Meet the candidates

Vote in the election this spring

Christine Lind Hage   Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe   James G. (Jim) Neal

The ACRL Board of Directors posed the following questions to the candidates (Hinchliffe and Neal are ACRL members) for ALA president, and *C&RL News* is pleased to publish their responses. Each candidate was given 1,200 words in which he or she could respond to six questions and contribute an optional opening statement; the responses are identified under each question.

Opening statement

Christine Lind Hage: Christine Lind Hage has been a full-time public librarian for 45 years and has been responsible for five major library construction projects. Recognized as Michigan's Librarian of the Year in 1997, she has published and presented widely on various public library subjects both nationally and internationally.

Hage has been a frequent contributor to PUBLIB and is the author of *The public library start-up guide,* published in 2004 by ALA. Within ALA, Hage is past-president of the Public Library Association and the United for Libraries, an ALA Councilor for 12 years, and chair of the Office of Information Technology's America's Libraries for the 21st Century Committee.

She knew she would be a librarian since she was 8 years old and has never worked anywhere but a library. She is currently the director of the Rochester Hills (Michigan) Public Library.

Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe: I want to thank the ACRL Board for these questions and the opportunity to share my thoughts with ACRL members. As an academic librarian, ACRL has been my division home. As a past ACRL president (2010–11), I know well the achievements of ACRL members and staff. As a donor to ACRL Friends, I am confident that my funds are put to good use. For more information about my candidacy for ALA president, please visit http://lisa4ala.org, and also be in touch via email (lisalibrarian@gmail.com), Facebook (http://facebook.com/lisa4ala/), or Twitter (@lisa4alaprez or @lisalibrarian).

James G. (Jim) Neal: Libraries and other information professionals . . . *we dare* . . . to be bold, courageous, and challenging. As president of ALA, I will build on the Libraries Transform focus of ALA President Sari Feldman, and the Expert in the Library theme of pre-

sident-elect Julie Todaro. My vision projects that we are *virtual,* engaged with our users and in our communities in more rigorous and effective ways; we are *virtuouso,* smart but always ready to learn; and we are *virtuous,* radically collaborative and always working in the public interest. This vision aligns well with ALA's three strategic initiatives: advocacy, information policy, and professional/leadership development, all areas of strength and accomplishment for ACRL.

There is a saying: Every snowflake in an avalanche pleads not guilty. The vitality and impact of ALA and ACRL, our profession, and our libraries will require a powerful collective commitment to action and transformation. Now is the time for an outward view, and not an inward emphasis.

I will bring to my service as ALA president over 40 years of membership and participation in the work of ACRL, serving on committees, speaking at numerous programs, and supporting its many initiatives and innovations. I have a strong record of involvement in the work of ALA, its executive board, council, committees, divisions and roundtables, its finances and its fundraising, as well as leadership roles in other national and international library organizations. I will bring a career devoted to mentoring the new and mid-career librarian, and to a more diverse and inclusive profession. I will bring experience as a spokesperson for libraries in local, national and global forums, testifying before congressional committees, state legislatures, and international groups on critical policy issues. I take seriously my professional voice, in my teaching, presentations, writing, consulting, and service to librarianship.

1. What do you see as the most important issues facing our profession, particularly for academic and research librarians? With respect to these issues, what should ALA do to address them? What skills do you bring to ALA to help address these issues and move the association forward?

Hage: The move from the traditional print to a digital environment is having a tremendous impact on all libraries. Along with this shift comes the misperception of some students that they can get everything they need from the open web. Students are often not as information literate as they may think they are, and they may not use academic-quality licensed resources for their research. Through instruction, academic librarians can open these costly licensed resources to students and researchers.

Working together, librarians and faculty must help students to develop critical thinking skills. Building strong interlocking relationships with classroom faculty is essential as never before.

Open access to information/research and challenges to digital property issues are just a few of the critical issues academic libraries face in support of the research process. This is both exciting and daunting, as it pulls librarians into new areas requiring professional development. ALA and ACRL are prime providers of this needed continuing education.

My involvement in the Office for Information Policy has shown me how effective we are when we work across divisions on a project of mutual concern, such as the

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ACRL presidential candidates' online forum recording

The 2016 candidates for ACRL vice-president/president-elect will participate in an open online forum on Monday, March 7, at 11 a.m. (CDT).

Mark Emmons and Cheryl Middleton will discuss their platforms and vision for ACRL. Emmons is associate dean of public services at the University of New Mexico, and Middleton is associate university librarian for learning and engagement at Oregon State University Libraries and Press. Details for accessing the webcast and an archived recording of the session will be available on the ACRL Insider blog, www.acrl.ala.org/acrlinsider.

