

**Association of Centers for the Study of Congress
Annual Meeting 2017
Session 1: Introduction and Keynote, May 10, 2017**

James Wyatt (JW):

It is 1:30, and we have an hour for our keynote session, so I want to get this going because I think it promises to be really a fantastic start to our meeting. I'm very much looking forward to it and I'm going to try to betray my historian's impulses and keep my introduction short. Those of you who know me know how hard that is. As much as I would like to think otherwise, I know you're not all here to see me.

As I mentioned in my opening comments, the focus of this year's meeting is really having to do with connecting and communicating. Because of that the focus of this year's keynote is outreach, and I think it goes without saying that developing and carrying out successful outreach initiatives is a critical part of effectively connecting and communicating with our audiences, whether they be K-12 educators, students, scholars, donors, prospective donors, or members of our local communities. The fact is that we simply cannot achieve our organizational goals without engaging in outreach and doing so in a successful manner. It's just not possible.

It's also obvious that doing this, developing and maintaining a successful outreach program is really, really, really hard. I've learned this over the past few years at the Byrd Center. There's multiple reasons for this that we could probably spend a whole other session on, but part of it is that our society now moves at an incredibly fast pace, and

breaking through the cacophony of news reports, both real and fake, Facebook posts, tweets, Snapchats, text messages, work and personal emails and on and on down the line, all of these things compete for people's attention and getting through that wall or those walls is really a daunting task. It always seems that just when you think you've got it figured out, when you've perhaps found a niche where you're in, that the political or the economic or the social, cultural winds blow, the mood shifts, the paradigm changes, and you're sort of back where you were or close to it, right?

So it's this challenge of doing outreach and crafting programs and events and initiatives that are of the moment and have some durability that is so hard, and I think the core of what we all need to do to make our organization successful. It's within this context that we're very lucky to have our keynote speaker, Dr. Colleen Shogan, and our session moderator, Mr. Ellis Brachman here today to discuss and share insights with us about the Library of Congress's extensive and very successful outreach initiatives, and some of these include the fantastic Teaching with Primary Sources program as well as the Digital Preservation Outreach in Education program among many others.

Dr. Colleen Shogan is the deputy director of National and International Outreach at the Library of Congress and an adjunct professor of government at Georgetown. She was previously the deputy director at the Congressional Research Service here at the Library of Congress. Prior to joining the library, Colleen served as a policy staffer in the Senate, and before working Congress she was an assistant professor of government and politics at George Mason University. She joined the George Mason Faculty in 2002 after

completing her PhD in Political Science at Yale University. Her first book entitled *The Moral Rhetoric of American Presidents* was published in September 2006 by Texas A&M University press, and she has also published research articles in numerous publications including *Perspectives on Politics, PS, Studies in American Political Development, Presidential Studies Quarterly, Rhetoric and Public Affairs, and Women in Politics* just to name a few. She was a Stennis Congressional Fellow for the 112th Congress, and Colleen, on top of all of that, is also a mystery writer and has her third novel debuting this summer, so congratulations on that.

Ellis Brachman is the chief communications officer for National and International Outreach at the Library of Congress. He serves as one of the library's senior communicators and advises on public outreach and engagement efforts. Ellis joined the library in 2015 as the chief communications officer for the Congressional Research Service. He previously served as the chief spokesman and communications director for the House Democratic Caucus, the House Appropriations Committee and three members of Congress. Beyond that he also worked for a US senator and has advised on numerous congressional and public relations campaigns. He graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with a BA in government and history, and has also just been named a Stennis Congressional Fellow for the 115th Congress, so congratulations on that. So with that I will turn things over to Ellis and Colleen.

Ellis Brachman (EB):

Thank you, Jack. So, just to start things off here, it's not every day that you get asked to grill your boss in front of an audience, so I have that distinct pleasure today with all of you. Normally, it's Colleen that is in the interviewer seat here for the library. She does a lot of these events and is really good at it, but I promise I won't go easy on her. I'm also going to save some time here at the end for all of you to ask questions, so go ahead and think about what you want to dive into and we'll save some time for that. So let's get started. Colleen, you've got a great title, the deputy director for National and International Outreach here at the Library of Congress. What exactly does that mean?

Colleen Shogan (CS):

That's a good question. I wake up most mornings with that question. Well, at the Library of Congress we've taken a new focus, I'd say within the past two years, which is really to figure out unique and innovate ways in which we can focus on our outreach efforts and our public programming. National and International Outreach at the Library of Congress is what we call a service unit, but what most places would call a division or a department, one of the five major divisions or departments of the Library of Congress. We have about 400 people who work in National and International Outreach at the library. We have about 3,100 people that work at the library in total, just to give you a sense of the components that we're dealing with.

National and International Outreach is a collection of our eighteen public programs here at the Library of Congress. When I say public programs, those are the programs in which we're reaching out to the public at large or specific constituencies, such as, for example,

teachers, K -12 teachers through the Teaching with Primary Sources program or, for example, the blind and physically handicapped for our national programs for the blind and physically handicapped through our Talking Books program.

