

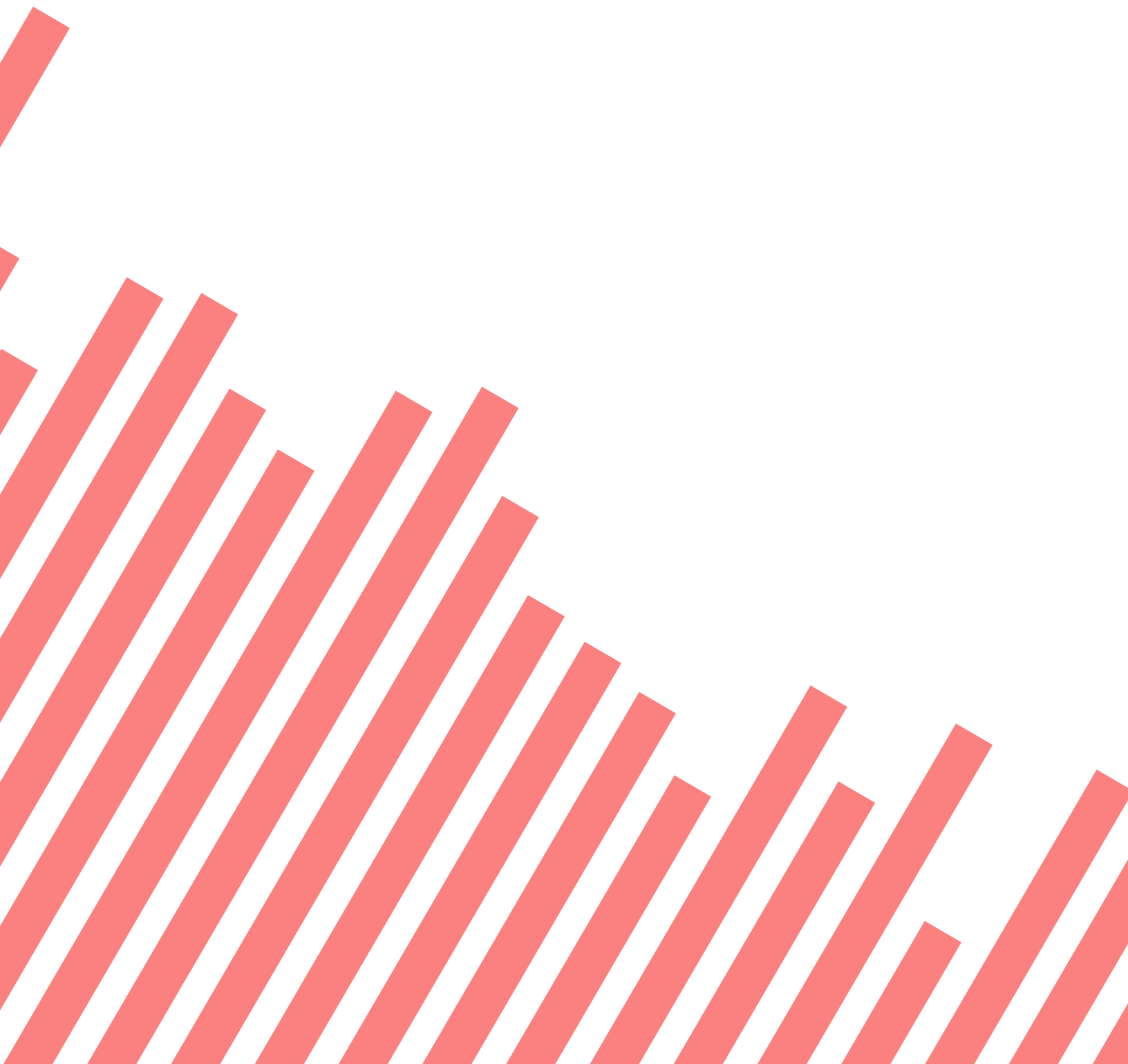
Research Library Issues

RLI 301:

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

2020

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In This Issue

Introduction	3
Redefining Student Success in the Academic Library: Building a Critically Engaged Undergraduate Engagement Program	6
Understanding Our Students' Needs	
Our Methodology	
Redefining Student Success in the Neoliberal Landscape	
Conceptualizing Programming for the UEP	
On Critical Librarianship, Inclusive Practices, and DEI Initiatives In Light of COVID-19	
How a Global Pandemic and Racial Unrest Are Impacting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Work in Research Libraries	26
Improving Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Libraries: Programs and Methodologies to Consider	43
Lack of Demographic Change in Spite of Efforts to Diversify Programs and Methodologies That <i>Appear</i> to Be Working Next Steps for ARL	

Introduction

Mark A. Puente, Associate Dean for Organizational Development, Inclusion, and Diversity, Purdue University Libraries and School of Information Studies

The spring of 2020 surfaced unprecedented challenges, with a global pandemic and societal unrest initiated by highly publicized police killings of citizens in Minnesota, Kentucky, and elsewhere. Although for many people throughout the US and Canada, the confluence of events has brought a new level of awareness and new vocabulary for such issues as wide disparities in health treatment and outcomes for communities of color, or the concept of systemic racism, these realities and taxonomies have been studied and written about for generations. And although current events and the contemporary political and social climates may be bringing new understanding of areas of sociological inquiry, such as critical race theory, the perennial question from many—even the most well-meaning practitioners from the library, archives, and other cultural heritage and memory sectors—is, “What are the implications for our communities of practice?” In other words, “How are these issues relevant to our profession?” And, “How do these principles play out in the values and mission of libraries, archives, museums, and similar institutions?”

The content for this issue of *Research Library Issues (RLI)* was planned and solicited long before COVID-19 or global protests for racial equity. The topics and themes, however, remain relevant, with perspectives that offer both practical applications of existing and emerging theories and practices, as well as more aspirational reflections.

In the first article, two librarians of color at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Teresa Helena Moreno and Jennifer M. Jackson, chronicle a process whereby critical race and feminist theory informed the assessment and development of an undergraduate engagement program that was connected to broader, campus-level, student-success efforts. The authors reimagined how to define student success in the

context of one of the most diverse, urban universities in the US and developed new programming and success metrics to reflect that.

In an informal interview, three practitioners with responsibilities for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), either within their institutions or on a consortial/association level, discuss the impact of these two historical events on their current work and their future plans. Maha Kumaran is associate librarian for the Education and Music Library at the University of Saskatchewan. Jeff Witt is an organizational and leadership development professional for the University of Michigan Library. Twanna Hodge is the diversity, equity, and inclusion librarian for the University of Florida Libraries.

The third article in this issue features the work of Kiyomi Deards, visiting program officer for the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. To help ARL prepare to enhance its professional development efforts, Deards has been researching competency frameworks in DEI, as well as training and developmental providers and experiences that libraries and other industries have been implementing on a local level. Deards and I highlight a few examples from the extensive data set of providers and methodologies she identified.

These three articles are contrasting in their perspectives, from practical implementation of programs aligning with institutional mission, to a more comprehensive exploration of strategies for creating and sustaining organizational change in support of DEI and racial equity. As organizations and institutions struggle to find solutions to enduring and seemingly intractable problems, it seems clear that new approaches, vocabulary, and mindsets are needed in order to effect necessary changes. This issue of *RLI* offers several access points to this work, to the necessary change for the betterment of society, and to how libraries and archives can be catalysts for this critical work.

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Redefining Student Success in the Academic Library: Building a Critically Engaged Undergraduate Engagement Program

Teresa Helena Moreno, Undergraduate Engagement Coordinator and Black Studies Liaison, Richard J. Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago

Jennifer M. Jackson, Undergraduate Engagement Coordinator, Richard J. Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago

Many academic libraries recognize the importance of reaching out to undergraduate populations and providing them with various forms of support systems to help them throughout their undergraduate careers. Undergraduate engagement librarians, first-year experience programs, and other such initiatives are designed to increase undergraduate students' use of the library and its services in order to deepen undergraduates' relationships with the use of information.

In 2012 at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) a campus-wide directive was issued from university leadership to examine student support services and their interactivity with one another and with the students they serve, leading the UIC Library to institute a permanent Student Success task force.¹ Two librarians at that time shared a core responsibility for realizing the Task Force's recommendations by focusing on undergraduate student engagement. As time progressed, these roles morphed into our two undergraduate engagement librarian positions as they exist today, and we were tasked with the project of reimagining student-centric student success pathways in the library, while also acknowledging UIC's unique student population and building programming and supports specifically aimed at this particularly diverse cadre of students.

