Li Fu, CALA Executive Director Report
Dec. 31, 2013

I am pleased to have this opportunity to provide my half year report as a new Executive Director. Since July 1, 2013, I have made conscientious efforts to learn the ropes and get to know more about CALA and our members. It has been incredibly inspiring and enlightening to me as I spent time speaking directly with our members and working with our officers and internal/external collaboration groups. I have since developed a much deeper understanding of CALA and truly appreciate your dedication and contribution to the success of the organization.

As the Executive Director, it has been my privilege to help President Lisa Zhao carry out this year’s theme: Together, We Make Difference. Under her exemplary leadership, we were able to collaborate closely with CALA members, working together as a strong and united team. Taking a changemaking approach, we have been able to engage a wide range of members in committee work and Board discussions, as well as to reach out to other caucuses and international organizations. With 28 Boards of Directors, 17 standing committees, 13 taskforces and ad hoc groups, and over 7 chapters including members from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Australia, Canada, etc. we have worked together to support CALA’s goals, promote organizational excellence, and advocate for the Chinese people, Chinese culture, and Chinese American librarianship.

CALA is a member driven and volunteer based organization. Unlike a workplace where there are hierarchical structures and expectations of work production, CALA is comprised entirely of volunteers. As the Chief Administrative Officer, I am constantly challenged to brainstorm creative ways to bring the CALA family together, bridge differences, support teamwork, and ensure that we remain focused on results. From Day 1, planning and ideation has been driven by the fact that CALA members are the reason why I became the Executive Director and that CALA’s interests and members’ benefits need always be the Number 1 priority. Everything that I, as Executive Director, and we, as the leadership team, do, is for you, by you, and from you.

The past five months have borne fruit to our hard work: there has been increasingly active participation, more enthusiastic involvement and a team working environment across the board and committees as well as our members. By being responsive, supportive and transparent, I believe this leadership team has earned your trust and confidence. Strategically, we provide practical tips, professional expertise, guidance and assistance to mentor new board members, chairs, librarians and student members. Through initiatives and projects, we offer educational and professional opportunities.

Below are a few more highlights and examples of our achievements. Thanks to Dr. Li’s scholarship for recruiting Chinese students to library schools, and the Membership Committee’s efficient work, we are seeing a substantial increase in active membership. To ensure a smooth leadership transition, we have reached out to various ALA offices to inform them of the CALA
leadership change; transitioned CALA financial accounts; and worked together to ensure the smoothest transition. When Haiyang devastated the Philippines, we established the Philippines Typhoon Relief Fund to show we care and that we will overcome the disaster together. During the holidays, we sincerely express our thanks to you, as members, to express our profound appreciation. We worked together and successfully had CALA’s status reinstated as a non-profit organization registered in Illinois. Although it was an unexpected obstacle, I am proud to say that we worked quickly to resolve the issue and have put into place several policies and procedures to prevent it from happening again. For the upcoming Midwinter, we are publicizing our events among and beyond CALA. To best accommodate all board members availability, we will be providing simultaneous online and onsite options for Board sessions. Together, we have achieved more than we had hoped, and together we are building our professional home for tomorrow.

Looking forward, I continue to be excited about the opportunities we are developing for our members. It will take a collective effort on all of our parts to make CALA the best that it can be, for you, and by you. I hope you will join me by actively supporting and participating in our discussions and programs. CALA is a great organization and it is gaining momentum every day. I urge you to spread the word and promote CALA in your libraries and among your colleagues. As we enter the new year, my hope is that I can continue to carry on the legacy of furthering CALA’s goals and values, continuing along the path toward excellence, and launch CALA to a higher level: financially stronger, rapidly growing, and gaining a national and international prominence. I am confident we are coming up on a wonderful New Year and I have a very strong commitment to continuing to help CALA grow!

All the best,

Li Fu