

Meet the candidates

Vote in the election this spring



Loida Garcia-Febo



Terri Grief



Scott Walter

The ACRL Board of Directors posed the following questions to the candidates (Grief and Walter 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

Loida Garcia-Febo: I am a librarian, an advocate, and an activist. Libraries change lives for Americans in every community in our nation. Our strong value system propels us to create new ways to help children read, assist job seekers, support first-generation college students, and connect battered women and children with shelters.

Thanks to our work, libraries remain the true bastion of intellectual freedom, democracy, diversity, and social responsibility in our communities. Given the threats we face to these core values, we cannot afford to stay on the sidelines.

My vision for the association

- ALA will be the leading voice advocating for libraries and library users while maintaining our core values.

- ALA will have a place and a voice at the decision-makers' table, particularly for those in our communities with no voice. We will amplify their concerns to Congress, at the state house, in city councils, and to school boards.

- ALA will build coalitions with like-minded partners sharing our values.

- ALA will facilitate joint work among its units to promote diversity and equity in our profession and association.

- ALA will train our members to flourish throughout their careers to lead, serve, and empower our libraries, patrons, and communities.

- ALA will advance our concerns through actions conveyed by pillars of ALA's Strategic Plan—advocacy, information policies, diversity and inclusion, and professional and leadership development.

These are challenging times, and I am confident that *together*, we can bring change.

Strong experience

- I have been a librarian in academic, school, and special libraries in Puerto Rico, and public library in Queens;

- consultant, educator, and mentor of new librarians;

- advocate for libraries at United Nations with civil society partners, private and public organizations; and
- advocate at grassroots and national levels to impact policy.

Strong leadership

- I am currently a member of the ALA Executive Board, Finance and Audit Committee, IFLA Governing Board, and chair of Action for Development Through Libraries;
- chaired the Intellectual Freedom Round Table, International Relations Committee, and the Committee on Membership Meetings to establish ALA's Annual Virtual Meeting;
- served on ALA's round tables, divisions, and not-for-profits like the Gates Foundation Global Libraries; and was
- REFORMA President (2009–10).

As ALA president, I will build on the Libraries Transform communities partnership launched by Molly Raphael, Maureen Sullivan, and Barbara Stripling; the career development initiatives of Courtney Young; the Libraries Transform campaign of Past President Sari Feldman; the Expert in the Library focus of ALA President Julie B. Todaro; and the Libraries Lead theme of ALA President-Elect Jim Neal. I will work with ALA divisions, members, chapters, the Librarian of Congress, and international colleagues to advance our profession. I am eager to work with you as ALA president. Thank you for your vote.

Scott Walter: Thank you for the opportunity to share some ideas with fellow ACRL members.

Let's begin by acknowledging that higher education has been under pressure for years, and that my home state of Illinois is on the leading edge of this trend. Economic changes, demographics, and partisan politics have come together to present an unprecedented challenge to financial support for higher education, individual students, and our state library consortium. As challenging as our situation in higher education already

was, this election takes place in the shadow of one of the most unexpected turns ever in American politics, and one that has already shown us how hard we must work in defense of free speech, copyright, an independent press, net neutrality, a diverse student body, etc. Many of us in ACRL built our lives in libraries around the idea of collaboration, and the need for a collaborative, action-oriented mindset has never been clearer. We have a renewed mandate to work with campus colleagues to promote information literacy, media literacy, and engaged citizenship, and alongside faculty, students, and community groups to advocate for our core values in support of institutional mission, especially as these align with our commitments to intellectual freedom, social justice, and the public good. We have not faced challenges like these in my lifetime, and ACRL members have much to contribute to the work ahead.

