

## Committee on Professional Ethics

# REPORT TO COUNCIL

### 2014 Annual Conference — Las Vegas, Nevada

As chair of the Committee on Professional Ethics (COPE), I am pleased to report on the committee's activities since the 2014 Midwinter Meeting:

#### Explanatory Statements on the Code of Ethics

As a committee of Council, COPE's charge is to augment the Code of Ethics by explanatory interpretations and additional statements. In response to requests from the library community for ethical guidance on the topic of copyright, and in anticipation of a revised edition of the Intellectual Freedom Manual that will include a new section on copyright, COPE has created the first-ever Interpretation of the Code of Ethics on copyright. This statement was developed in consultation with the OITP Advisory Committee Copyright Education Subcommittee and the Committee on Legislation Copyright Subcommittee. The initial draft was posted to the Council email list and Connect on May 23, 2014 with a solicitation for comments and suggestions. A public hearing on the document was held on Friday, June 27<sup>th</sup> at the committee's first business meeting. After considering all the comments and suggestions received in person and via email and Connect, COPE approved the final version on Monday, June 30<sup>th</sup>. COPE respectfully requests that the Council adopt this Interpretation.

Additionally, COPE has developed a new Q&A on Conflicts of Interest, which was finalized at the conference and will be posted on the ALA website.

#### Educational Programming

The committee presented the following program at ALA's Annual Conference in Chicago on Sunday, June 29, 2014 from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.:

**“What Would You Do? Ethics in Action: Libraries and Law  
polices, and roleplay scenarios to prepare you for real life ethical dilemmas involving  
law enforcement.**

**A panel including academic, public, and school librarians as well as two detectives from the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department started the program by sharing their own experiences with the intersection of librarians and law enforcement. Reviving a longtime tradition of COPE, skits were then used to introduce scenarios of ethical dilemmas for discussion by the audience and panelists. The resulting discussions were lively, informative,**

and timely. The 2015 Annual Conference program will focus on ethics and digital citizenship.

In 2009, a Council-



limit or restrict the rights of users or libraries. Librarians should develop a solid understanding of the purpose of the law and knowledge of the details of the law relevant to the activities of the library, the ability to critically analyze circumstances relying on fair use or other limits to the rights of copyright holders, and the confidence to implement the law using good judgment.<sup>2</sup> Librarians and library staff should be educated to recognize and observe copyright and its limits, to understand and act on their rights and those of their users, and to be ready to inform or properly refer users with questions pertaining to copyright.

Librarians have a proud history of advocating for the public interest. Copyright law should not expand the rights of copyright holders without sufficiently considering or benefitting the public interest. When the balance between rights holders and information users needs to be restored, librarians should engage with rights holders and legislators and advocate on behalf of their users and user rights.

Approved by the Committee on Professional Ethics, 30 June 2014

Endorsed in principle by the OITP Advisory Committee Copyright Education Subcommittee  
Endorsed by the Committee on Le