Digital Content Working Group. Academic libraries face some unique challenges, such as the spiraling costs of digital resources, and I have the ability to work with ACRL leaders to understand and articulate these challenges at the association level.

Hinchliffe: The most important issue for our profession today is understanding the information needs of our communities and continuing our historic success in transforming our libraries to meet those needs. ALA is a platform for collective action and empowerment of libraries and library workers through which we can collaborate and implement solutions that cannot be achieved by a single institution or individual. ACRL exemplifies this for the academic library community.

I have a long track record of providing leadership in decentralized organizations that are managing multiple priorities. When I served as ACRL president (2010–11), I brought together hundreds of people (members and staff) with divergent viewpoints to create the ACRL's Plan for Excellence. We also launched the Value of Academic Libraries Initiative, shifted *College & Research Libraries* to an open access model, and restructured the division committees, among other things.

My work as information literacy coordinator at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign depends on successfully deploying strategies of persuasion and partnership for programmatic development. In 2015, I also served as coordinator for strategic planning at the University Library, engaging people across the organization in a highly participatory and inclusive process to draft the library's recently adopted Framework for Strategic Action.

Neal: Librarians and other information professionals across all types of libraries face the extraordinary challenges of transformation. We must change in composition and structure, that is, what we are and what we do. We must change our outward form and appearance, that is, how we are viewed and understood. And we must change our

character and condition, that is, how we do it. In academic libraries, this means that we are taking on expanding roles as publishers, as educators in the classroom, in the laboratory, at the bedside, as enablers of big data, as R&D organizations, as entrepreneurs, and as policy advocates. It means that we are confronting rapidly shifting user behaviors and expectations, redundant inefficient library operations, aging service paradigms, an increasing emphasis on digital and unique resources, the open scholarship and learning movements, new thinking about library space, the need to achieve scale and network effects through aggregation, the acceleration of collective innovation, and the extraordinary challenges of digital preservation. It means that we need to think differently about the economic context, the assessment of our services, the attraction of new resources, radical collaborations and national systemic strategies, the legal and legislative environment, and the development of the 21st-century work force. ALA must build a network of peer sharing on fresh ideas, best practices, and useful research across the library field. ALA must strengthen the rigor and expand the availability of continuing professional education, certification for library workers, and leadership development.

2. ACRL's Plan for Excellence identifies goals that heighten the impact that librarians have upon the Value of Academic Libraries, Student Learning, and the Research and Scholarly Environment. In what ways would you, as ALA president, work with ACRL and its partners to advance or promote these goals?

Hage: In ALA's recently adopted strategic plan, the first key action area is advocacy. The very first goal under advocacy is to ensure there is a "deep public understanding of the value and impact of libraries of all types on the communities they serve, the broad range of services offered by libraries, and the indispensable role of the librarian

and library staff in providing these services." ACRL's Plan for Excellence is an excellent model and pathway for the rest of ALA, and ACRL has been a leader in developing value studies that ALA can expand to other divisions.

The more partnerships librarians can build on campus, the more support they will have when tough funding, space, and staffing decisions have to be made on campus. As librarians, we know what our libraries add to our campuses, communities, schools and businesses, but we need to articulate this to our funders and users.

Librarians need to articulate the value of libraries as we provide the service. We need to broadcast our good work so that all of our users become aware of the library's value and can then become advocates for the library within our communities and campuses.

As the past president of United for Libraries, I have had a long-term commitment to a national network of enthusiastic library supporters who believe in the importance of libraries as the social and intellectual centers of communities and campuses.

Hinchliffe: As ALA president, I would welcome the opportunity to highlight the work of ACRL and academic and research libraries in broader conversations about the impact that libraries have on their communities. I have continued to lead a component of the ACRL Value of Academic Libraries Initiative—specifically serving as co-lead facilitator of the Assessment in Action project—and am familiar with how the ACRL Plan for Excellence serves as the foundation of ACRL's programmatic development, as well as a springboard for engagement with the broader higher education community in building visibility for the impact of academic libraries on their communities.

Many other divisions and units within ALA are also undertaking projects under the rubrics of impact and value. I do not wish to homogenize these efforts because each group has unique considerations and circumstances; however, as ALA president,

I would be in a position to harmonize the results into clear, coherent, and compelling messages about the value of all types of libraries to policymakers, funding agencies, and other stakeholders. I know that academic libraries sometimes are missing from some of the national discussions on the importance of libraries, and ACRL can count on me to be inclusive of academic libraries in these conversations.