We undertook a large-scale reexamination of the UIC Library's undergraduate support systems in fall 2018, ultimately leading to the formation of a new, streamlined system of support, the Undergraduate

Engagement Program (UEP), formally initiated at the UIC Library in the 2019–2020 academic year. Given the nature of our roles, we had the ability to conceptualize a new and innovative way to approach undergraduate engagement through a critical lens. Our goal in this paper is to demonstrate our process in developing our program through centering our unique student population, employing a synthesis of our individual methodological approaches, reimagining definitions of student success in the context of university libraries, conceptualizing tailor-made programming, and recognizing how such an approach fits within the context of contemporary academic libraries.

Understanding Our Students' Needs

With approximately 21,921 enrolled undergraduate students,² UIC's campus is one in which there is no racial or ethnic majority. Its campus is uniquely designated as both an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander–Serving Institution (AANAPISI) and Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI).³ It is home to the first Arab American cultural center on a college campus in the United States.⁴ Our campus has frequently been voted one of the most LGBTQ-friendly campuses in the country.⁵ The UIC student body is composed of 38 percent first-generation students with 70 percent of our undergraduates receiving some form of financial aid.⁶ Many of our students are commuter students who travel across the Chicago area, and within the landscape of higher education in Chicago, we are a campus with continual growth in comparison to other universities in Chicago.⁷ Like many institutions, the snapshot of our campus community is not that of a monolithic student narrative, but rather a wide range of types of students who challenge the normative narratives of what typically constitutes a traditional college student.

Our approach to undergraduate engagement—and by extension student success—is one in which we purposefully and intentionally center our diverse students' needs. We know that our students are Black and Brown. We know our students are disabled. We know we have undocumented students, LGBTQI students, and students who

experience homelessness or food insecurity. We know many of our students struggle with the ability to pay their tuition and that many of our students have identities that have been historically minoritized. As the co-creators of the Undergraduate Engagement Program, we made a conscious choice to center, and not erase, the multitudes of identities of our students. Instead of trying to fit our community into pre-existing models where whiteness and dominant culture is the foundation, we have worked strategically to create a model that, at its core, centers our campus community by employing a holistic approach to the definition of student success rooted in social justice frameworks. This approach is predicated on critical forms of librarianship in which one of the core tenets is challenging the notion that libraries exist as neutral spaces.⁸

The discussion of neutrality of libraries is certainly not a new conversation, but with the continued emerging practices of critical librarianship, the neutrality of libraries continues to be debated, even warranting a president's program at ALA Midwinter 2018 devoted to the conversation.⁹ For our purposes, we are approaching the neutrality of libraries through critical librarianship in which we take into account the library as an institution that was created by a set of norms and standards by dominant society. We are also critically examining the ways in which the field outside of critical library scholarship has largely left pervasive whiteness unchallenged by historically defaulting to whiteness and leaving conversations of race out of library literature.¹⁰

Our Methodology

As we established the UEP, several fundamental theoretical lenses shaped our vision. Prior to becoming a librarian, Teresa Helena Moreno was trained in feminist studies and critical race and ethnic studies, work that has found a natural home in the field of critical librarianship. Women of color feminisms and critical race theory in particular are often invoked in critical librarianship as helpful tools for unpacking and applying a critical lens, especially with regard to the conceit that neutrality in libraries is a myth and that the root of the problem is

an articulation of libraries' foundations being built upon whiteness.¹¹ By studying feminist methodologies as well as social movements, the inherited knowledge of those who have historically worked toward justice as well as inclusion provide a pathway and a lens that can be applied within a library structure.

Neutrality is often invoked in discussions of how to obtain information, but the specter of neutrality is rarely considered in terms of ideologies around student success in the academic library setting; a good deal of literature exists to describe how to better undertake critical library instruction, how to engage in more critical reference interviews, or how to create more critical metadata, but the same attention has not fully yet been given to building a critically engaged student success program within the context of academic libraries. Without this critical lens, librarians run the risk of creating programming that is ultimately not holistic or, worse, causes more harm or violence to its communities. To move toward a community-centered approach, Moreno posits that we as librarians must shift our thinking from the one-size-fits-all approach to a more complex, multitiered method. Ultimately, Moreno is driven by inquiries of how we can form supportive community-centered spaces within institutions that were built and continue to operate in ways that minoritize individuals and to push against the structures that historically subjugate minoritized people.

For Jennifer M. Jackson, the concept of a sense of belonging coupled with adopting a culturally sustaining pedagogy provides a different though complementary lens. Specifically, the concept of sense of belonging “refers to students’ perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectedness, the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by, and important to the group (e.g., campus community) or others on campus (e.g., faculty, peers).”¹²

Jackson’s primary question, in her research and in her work on the UEP, is this: to what extent are student users feeling valued at the library? Libraries tend to use quantitative data to attribute value,

such as numbers of times students enter the library, unique visitors to library programs, etc. Yet these numbers do not tell the larger story of students' experiences, particularly with regard to these experiences' emotional quality. Indeed, several decades of educational research has shown a correlation between sense of belonging and student retention at all levels of education. Notable works include Goodenow,¹³ Hausmann, Schofield, and Woods,¹⁴ and Osterman.¹⁵ By including sense of belonging within the development of undergraduate engagement, a critical analysis can be taken as to the types of relationships students foster with their peers and library workers, as well as the ways in which students feel a sense of connection to various library spaces and resources.

While addressing the topic of belonging, it is also necessary to do so with a lens that addresses undergraduate students' cultural identities. Centering the program design around a culturally sustaining pedagogy “explicitly calls for schooling to be a site for sustaining—rather than eradicating—the cultural ways of being of communities of color.”¹⁶ Though this pedagogy is discussed more often within the realm of primary and secondary education, it is important that librarians recognize their roles as educators, as well as the ways in which librarians' interactions and decisions on behalf of patrons impact the ways in which patrons see themselves.

Having these complementary theoretical foundations prior to starting the UEP was key to collaboratively thinking through undergraduate engagement and support. When wrestling with the challenge of tailoring a program to a student population that is ever-growing and ever-changing, our approaches coalesce around a primary focal point of centering community. To quote fellow librarian and Black feminist Audre Lorde, “Without community there is no liberation, only the most vulnerable and temporary armistice between an individual and her oppression. But community must not mean a shedding of our differences, nor the pathetic pretense that these differences do not exist.”¹⁷

Lorde's sentiment here continues to be a guiding force in understanding that we must go a step further than creating student-centered programming and recognize that the diversity of UIC's student population—with regard to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, ability, immigration status, religion, and many other facets—must be explicitly spelled out and focused upon; that is to say, in order to instill the values that Lorde discusses and to truly take on community-centered-ness, we cannot minimize the differences and wide-ranging diverse sets of needs of our undergraduate student community. We must not only apply an intersectional theoretical approach to creating community but center these narratives in the decision-making process in order to have a truly student-centric approach.

In feminist praxis, the theoretical is only as good as the ability to put theory into practice. As the UIC Library had already adopted a specific mechanism for illustrating its strategic planning, we opted to utilize the same mechanism—a logic model—in order to organize our thinking through enacting our methodologically guided approach. A logic model can be described as “a systematic and visual way to present and share your understanding of the relationships among the resources you have to operate your program, the activities you plan, and the changes or results you hope to achieve.”¹⁸

Implementing a logic model was not without its challenges. Though the model visually illustrated various resources and relationships, it was a difficult framework to grasp for undergraduate engagement for two reasons. Primarily, it was challenging to dissect engagement events and relationships that were already in motion, but the structure of the logic model itself brushed against traditional ways of thinking about library programming as well as our methodologies and theoretical approaches to undergraduate engagement.

