



**Daniel Burgard**  
**President 2021 – 2022**

### **Council Report – Annual Conference 2022**

I am happy and honored to have had the chance to give back to the Texas library community through service as the President of the Texas Library Association over the past year, and what a year it was! We continued to excel at serving our communities while simultaneously learning to live with Covid-19 and battling back against sustained attacks from vocal opponents, including our own elected officials. I could not be prouder of our members' engagement and enthusiasm and TLA staff's work to move the organization forward in such an environment. You all are amazing and all together, make TLA the world's best association!

So, how did TLA move forward in the past year? Here are a few visible ways:

- **In-person Annual Conference and Summit**

Without a doubt, one of the most exciting things that happened in the past year was the continued drive to plan and execute TLA's first in-person annual conference since 2019. Dedicated volunteers on the Program and Local Arrangements Committees have been working hard for nearly 18 months to bring us quality programming and a seamless experience. With the tagline "Recover, Rebalance, and Reconnect", we hope the conference can meet your professional and personal needs as you begin to re-engage with your fellow librarians. We will offer well over 200 programs, many focused on individual and organizational health. Additionally, our program features speakers who will focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion, intellectual freedom and censorship, and person growth during the last few years of lockdown.

Thank you to Program Committee Co-Chairs Stacy Cameron and Current McLane, Local Arrangements Committee Co-Chairs Chantele Hancock and Mike Pullin, and TLA Staff, especially Michele Cruz and Lovdy Grossman for their immense efforts to ensure the conference will be a great success. Also, I would be remiss to not mention the outstanding effort put forward by Shirley Robinson, TLA Executive Director, in orchestrating the entire conference effort. She deserves maximum credit for many or most of the items mentioned in this report.

In addition to the Annual Conference, TLA will be offering a one-day, online-only extravaganza of programming known as the Summit. Taking place in early June of 2022, the Summit will offer low-cost access to a full range of programming that can be consumed either on the spot or through recordings that will be available for a month after the event. Built to reflect new needs in a changed world, we hope that the Summit becomes a regular TLA offering as people recognize the flexibility and quality offered by the event's programming.

- **Intellectual freedom, censorship, and the right to read**

Right now, we are in the middle of the biggest challenges to intellectual freedom and library professionalism in the history of the Texas Library Association. State of Texas elected officials have declared open season on our profession and professionalism, demanding the withdrawal of what they consider to be offensive material and threatening to arrest librarians who commit what they consider to be offenses against society. Further, school librarians have been vilified and threatened with physical violence as well as undercut by their own organizations' administrative officers. Despite these attacks, librarians are standing strong and TLA is offering a variety of support, including help from the Intellectual Freedom Committee and the creation of a hotline that librarians can call when they find themselves in such a situation.

Of special note, in early 2022, TLA formed the grassroots coalition known as Texans for the Right to Read. (<https://texansfortherighttoread.com/>). The Coalition opposes the push to remove books and ban them from Texas library collections and seeks to educate the public about the positive effects of access to library collections unfettered of control by those who seek to censor important resources that help teach our youth and educate the public. We need your help with getting the Coalition's message out and I encourage you to join and lend your voice to the fight. Yes, it is a fight for our professional lives!

- **Strategic Planning**

TLA recently completed a robust process to set a new strategic plan for 2022 – 2025. Following an extensive process of surveying the association's membership and interviewing key stakeholders, the Executive Board and TLA leadership engaged with a strategic planning specialist to set a plan that will help the association chart a path forward and measure its success in attaining its new mission and vision. Here are the basic elements of the new plan:

- Mission Statement – why TLA exists and what it does
  - *The Texas Library Association's mission is to unite and amplify voices of the library community through advocacy, education, and intentional equity, diversity, and inclusion.*
- Vision Statement – TLA's desired future state
  - *The Texas Library Association is an integral partner, innovative leader, and passionate advocate for Texas libraries and librarians.*

In addition to the new mission and vision statements, TLA has adopted the following strategic priorities as part of its new plan.

1. Communicate the Value of Libraries
2. Lead a Learning Culture
3. Cultivate a Thriving Organization

Each priority is buttressed by goals, indicators of success, and strategies that will guide the Board's work in implementing and evaluating the accomplishment of the new plan. The plan is built with the intention that it will drive effort to achieve specific goals and support the success of our association in the new world in which we find ourselves.

Underlying each of the strategic priorities is TLA's overarching value of "Fostering intentional equity, diversity, and inclusion." All TLA efforts will be evaluated through the lens of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Discussions will be intentional, and we will build a better and more inclusive association because of this effort.

Beyond the very visible items listed above, I want to call attention to the quiet, behind-the-scenes efforts made by TLA staff over the past year. While not highly visible, this work on building new financial and human resource procedures and implementing a new association management system will ensure that TLA is an efficient and member-focused operation going forward. Along with visible changes to the association's education and leadership programming efforts, you will soon begin to see the fruits of this labor. One change that will happen soon is that TLA will move toward changing its fiscal year to a calendar year basis. This is not a bright and shiny event, but the change will ripple through the association's activities and decompress the time crunch on many member activities, especially those involved in running various TLA units. Watch for this and other exciting news coming soon as TLA continues to evolve to meet the needs of its members.

***Thanks to all of you for your hard work and diligence over the past year. You make TLA great, and it is because of you that our professional home has such a bright future!***