Neal: The communities and organizations that support libraries are asking hard questions about their investments, and this has led us to be far more focused on assessment, accountability, and value. Academic libraries must grow in their capability and sophistication in the gathering and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data that are responsive to areas such as user satisfaction, market penetration, user success and engagement, impact, cost effectiveness, and usability. There must be new thinking about the migration from product to service, and about the relationship between action and benefit. As the ACRL Value of Academic Libraries report and the Plan for Excellence emphasize, we must understand how we relate to student learning and success, and to researcher productivity and impact. We must foster a culture of assessment and improve the competencies for documentation and communication. And we must expand collaboration with other players in the higher education community.

3. How do you define diversity, and what experience have you had advancing diversity in the library profession?

Hage: Diversity is critical, because it broadens the conversation leading to better decisions. My library collects materials in 23 different languages. Currently we have five conversation groups meeting each week where newcomers can practice speaking English. We serve as the library for the blind and physically handicapped for our county and are second only to the state library's service in the number of items we lend and clients we serve. Whether in our libraries or

within ALA, our diversity provides a richer experience for everyone.

The Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion is working on a massive report, which is due at the 2016 Annual Conference in Orlando. I look forward to reading their findings and suggestions and, as ALA president, would work with all units of the association to implement the recommended actions.

Hinchliffe: The definition of diversity in ACRL's "Diversity Standards: Cultural Competency for Academic Libraries" reflects my own understanding of diversity and its importance in our libraries and society. My own work in advancing diversity has focused on mentorship. I have served as a mentor in the ACRL Dr. E. J. Josey Spectrum Scholar Mentor Program (one mentee relationship is getting near to a decade long now) as well as in local programs at the University of Illinois. As head of the Undergraduate Library, I championed a successful program to recruit undergraduate student workers from diverse backgrounds into graduate school and the library profession.

Recruiting to the profession is, however, only one aspect of creating inclusivity and equity. More recently I have added to my efforts a focus on retention in the profession and what it means for libraries to be a workplace of choice. If we are to move towards attaining our diversity goals, we need to understand all of the factors and considerations that are impacting diversity in the profession.

Neal: Diversity for me is understanding, embracing, respecting, and celebrating individual differences. This includes differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, and political beliefs. It means creating a safe, positive, and nurturing environment where all can participate and thrive. I have worked on the development and the fundraising for the Spectrum program. I have served as a mentor for over 20 years in the academic library community working with young and mid-career librarians in several leadership development programs. At six universities, I have consistently and aggres-

sively advanced diversity and inclusion as high priorities, serving on diversity planning committees, and at Indiana, chairing and developing the institutional diversity strategy. My campaign statement calls for ALA to sustain and grow the work of the Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion so that we are models of leadership and action. And it commits us to establishing diversity and inclusion as association-wide and profession-wide priorities.

4. Membership organizations, such as ALA and ACRL, need to demonstrate their value to recruit and retain members. What does ALA need to do to keep the organization relevant to academic and research librarians, particularly those new to the profession? How can ALA continue to engage members and non-members as travel and professional development funds are being reduced or eliminated?

Hage: To make sure we have new voices in our decision making and younger people to take leadership roles, we need to get new members involved in our work as early as possible. We already offer reduced membership rates for students, but we need to work on making conference attendance more affordable. One way would be to waive registration fees for those who volunteered in various settings. Since this might involve contracts, it could take a while to implement.

There are also several online learning opportunities offered through the ACRL website as well as through other divisions. Designing learning opportunities that can be used remotely is an excellent way to reach people who cannot attend conferences.

There are intern positions on ALA committees for people who have never served on an ALA committee. These appointments are made by the ALA president-elect. Members can do committee work remotely and can take an active part via social media in the conversations about professional issues. The ALA Think Tank is one such outlet and can be viewed as a recruiting point for ALA membership.

Hinchliffe: Delivering value is a challenge for both libraries and library associations. Just as academic libraries need to understand the needs of their communities and meet them, so too do ALA and ACRL. I am excited about new efforts in this arena that are underway in both ALA and ACRL.

Two of the specific actions that I have promised in my Candidate Statement (http://lisahinchliffe.com/ethos-of-hospitality/) are particularly relevant to the question of engagement. First, I commit to using ALA president funds to support promising examples of digital inclusion and to share those practices across the association. ALA policy allows us to conduct our work virtually, and ACRL has been a leader in experimenting with possibilities. We need to share practices across the association and align resources with those practices.

Second, I believe that ALA needs to systematically re-examine the viability of holding two conferences per year and the effect of doing so on member engagement and the ecosystem of division and state conferences. Given the strength of the ACRL conferences, I look forward to engaging ACRL leaders in these discussions.