Undergraduate Engagement Program Logic Model

Inputs		Outputs		Outcomes—Impacts		
		Participants	Activities	Short-term	Intermediate-term	Long-term
What internal stakeholders and resources are needed?	What external stakeholders and resources are needed?	Who does the Undergraduate Engagement Program reach or benefit?	What type of program is implemented?	Results in terms of learning	Results in terms of changing action	Results in terms of changing conditions
Teaching and Learning Committee	(Broadly— Student Affairs and Student Academic Support) Office of Global Engagement Academic Units Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change Office of Diversity Co-curricular Programs Undergraduate Student Government UIC Registered Student Organizations	Undergraduate Students	Finals Week Relaxation Station	<i>Students will be able to:</i>	<i>Students will be able to:</i>	<i>Students will be able to:</i>
Student Success Committee		External Stakeholders	Library Orientation Sessions	Explore the Library Website as a Resource	Articulate and Apply Information Literacy Skills	Demonstrate How the Library Empowers Them to Succeed
Research Services and Resources Department (RSR/ISR)		Library Internal Stakeholders	Library Information Literacy Sessions (Main Focus: ENG 160/ENG 161)	See Themselves Reflected in and Connected to Library Collections and Services	Initiate Research Consultations, Purchase Requests, and Other Requests to Support Their Research	Complete Their Undergraduate Education in 6 Years
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Council and Cultural Competency Training			Pop-up Library at Student Events and Student Organizations	Engage in Library Activities That Address Holistic Needs of Student Life to Actively Participate in Rigors of Academic Achievement	Articulate Resources in the Library and Their Value to Others (Library Spaces, Services, Tools, and Resources)	Maintain a 3.0 GPA
Director of Communications			Research Clinics (Collaboration with Specific Departments at Student Support Units)		Establish New Opportunities for the Library to Better Integrate into Campus Life Experiences	
Assessment Coordinator			Research Consultations	Have Successful Retention from First Year to Second Year		
Library Resources: Meeting Rooms, Labs, Current Collections; Collections Budget, Marketing and Promotional Budget						

In the initial attempt of crafting a logic model for the UEP, though it captured the essence of a student-centered approach, it failed to articulate specific details of an undergraduate engagement program and did not set attainable and measurable goals. Through trial and

error, and an exploration of various types of logic models, the logic model was revised in 2018, incorporating both an outcome approach model and a problem implementation template to create a more holistic picture of the work being undertaken. Additionally, in the revision process, we also saw the need to create multiple logic models for the program as a whole. What we have essentially developed is one overarching model with a number of sub-models that allow us to focus on particular partnerships or programs. In the revision of the logic models, we were able to go more in-depth to directly name our resources, collaborators, and assessment methods.

Since its inception in spring 2019, the mission of the UIC Library UEP has been to empower undergraduate students to discover, use, and create knowledge while fostering an academic environment that reflects their experiences and identities. The UEP addresses this mission through strategic collaborations with campus partners to provide experiential and academic programmatic support that strives to meet the holistic needs of students for undergraduate success, with the additional goal of helping students to redefine their relationship with information as research patrons. With our combined methodologies, and a defined mission, we set out to strategically plan and build the program.

Redefining Student Success in the Neoliberal Landscape

For many people who do work that is centered around student experiences or how students interact with various services or mechanisms, measurement presents a unique challenge. This became even clearer when working through the assessment portion of developing logic models gave us insight into what our limitations would be, especially given the qualitative nature of this work, particularly in relation to the social and emotional benefits of student success work. A complicating challenge to measurement is that the benefits of student success interventions often have a long incubation period in students—that is to say, a student may participate in a particular program in their first year of their undergraduate experience, yet significant benefits

may not be apparent until their third year, if not later in life. As such, often when measuring student success or student interactions with the library, researchers tend to rely on quantitative metrics that, for example, focus on comparing changes in students' GPAs to how many times students entered the library or asked for help using a chat or reference service; these measurements may also be employed to articulate the library's role in maintaining high retention or graduation rates. The methodologies for measuring outcomes via data points into forms of benchmarking are also included in what the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) acknowledges as being a key component and form of measurement in the Standards Structure for Libraries in Higher Education.¹⁹ The heavy reliance on numerical data points to inform assessment within our field, in turn, means we are relying on a type of traditional assessment.

Traditional methods of assessment can tell us certain things. For example, at UIC's Richard J. Daley Library, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, use of the library was in high demand as many students struggled to find seating, often sitting on the floor or on stools in between stacks, and typical gate counts estimated that at various points during the day there were anywhere between 5,600 and 7,600 students in the library. These numbers clearly indicate that we do not struggle to get patrons into the library, so outreach in that way is not a dire need. Students are also in high attendance when participating in library-sponsored finals events with numbers ranging between 200 and 400 unique visits in a single day, which demonstrates that these events, while expensive to execute, are quite reasonable expenditures given the per-person cost. These numbers and data points can help to show some areas of need and success; however, there are still measurements of success or unmet needs that can't be fully encapsulated in this form of metric alone. We may see several thousand patrons in the library each day, but this number tells us nothing about the quality of the experience; we usually see high attendance at finals week programming, but we do not know by these numbers alone if we are meeting our goal of providing students an opportunity to de-stress.

In the neoliberal university, we understand why data points and quantitative metrics become the kinds of methods relied on most heavily, especially because in many ways they are more easily tangible and therefore easier to capture. Additionally, they allow us to easily assign a value to a data point. Neoliberal institutional structures within higher education as well as the commodification of education teach us the double-bind of relying solely on these assessment points—they can be helpful for articulating a narrative of needs and success, but they only use one lens. Upon examining and looking more closely at our community, we understood that these metrics are not necessarily the purest, most holistic form of measuring student success. We found the need to think a little more creatively about how we're defining student success. By extension, when we brought this back to our library community and student success committee, we encouraged our colleagues to resist the standard normative narrative of success. What does it look like to redefine success and our measurements of success?

Academic success—from kindergarten through college—is only as good as the holistic support mechanisms students are granted during their education experience, including within the library. For a student experiencing homelessness, their GPA will likely be heavily influenced by a lack of stable housing and social support in ways that will supersede the excellence of a particular library instruction session they attend or the helpfulness of a librarian during a reference interview; this is just one case in which singular data points are not an adequate representation of the role a library can play in the academic life of a student whose non-academic needs present a constant challenge that will interfere with their academic success in myriad ways. And in asking our colleagues to redefine their ideas of what student success looks like—beyond the quantitative measures that we must continue to use in contemporary higher education—we begin to better understand our role as a library in the landscape of student success. Our students are more than their graduation rates, GPAs, and degrees conferred.

As corollary, it is also necessary to reassess preconceptions of the purpose of students' use of library spaces on university campuses. A group of students watching videos on their laptops can appear to be nonacademic or out of step with the intention of library spaces for patrons' use, yet redefining our ideas of student success might lead us to recognize that, for example, for commuter students—a very large contingent of the undergraduate student population at UIC—finding a safe place on campus to go between classes and taking a break to watch their favorite television series can mean the difference between the student staying on campus and attending their late afternoon class or leaving campus early and skipping the class because they have nowhere they feel welcome to go.

Academic librarians first and foremost recognize that their role is to support the academic success of their students, but student success is contingent on straddling two worlds—the academic and the social. The library is an integral part of the academic landscape, offering essential services and access to materials that make learning and teaching possible, but the library is also a social destination for the entire community that is essential to academic life on campus. This second, overlooked facet of the library's role on campus is absolutely essential to the university as a whole, further evidenced by the fact that universities heavily invest in and support a wide range of campus life initiatives as well as student organizations. It is for this reason that we have actively chosen to engage in holistic approaches as well as understand the need for assessment measures that will accompany our redefined articulations of student success.

Conceptualizing Programming for the UEP

The success of the UEP rests on the development of relationships in and outside of our library as well as the creation of library-led programming and programmatic partnerships. In moving forward with a holistic approach to student success, we know that we have to actively partner with campus organizations to meet our goals. Partnerships with other offices on campus provide a multitude

of opportunities for high-impact undergraduate engagement programming.

To organize our thinking, we categorized our programming into three areas:

- **Library-led programming**—initiatives started and managed by the UIC Library—include examples such as finals week programming, our Wall of Encouragement (a space in which students are invited to leave sticky notes with encouraging remarks to make visible students' solidarity and community), and our new Pop-Up Library (for which students conceptualized designs and voted to select their favorite and which is now being manufactured in order to appear at future events on campus with curated titles available for borrowing).
- **Library collaborations**—long-term relationships built into existing curricular models—include fundamental support for all first-year writing courses in the form of one instruction session per class and our ongoing relationship with the Writing Center.
- **Campus collaborations**—initiatives led by other campus entities in which we play a support or outreach role—include examples such as assisting with university orientation sessions, participating in a task force focusing on the needs of first-generation students, or providing workshops on information literacy to specific groups on request.

