



August 22, 2017

Dear Children's Literature Association Community,

This summer we posted on our website a call for papers for our annual conference with information and phrasing that caused concern for members who were excluded and marginalized. We – the ChLA officers and Executive Board, ChLA Conference Planning Committee, and local organizing committee – apologize for this exclusionary language and are grateful to these committed ChLA members for calling our attention to the oversights, erasures, appropriations, and misrepresentations in the original call. Problems in the original call were references to indigenous peoples that suggested they exist only as archaeological remains and elided the violence done to them, Latinx culture equated solely with food and dance, important issues erased by naming the colonizing forces that occupied central Texas solely as explorers and settlers, and LGBTQ and disability issues absent from the call and therefore excluded. We have carefully listened and studied, solicited additional feedback from multiple sources, and revised the call for paper proposals.

Here is a link to the original call for proposals:

https://chla.memberclicks.net/assets/Statements/2018%20Conference%20CFP_Original.pdf

A revised version of the 2018 ChLA Conference call for papers has now been posted to our organization's website:

https://chla.memberclicks.net/assets/Statements/2018%20Conference%20CFP_Revised.pdf

Altering a CfP after it has been published is unusual, but we want to honor our commitment to diversity and inclusion as guiding principles and our deep commitment to all members of our community as valued colleagues and friends. These changes should not hamper those who had begun framing their proposal based on the original call and, indeed, should offer more possibilities for topics, lenses, texts, and discussions.

Revising the CfP is a short-term solution to an immediate problem, but we also recognize that we need to keep working to make long-term changes so that we can continue to learn and grow as an organization and as a community. Currently, the ChLA Conference Planning Committee is developing guidelines to help local organizers to plan more accessible and inclusive conferences. Our management company created a post-conference survey, which was sent to members after the 2017 conference and which we are using to plan future conferences. We will expand the survey and send it out again after the 2018 conference. Additionally, our management company will, starting with the 2019 conference, insist a non-discrimination clause be included in all conference hotel contracts. We are also making accessibility and environmental sustainability top priorities in our criteria for conference site selection.

Finally, the ChLA is committed to ongoing diversification at all levels of the organization. Through the Giving Tuesday fundraising effort this coming November, for which funds will be dedicated to diversity initiatives, international initiatives, graduate students, and research; through mentoring initiatives for newer scholars; through the nominations and elections process; and through the

efforts of all our committees, ChLA works to foster an environment – at our conference, online, in our journals and newsletter – where all members feel welcomed, included, valued, and respected.

Please share this notice with others in the ChLA community so that we can continue to have open, transparent dialogues with one another.

The ChLA Executive Board, Conference Planning Committee, and 2018 Conference Hosts