So we have a variety of constituencies ranging from specific constituencies to the public at large that we're trying to serve, really, at the Library of Congress through our programs and also by trying to promote our collections. So my job is to work along with my boss, the director of National and International Outreach, Jane McAuliffe, and we try to bring a coherent approach to our outreach efforts and our programming efforts at the Library of Congress and try to figure out ways to make sure that we're consistent and also to figure out efficiencies and synergies across the entire institution.

So our job on a daily basis is trying to make sure the right hand knows what the left hand is doing, which is not a small task when you're talking about a 3,000 or 3,100 person institution, and also not an easy task when you're talking about being a legislative branch agency situated here on Capitol Hill because we have another really important constituency here on Capitol Hill which is the United States Congress. So we have a lot of balls up in the air at any one given time. That's basically what I do is sometimes working individually with programs, but a lot of times really trying to focus on collaborative efforts across the Library of Congress and also in the larger Capitol Hill Community.

EB: You alluded to the fact that NIO was created a couple of years ago, that you really helped stand up this new service unit here at the library. Why did the library move in that direction? Why did we need a new direction?

CS: Well, a few years ago, about two years ago was sort of a pivotal point at the Library of Congress. Dr. Billington who had been the librarian of Congress for I think twenty-six, twenty-seven years had announced his retirement and was starting to think about what was going to be really the hallmark of his legacy, and along with a few other senior leaders in the Library of Congress looked around to other like-minded, comparable institutions, cultural institutions, other major libraries, like the New York Public Library, and figured out that one thing the Library of Congress was missing was a unit focused on public programming and outreach.

Before National and International Outreach was created, all these programs for the most part existed at the Library of Congress, but they were all across the institution in different divisions without one singular leader, without a singular focus, without a management structure, and without, quite frankly, the concerted attention that outreach gets now at the Library of Congress. So this was one of the last things he did as librarian, which was a very valuable action that he undertook was to create National and International Outreach as a division in the Library of Congress and stand it up.

At this point in the time, I was the deputy director of the Congressional Research Service, and I'm a political scientist by training. I love working and working alongside and

working with and for Congress. That had been my career path for the past ten years, three years in the Senate and seven some odd years at the congressional research service. I got a call one day to come up to the librarian's office to talk about this. I had not heard about them creating this new service unit. It's the current deputy librarian of Congress, Robert Newlen, who was then the chief of staff, asked me if I would consider taking on this position to help stand up this new division in the library. And I said, oh no, I mean really, you don't want me. I only know one thing. Well, I know Congress. I know the presidency. I know political science. I know politics. I know policy.

He said no, we really need someone who's been in the library for a while, who's been a senior person, who's run a service unit before. You're going to work with Jane McAuliffe, who was the former president of Bryn Mawr and the former dean at Georgetown, who brings a lot of executive experience but just a little bit of time in the Library of Congress, so we need someone that can bring also the perspective we want to bring in the congressional perspective into our Outreach division. I said well, if you really want me to do it, there's not too many opportunities times in your career, particularly at a senior level where you get to switch focus, especially within an institution. I said I'll do it, but I'll do it for six months. That should get the thing off the ground but then you know, you can find your deputy, you can find your leadership team. He said, okay.

I think I was about four months into it, and I was in Robert's office again but for a different reason. I said, can I stay? Can I keep this job? The answer was yes. It's not

because I didn't like working for Congress anymore, and actually I missed that work, but I realized that I was never going to leave that work behind. That the key to a successful Outreach unit at the library was bringing, exactly what Robert had said before, bringing that congressional focus alongside our other public programs and figuring out how we could integrate congressional interests and congressional participation with some of the programs we already had in existence. And that was, at least in part, some of the value add that I brought to the new position. I liked the idea of finding new and unique ways in which we could engage Capitol Hill.

Yes, the Congressional Research Service has a very, very specific, dedicated function of providing non-partisan policy analysis to members, but what are other ways in which we can engage members and engage their constituencies and serve them through the Library of Congress. That was kind of a completely open book, so that was very exciting to me. So that's how I came to my current position, and I think that's the reason why the library wanted to create – wanted to put the resources towards an Outreach division at the library.

If you have great collections, if you have the coolest things ever, which we do at the library ranging from the manuscripts of congressional leaders all the way to what we're going to showcase next month, the world's largest comic book collection, and you run all the way in between those two extremes, that's terrific. But you have to figure out a way to share those collections and share those treasures with the constituencies and the audiences that matter, because if you don't do that, it's nice, you're in the preservation

business, which is important, but where you should also be in the sharing business, in the collaboration business. I think that's what our Outreach division is supposed to be doing.

EB: So we've got a new outreach division. We've torn you away from CRS. As you alluded, we've got the world's largest collection here at the Library of Congress. You pick it, the subject's there. How does the library strategize for public events? What are we looking to do in terms of the public engagement?