In order to determine the UEP's programming, an evaluation of existing relevant services on campus was essential. The evaluation of existing services and areas for growth were identified in the process of creating the logic models. These primary drivers also helped to avoid replicating programming and initiatives already underway on campus and were also essential to avoid undermining the good work campus partners are already doing—campus partners who are experts in their own areas of focus.

But in order to create a sustainable program interwoven into the fabric of a university, building relationships with campus partners ensures that student experience and support are made more seamless through constant communication, providing campus partners and librarians the ability to know where a student can receive particular support and personally handing off the student to the campus partner when appropriate. Campus partners and librarians can also report on recent trends in our respective areas; for example, prior to the establishment of the UEP, the library worked with the UIC Writing Center to offer librarians for consultation following or as part of a student's peer-tutoring process. The UEP deepened this relationship by offering librarian consultations to Writing Center users much earlier in the research and writing process through knowledge gleaned from Writing Center usage and anecdotal evidence perceived in library instruction sessions, particularly with first-year writing classes.

One of the most unique things about UIC is its commitment to the Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change; unlike many student resources centers that can mostly focus on academic success for students who identify as disabled, African American, Latinx, Arab American, women, transgender, Native American, or other diverse identities, these centers focus on culture and community building, in contrast to the deficit model of support services, in which specific populations are labeled "at risk." For us, finding ways to be in collaboration with the cultural centers was key to themes of belonging and building UEP programming tailored to the diversity on campus.

As part of our launch of the UEP, we instituted a film series in conjunction with the campus cultural centers, in which we select a film to screen and host conversations afterward, often focusing on educational content. When possible, we work to collaboratively select titles in service to the centers' programming or that are relevant to related academic departments' curricular goals. In most cases, these conversations have led to our purchasing new titles based on our partners' recommendations, which inadvertently have helped us with

our larger efforts of diversifying the library's collections. By involving relevant liaison librarians in the process as well, we work to highlight titles in our collection relevant to the content of these films, which has in turn made bare any glaring omissions in our collections, thereby giving us insight into relevant purchases to expand the diversity of our collections. This has been particularly relevant as we strive to select titles that are written in #ownvoices (that is, for example, books on Indigeneity written by Indigenous authors rather than non-Indigenous authors).

In addition to such programming, another aspect of the program is to increase the visibility of diverse populations throughout the library in order to contribute to students' sense of belonging. In advance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, we used the display screens throughout the library to post photographs of Dr. King's work in Chicago (found in the UIC Library's archives) and paired them with quotations from Dr. King; through using more academically challenging quotations as part of the #ReclaimMLK movement,²⁰ we also incorporated a pedagogical component that expands students' understanding of this well-known figure's views outside of whitewashed media portrayals. While our first foray centered around Dr. King, we have since expanded our efforts to include figures such as transgender activist Sylvia Rivera alongside more popular icons, with the goal of teaching through representation.

On Critical Librarianship, Inclusive Practices, and DEI Initiatives

To those who are not actively involved in inclusive practices, undergraduate engagement—especially when undertaken with our chosen methodology and critical approach—can be contextualized as part of larger diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. This is especially true in the contemporary moment when libraries are devoting considerable time and resources to DEI conversations. Consultants are coming into our institutions to aid in creating DEI plans. Even our conferences are focusing more specifically on DEI concepts; indeed, the 2019 ACRL Conference focused on “recasting the narrative,”²¹ and Robin DiAngelo spoke on white fragility at ALA

Midwinter 2019.²² The messaging is clear that conversations about DEI are on trend for the field of libraries.

Yet, for diversity practitioners, this work is not trendy, and people's lives are not trends. For diversity practitioners—or professional feminists—this is not a supplemental or additional lens through which their work is viewed; rather, this encompasses the entire methodology and framework upon which their approach to their work relies.

Put another way, Sara Ahmed writes, “Feminists are diversity workers in the first sense: we are trying to transform institutions by challenging who they are for. We have feminist centers and feminist programs because we do not have feminist universities.”²³

So too is Ahmed's assertion true with university libraries. In UEP we strive to challenge who the university library is for, how student success is defined, and how students have a sense of belonging within the library as an institution. In developing the UEP, it is further underscored to us that the library is not a silo but the nucleus of a larger structure with arms stretching out throughout the entirety of the university. Our choice to call for a feminist approach of belonging to the UEP is vitally important given the larger truth that institutions such as libraries and universities are inherently embedded with institutional racism, white supremacy, ableism, ageism, classism, heteropatriarchy, and transphobia.²⁴ Just as we know that we must acknowledge and often work within neoliberal rhetoric, we also know that we must push beyond those very boundaries to make real the transformative promise of student success in the academic library. To do this is to reimagine the idea of student success and to understand that dominant narratives of student success are not the only form of student success. In centering our various communities within UIC, students teach us as librarians what success looks like to them and for them, but we have to be open to listening to their needs.

Yet Ahmed also offers this warning: “Feminist work in addressing institutional failure is appropriated as evidence of institutional

success.”²⁵ The double-bind of addressing the dominant cultural elephant in the room in this way is that, by critiquing and addressing the systemic failures within an institution, institutions can then in turn uphold such attempts as a kind of diversity “success”—even by simply naming the challenges and not working to adequately address them. While the approach outlined in this piece may feel new to undergraduate engagement within academic libraries, especially because our program was built centering populations of students who have been historically minoritized, we must resist the urge to put this work on a pedestal and name it a success of DEI work within the institution of libraries. It is our job to engage all undergraduate students to meet their needs in a holistic way that works toward individualized success for each student. Acknowledging and purposefully centering our diverse campus in conceptualizing an undergraduate engagement program is not a special marker of institutional success. It is simply doing our job.

In Light of COVID-19

UEP at UIC, like many programs and initiatives on college campuses, has had to make shifts to accommodate the reality of our new educational environments—namely the shift to virtual spaces. The pandemic has unintentionally highlighted the gaps in our initial formation of the program regarding our work with off-campus learners. Prior to COVID-19, the availability of online instruction at UIC was not ubiquitous; however, as we are learning more from our campus leadership and the trends of higher education, it has become clear to us that when the pandemic ceases our institution will likely move to a hybrid educational model incorporating off-campus and on-campus learners. As we began to understand the reality of this shift, it became important for us to understand how our prior strategic planning and program implementation needed to also change.

It is for this reason that we at UEP have decided to focus on the future of this new hybridity, particularly as it relates to undergraduate support, throughout this academic year. The methodology we have

developed has proven to be extraordinarily helpful in moving us forward in unprecedented times. The framing of the library as a physical resource space and as an intellectual one has been a guiding foundation in our communications with undergraduate students. It has helped us articulate the necessity of the library as a research tool, but it has also allowed us to examine the student needs that our library meets through students' access to physical space, which has grown increasingly relevant with the various restrictions in place due to COVID-19.

The methodology of centering students gave us the insight to find ways to make sure we were directly incorporating their voices. To this end, we have begun to develop a process of conducting focus groups and have been working with student leaders to best understand and address their needs as best as we can in a pandemic, all with an eye to the future of hybrid learners. COVID-19 has certainly impacted us all and has made inequalities in our society even more visible. In UEP we are striving to learn from what the pandemic has laid bare, and it has served as a reminder of the continual need to recalibrate when the situation calls for it.

Endnotes

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How a Global Pandemic and Racial Unrest Are Impacting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Work in Research Libraries

Mark A. Puente, Associate Dean for Organizational Development, Inclusion, and Diversity, Purdue University Libraries and School of Information Studies

Twanna Hodge, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Librarian, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida

Maha Kumaran, Associate Librarian, Education and Music Library, University of Saskatchewan, and Visiting Program Officer for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, Canadian Association of Research Libraries

Jeff Witt, Organizational Development Lead and Interim Director of Human Resources, University of Michigan Library

Perhaps stated too often is the reflection that 2020 has brought unprecedented challenges and uncertainties to the communities served by research libraries and beyond. The convergence of the global COVID-19 pandemic with the sequence of police killings of unarmed Black citizens in the US and the resulting protests may be fueling dramatic shifts in perspectives about societal structures that create acute vulnerabilities for communities of color and other marginalized populations. Facing a new reality where face-to-face contact is impossible in almost any context, practitioners in research libraries across the US and Canada whose work is focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are dealing with the realities of having to conduct their work in a dramatically different way, along with shifting views and heightened interests in the issues for which they are charged to lead. Below, three DEI practitioners offer their reflections on the impact of these events on their work, in response to a series of questions posed for this article.

