



Special Issue on Diversity

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Recent social and political events throughout the United States have given rise to intense discourse on the topic of racial and ethnic inequalities. In the higher education realm, court cases such as *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin* and Michigan’s *Schutte v. Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action* have led to a nationwide debate regarding the value of considering race and ethnicity in college admissions. As libraries in the US and Canada strive to reflect demographic trends in those countries in their staffing, programs, and collections, many libraries identify diversity and inclusion as guiding principles that will increase their relevance to the communities they serve and will lead to organizational excellence. In “Pipelines and Partnerships in Diversity at the National Library of Medicine [NLM],” Kathel Dunn and Joyce Backus of NLM outline a multi-pronged strategy for ensuring that NLM remains engaged in diversity initiatives and contributes to diversification of the medical and health sciences libraries workforce.

On the topic of workplace climate and organizational health, Michael Crumpton of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) Libraries writes about UNCG Libraries’ implementation of the ClimateQUAL protocol. In “Strategically Focusing on Focus Groups to Improve Organizational Climate,” Crumpton describes the UNCG Libraries’ analysis of the survey data and the process they employed to create improvement strategies based on staff feedback collected from this tool. The goal of these strategies is to improve workplace climate, ensuring improved organizational health.

In the accessibility arena, the Technology, Equality, and Accessibility in College and Higher Education Act, or TEACH Act, has ignited significant debate in the US about the degree to which institutions of higher learning should accommodate persons with disabilities as they attempt to fully engage in research and pedagogy that is increasingly reliant on technology. Best practices for accommodating patrons and employees with disabilities have long been informed, in the US, by interpretations of both the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) revised in 2010, as well as Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (simply called Section 508). Similarly, Canadian provincial authorities have legislation ensuring that persons with disabilities are fully integrated into the higher education environment. In “Developing Inclusive Research Libraries for Patrons and Staff of All Abilities,” Darlene Nichols and Anna Ercoli Schnitzer of the University of

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Michigan Library provide an important review of some of the considerations for libraries as they work to make content and services accessible to a growing population of users of all abilities. Nichols and Schnitzer also discuss strategies for making libraries welcoming organizations for staff with disabilities.

More and more, the social sciences are weighing the value that diversity and inclusion bring to systems, and many organizations and institutions are prioritizing these efforts in their strategic planning. These three articles in this issue of *RLI* offer unique insights and perspectives into the principles of diversity and inclusion and their application to various dimensions of library operations and culture—recruitment and retention of people from traditionally underrepresented groups, organizational climate and health, and library services to persons with disabilities.

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