CS: Well, that was a big phase of 2016, because we were just starting to transition into having a new librarian of Congress, although, the appointment hadn't started yet so we were in a transition time phase. We had stood up this new service unit, National and International Outreach, but before any of that happened in 2016 we looked at what we were doing. What kind of events are we engaging in at the library to actually bring these collections to life, to bring them to various constituencies? We realized that we did not have a handle on the events and the programs that were taking place at the Library of Congress. There were very good events and programs taking place at the Library of Congress, but no one person or no grouping of people, ranging all the way from the librarian's office into National and International Outreach, really knew the full scope of the programming and the events that were going on every day at the library.

I think it came to a head at one point in early 2016, we realized that there were four competing events going on at the exact same time one day at the Library of Congress.

They were all really good events and, in fact, one was in this room and we had a member

of Congress here. I was participating in that event. We couldn't figure out why we couldn't get a sizable audience, because it didn't make sense. Oh, when we traced it back, there were three other competing events at that exact same time that caught people's and visitors' interests. That was it. We've got to figure this out.

So for some reason, I was still in my eager phase, right? You know, I want to understand how to do these things, and I got tasked along with the general counsel who had a long-standing interest in trying to bring coherence to our events approach to the Library of Congress, got tasked with creating a special librarian's committee, at that time, to figure out a new events policy and procedure and approach to the Library of Congress. It sounds like a small task, but it's a big task because you not only have all these eighteen or nineteen public programs at the library, but you also have individual reading rooms that are running events. You have the law library, which is running events. You have some events run by the Congressional Research Service, mostly for members but sometimes they at times can engage with the public or the scholarly audiences. So you have, really, a very, very big sphere of what's going on.

We got together a good committee, library-wide, a lot of people, eighteen or nineteen people in the room, and we quickly figured out that we needed to hit the road, that we needed to find out what other like-minded comparable cultural institutions, how they approached events. Why reinvent the wheel when other people are doing a good job at other institutions? So we split up into a task force and in the span of just a couple of months we went out, mostly in Washington, DC and came up with a very, very

comprehensive survey, and we went and asked the hard questions from our peer institutions, mostly across the city, mostly federal institutions, but also some private institutions as well. We created a huge spreadsheet with all the answers to explain about the ways in which they approached events, how they funded events, how they were organized, what was the structure of deciding what events took place at the institution? We compiled this spreadsheet. It took us a little while, but by end of the summer we were done.

I looked at that spreadsheet, and I knew we were in trouble. I knew that we had to change, because we were the outlier. We were doing things in a completely decentralized fashion in a way that these other institutions were not. We started to have some discussions based upon what we had learned. We figured out the biggest, I guess you might want to say, the biggest places in which change needed to be effected. What are the major characteristics that need to be addressed? And by the end of that year, we had a new structure and a new approach for how events would be executed at the Library of Congress.

Coinciding with that time, by the way, we had a new librarian on board and she was eager to bring more coherence to the events and strategic programming. So she quickly signed off on those recommendations, and then 2017 has been about implementing this new structure. We're only about five or six months into this new way of doing things, and it's already, I think, made a huge difference at the library. We now know what's going on any given day at the Library of Congress, and we can make educated and

strategic decisions about which events we want to do if there's conflict or if there's a constraint on resources.

EB: Can you share a few of the key findings? Or what were the best of the institutions doing around DC?

CS: Well, almost all of them had some sort of, I guess you could say deciding entity or committee or person that looked at all the proposed events and then made decisions about whether or not we were going to pursue these particular proposals for events. So we had to figure out a way at the library in which we could implement that. So we created what was, we thought based affectionately because we're congressional people, Ellis and I, we created the rules committee for the Library of Congress. But it was the rules committee on events, but it really functions like the rules committee in the House and it was, you know, picked by the librarian. Like the rules committee is picked by the speaker. You know, control your membership. But it needs to be a representative committee. It has to be members of the committee that come from all across the library that bring certain expertise and perspective.

The rules committee had to meet regularly, which was weekly, so it it's a big commitment, right, the standing events committee, and look at every event that came through, every proposed event that we would do at the Library of Congress. Whether it's a Library of Congress event, whether it's an external event like this one, or whether it's a co-sponsored event in which the library is actually partnering with an outside entity to

execute this event, look at all these types of proposals. Sit with the people in the room that had the calendars and maintained the resources, have a very standard checklist, which everybody had to fill out, and then have an educated discussion about each event, subsequently on a weekly basis, and work with those event organizers to make sure that we brought consistency and quality to the events that we were orchestrating at the library, which was really, really important. Consistency and quality. We were doing great events, but they were very heterogeneous, and they weren't always branded correctly as Library of Congress events. Now we have a really nice process that makes sure that we get the right people in the room for the right events.