I bring to ALA leadership over 20 years of experience working in higher education and collaborating with campus and community partners to design and deliver programs that make a difference for our librarians, faculty, staff, and students. I bring a passion and commitment to our field shared with many of you during a career that has allowed me to teach, write, and speak to local, state, national, and international audiences about the value of libraries. I bring a "bias toward action" that has allowed me to work alongside many of you to bring changes to academic libraries, move discussions of the future of libraries forward, and make certain that libraries are seen as valued partners in all endeavors where we should have a role. Now is not a time to be timid in defense of higher education, libraries, or the fundamental liberties that both have worked to ensure. You have never known me to be timid.

ACRL members must be leaders on campus, in our communities, and in ALA, as we work to defend the values that brought us into this field. I know you are, and I invite you to learn more about my candidacy at www.walter4ala.org/.

1. What do you see as the greatest challenges facing ALA in the coming few years?

Garcia-Febo: Libraries are pillars of public education. Libraries are changing lives in our communities every day. We will face challenges to keep libraries open, provide services to all—immigrants, first-generation college students, persons with disabilities, and LGBT populations. Access to information, which as per the United Nations is a human right, will be challenged by modifications to NSA, net neutrality, filters, censorship, privacy, broadband access, copyright matters, and access to e-resources.

Grief: There are several things that I see as challenges. The first one is the retirement of ALA staff that have been instrumental in the success of ALA. Don Chatham, publishing; Keith Fiels, executive director; and Emily Sheketoff, Washington Office, have years of relationships and contacts with both members and other associations that will be hard to replicate. I have faith that the search committee for executive director and the ALA Executive Board will find a great person to take over as executive director and he or she will lead our association through staff changes.

Another challenge is the current threats to our core values. We have to remain strong together as an association, and we have to develop strong relationships with others who are being threatened with this. We've had close ties to the ACLU, but we must become even tighter aligned with them. There are many, many others, including First Amendment Coalition, Planned Parenthood, National Science Foundation, NAACP, American Bar Association, Mexican American Legal Defense, and Education Fund, that will be standing up for our democrat values.

Attracting new members and retaining current members is a constant challenge. If we are meeting the needs of members, retaining should be easy. If we are losing members, we need to do some analysis. If that analysis reveals that the lapsed member felt that ALA and/or their division wasn't meeting their needs, it gives us room to grow. I know that numbers

fall and rise, division-wise, according to the conference year, but we have to do some very harsh self reflection if we find a common reason. Attracting new members should be a priority, not so much because we need the numbers, but we should be evangelical about our message and our importance to their daily lives. I know that many school libraries are isolated and they do not see the connection to ALA. However, when we can talk about the Every Student Succeeds Act and the role that ALA played in the passage of that, this should resonate as a reason to join. I want to add members to help *them*, not just to add members to our rosters.

Walter: As ALA president, I will work with all members and ACRL to support our members' developing knowledge, initiatives for student success, retention, and information literacy. Additionally, I believe that libraries building capacity through education will strengthen resilience long after the threats over our core values have been destroyed. Together, we can bring change to impact policies, and benefit our profession and our communities.

The greatest challenges seem to stem from the unprecedented assault on free speech, freedom of inquiry, independent media, access to information, and the idea of the public good that have become part of mainstream politics. This represents not only a threat to the core values on which our professions are founded, and to information policies crucial to our ability to provide library services, but also to our ability to recruit, retain, and engage our membership. An ACRL member was one of the co-organizers of Atlanta's March for Social Justice and Women, and all ALA members will face personal choices in the coming years about where to devote their time, energy, and passion to make a difference for the issues and people who matter most to them. ALA must commit to making a difference on those things that matter to our members and our profession if it is to continue to engage them and if it is to play the meaningful role in their lives, and our national dialogue, that it should.

2. Are there specific initiatives you would like to see ALA tackle?

Garcia-Febo: Every library worker is an advocate. Together, we can bring change advocating for services for all in our communities, equity, diversity, inclusion, information policies, funding, awareness about the value of libraries, and position librarians as leaders. We must use multiple online and in-person platforms to advocate for libraries and grow advocate leaders.

