
Finding Our Balance with Respect

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At ALA Annual 2018, I was inspired by Michelle Obama's conversation with Dr. Carla Hayden. Two things in particular resonated with me. The first is personal: that you can have everything, you just can't have it all at the same time. It's been an interesting year for me as President-Elect of RUSA as I've been juggling to balance work, life, and volunteering; a struggle I know we all face on a day-to-day basis.

The second thing that really struck me was Mrs. Obama's mention of practicing respect, kindness, and empathy. RUSA is facing a year of major change as we work towards getting the division out of a deficit. In 2017–2018, the Budget and Finance Committee started tackling the question of our deficit in preparation for our 2020 budget. This group included people from across the division, and I want to thank them for their hard work. Thank you to Jennifer Boettcher, Greg Fleming, Beth German, Cynthia Johnson, Chris Le Beau, Cindy Levine, Micquel Little, Alesia McManus, Ike Pulver, Jenny Presnell, and Christina Pryor. I would also like to say a big thank you to our Executive Director, Jessica Hughes, especially for digging for all the data we needed to make informed decisions.

You're probably wondering, what does this group have to do with respect, kindness, and empathy? Because we were dealing with a sensitive topic, we set out a list of ground rules, and the major rule we all agreed upon was respect. In our current climate, it's easy to be disrespectful or confrontational, especially in times of change. But that behavior will not help us come to a solution for the challenges that RUSA is facing. I ask that each of you think about how you interact with each other in the name of RUSA and your sections and let respect, kindness, and empathy guide your words and actions.

For the next year as we work towards our balance, let us all agree that the first ground rule will always be respect.