Last night we hosted a whole bunch of national security policymakers at the Munich Security Conference. We always send library representatives to every event that we host here at the library even if it's an external event like that one. So we knew that the Munich Security Conference was coming here for a dinner last night. We had John McCain was here, and Senator Corker, and we had a whole bunch of really important foreign policy thinkers in the room, so we very strategically figured out who from the Library of Congress do we want to make sure is in the room with these individuals for dinner. We had someone that gave an opening and a welcome and could talk about the library a little bit. Just so that we're getting our message out as they're having fun, enjoying the Library of Congress, and enjoying the Great Hall and enjoying their dinner and their speakers that we're also making sure that we're conveying a consistent message to those who come and visit us.

EB: So let's get into the weeds a little bit with the specific event. What do you for in a good program? I mean, what attracts people?

CS: It depends on the audience, but that's really the number one thing, right, do you have an identified audience? Is there a strategy behind the event? Is there a reason why, in particular for the library events, and it would be the same for any of your centers, is there a reason why we are doing this event at the Library of Congress or at this particular center? What is the hook? What is the connection to my institution's mission? There has to be a consistency between that event and the mission for the Library of Congress. Then what's the strategy? Is there a strategy? For example, we want to bring this particular group in to the Library of Congress because we want to strengthen our future. We may have a little bit of a relationship with them, but we don't have as strong as a relationship that we want to have. Let's invite them into the library and develop. This will be an entry point in which we can develop a stronger, collaborative relationship.

For example, we had Women's History Month here. That was in March, right, and we constructed an event. We wanted to celebrate women's history month with Dr. Hayden. She's the first African American and also the first female librarian of Congress. So we thought a little bit about what type of event could celebrate the fact that the first time in American history we were actually being led by a woman. We want to celebrate that during Women's History Month. So we invited three cultural institution leaders across Washington, DC, who are women that lead other cultural institutions and put her, you know, in the members' room in the Jefferson Building in a conversation very much like

this. What resulted from that event – it was great to have the four of them on stage talking about what it's like being a female and leading a cultural institution and some of those challenges for women in the arts, so substantively that was terrific, but the real take away were the partnerships that developed in the coffee beforehand.

Now we're going to do a partnership with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. We're going to bring the Orchkids program, the kids' orchestra program in, in 2018, to do a flash mob in the Jefferson Building and do a concert. And we're going to try to get out collections out to the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra when appropriate. We're working with the music division here at the library to figure out the connections, along with the conductor, there, Marin Alsop. We're also working with the Kennedy Center on the 100th Anniversary of JFK's birth, and we connected that in to a lecture we're going to have next week. So, those collaborations and those ideas really began because we got the four right women in the room who began to talk and said, yeah, let's get our staff's together and let's figure out how we can work together more in the future.

EB: So in building a public event, do you look at that the same way as engaging with Congress, or are there distinct differences?

CS: I think there's differences because Congress is in at the library. We are the Library of Congress, so we work for Congress. We're a legislative branch agency. We take that very seriously. We're here to serve Congress and the American people. I think when we're trying to create an event or something for particularly members of Congress, but

also for congressional staff, we really have to think even more strategically because the most valuable resource that members of Congress and increasingly congressional staff have is time. Yes, they need to raise money and they need to spend time meeting with constituents and they need to engage in policymaking, but it's really how they spend their time, and that's their most precious resource.

So if they're going to come over and spend an hour with us at the Library of Congress, we need to figure out a way in which we can make sure that it's worth their time, that there's a particular rationale and reason why they would want to come over and do that with us. It may be an intellectual engagement. It may be, quite frankly, nothing more than that, but what type of intellectual engagement? Who would attract them to the point where they would want to spend an hour or an hour and a half with us? What type of speaker? What type of format are we engaging them in? Members of Congress don't necessarily like to just sit there and be talked to for an hour. They want to interact. They want to ask questions. They're used to that. That's the format in which they thrive. The entire committee system, the entire hearing system is based upon that, so we want to get them involved. We want to get them to be able to ask their questions and engage with any speakers or experts we put in front of them.

So we have to think even more strategically when we deal with members, and we always have to be mindful about the calendar, because members of Congress aren't always in Washington, DC. Sometimes they're back in their home districts. So there's no point in creating a congressional event if everybody's flying out on Thursday night to go back to

the district, so you have to be very, very mindful when you're scheduling those events.

And you have to make sure they're not tripping over each other, because we have a lot of different entities within the library that want to engage members and we have to make sure that every week we know exactly what member asks we have out there for attendance at the library so we're balancing that in a way that makes sense.

EB: Pivoting a little bit, the Library of Congress obviously is a research institution. You've got a lot of scholars, a lot of researchers here doing work. How do you convert that into public programs? I mean, how do you take in-depth scholarship and make that something that is interesting and engaging for a broader audience?

CS: That's a work in progress, I think, at the library, but I definitely think this is something that we're trying to focus on. I think it has to do with engaging with whoever your speakers or your talent is going to be for the event? We found this out. You and I have found this out. If you leave people to their own devices it may work out, but it may not work out. It's not because people aren't well meaning, people are well meaning. They just don't necessarily exactly know their audience or how they should engage.

