

**CHILDREN'S LITERATURE ASSOCIATION
DIVERSITY COMMITTEE
STRATEGIC PLAN 2009-2013**

Goal 1: Planning for membership

Goal Statement: ChLA actively recruits members from a broad spectrum of professionals, valuing diversity, international involvement, and members new in their careers.

Strategic objectives:

- A. Make the ChLA more visible to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs).

Action item: Identify institutions (with an eye towards those that educate teachers), gathering information about faculty and curricula in children's literature at each institution, making contacts with faculty and graduate students.

A note of explanation: there are hundreds of two-year and four-year schools that fall under the HBCU, HSI, and TCU designations. A first step would be create a list of *four-year* HBCUs, HSIs, and TCUs, and then to divide that list among the Committee members. (The "four year" stipulation is in place in order to emphasize schools that offer BA degrees in English and in Education.) Each member would be responsible for discerning the school's investment in children's literature (courses in the English and Education Departments) and investment in training teachers (Education programs); this information is available through the web. We wish to create an initial list of eight to ten schools to pursue. Goal for completion: January 2010.

At the same time, the Committee will use its listserv and the ChLA's listserv to ask its membership about its knowledge of HBCUs, HSIs, and TCUs that are invested in children's literature. Goal for completion: January 2010.

Action item: Discern the best means to create relationships with HBCUs, HSIs, and TCUs with a goal of recruiting and retaining scholars.

Once we have the short list, we will then need to begin conversations within our Committee about how to create relationships with faculty members at those schools. This action item relates to discernment rather than creation of relationship.

One idea that we may pursue through seeking funding from the ChLA Board would be the institution of Cultural Diversity Travel Grants, on the model of the NCTE's Conference on English Education. The description of the NCTE's grant program reads:

“a grant of \$500 per proposal to support travel costs, registration fees, and other expenses associated with participation at the NCTE Annual Fall Convention.

Eligibility: Any teacher, teacher educator, or prospective teacher (graduate students and student teachers) in the English language arts, who represents an historically underrepresented ethnic group in NCTE (African American, Asian American, Mexican American, Puerto Rican and other Latina/Latino American, and American Indian) who has not previously appeared as a presenter at an NCTE national conference.”

In addition to email conversations, we would make developing relationships with the schools on our short list the main subject of our Committee’s annual meeting at the ChLA Conference in 2010. We would then need time after the Conference to continue the conversation and fine tune our approach. Goal for completion of discernment process: August 2010

Please be aware that developing relationships with HBCUs, HSIs, and TCUs is not a process that has a simple end-point. We hope to make this a continuing priority for our Committee.

B. Make the ChLA more visible to programs in Ethnic Studies at universities and colleges.

Action item: Research particular programs that have had an interest in childhood and children’s literature, and develop contacts with faculty members. This would be a targeted recruiting effort.

Our outreach to Ethnic Studies programs will commence after we have begun in earnest on Action item A. We anticipate beginning this process in 2011, and will probably follow a procedure similar to our efforts with HBCUs, HSIs, and TCUs.

C. Reclaim relationships with scholars of color in English and Education who have shown interest in ChLA in the past.

This is our third priority. We anticipate working with Kathy Kiessling and using the Committee listserv to generate ideas. We would also look through recent issues of *Children’s Literature*, the *Quarterly*, *CCL*, and *Lion & the Unicorn*, among other journals, for publications on diversity issues, and discern authors’ experience and potential interest in ChLA. We anticipate beginning this process in 2011.

D. Recruit and support graduate students who are working in areas related to diversity and childhood, and discern the means by which graduate students could become actively involved with the Diversity Committee.

We will launch two efforts; the most immediate effort will aim to expand Committee membership and participation. We will encourage graduate students to run for committees. We will also hold an “open meeting” of our Committee at the ChLA conference, in the interest of hearing graduate student concerns.

Action item: Generate greater student involvement in discussions on Committee issues (through the listserv and through open meetings at ChLA conferences). Goal for first open meeting: June 2009.

The second effort is long term. We will use our relationships with Ethnic Studies programs and with HBCUs, HSIs, and TCUs in order to recruit graduate students.

In the long term, we also hope to work with the Membership Committee to identify graduate students and junior scholars (with interest in diversity issues) who are new to our organization. We would like to talk with the Membership Committee about revising the membership/dues form in order to include a “check list” of interests within our field (not limited to but including diversity issues). This “check list” would be modeled on the MLA’s membership form, which allows scholars to join discussion groups based on sub-field. It would be helpful for the organization to allow members to self-identify; the organization could then discover how many of its members are interested in, say, fantasy or picture books, as well as enable the Diversity Committee (and other Committees) to recruit members and develop involvement.

- E. Publicize the ChLA to professional organizations concerned with scholarship on diversity in literature (such as the Association of Jewish Librarians, The Society for the Study of Multi-Ethnic Literature, and so on).
- F. Each year we will also generate nominations for elected Committee membership, drawn from suggestions from the listserv and membership at large. We will also each year organize our annual panel at the ChLA Conference.

Action item: Generate nominations for elected Committee membership and organize annual Diversity Committee panel at the ChLA Conference.