

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting
ALA Midwinter Meeting, Seattle
January 19-24, 2007**

Topic: Increasing Diversity in YALSA and YA Librarianship

Background: In October 2006 ALA released the results of a diversity study done by the Office for Research. The press release is provided below for your reference. The full report is online at www.ala.org/diversitycounts. The report indicates that the profession actually got less diverse between 1990 and 2000. The Board may want to explore ways that it can make the association more diverse and/or lead the way in recruiting more a more diverse group of individuals to the profession.

Action Required: Exploration

For Immediate Release
October 12, 2006

**American Library Association releases national study of diversity
in library workforce
Confirms need for continued recruitment of people of color**

DALLAS - Today the American Library Association (ALA) released "Diversity Counts," a comprehensive study of gender, race and age in the library profession.

Using 1990 and 2000 Census data (the most current available), the study found that the nearly 110,000 credentialed librarians were predominantly ages 45 - 54, female and white. The number of racial and ethnic minorities receiving accredited library master's degrees (MLIS) grew 4 percent, up to about 13 percent in 2000 from 9 percent in 1990.

To increase diversity, the ALA committed \$1.35 million in 1997 toward the Spectrum Scholarship Program, a groundbreaking effort aimed at encouraging more people of color to become librarians. A 2004 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) nearly doubled funding available for graduate students from racially and ethnically underrepresented groups to attend ALA-accredited master's programs or National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) library media programs. Since its inception, more than 400 students have received scholarships, mentoring and ongoing networking opportunities.

"This study is a first step in providing a benchmark for initiatives currently underway and a road map for work still ahead of us," said ALA Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels. "The

2000 data does not reflect national recruitment efforts initiated by the ALA and others beginning in the late 1990s."

The study was conducted by the ALA Office for Research & Statistics, ALA Office for Diversity and Decision Demographics, a research firm based in Arlington, Va. The research provides the ALA with a reliable estimate of employment and will influence future recruitment efforts, Fiels said.

According to 2000 U.S. Census data:

About 25 percent of Americans were non-white, compared with 11 percent of credentialed librarians;

African Americans made up 5 percent of the profession but 12.3 percent of the population;

Latinos represented 2 percent of the profession and 12.5 percent of the population

Native Americans were less than 1 percent of the profession and .9 percent of the population; and

Asian Pacific Islanders were 3 percent of the profession and 3.7 percent of the population.

Academic librarians were slightly more ethnically diverse than their counterparts in public and school libraries, with a representation of 15 percent non-white.

"This study is a call to action for the profession," said ALA President-Elect Lorienne Roy.

"While we have made progress, the findings confirm the need to commit additional time and financial resources to recruit a more diverse workforce. If libraries are to remain relevant to all of our users, our staffs must reflect our country's demographics."

The study also shows that overall admissions to MLIS master's programs were stable over the past 10 years, averaging close to 4,900 graduates per year. Census data suggest, though, that many of these graduates did not go into the library profession. While the profession continues to grow, veteran librarians stayed longer in their jobs, and entry-level positions did not become available. Roughly half of librarians currently working will reach retirement age in the coming decade.

"Rather than a crisis of attraction to the profession, the research suggests a potential crisis of leadership. We need to provide meaningful professional growth if we are to retain new librarians," said ALA President Leslie Burger. "I hope the first Emerging Leaders Institute in January 2007 will be only one of many efforts on behalf of the 400,000 librarians who work in libraries."

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The profession experienced a decline in credentialed librarians of 3 percent under the age of 35, compared to a 19 percent drop among the U.S. population as a whole. The only age range to experience growth among credentialed librarians was ages 45 to 54, which grew 28 percent, compared to 33 percent in the U.S. population;

Men make up 18 percent of all credentialed librarians