So I feel as though communication, just like we did for this event, going back and forth.

Okay, exactly who is the audience and what do you want us to do and what do they want to get out of it? How do you want us to engage with them? Asking those types of questions are really important, and also working with your speakers or working with your guests to make sure they know exactly what's expected of them. Then also reminding

them right beforehand and saying, we only need you to speak for ten minutes, ten minutes, and then we want questions. You can take questions for the other fifty minutes. There's going to be a lot of them. But ten minutes because more than ten minutes for a particular audience is just not going to work out.

We're trying to move more to these types of things, which I'm a big fan of, Q and A back and forth. We're also trying to move more towards, the flash TED-type presentations where we get scholars up there or experts up there and they get to talk for, at most, ten or fifteen minutes, hopefully with slides, with something engaging, and then open it up for a back and forth discussion. Because we're finding that's kind of what people's attention spans are these days, and that's why people want to come to the Library of Congress so they can interact with experts, not be talked to.

EB: So with your job, you've gotten to meet a lot of neat people. You escorted Stephen King at the Book Festival last year. You had Justice Ginsburg here a few weeks ago. You got to interview Newt Gingrich. Just last week we had Gloria Gaynor and Tim Gunn and others here for disco.

CS: Right.

EB: Yeah, it was quite an event. Have you had any real fan girl moments? Any crazy experiences?

CS: Yeah, well it's interesting. What I've learned is that it's great to bring people in here of prominence to the Library of Congress. The great thing about the library is we can bring those people and they want to come and they're excited about coming. There's been a lot of terrific moments. Probably not too much that can top Stephen King. Stephen King is, you know, was really one of a kind. He was an incredibly nice person. You know, probably I think, the number one, number two, best-selling author in the United States, and incredibly humble, easy to work with. Really funny, actually, downright funny and unassuming. I was really nervous. I mean I can't tell you how many times I went over the plan for Stephen King. I mean I called special meetings about it, I saved the memo, it had all my notes and marks on it because I was just so concerned since he has such a dedicated and enthusiastic fan base, and I had heard of other situations in which his fans had sort of just become overwhelming. I was just really concerned that we were able to move him from location to location in a way that was safe for him, quite frankly safe for me, and that we got him to the Book Festival on time.

But the best part was, I was in the car with him driving him from his hotel to the Book Festival, and this is the fan girl moment. He said, "Okay, so what do you do at the library?" I tell him. He said, of all the people, why did they pick you to spend the – something like that. Funny, you know, he was being funny. I said, "Well I think one of the reasons why is that I write, you know, these mystery novels and so I'm a fellow writer, and I don't write horror. I don't write anywhere near your genre or anywhere near your popularity, but I'm a fan, and I've read a lot of your books, and so I think that's why." He said, "Oh so you write mystery novels. What was your last one?" I told him,

you know, the name of my last one. He just pulled out that iPad and he went right online and he pulled up the Kindle app and he just bought my book. And so until the day I die, I could say Stephen King bought my book. So that was it. I thought okay, day over. That's it. You know, I'm done.

EB: So sticking to that, you write good old-fashioned whodunits, as you call them, and they're about a congressional staffer who keeps finding dead bodies on Capitol Hill. Anything you want to tell us about your time as a staffer?

CS: Sometimes I wish that I – I think about – the mystery novels are interesting. You think about, how could I kill someone? I mean, you know, when you're put in certain situations, what is the most creative way in which someone can die? I was thinking about it this morning, and what are the motives for it? Here's the thing on the mystery novels. I love mysteries. That's why I write mysteries and that's why I write in that genre, so that that's the easy explanation, and I've always liked reading mysteries. But the reason why I decided to set my books on Capitol Hill was I'd been tossing around an idea in my head about writing some sort of book. Really, it was more of a non-fiction. It was a non-fiction book about something in defense of Congress, because Congress is what at eleven or twelve or thirteen percent approval. It kind of hovers in that.

EB: Eight or nine.

CS: In the teens, you know, somewhere in the low teens. I wanted to write a book that tried to explain the pressures of being a member in Congress, of working in Congress, of working on Capitol Hill to try to explain it to a popular audience. Not a political science book, but try to explain to a popular audience, this is what this institution is all about and when you have outcomes that you don't like, there are real hard and fast political and other reasons of why you get these types of results. It's not any one member's fault. Almost collectively, it's not their fault. It's an institution – it's the popular engine of our federal system. They are popularly elected, and they are a reflection of our country at large. That's why you see all they dysfunctions that we have in our political system writ large today in the United States are reflected in Congress because they are the popular institution.