Neal: Membership is at the core of the vitality and success, and the financial health of ALA and ACRL. This means retaining current members, and attracting the investment and participation of new information professionals. Members increasingly expect to see return on their engagement, and the ability to contribute and learn in more virtual ways, as travel funds and time away from job are reduced. Members want to be successful in their careers, happy, productive, make progress, establish relationships, have positive experiences, and have impact in their communities. How does membership in ALA and ACRL respond to these expectations?

5. Managing research data (acquiring, storing, organizing, and analyzing it) is a subject of great interest both in and beyond higher education. ACRL is currently exploring how it might provide educational opportunities related to research data management to its members. As data management becomes more widely used in analytical methods in academic and scholarly research, as well as government and industry, how can ALA support divisional efforts to make sure we are helping our members to thrive in this new research environment?

Hage: The management of big data is of great importance to libraries and society. It is different from the type of research data academic libraries already so adeptly manage, due to its immense size. We need to work with IT specialists as well as with researchers to ensure the structural and descriptive metadata code is appropriately generated to provide the access that researchers need to mine the data for new research. New librarians need to be well versed in the creation and management of metadata schema. Whether ACRL does this through continuing education opportunities or in close collaboration with library schools, the expertise of librarians needs to be exercised.

Hinchliffe: Research data services is a great example of how academic libraries recognize information needs in their communities and transform library organizations to serve these needs. Managing research data is a very complex and fast-changing area of work and requires partnerships within our institutions as well as across industry and government.

As ACRL leaders know, ACRL is not the only division whose members are engaged in this work. This is a good example of a case where ALA needs to be a platform for divisions and other units working together. At times, unfortunately, ALA structures and policies can create barriers to partnerships. If elected ALA president, I anticipate taking an active role in helping the association develop creative solutions to working collaboratively on issues and challenges that cross organizational lines. By doing so, we can create value for our members and better meet their needs through professional development and program support.

Neal: There is the growing need and requirement in the research community, among funding agencies, publishers, and teams of researchers, that the data produced in research be captured and preserved. This is an important opportunity for the academic library community as it partners with its faculty to address this challenge. Researchers need data planning management. They require discovery and access, and organization and management on a massive and global scale. This means rigorous metadata and documentation, data sharing and publication capabilities, and new thinking about long-term preservation of the data and its usability. And they want rich simulation and visualization capabilities. These are all areas where the library should be involved as a participant and as a service organization. ALA must create the environment where ACRL can build the learning, training, research, and sharing strategies and programs to support academic library engagement.

6. There has been much written about net neutrality and the dangers that changing existing policies might mean for websites, organizations, and other information agencies and content providers. In what ways will the end of net neutrality affect college and research libraries, and what steps might we take to protect our interests?

Hage: Libraries cannot be confined to the slow lane on the Internet. Big data is a growing part of our research data and much of that research is done via the Internet. Net neutrality is essential if libraries are to provide the access to that big data at a speed and cost that is accessible to our users.

Students rely on an open Internet for distant learning that incorporates audio and streaming video. Slower bandwidth can severely impact the feasibility of online education and distance learning. ALA, through its Washington Office, needs to continue to protect our rights to net neutrality to preserve the competition in online markets for use by individuals and libraries.

Hinchliffe: The end of net neutrality will mean first and foremost even greater disparity in information access for our communities. A very challenging aspect of this is that such inequality and injustice can be obscured by complex business arrangements, contracts and licenses, and even competing interests within our own higher education institutions.

We will have an opportunity to play an important role locally within our institutions. Our scholarly communication and information literacy librarians will be key players in educating and working with our user communities about the impacts of the end of net neutrality on teaching, learning, and research. Engaging our user communities will be necessary to build coalitions for advocacy and communication.

Fundamentally, we must focus our interests in alignment with the interests of our user communities. We must be active and vigilant in monitoring legislative changes, understanding and documenting their impacts, and choosing strategically how we approach our advocacy work. I am a comfortable and confident public speaker and as ALA president, I would use those talents in partnership with staff and member leaders to address challenges to net neutrality.

Neal: Network neutrality is all about equity of access, and thus of fundamental interest to the academic library community. We must advocate the principle that Internet service providers and governments should treat all data the same, not discriminating or charging differently by user, content, site, platform, application, type of equipment, or mode of communication. We must promote the goals of freedom of speech, political participation, and investment in innovation. Academic librarians must be engaged as knowledgeable resources on the topic, as political and legislative advocates for the interests of the academic community, as educators of our students and faculty on the topic, as promoters of community and business political coalitions, and as enablers of successful models of net neutrality. ☙