Mark A. Puente: The last several months have brought unexpected and dramatic changes to the way research libraries and archives

operate. Through a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) lens, what has been most challenging about dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, and with the racial awakening and unrest that we are experiencing?

Maha Kumaran: Work-wise, for me, reaching out to distributed (distance) students has been a priority and challenge. They are already shy about reaching out to libraries. Technology is a huge issue for many in terms of access. Faculty are often the conduit for these students but, with fewer classes in spring and summer, faculty are not in touch with me. International students, especially those who are new to Canada are experiencing major challenges. There are many implications for added costs (such as internet access from home) for those students. Curbside pick-up of library materials is one way to address this, but not everyone has access to physical resources. Anyone doing field research is being impacted, especially those studying marginalized populations. It is harder to reach these populations.

Jeff Witt: The most challenging thing for us at Michigan is that, before we went to 100% remote work, we had laid the groundwork for doing a deep exploration into organizational culture and climate within the libraries. Most of that work is now stalled. I had just received a report on a focus group we conducted regarding the experience of people of color (POC) employees in the library. We have a similar report from 25 years ago to compare. We had just received the new report and organized a group within the libraries to look at it and make recommendations right before COVID-19 hit. The pandemic also interrupted our work on organizational culture. We were so excited that we had the support of the dean for the work. We are just now getting comfortable with working in this new way, and now we are ramping up the work again. Right now we are working through a process of very limited reentry. We polled students and researchers to get a sense about what services are most critical to their experience...the library services that need to happen within the building and thinking about staffing. Our services will be

very limited and completely opt in. We are getting back to the racial equity work we started previously with a focus on what is going on in the US and globally. We jump-started the effort by hosting an all-staff meeting that was focused completely on race equity. At that event, we rolled out the new report. The dean and the associate university librarians (AULs) were vulnerable, recognizing that more work needs to be done. It was exactly what the organization needed. The administration took some hits in terms of the honesty of the feedback, but they were well prepared for that. The administration is fully willing to admit that we've not done enough.

Twanna Hodge: I think I'm in a unique situation because I just started this position five weeks before the stay-at-home order went into effect. I didn't have the opportunity to get to know the libraries in-depth in-person before we went remote. Since then, I have been working from home. Because I am new to the position and because this is an inaugural position, there is much that I have to learn and figure out. The most challenging part of dealing with the stay-at-home order for most institutions was finding work, especially for the frontline staff, working from home, virtually, or still on campus, maintaining support for research and curricula needs, and determining who will be on campus (short-term and long-term) in terms of facilities personnel, etc. All-staff town halls were scheduled weekly to communicate timely information. In regards to COVID-19, much of it is about determining how to work from home without creating new silos. That was the biggest challenge within the first month. We can't provide the same level of service. How do we manage to continue supporting an R1 institution during a pandemic? Regarding the racial inequities, a lot of education is needed about the catalyst for the recent murders that led to the current and recent demonstrations and protests. People are learning about structural oppression and white supremacy. It was an awakening in terms of dealing with this and, simultaneously, with the pandemic. It was eye-opening to work with the employees to create statements and other ways to support BIPOC employees and patrons. One of the

most challenging things is being a Black woman facilitating these conversations as the diversity, equity, and inclusion librarian. How does one do that in a productive way, where people will not shut down or double down? This has been especially hard given my newness in the position.

Puente: How has the “work from home” order impacted your DEI work, either for your institution or for the work in general?

Kumaran: We are experiencing the same challenges with respect to technology solutions. I updated my Wi-Fi, but calls do get dropped and meetings freeze. People are impacted by the issues around them. (For example, if they have family affected by the pandemic.) DEI work has always been part of my research. I continue to do this in terms of facilitating conversations while not being there in person with others where I might need to be. Our library has started conversations about anti-racism in two-streams: one that focuses on anti-racism learning and another on an anti-racism approach. Learning is only the first step, approach will take us to the next level—actions. The approaches and conversations could get difficult. Our interim dean is taking the lead in these efforts. I am also working as the visiting program officer for the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) to lead their EDI initiatives. Luckily, our monthly meetings were always online, so this work continued with minor interruptions or changes.

Witt: I am still the interim director of Human Resources. We hired a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) program manager, Thomas Dickens. Thomas and I took a look at the plan for DEI and accessibility work. He initiated the implementation of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)¹ in response to the focus group report. We first implemented the IDI for middle managers (individualized work) and now we are doing one-on-one coaching sessions with them. We are using administrators of the IDI from across the campus to administer to the library. We have shifted other things from in-person to online, for example, our safe-space training has changed as well as our brave-space conversations.

We are using Zoom video technologies to continue the work. We started with conversations around COVID (part of our conversations around safe spaces), and continued with programs on the experiences of Black and Asian people in light of COVID. These programs were well attended. Perhaps we didn't have enough representation (space) for POC employees within the organization. We are now looking at ways to reframe that as an action of an affinity group. We are hoping to create a brave space for white people looking at anti-racist practices. We are taking full advantage of positive energy around racial equity right now. DEI is not the same as race equity work. We can become too complacent, patting ourselves on the back about DEI.

Hodge: The pandemic has brought to light many things in terms of peoples' capacity to be engaged. We had a lot of work in the queue. There was a lag in terms of my engagement with the institution, as I became adjusted to the new position. We (the world collectively, institutions, and individuals) didn't have a week or any time to adapt to this new reality. I was lucky enough to have a workspace at home and only needed a few modifications. Now work has invaded my home sanctuary, so there goes the work/life separation that I was trying to establish. In a pre-COVID-19 time, it was easier to have that separation or the illusion of it. Now I can very easily work until 9:00 p.m. or get up at 1:00 a.m. to work if I choose to do so. This has disrupted my scholarship, as well. The pandemic has brought to light some things that might not have surfaced for weeks or months, such as the faculty/staff divide on our campus and the freedom and protections that some have as opposed to others. Also, the level of surveillance that some experience is problematic. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of frequent communications across the organization, but primarily to staff. It has allowed us to streamline communications to all levels of the organization. One of the biggest things that COVID has surfaced is the disparity in how employees, based on their status/rank/position, receive communication and provide input.

Puente: In what way have these major challenges changed your perspectives about how we approach DEI work?

Kumaran: I feel that there is more urgency from everyone, but my concern is that DEI work becomes a fad again. We should not undertake this work only due to the events happening around us. In terms of approaching DEI work, I was reflecting on the book *Engaging the Six Cultures of the Academy* by Bergquist and Pawlak. It provides a history of how different institutions in Canada (and the US) came about. One of the premises of the book is that managerial culture wants to ensure that resources are spent wisely, and that resources (human and monetary) are managed and controlled. I think DEI should be one of the core cultures of the academy, the first culture. And all other cultures should be viewed from the DEI culture perspective.

Witt: We are experiencing a cognitive shift: from DEI to race equity work. These two experiences have exposed the weaknesses or fallacies of DEI work, especially at a predominantly white institution like Michigan. Framing the work as “DEI” can help us avoid doing the really hard work of race equity. More folks are understanding/realizing that true social justice is really uncomfortable. Much of the DEI work is “feel good” work. Social justice work churns up all kinds of emotions...it is not “feel good” work. We are finding that more folks in the library are capable of living in that discomfort, which is a positive thing. Our AULs have been more open to exploring and seeing the impact of systemic racism. Our organization, especially leadership, is starting to recognize how white supremacy plays out at work. We are also focusing this work in library publishing.

Hodge: Instead of talking about microaggressions and biases, the conversations and actions have shifted to racism, especially eradicating anti-Black racism. The work has changed to having conversations about underlying structural inequities, institutional racism, etc. From an operational standpoint, how is this embedded

into the workflows, communication, daily practice, assessment strategies for our employees and those they serve? As the fall semester is ending and the spring semester approaches, how are we considering the impact and effect of providing services to people and how is that different depending on their role, identities (visible and invisible), and status in the workplace? I am finding that more people are willing to talk about whiteness, white supremacy, and even colonialism and decolonization. It is a much-needed and required shift in mindset and focus.

Puente: As our institutions and associations attempt to move forward, some with reopening (at least to some degree), and surely almost all looking at significant financial implications, how can we best advocate for DEI efforts? What might that look like?