I wanted to write something like that, either it was an article or a book or something. Then for some reason I said, maybe I should write a story. I mean, maybe it should be a fiction in which I can convey what it's like to work on Capitol Hill and the challenges of working on Capitol Hill, but you know, it could be something else. That's really how my series started. That's what I try to do in the books, besides hopefully write a fun mystery that people like to read, it's also about working and living in Washington, DC, and the pressures that people engage in on a day-to-day basis.

Really, some of the most gratifying comments I've gotten from readers are, you know, I don't live in Washington, I'm never going to live in Washington, it was really interesting reading about what it's like to work in Congress and I have a lot more sympathy or

empathy or I understand better the pressures that those people are under. If that's the take away, then I've completely achieved my purpose from writing that series. So that's always in the backdrop. It's not the motivation for the story or the plot, but that's sort of the general principal behind it.

EB: Let's open it up to questions. Anybody? Anybody want to take up somewhere?

M1: As you're speaking, I'm thinking about the different episodes on various campuses where they have to deal with controversial speakers. So in your selection of events to either host or co-host, how do you bring that issue? What kind of complications does it pose for you?

CS: That's a good question because we're a government agency here at the Library of Congress, and we are situated on Capitol Hill. We're a Legislative Branch agency, and so we find ourselves in this Hill environment all the time, and our oversight committees take a lot of interest in what we do here at the Library of Congress. They view the library as their research institution and their cultural institution. Even, we have a closer tie to Congress than, for example, even the Smithsonian, I think, or the National Archives, or other entities, so we have to be careful.

I think a lot of what we do here at the library, and Ellis, you could probably chime in on this as well, is we have to make sure that on the totality, on the whole, that we're covering all sides of the issue and we're balanced. We would not want to put together,

for example, a National Book Festival where we only had left-leaning authors or only had very conservative authors. We can have both conservative – we definitely want to have conservative voices and we want to have liberal voices, but we have to make sure that we look at that program and we say, yes, we're representing the voices, the different voices not only of what's going on here in Washington, but really of the American people.

So for example, in the main stage this year, the upcoming National Book Festival that we're going to have in 2017, we have Al Franken, who's just written a book on the United States Senate, and he's going to be on the main stage, and of course he's a Democrat from Minnesota, but we're also going to have Condoleezza Rice, the former Secretary of State, and she's going to talk about her new book called *Democracy*, which is her sort of seminal work, theoretical work and empirical work on democracy, not only in the United States but across the world. So we look at that and those are two very different people, obviously, and they're writing on different subjects, but we feel as though, okay, that's a nice representation on the main stage. If we're going to have two political speakers, they bring two very different perspectives.

EB: Yeah, well first off, Colleen's breaking news here because we haven't announced the main stage people yet, but so you guys just got a little preview of who's on the main stage at the book festival in September. But I would add, I mean as Colleen said, it is a balance here with, you know, how we look at things. And the library is a cultural institution, so we try to find that niche between promoting these things. I mean how do you promote poetry in this environment right now when poets are out there screaming

their heads off about the arts budget and what's being done to folks like that. So it's a struggle but we also, you know, there's a difference between welcoming in a controversial voice and doing it in a smart, balanced way and being controversial yourself.

The library tries to stay out of controversy as much as we can as an institution, but as a venue for people to express different ideas and different emotions and different approaches to things, that we try to encourage. I mean we want discussions. We want to encourage bipartisan engagement. It doesn't have to be non-partisan. It doesn't have to be stodgy and dry, but it does have to walk that line of, you know, we're not going to get too many people screaming at us at any one time.

We're doing a film festival this summer. The library, I don't know if you all know, has the National Film Registry which every year inducts twenty-five movies that are of cultural significance to the United States, and has amazing movies. They date back to the beginning of cinematography to current times, and so for this year, this inaugural one we chose to do sort of modern classics. There was a large debate about what movies could be shown and what would be appropriate for a public audience at the library as an institution, and we settled on I think some really good ones. *Princess Bride* and *Ferris Bueller* and *Ghostbusters*. *Top Gun*, I think is in there. You know, I mean, so we've got some fun movies, but it took a lot of internal discussion about where we wanted to be with those.

M2: How do you determine and evaluate the success? What marks a success?

CS: That's something we're still working on. The metrics can be harder to determine. I know with our events committee we're starting to think about, after an event, having there be a after-action report, for lack of a better term. It wouldn't be particularly long or arduous to fill out, but we want to know, if you said that your target audience was a hundred people related to these three different embassies, because this was a multicultural-type of international event, did you actually attract close to a hundred people from these embassies? Were you able to collect their information? How are you building them into your database so that we can contact them in the future for similar events if they enjoyed their event at the Library of Congress?

So we're starting to figure out ways in which we can have tangible takeaways and also, by the way, what worked for the event. Like this worked really well. This particular format worked. It was perfect. Or, you know what? We tried to do a livestream event, just for example, where we were touching base with the community center somewhere, and actually this particular way in which we did it turned out not to be very beneficial. Or, if we need to do it in the future, we need to change the way in which we did it.