The ALA Boot Camp presented by the offices of Library Advocacy and Intellectual Freedom represents an opportunity to reach ALA chapters and members advocating for libraries at state level. We need to expand this model.

ALA will equip our members with professional and leadership skills needed to flourish in the current moment they are experiencing in their careers, to lead from where they are, and to serve libraries, library users, and communities.

Grief: The ALA Council has identified four strategic areas that we need to focus on without additional initiatives to address. We need to concentrate all of the association's efforts that address these areas. All of us do a great job with the Professional and Leadership Development area and we are very focused on Advocacy, but we seem to give Information Policy and Diversity to one or two units and/or divisions to accomplish. I want to see all the divisions come together to discuss how each of us will incorporate all of the strategic areas of ALA, and how we can work together to accomplish this.

Every unit and division should have a diversity and inclusion plan. We all have to address this, and I especially see it in AASL, ACRL, and PLA. We need to reflect our students and communities. I can envision a joint recruiting campaign. High school librarians could be charged with identifying students who are interested in librarianship as a career and help introduce them to college librarians to mentor them through their undergraduate programs. It is just the beginning of an idea that I'd like to see fleshed out.

Walter: ALA has established a role in the fight against "fake news," but this is only part of a broader initiative that must be pursued around critical thinking about information in lifelong learning, especially as a requirement for informed democracy. ALA must think in new ways about what we mean when we say "information is power" and about the role of libraries in providing access to information and technology that empowers marginalized individuals and communities. ALA must embrace new partnerships with organizations sharing our commitment to free speech and the public good, especially as these may be informed by our information expertise, e.g., access to legal information, health information, government information, and information about the rights of women, immigrants, and refugees. Libraries will "transform communities" only to the degree that we are able to build these partnerships, deliver these programs, and stand firm in our commitments to the library as a bulwark of democracy. Academic librarians are experts in bringing together student groups, faculty experts, and community partners who share those ideals and who form the network we need to do this work in the coming years.

3. What are your own primary professional or research interests?

Garcia-Febo: My research interests include information seeking behavior of multiethnic and multilingual populations, Latinos and other diverse groups, continuing professional development, new librarians, and library association's work.

My recent publications about these topics include: "Public Libraries in Puerto Rico" in *Introduction to Public Librarianship*, Third Edition (forthcoming, ALA, Spring 2017); "Using technology to communicate, educate, and empower POC girls" in *Libraries with Spines* (forthcoming, HINCHA, Spring 2017); "Working together: access to information and our power to cause change," WLIC IFLA Library (2016); and "Fundamental Freedoms, Library Services and Multi-Lingual Populations" in the special issue of *Indiana Libraries: Intellectual Freedom & Censorship* (2013).

Grief: My main focus has been student achievement and the role of the school library. I also have been very interested in diverse collections, intellectual freedom, and leadership. My presidential initiative as AASL president was a leadership workshop for our affiliate leaders that could be replicated in their states. We have to build leaders at the local and state level if we want to have people serving ALA.

Walter: My Ph.D. is in Higher Education Administration, and my research agenda focuses on the role of the library as part of the university, especially in regard to teaching and learning, diversity, and community engagement. Having suspended my research during my years as editor-in-chief of *C&RL*, I have been looking for the “next thing” for the past few months. One area that interests me is the emergent role of the chief diversity officer, and what the evolution of this portfolio may tell us about leadership of diversity efforts in academic libraries. I am also interested in research skills education for practitioners, something I have promoted as chair of the ACRL Research Coordinating Committee, and as a member of the advisory boards for the Institute for Research Design in Librarianship and the ACRL/OCLC “Action-Oriented Research Agenda on Library Contributions to Student Learning and Success.”

4. What do you see as new directions for advocacy for ALA?

Garcia-Febo: ALA will work with the offices of Information Technology and Intellectual Freedom, the Washington Office, divisions, and ACRL to continue to promote reading and research and stop the creation of digital divides. Together we will strongly lead efforts addressing filters, open access, more open systems of scholarly communication, censorship, privacy, access to ebooks and databases, copyright matters, net neutrality, and broadband access.