Kumaran: We have to make DEI work part of academic culture. We have to go beyond collecting knowledge resources. We have to concentrate on activity and build accountability. Many people from minority cultures are not asked to collaborate with researchers. How do we change that? We have to stop thinking about DEI as a separate entity. It needs to be part and parcel of everything we do. Our policies and planning need to be more inclusive and accommodating, and not just building rooms for breast-feeding or for prayers. We have to think about how inequity is built into things like our recruitment, collaborations, and promotion & tenure process. We have to ensure that Indigenous ways of knowing and learning are part of academic inquiry.

Witt: There will be significant differences in the way the budget will be used. We are under a hiring freeze, so there won't be lots of opportunities in terms of bringing in new people. There will be many implications and our ways of doing this work may be more limited in the future. Our strategy is to get the dean's commitment to racial equity work. This year will focus on this. In order to be effective we have to be that specific and identify specific goals. It will help us not get sidetracked. The work has already started. Our

dean put a stake in the ground: provided a laundry list of a half dozen things that the administration will commit to in the next year. We had an existing strategic plan and we plan to review the plan every year and modify the goals for year five, expressly using the lens of racial equity. We will work at modifying the goal through a race equity lens. We know it is a lofty goal, but it will make a difference. We have to go big.

Hodge: It is connecting DEI efforts to the mission, vision, strategic plan/goals of the institution and embedding DEI in daily practice. In 2016 the University of Florida shared a plan called “The Decade Ahead” that includes an objective of, “A university climate that is inclusive, supportive, and respectful to all.”² Training on racism, inclusion, and bias is needed. Is the institution ready to support this work? Do they have the necessary resources? Are we prepared to shift to take action about systemic inequities? Are we prepared for conversations about anti-Blackness and anti-Indigeneity? The library is the heart of the campus. Do we have the resources and mechanisms to support this level of discourse and action? Are people ready to help researchers finding resources on white hegemony or white fragility? Now is the time to think about making equitable cuts where cuts occur. What is the impact on DEI priorities and the ability to support those priorities, when cuts are made? If positions are cut, what percentage of those folks will be BIPOC? How do we dismantle and rebuild systems so that they are built for everyone (BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, persons with disabilities, etc.)? We must be able to connect these adjustments to our fundamental mission and values. How do we move towards a future where people don’t feel tokenized or just a representative of their culture or identity?

Puente: Are there efforts that we might devise and create across institutions, associations, or even across respective countries, that might help us better meet the demands of our profession and our societies in the DEI arena? How might we make those happen?

Kumaran: All institutions need to talk to each other about these issues. At this point we don't. What are we already doing? What do we want to accomplish and how will we do it? Libraries need to reach out to American Library Association (ALA)-accredited institutions in other countries. I don't think it would hurt for us to reach out to international communities to recruit practitioners. The master of library and information science (MLIS) is still an expectation for professional employment in Canadian libraries, and while we need standards, we also need to look into hiring experienced practitioners from non-ALA-accredited programs. Perhaps they will need to take a few courses or have some sort of accreditation that acknowledges their education and experience from other countries. Enable them to apply for jobs here.

Witt: At Michigan, we have been talking about what type of help we as an organization need from the profession. We need help understanding the notion of systems (such as white supremacy). We have leaders who can better recognize how those systems perpetuate inequity. We need to understand how to identify, dismantle, and rebuild systems. It's inevitable that there will be pushback, internally. We need help from the outside to facilitate those conversations and to help us conduct a "systems" analysis.

Hodge: There are efforts occurring and being devised in libraries and librarianship; for example, I had the opportunity to present on institutional racism in libraries and librarianship for a different institution. Through our professional connections, we can do cross-institutional work. Some organizations, like the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL), through their Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee, provide opportunities to collaborate with others. The Association of Southeastern Research

Libraries (ASERL) is another example and created DEI task forces, one focused on recruitment and one focused on retention. ACRL, ARL, ALA's Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services, and the Public Library Association formed the Building Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity Framework Task Force.³ The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) is another example, as is the work that National Associations of Librarians of Color (NALCo) are doing in engaging and supporting library staff of color. There is a lot of infrastructure that already exists. So we need to (start or further) connect, collaborate, create, document, disseminate, assess, and rinse and repeat. Sometimes, you need to experiment, take risks, launch something and see how things work. For example, the BIPOC in LIS Mental Health Summit offered this spring came out of conversations in other spaces, not necessarily institutions. Being able to host the summit proves that we can work both within and outside existing (hierarchical) structures and institutions. I agree wholeheartedly with Kumaran and Witt. Additionally we and many others who do this work need consistent support and investment (time, resources, folks' willingness to push beyond discomfort or pain) from our organizations, the associations, and the profession.

Puente: Many thought-leaders and practitioners who do this work talk about dismantling and recreating systems. What comes to mind when we speak of those systems and which, if any, are the ones directly related to libraries, archives, information, and cultural heritage organizations?

Kumaran: This will require that we reimagine what libraries mean, particularly academic libraries. Academic libraries were established within dominant culture and developed out of the white foundational figures. What would the library look like for Indigenous/Black populations to feel comfortable within them? What would it take for the dominant cultures to accept the underrepresented perspectives? There is a lot of work to do in terms

of content and access. Digitization could help with some of this, although access could still be a problem. Inclusion is needed at all levels in librarianship including leadership.

Witt: We've been having conversations with folks about these systems. We've had conversations with university publishers about how to set up authors of color to be successful—editors, marketing, distribution. We recognize that we don't have the data to know where we are. We need to create a platform to gather that information. Thinking about collections, we have to focus on decolonization...drawing out problematic parts of the collection, such as *Robinson Crusoe*. And then we build programming around that theme, creating a platform for anti-racism and anti-colonialism. We need to look at recruiting/hiring, especially at the leadership level. We need to look at how we develop talent within the organization. Succession planning is important but we have to analyze who gets picked as the emerging talent and who gets left out? Where are future talent pools? Now is exactly the right time to dismantle our hiring processes and our developmental strategies. It is easier to dismantle a system that we're not actively using.

Hodge: We need further critiquing of professional credentialing (the barriers associated with it), gatekeeping that occurs, and vocational awe embedded in librarianship. We need to examine the things related to culture that impact librarianship. For example, what's taught in LIS programs about the contribution of BIPOC library workers? I didn't learn about E.J. Josey, civil rights activist and one of the founders of the Black Caucus of ALA (BCALA), until my last quarter of library school. To my knowledge, LIS programs offer no systemic education for LIS professionals in training on racial identity, power and privilege, and their impacts on interpersonal relationships, collection development services, and programming. There are no curriculum-based or focused discussions about ethnic caucuses. For a profession working for so long on diversification of its workforce, we have not done a

successful job. To enter the profession, you need to get a degree from an ALA-accredited institution. How many HBCUs, tribal colleges or universities, or Hispanic-serving institutions have LIS programs? For the folks we are recruiting into the profession, are they entering work environments where their authentic selves are celebrated? We need to work at countering librarian archetypes and stereotypes. What are effective retention strategies? How are we supporting mid-career and advanced career BIPOC library staff? We need to rethink the admissions process for LIS programs. There are so many barriers; for example, someone might need to have experience (work, volunteer, etc.) in archives and special collections even before applying to or starting a graduate program with that specialization. We need to eliminate the practice of unpaid internships. We need to reexamine funding for and costs of the MLIS, and the pay structures for graduate student workers, library staff, and early career librarians, based on race, gender, rank, etc. The general public and those in senior positions of power (outside of librarianship) typically do not understand or value the work that library workers do; they hold many misconceptions about librarianship that affects budgets, workload, and more. As Kumaran and Witt have referenced leadership, access to leadership positions are viable for a few and those who are already in the profession or have relevant doctoral degrees.

Puente: When we talk about recreating a desired, more equitable future, what do you envision that will look like? What do you think it will take to get us there?

Kumaran: We're not at that point yet (in terms of envisioning). We need to have conversations first. We need time to get over the hurt and start to listen and then act. Institutions need to stop saying they are committed to the work and start doing the work. Dialogue is happening. Policies and processes have to be put in place to prevent us from dropping off DEI when it's no longer a fad.

Witt: We need to continue to recognize that our traditional DEI and accessibility (DEIA) work needs to become foundational—just the way we operate. This creates a space for us to pursue social justice more. We create more time and space for substantive conversations when DEIA is baked in. What we're building is a culture dedicated to social justice. We talk a lot about representation, but we need to get to a point where we have a critical mass of POC working in our profession. If people feel isolated or tokenized they will not trust the work. Also, born-accessible materials should be leveraged as we create and innovate. Reaching our accessibility and access goals is still too much of an afterthought. How are people going to gain access?