Ellis mentioned we had Gloria Gaynor here this past week and this was a terrific event, all day event, a symposium on Saturday and then a very fun concert on Saturday night. There's going to be a lot of discussion about that. What did we learn from doing that type of large-scale event? If we were going to do another large-scale event like that in

the future, what are the five things that would stay the same and what are the five things that we would do differently?

We try to shy away from numbers, just per se. I mean numbers are important, obviously. If we do an event and only three people come, then maybe you have to rethink that, I mean, that seems fairly small. Now, if it was three members of Congress and it was an event targeted at members and they had a really good discussion for forty-five minutes with the expert we put in front of them, then maybe, you know, we'd say okay. I mean, we would like to have had thirteen instead of three, but that was actually probably a very good use of our time, and we were able to talk to them afterwards and they seemed happy with it and there were maybe reasons why we didn't get thirteen and why we got three. So the numbers aren't necessarily everything.

Really the question would be other things. I like the Women in the Arts example, because that was great substantive event. We had a hundred people in attendance and we live streamed it so we reached other audiences. We videotaped it and it will be available for people to watch, with Dr. Hayden in conversation with those three other Women in the Arts leaders. But the real by product of that thing was the fact that we walked away with new partnerships, and that was the most valuable part of that event. So that taught us that in the future, whenever we're going to have people into the Library of Congress that we may want to engage in the future, we need to have that strategy already thought through.

We're going to have someone next week, Reed Hastings, and we're thinking about that. You know, the CEO of Netflix. How can we engage with him and possibly with Netflix in the future? The Women in the Arts kind of taught us to think that ahead of time to make the most use out of the fact when very important and prominent people come to visit us as the library.

EB: Yeah, I'd echo that. The library's really sort of in a period of transition right now as we think about how we do events. For years, events at the library were sort of individual things. We had a lecture. Did a crowd show up? Did anybody die? You know, I mean, if it happened, it happened. It was a successful event. Now it's really much more about, I mean, obviously we want tactically the event to be successful, that people showed up on time, that it happened, that they enjoyed it. But the bigger question and the better question for evaluating success is, what does it lead to? Institutionally, why did we do this? Did we get something out of it? How do you build from this? What comes next? You know, being much more strategic about how we use our resources and what we learned from how we use our resources? Other questions?

M3: Could you tell us what the latest thinking is on the ongoing debate regarding public access to CRS reports? You know, a lot of us have collections which have a lot of these CRS reports in them. We use them all the time in our work. Is there anything going on about that right now?

EB: Yeah, absolutely. So, obviously this is something that's of interest to a lot of people. It gets a lot of discussion. The Congressional Research by law, I mean this is Congress's decision, does not make its reports public. It's not a library choice. This is a congressional choice and they pay the bills so they get to decide. Obviously, there's a lot of really good work in CRS. There's some amazing analysis. A lot of that gets out already. In fact, there are some members of Congress who currently have started a website and basically every report that CRS makes public is now out and via – I mean it's Congress working with some outside groups to do that, which is beneficial in some ways. There are arguments on either side for where it should be as an institution, CRS especially, and the library really doesn't take a position. We'll do what Congress tells us to do.

M3: Thank you.

EB: Another question?

F1: So if (indiscernible 0:48:54.1 - 0:49:11.0)

CS: We meet weekly on Tuesday mornings at nine a.m., and the meetings last anywhere from – if we don't have that much to review it could be a half hour to forty-five minutes all the way to ninety minutes or close to two hours. So the rule is kind of you stay until we get through the packet, and you move through it. Just in the few months we've been meeting we've gotten a little bit quicker, and as we've looked at some events and returned them to

the people that were organizing the events in the library and asked for changes or improvements or suggestions. We're finding as we get new submissions they're better, because people are learning and they understand what the strategy is behind it. I don't think we have a target for the number of events that we have here at the library on any given month. We don't have a problem having probably a hundred events in a given month. It's more about trying not to schedule over other events, so the coordination of events is really important. What was your other question?

F1: How far out?

CS: Oh, how far out, yes. Really, to go through the process we think at the minimum it's two to three months ahead of time for an event. Of course, we realize that things pop up and an opportunity presents itself, and so-and-so's going to be in town and we can get him or her for lunch or a breakfast or this or that. And so that's not a hard and fast rule, but if you were actually planning an event, two to three months would be the minimum and we would prefer more in the three- to four-month time range.

EB: Just to add to that, the library obviously is a large bureaucracy in some ways. We pride ourselves on being nimble enough to make things happen when we need to, but to do it right. To really figure out who your audience is, get invites out, engage with them, whether that's publicly through media and other things or whether that's through specific invites. You know, build the event, get the right people involved, make sure that we've got all the things; it takes time, depending on the size of the event. We've got an annual,

the Inouye Lecture that's part of the Kluge Center here. That's a great – they bring in – this year it's going to be Reed Hastings and Secretary Chao, you know, the Secretary of Transportation. Because they both served in the Peace Corp, they're going to come in and talk about public service and things. That event's been a year in the making. So we've got smaller meetings that come together in days or weeks and we've got larger things. We've got the National Digital Initiative that's looking at how we engage digitally, and they're trying to do a large symposium to bring people together, and that's been in planning for the better part of a year. I mean, it just depends on what the event is.