Our core values will guide ALA to adopt public policy and to build broader coalitions with national and global value-sharing partners to move library concerns on national and local agendas with organizations such

as La Raza, ACLU, the American Association of University Professors, and the Society for Scholarly Publishing.

Grief: We have to continue to message that libraries transform because of what we do for our students and patrons. I am not a fan of each president starting something new, so I would continue this campaign. I would also develop more training within the association of the Harwood-type training that shows us how to look outward to our communities. When we do this, we apply our knowledge of our communities in our decisions about how we design and implement our library programs. It all fits together to make our libraries more visible because of the important services that we provide.

Walter: I have provided some suggestions in my earlier comments, but I am not certain that we need new “directions” so much as new “commitments.” Our approach to advocacy must be sharper, more focused, and action-oriented. We will find colleagues who will defend libraries and librarians as essential to an informed democracy if we make a renewed commitment to our core values, the bar against which our association’s work is measured. On campus, this approach may open doors to new partnership, e.g., with academic and student affairs programs representing the campus commitment to social justice, or with academic programs focused on communities now under threat.

5. How can ALA best support its members in today’s tough financial climate for most libraries?

Garcia-Febo: As ALA president I will seek that ALA has a place at the decision maker’s table. We must be present to impact public policy. For instance, the new President of the United States of America submits his budget by March. There seems to be threats to LSTA, IMLS, NEH, and NEA. We need to be there, advocating, now.

It is about helping each one of our members’ backyards, where we live, our children go to school, and we pay taxes. As ALA president I will seek that ALA strengthen

our support for our chapters, grassroots, and state advocacy efforts. Libraries are pillars of public education and we have a responsibility to support and advocate on behalf of them, and share the value of libraries and librarians with different stakeholders. This is a force to be reckoned with.

Grief: I'd like to see more attention paid to return on investment and how we can articulate a member's ROI to our membership. I find this one of the most powerful arguments with all stakeholders.

Walter: Since we know that members value networking opportunities, professional development, and opportunities to take on leadership roles, ALA can make these opportunities available without the consistent requirement to travel across the country to attend programs. ALA can provide access to selected "free-for-members" professional development opportunities. ALA can make all service opportunities, including leadership opportunities, available to members who can only participate virtually. ALA can coordinate more effectively with chapters to provide high-quality programming at the state and regional level, where the expense to participate is not so high. Finally, ALA can continue its commitment to developing focused, high-quality programs at a reasonable cost that will make it easier for library directors like me to continue supporting professional development budgets when there are many calls to reduce or reallocate those funds.

6. With regard to your goals for ALA, how do you see ACRL most effectively contributing to and supporting your vision for the future?

Garcia-Febo: As ALA president, I will work with ACRL to embed diversity and equity principles in our association's programs and services to benefit our profession and services provided by libraries.


ACRL's Diversity Alliance is a great model that could be followed across ALA by divisions and round tables.

ACRL's valuable understanding of student learning, information literacy, new roles of

librarians, changing landscape of librarianship, and the Marrakesch Treaty, will help ALA to support its membership balancing aspects of a changing academic library environment where we keep traditional roles while adding new ones to meet the needs of users. Together we will find ways to keep us on our mission as it evolves without abandoning our services.

ACRL members' expertise is needed to strategize patron privacy, confidentiality, copyright, usability, and accessibility to help ALA advance our concerns through pillars of the Strategic Plan such as Information Policies.

Grief: I've always seen ACRL as one of my biggest allies. My seniors are your freshmen, and our standards are both based on our students' success. ACRL and AASL have partnered in the past, and my idea of sharing and partnering is a natural for ACRL. My passion is that we are all working for the same outcomes and that we need to strengthen our internal relationships in order to have a stronger voice with other like-minded associations and individuals. I can envision ACRL uniting naturally with LITA, RUSA, and others, since there are so many interest groups within ACRL that would be a perfect fit with others. I would love to see a program developed that would encourage collaboration at the local level with school, community college, and university libraries so that our students see that natural connection.

