

From the Executive Director



I've had an amazing journey the last 6 months as your Interim Executive Director. The citizens of Florida are extremely fortunate in their libraries of all kinds, sizes, and budgets. This issue of Florida Libraries celebrates the successes of our libraries and library staff through the Florida Library Awards for 2022. I hope you will enjoy reading about the wonderful services Florida libraries are providing and be inspired. This issue also describes the 2022 Annual Conference events planned for you both in person and virtually. You won't want to miss this conference, if you cannot travel, I encourage you to attend virtually.

I am inspired daily as I work with the FLA leadership to build capacity and sustainability for the next 100 years of FLA with attention to the past and expectations for an even better future. When I reflect on how we can work together towards our goals for the association I think of the metaphorical "three-legged stool". One leg is Inward – the work of the staff, the committees, and the business of the association. The second leg is Outward to the membership and partners; communicating, transparency, and responsive. The third leg is upwards to the governance; advising, listening, and supporting. It's a balancing act, but the stool will stay steady if we keep all three legs in mind. We are working to make FLA a three-legged stool that will be safe to stand upon.

The first priority of the Inward leg is to secure a new executive director that will provide the leadership needed as the socio-political environment continues to change and impact our libraries and communities. The Human Resources committee has begun the search and plans to have the Executive Director onboard by September. I have agreed to stay on until that happens. Another high priority is ensuring the association is sustainable and securely funded. The Finance committee is committed to balancing the budget while keeping revenues up and expenses down. FLA is dependent upon the work of our volunteer committees. Committee membership provides our members the perfect opportunity to share their expertise and learn from their peers.

FLA is a member-driven association and needs a strong Outward leg to continue and expand upon the history and traditions of a 100-year-old organization. It is important to provide our members with reasons to join thinking of their careers, their professional development, and the improvement of their library services. It is equally important to appeal to the idea of professionalism to share their expertise, mentor other librarians, and support the ideals of the profession. FLA will continue to provide resources, learning opportunities, and respond to issues affecting libraries and our communities.

Upwards leg to Governance, including the Board of Directors, the State Library and library funders is the third leg and equally important. FLA is taking a good look at the Bylaws and the policies to increase their usability and ensure the governance documents are up-to-date. The new Board of Directors are ready to step into their important roles and lead the association in 2022-23. The FLA staff is working to keep all three legs "in the know" through carefully planned communications and social media posts.

The three legs of our stool stand firm and we are doing our best to keep them steadfast. I enjoy meeting with all of you and look forward to seeing you at the conference. Please send me an email, call me, or grab me at the conference if you have concerns, ideas, or questions.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Pratt
Interim Executive Director