F2: Sunday night I was looking up information about Olla Belle Reed, and I came across on YouTube a wonderful ninety-minute interview panel program that was recorded by the American Folk Life Center. So that was awesome, and I was really proud to see that we're at the source. I saw that and I immediately clicked on it. So my question is about decisions to use social media and marketing and branding, and also is this part of the international outreach, would you consider. Does every program get recorded? What decision do you make about how to use your communication?

CS: That's part of the events committee. That's part of the decisions that we make, and that's a big change at the Library of Congress. Are we going to, for example, record this event? Are we going to not record this event because it's not appropriate, or it doesn't make a lot of strategic sense? Or are we going to live stream the event, and we're doing – we've never done live streaming before. That's fairly new at the library. If we're going to live

stream, we're developing new criteria for why we would consider doing a live stream event versus doing a recorded event that we could then edit and put up on our website.

We certainly have a lot of popular social media channels at the library. We're trying to enhance those. Dr. Hayden has her own Twitter account and that's very popular, so we can make use of that. We have a number of Twitter accounts. We have Instagram. We have Facebook. We have a YouTube channel, and we're trying to get into the realm of podcasts at the library. And certainly, when you get into this type of dissemination, then you hope you have an international – I mean the goal is to have an international reach. We're very focused on serving the American people, but we also realize that the reach is really limitless when you're talking about making sure that your programs are available in a digital format.

I will say to the new librarian's credit, she's very much focused on getting people inside this building, experiencing the events here at the Library of Congress, whether it's in the Jefferson Building or in the Madison Building, and improving that experience. But she's equally as interested in trying to reach people who will never set foot inside the Jefferson Building, because either they don't come to watch an Washington, DC, or they're unable to, so figuring out new and creative ways in which we can make sure that those who don't visit us in person still understand and can appreciate and utilize the value of the Library of Congress.

EB: We've got time for one last question.

F2: Kind of to piggyback on that, when you centralized your outreach, this whole program, did you centralize the marketing, you know, getting the word out before the event, and is there a plan for that? What is your advice on the best ways to get the word out before events?

CS: Right. That's a good question. We have Public Affairs office, which serves the entire library. They're very integral to our events committee. The head of our public affairs office sits on the events committee, and also the librarian's chief communications officer sits on the events committee, and Ellis sits on the events committee, so everybody is in the room as far as communications professionals that need to understand what the plan is. We haven't gone so far in the library as putting all communicators sitting in this office suite and everybody is going to be in the same particular office, because there's communications functions across the library that are external, of course, but there's also a lot of communications that have to go on within, for example, my 400-person unit that's internal as well. You also need someone to work on communications that can help you with internal communications as well as external, and I think that there's a recognized need that that needs to still exist. But you can talk about the communicators and how often you meet.

EB: There's a handful of senior communicators and then additional staff, both in the communication office and across the library. We meet regularly. There are these weekly

event meetings. The senior communicators get together biweekly to go over issues. We talk 24/7.

The second part your question, sort of the tips for promotion and what we're looking at; the communication office does a great job. We've got a large list. The library maintains a calendar of events. They've got a large list of external calendars they get on. We've got a listserv of people that are interested in information from the library. They help think about targeted audiences, both media and straight and will engage with them. They do everything from print to web, to paid advertising that we do in a small amount for the library. We don't do a lot of it, but where appropriate we do some. So they help think through all of that.

But we really have been shifting a little bit with all of this process to try to think about how we can promote more series or topical things. So instead of one-off, hey, we had disco here, and that was an exception, it got a lot of attention and 1,400 tickets sold out in about thirty seconds, but in general we do regular book talks here at the library. So instead of advertising that author X is going to be here on Tuesday, we try to look ahead and say that over a six-month period, we're going to have a regular series of these. So that helps get word out. It's easier to talk about it. It's easier to do a press release and get some attention to a set group of things as opposed to individual one-off small things, so you're seeing that happen a lot more.

We're actually looking at that in our streaming process, too. Instead of trying to advertise and promote a particular event that's going to be live streamed at the library, we are in the early stages of trying to regularize a few things, that maybe it'll be Tuesday story time or Wednesday lecture. I mean, whatever it is, that people will know every Tuesday at ten a.m., they can tune in and see something from the Library of Congress. The subject might change, but the type of event will stay the same. So it's an ongoing process. We're always learning from ourselves and everybody else, and of course best practices are constantly changing. I mean, social media is changing how people use the internet and social media and engage for events is changing every day. I think that's all our time.

JW: Yes, that's all of our time.

EB: Thank you all.

JW: So let me take a couple of minutes and then we'll reconvene for our second session.

[End of interview]