Walter: My vision for the future is one that I hope we all share, i.e., an association that takes a strong stand in defense of our values at the national level, while empowering its members to be advocates and activists at all levels. I've suggested some ways ACRL members can contribute to that goal, e.g., by bringing their expertise in leading campus-wide initiatives to relevant discussions of freedom of speech, information policy, and equity and social justice. Bring the skills of library organizers and innovators to community organizations and action groups. Those of us who have routinely worked "across borders" with other library types and community-based organizations can play a leading role in bringing the power of those partnerships to the work ahead. 

ACRL members running for ALA Council in the spring 2017 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.

Latrice Booker, Coordinator of Library Instruction, Indiana University Northwest-Gary, Indiana

Steve Brantley, Head of Reference Services/ Associate Professor, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois

Matthew P. Ciszek, Head Librarian, Penn State Shenango, Sharon, Pennsylvania

John C. DeSantis, Cataloging and Metadata Services Librarian, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire

Emily Drabinski, Coordinator of Instruction, Long Island University-Brooklyn, New York

Katherine Furlong, University Librarian and Director, Blough-Weis Library, Susquehanna University, Selingsgrove, Pennsylvania

Martin J. Gomez, Vice Dean, University of Southern California, Los Angeles

Peter Hepburn, Head Librarian, College of the Canyons, Santa Clara, California

Cynthia Maria Ippoliti, Associate Dean for Research and Learning Services, Oklahoma State University Libraries, Stillwater, Oklahoma

Grace M. Jackson-Brown, Library Faculty/ Associate Professor, Missouri State Libraries, Springfield, Missouri

Susan L. Jennings, Dean of Library Services, Chattanooga State Community College, Chattanooga, Tennessee

KYmberly mieshia dionne Keeton, Academic Librarian, Assistant Professor of Library Science, Lincoln University, Jefferson City, Missouri

Rebekah D. Kilzer, Director of Member Education, OCLC, Dublin, Ohio

Karen Anne Liston, Librarian Liaison, Modern Languages and International Programs, Wayne State University, Libraries System, Detroit, Michigan

Stephen L. Matthews, Librarian, Foxcroft School, Middleburg, Virginia

Sarah Marie McHone-Chase, Head of User Services, Northern Illinois University, Dekalb, Illinois

Joe Mocnik, Director of University Library/ Professor, Georgia College and State University, Milledgeville, Georgia

Juliana Nykolaiszyn, Associate Professor/ Librarian, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma

Brenda Pruitt-Annisette, Assistant Professor and Coordinator of School Library Programs, Chicago State University

Raymond Pun, First Year Student Success Librarian, Fresno State University, Fresno, California

Renna Tuten Redd, Interlibrary Loan Librarian, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina

Stevó Roksandic, Regional Director of Library Services, Mount Carmel Health System, Columbus, Ohio

John C. Sandstrom, Associate Professor/ Acquisitions Librarian, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico

Lindsay C. Sarin, Director of Academic Programs, College of Information Studies, University of Maryland, College Park

Karen G. Schneider, Dean, University Library, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California

Jessica J. Schomberg, Department Chair, Media Cataloger, Minnesota State University, Mankato, Mankato, Minnesota

Steven Escar Smith, Dean, University of Tennessee Libraries, Knoxville

James Kevin Teliha, Director of the Library and Learning Commons, Utica College, Utica, New York

Lettycia Terrones, Education Librarian, California State University, Los Angeles, California

Julia Warga, Director for Research and Instruction, Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio

Erica Ann Watson, Librarian, Art Institute of California, San Francisco

Amanda J. Wilson, Director, National Transportation Library, U.S. Department of Transportation, Washington, D.C.