

Bylaws, Policy & Procedures Committee

November 8, 2021 | 3:00pm | Online

1. Roll Call

- ✓ Debra Klein, Chair (G)
- ✓ Stuart Auchincloss (U)
- ✓ Rajene Hardeman (D)
- ☐ Michele Ment (P)
- ✓ Janet Schnitzer (C)
- ☐ Ric Swierat, ex officio (D)
- ✓ Rebekkah Smith Aldrich (Staff Liaison)

2. Chair's Comments

- a. Committee Chair Klein reviewed the accomplishments of the committee related to the board's goal of addressing issues related to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), in particular noting the passage of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy and the introduction of the EDI Policy Analysis Framework.

3. Review & Recommend: 2022 Board Rules & Procedures

- a. The Committee members reviewed the 2021 Board Rules & Procedures and are recommended one addition for 2022 related to system trustee education. The Governor has signed into law [a bill](#) that will require member library trustees to annually complete two hours of continuing education. The bill does not extend to public library system trustees but the committee feels our board should model this best practice regardless and unanimously recommends that it be a requirement in our Rules & Procedures.
 - i. **ACTION:** The Bylaws, Policy, and Procedures Committee unanimously recommends that the board adopt a policy, separate from the Rules & Procedures document, that requires all system trustees to take two hours of trustee education each calendar year, either from MHLS or another source approved by the board president.
 - ii. **ACTION:** The Bylaws, Policy, and Procedures Committee recommends no changes to the Board Rules & Procedures for 2022.
- b. Gender Neutrality in the Minutes:
 - i. The Committee members discussed the current practice of using gendered honorifics such as Mr. and Ms. in the minutes of MHLS board meetings. The Committee members discussed best practices, including consulting Robert's Rules of Order, and instructed the Executive Director and Secretary of the Board to use the following guidance when writing the future minutes of the board:
 - 1. As per Robert's Rules of Order, officer's titles should be used in the minutes (e.g. President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary).
 - 2. For non-officer positions, at the first mention of a name their title, if applicable, will be used (e.g. Committee Chair Klein; Executive Director Aldrich) or their full name (e.g. Casey Conlin). Subsequent references to the person within the same sentence or paragraph should

use the gender-neutral pronouns “they,” “them,” or “their.” If the use of these pronouns creates any ambiguity, the minutes should refer to person by their last name.

- ii. The Committee offers up the following resources for other board members to learn more about personal pronouns:

1. [“Pronouns,”](#) Center for Inclusion and Social Change, University of Colorado at Boulder
2. [“What are personal pronouns and why do they matter?”](#) [MyPronouns.org]

c. Land Acknowledgements:

- i. The Committee members learned more about land acknowledgements and why other organizations have begun using them. During the discussion it was identified that to do this properly quite a bit of research and outreach would be necessary. The Committee noted the findings of the recent EDI Assessment which has resulted in a large list of recommendations to address and therefore recommends tabling this issue for now.
- ii. The Committee offers the following definition of a land acknowledgement for those trustees who would like to learn more: “A Land Acknowledgment is a formal statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of this land and the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories...To recognize the land is an expression of gratitude and appreciation to those whose territory you reside on, and a way of honoring the Indigenous people who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial. It is important to understand the long standing history that has brought you to reside on the land, and to seek to understand your place within that history. Land acknowledgments do not exist in a past tense, or historical context: colonialism is a current ongoing process, and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation. It is also worth noting that acknowledging the land is Indigenous protocol.” [Northwestern University, [“About Land Acknowledgement”](#)]

- 4. **Report on Internal Policy & Procedure Audit:** Rebekkah shared an on-going project started by the staff this year to identify, locate and categorize policies and procedures of the Mid-Hudson Library System. The results of this audit will be used to inform policy work in the coming year to fix gaps in the policy/procedure collection, to ensure the timely review of policies/procedures in the future, and to ultimately ensure board members and staff have holistic access to the policies and procedures of the organization.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:02pm