Hodge: The desired future is almost the opposite of what is the current reality. It is being able to go to any library program and see faculty and administrators of color, to see a multitude of identities (Black, Afro-Caribbean, trans, immigrant, female, etc.) reflected in the curriculum. It is that the lives and experiences of BIPOC colleagues are valued, and experiences, knowledge, and research are reflected in K-12 and higher education. It is that the preservation and support of Black and Indigenous life are interwoven into the systems and structures. It is to be seen as an individual and not a representation of any identities. It is that a position like mine is obsolete due to the reality of inclusive, anti-racist, equitable workplaces. How can we thrive together as a society, where universal design comes naturally? Where people are not judged for their skin color, or not preferencing those who are younger? Work environments where respectability politics, "culture of niceness," conflict avoidance, passive-aggressiveness, or whiteness aren't the standard or expected norm. Difference is celebrated. People can be who they are without choosing which parts of themselves they need to mask or make more palatable to fit into a society. Paraphrasing a speaker, it is hard to envision something that doesn't exist. Let's start envisioning and then get to work. Anti-racism, equity, and inclusion don't happen suddenly; they take time, resources, life-long learning, and dedication.

Puente: What do you think will be the most effective strategies for keeping DEI issues at the forefront of our practice and profession, even in these challenging times?

Kumaran: Talking about it. It doesn't have to be a bad event that instigates these conversations. People need to be embedding conversation about DEI in teaching, learning, and research. There will always be someone fresh. Make ongoing DEI training mandatory for all employees. Develop and implement pre-tests/post-tests to gauge what people are getting out of it. Include DEI in promotion and tenure standards for accountability purposes.

Witt: We need approaches that are more humanistic than scientific... what's really made a difference here is that we've recently had a dean and associate dean who were willing to step out in front of the organization and say, "I've not done enough." They opened themselves up to critical review. People are saying, "You're not doing this right," and we have to be open to the message. Deans, by stepping into that space have allowed some voices to be heard who have not been heard before. By being that vulnerable, that open to criticism, we build trust. People from marginalized groups have the agency to say how these things affect their experience in the organization.

Hodge: We have to tie this work to lives and livelihoods. How do we connect this work to the people's jobs and what they care about and think about why this needs to be done? We say we want a fair and just society, but are we willing to do the lifelong work to make that happen? We need to develop communities of practice to share strategies, data, information, and assessment tips. It's having metrics and benchmarking and tying it into what people care about, the institutional mission, vision, and strategic plan. Furthermore, centering the work and connecting it to all decision-making— leadership and middle management involvement, time for processing and reflection, professional development support for continuing education, etc. There is a cost to this, and no one is winning.

Puente: Is there anything that I've missed today? Is there anything that it's important to communicate to leaders who want practical strategies for supporting DEI work now and into the future?

Kumaran: Listen, engage, participate, act. Leaders cannot do everything, but they need to consider who would be best positioned to do this work. Think about whether it is appropriate to ask BIPOC employees to engage or not. Where else from the organization can there be leaders? Maybe libraries can take the lead in these efforts, beyond collections and resources—going back to reimagining.

Promising exemplars include the Canadian Health Libraries Association. People are doing anti-racist work. This needs to be done for the right reason, by the right people. The Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) released its *Competencies for Librarians in Canadian Research Libraries* in September and DEI is a big part of the new competencies. DEI is important in a system-wide context. More and more conversations are happening...we have to find a way to sustain these conversations. More and more underrepresented librarians are engaging in these conversations. Either through research, conference presentations and publications, and other platforms. But sometimes we are preaching to the choir, it is the same people who do this work, participate in these events. How do we convince everyone that this is important?

Witt: Thinking about, and working on, laying a foundation of stick-to-it-ness. How do we avoid the traps of being polarized and immobilized? Moving into social justice is really difficult. Asking people to move into a space that is deeply uncomfortable when we don't know how to do it yet. Librarians tend to need to do it right...we refuse to step out onto the stage until it's perfect; we have to learn how to let go of perfectionism and build trust. Be ready to fail over and over again, be ready to be uncomfortable. That actually helps build trust. If our colleagues have the trust to tell us when we're messing up, then I need to be appreciative of that trust and call it a win: people are willing to tell me how they are engaging in the hard stuff.

Hodge: We need to be failing forward, embracing the fact that we'll make mistakes. We need to work on emotional intelligence (EQ) and conflict resolution skills. We don't get to opt-out or turn away, and there are no options to pick and choose what is essential. If we want to have an equitable, anti-racist profession, we need to think about what led us here—to this point. My interpretation of the concept of Sankofa—is going back to the past to understand it, gaining information from different perspectives, which will lead to progress in the future. We must look at that knowledge to create the future that we all need and deserve. This is something that we'll be working on constantly. This is a lifelong marathon that everyone needs to be engaging in.

We need to be willing to make small steps, understanding that we'll want to pause, but we can't stop. This is a movement towards being vulnerable, honest, open-minded, actively listening, and making space for painful, frustrating, traumatizing, and demoralizing hard truths and lived experiences. We need to make more space, time, and consistent financial support for these conversations. We have to be willing to give up power, temporarily or permanently. We must be open to the discomfort, pain, complicated emotions, and messiness this entails. We are fighting for civil and human rights. At the end of the day, we should be able to say that libraries are a place for everyone and not a place that accentuates intergenerational trauma. We need to be mindful of the emotional labor that BIPOC experience and create a future where deauthentication is an experience of the past. We need to create a future where all humans are seen as human and are treated with human dignity and respect.

Endnotes

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Improving Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Libraries: Programs and Methodologies to Consider

Kiyomi Deards, Visiting Program Officer for Diversity and Leadership, Association of Research Libraries, and Associate Professor and Librarian for Chemistry, Biochemistry, Forensic Science, Physics & Astronomy, and Water, University of Nebraska—Lincoln

Mark A. Puente, Associate Dean for Organizational Development, Inclusion, and Diversity, Purdue University Libraries and School of Information Studies

In August of 2020, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) celebrated the 20th anniversary of its signature diversity recruitment effort, the Kaleidoscope Program, formerly called the Initiative to Recruit a Diverse Workforce. Although established in 2000, the program developed out of consultative capacity at ARL that had been developed since 1990. In the past 20 years, looking solely at the five racial/ethnic categories tracked by the US Census Bureau (African American, Caucasian/other, American Indian and Native Alaskan, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic), representation of minoritized populations in professional positions in US ARL university libraries has increased from a combined 11.4% in 1999–2000, to 16.2% in 2018–2019.^{1,2} Looking at the raw numbers, in 1997–1998, there were 854 MLIS or comparably credentialed “minority” librarians employed in the 98 US university libraries for which those data were tracked. In 2018–2019, that number increased to 1,507 in 100 libraries, for a net gain of 654 library professionals who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

Causation is difficult to impossible to attribute without a detailed analysis of the current population of minoritized professionals employed in ARL member institutions, but it is fair to say that there has been a significant increase in the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color populations since the inception of the Kaleidoscope Program in 2000. Although not 100% of those who fall into those racial/ethnic

categories have participated in ARL diversity recruitment programs, certainly a large percentage has over the course of two decades.

These percentages are favorable when compared against national demographics in the profession. Although not updated since 2012, the American Library Association (ALA) *Diversity Counts* report indicated representation of credentialed librarians from minoritized populations at 11.1% of the total workforce of academic, public, and school librarians in the US.³ For the purpose of contrast, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates for “librarians” across four demographic groups indicate that approximately 9.2% of the credentialed librarian workforce in 2019 was from two racial/ethnic categories: Black or African American and Asian.⁴ Hispanic or Latino-identifying individuals make up approximately 9.8% of the librarian workforce, but may identify as other races listed in the statistics. Individuals identifying as White make up approximately 87.8% of the librarian workforce. No breakdown is given on the remainder of the workforce groups, which includes but is not limited to Native American and Alaska Native.

