Library Impacts through First Year Course Assessment”

Filed by [Gary Price](http://www.infodocket.com/author/gprice/) on January 12, 2018

The following article was recently published by Communications for Information Literacy.

**Title**

[Measuring Library Impacts through First Year Course Assessment](https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/comminfolit/vol11/iss2/6/)

**Source**

Communications for Information Literacy  
Vol. 11, No. 2

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DOI: 10.15760/comminfolit.2017.11.2.6

**Abstract**

This study shows the value of library instruction in the building of first-year students’ information literacy skills and it illustrates librarians as partners in leading student learning outcome assessment. Using research papers from a required first-year course, raters from units across the institution evaluated student information literacy (IL) skill development.

Students performed at a “Proficient First Year” level for most information literacy skill areas. The authors found there was a significant correlation between IL skill development and participation in one or more library instruction sessions. For this reason, the authors posit that liaison librarians are in a stronger and more stable collaborative position when they can demonstrate that their work has positive correlations with student learning.

Direct to [Full Text Article](https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1205&context=comminfolit)  
16 pages; PDF.

**About Gary Price**

http://www.infodocket.com/2018/01/12/new-research-article-measuring-library-impacts-through-first-year-course-assessment/

# 5. Open Access: Max Planck Society/Digital Library Announces Financial Support For SciPost

Filed by [Gary Price](http://www.infodocket.com/author/gprice/) on January 15, 2018

From a [Brief Announcement Posted on the Max Planck Digital Library Website:](https://www.mpdl.mpg.de/en/about-us/news/464-max-planck-supports-scipost.html)

Initiated by several leading Max Planck researchers, Max Planck Digital Library, on behalf of the Max Planck Gesellschaft, has provided substantial support for the development of [SciPost,](https://scipost.org/) a platinum open access publication portal in the field of physics. These funds will allow SciPost to carry out the implementation of a number of projects to enhance and broaden its services to the community.

From a [SciPost Announcement](https://scipost.org/news" \l "news_24)

http://www.infodocket.com/2018/01/15/open-access-max-planck-societydigital-library-announces-financial-support-for-scipost/

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