
Professional Development

Karen Clarke-Keesing, Pacific Rim Christian University, Chair

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Karen Clarke-Keesing, Pacific Rim Christian University, Chair
- Becky Givens, Covenant Theological Seminary
- Andy Loftus, Western Seminary
- Christine Wenderoth, Secretary
- Patricia Yang, Gateway Seminary
- Jamie Lin, Atla Staff Liaison

YEAR IN REVIEW

The Professional Development Committee (PDC) fosters the development of librarians and related information professionals who serve theological and religious studies scholarship and study. We define the infrastructure needed to deliver professional development opportunities to members throughout the year by determining member needs, identifying expert resources, and utilizing a variety of methods and delivery mechanisms. In doing so, we facilitate the exchange of ideas and support members at every point in their careers.

In October 2020, the PDC held its first ever virtual annual fall meeting to discuss programming ideas, review and align the PDC's goals with Atla's organizational ends, and set up an information literacy LibGuide project.

To respond to the prolonged isolation and feelings of disconnection brought on by the realities of COVID-19, an informal series of Conversation Groups were arranged to invite members to talk freely with their colleagues. These groups were arranged as Zoom meetings instead of webinars, and to facilitate open discussion, were sometimes not recorded. Topics for these Conversation Groups revolved around the effects of COVID-19 on workplaces, morale, and planning for the future. One example of these Conversation Groups was "What Happens Next?", held in May 2021 and facilitated by Tim Lincoln (Austin Presbyterien

Theological Seminary) and Kim Herndon (Samford University), which prompted a follow-up conversation with the same group of attendees and facilitators in July 2021.

During FY 2021, the PDC also experimented with a new series called the “Elevator Pitch Series,” designed to allow participants to collaboratively create talking points to engage institutional leadership in conversation around specific topics. For example, Brad Ost, Head of Reference Services and the Theology, Religion, and Philosophy Librarian at Atlanta University Center Robert W. Woodruff Library, led a discussion on “Advocating for Open Educational Resources” in this elevator pitch format.

The PDC also reviews applications and awards regional grants for programming by regional groups and institutions. During FY2020, the PDC did not receive any applications for these grants. Many groups hold their meetings in the spring, and we can only surmise that, due to COVID-19, meetings either went virtual or were altogether cancelled.

As we work within the new COVID -19 normal where Atla membership continues to work remotely, return to their libraries, or a blend of the two, the Professional Development Committee will focus on fostering programming that will meet the evolving professional development needs during these unique times.



2020-2021 GROUP: [pictured, left to right] Patsy Yang, Jamie Lin, Karen Clarke-Keesing, Becky Givens, Andy Lofthus