What analysis of the ALA *Diversity Counts* and other reports indicates is that, in spite of concerted efforts from major library associations as well as library and information science programs over the last several decades, based on the above data, little progress has been made with respect to representation of racial and ethnic categories that, historically, have been a underrepresented within the profession. There has been a great deal of literature published about enduring challenges to diversifying the workplace and how many interventions do little more than sustain and maintain homogeneity in the workforce, particularly in managerial ranks. In a notable article in the *Harvard Business Review* from 2016, two sociology professors point to evidence that, in the business sector, diversity initiatives often have the opposite effect of what is intended.⁵ Much of the literature regarding diversity in higher education laments the lack of progress in diversifying.

Lack of Demographic Change in Spite of Efforts to Diversify

Perhaps no other industry has seen such an abysmal return on its investments to diversify the profession than the technology industry. Speaking about the “technology giants” such as Google, Facebook, Microsoft, Intel, etc., a recent article from the Associated Press provided sobering statistics for the rate of “diversity” hiring by these corporations when compared to percentages of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color graduating with computer science and related degrees.⁶ This is in spite of hundreds of millions of dollars and ubiquitous training committed by these tech giants.

Research from the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) identified considerable gaps between what leaders in large organizations saw as the most significant barriers to developing a more diverse workforce and achieving greater diversity in managerial and leadership ranks, on one hand, and what people from identified “underrepresented” or “marginalized” groups perceived to be preventing progress, on the other.⁷ The same can be said of the proposed interventions that would lead to sustained change. The BCG researchers indicated that corporate leaders tend to see recruitment as the major obstacle to diversifying their workforces, whereas people from underrepresented groups see the obstacles across the employment life cycle: recruitment, retention, and advancement. As the BCG authors noted:

Hiring people from diverse groups is easier than successfully addressing the deep-rooted cultural and organizational issues that those groups face in their day-to-day work experience.

Unfortunately, the story is quite similar in higher education, specifically with respect to diversification of the professoriate. A recent study published in the *Hispanic Journal of Law and Policy* showed there has been little progress in the representation of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and women among university faculty.⁸ The article, which tracked federal data of demographic trends from 2013 to 2017, reported that the number of Black tenured faculty members grew by

only 0.1% in the four-year period, while representation of Hispanic tenured faculty grew by only 0.65%. Tenured faculty positions filled by Asian Americans saw the greatest gains, with a 1.2% increase over the period studied.

Rather than thinking of ARL's members as homogenous, it may be better to think of each library as its own micro-culture. In a 2018 autobiographical article for *Wired*, Joi Ito wrote, "People who are wired differently should be able to think of themselves as the rule, not as an exception."⁹ This quote can be rephrased in terms of ARL and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as, "ARL members and their patrons who have different needs should be able to think of themselves as the rule, not as an exception."

This need for diversity to be the rule and not the exception has implications for leadership as ARL moves forward. In 2019 Gallup reported that administrators' investment in support and resources for managers is key to retention and productivity of all employees, and that management roles and experiences need to be tailored to the individual.¹⁰ Wiegert and Maese asserted, "Managers account for an astounding 70% of the variance in their team's engagement." From this we can discern that in order for managers to integrate DEI into their hiring, management style, and the work of those they supervise, we must first provide support and resources to leaders of ARL libraries to develop these skills and habits.

ARL recognizes the need to develop leaders who model and encourage self-care, setting boundaries, delegation, setting specific achievable goals, and actively working towards dismantling institutionalized structures of inequality while also addressing any loss of trust and trauma from previous or current policies, systems, administrators, coworkers, collaborators, or patrons.^{[11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18](#)}

Programs and Methodologies That *Appear to Be Working*

Please note that this section highlights a small sample of models and programs that organizations are using to address DEI issues. Inclusion in this section is informational and not an endorsement, due to a lack of data on the effectiveness of these and other DEI interventions.

National Day of Racial Healing and the Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation Framework

The National Day of Racial Healing website,¹⁹ sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation as part of their Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation Framework,²⁰ provides resources for libraries and other groups to participate in the annual event. The National Day of Racial Healing was deliberately designed to follow Martin Luther King Jr. Day and emphasizes talking and listening with compassion.

On January 16, 2020, the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) announced that 13 institutions would “host Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT) Campus Centers.”²¹ This brought the total number of AAC&U TRHT centers to 23 with a long-term goal of 150 centers throughout the United States. The purpose of these centers is to use the pillars of TRHT to “prepare the next generation of leaders to confront racism and to dismantle the belief in a hierarchy of human value.” These campuses not only participate in the National Day of Racial Healing, but also participate in workshops, consultations, and designing and co-facilitating Rx Racial Healing Circles, while following the five pillars of the TRHT framework.

Truth and Racial Healing, & Transformation Framework Pillars

1. Narrative Change
2. Racial Healing and Relationship Building
3. Separation
4. Law
5. Economy

A video of one National Day of Racial Healing event is available for view on Facebook.²² The video begins with an interpretive dance describing the history of adversity and oppression of Native Americans and African Americans in the United States. The leader of the dance troupe stated that they wanted to demonstrate that nevertheless they dance through the struggle, despite the systematic oppression and genocide that Native communities have experienced throughout US history. This was followed by a Q&A session, which modeled how people can come together and discuss complex DEI issues as well as techniques to create change. The event continued to alternate between artistic performances, art, storytelling, highlighting relevant initiatives, and panel discussions.

Tips from the discussions in the Q&A session included:

- Don't heavily encourage/force individuals who are in multiple communities to pick a side; they are always 100% part of each community.
- There is a gap between where we are and where people think we are.
- Don't just hire people like you. Hire people who are different because you want to, not because it's a rule.
- Pay attention to suffering and feel the heartbreak so that you stay engaged and care.
- Do you perceive that I am all the things that I should be? versus Do you see me? and Do I see you?
- Do we learn from each other?

Strategic Diversity Leadership: Activating Change and Transformation in Higher Education

Those interested in a strictly higher education take on DEI may be interested in *Strategic Diversity Leadership: Activating Change and Transformation in Higher Education* by Damon A. Williams.²³ Williams uses boxes, tables, and figures throughout the book to provide frameworks, case studies, and benchmarks for honoring and increasing

diversity in higher education. While not all of the information in Williams's 2013 book pertains to libraries, resources such as the case study in Box 7.6 "Creating Shared Commitment," Table 9.3 "Criteria and Pitfalls for Developing Diversity Committees," and Box 5.6 "Strategies to Successfully Navigate Campus Politics" can provide lessons learned and frameworks to support the development of deliberate and sustainable change related to DEI (pp. 356, 418, 239).

Cooperative Extension

Cooperative Extension's DEI website²⁴ shares resources, frameworks, experts, and competency areas (understanding implicit bias, microaggression development and understanding, cultural competency, promotion of civility, social justice development, organizational learning). This website will be most useful to organizations looking for do-it-yourself ideas to advance DEI efforts.

DeEtta Jones & Associates (DJA)

DeEtta Jones & Associates (DJA)²⁵ specializes in e-learning, consultations, training, and adapting their methods to fit each organization they work with. Their online learning is targeted at social justice warriors, educators, and business leaders and managers. The website has a constantly growing blog²⁶ featuring arguments for DEI and steps individuals²⁷ and organizations²⁸ can take to work towards a more inclusive world.

Currently, DJA's *Equity Toolkit* consists of four modules designed to build upon each other: "Essentials of Cultural Competence," "Reducing the Negative Impact of Bias in the Workplace," "The Work of EDI: Integrating Inclusion into Organizational Practices," and "Enabling Equity: Strategy and Structures that Drive Transformation."²⁹ The next offering of "Essentials of Cultural Competence" starts in January 2021 at \$429 per person.³⁰

The Inclusive Manager's Toolkit is a “10-week online course for anyone in a formal or informal leadership or managerial role who wants to have inclusive and practical tools for maximizing workforce performance.”³¹ Pricing for *The Inclusive Manager's Toolkit* is \$2,250 for individuals from non-profit organizations and \$4,500 for individuals from for-profit organizations. Groups should contact DJA for custom pricing.³²

The components of *The Inclusive Manager's Toolkit* are listed below. Each topic covered includes an overview of relevant language, why a concept is important, current trends, and ends with a module summarizing the content and how to apply the concept(s) in practice.

The Inclusive Manager's Toolkit

Week 1: Managers are the Key

- Your Changing Role
- Inclusive Skills
- Inclusive Language
- Your Behavioral Preferences
- Privilege Ally-ship and Anti-Oppression
- Leadership Philosophy

Week 2: Executive Skills

- Emotional Intelligence
- Cultural Competence
- Find and Use Your Voice
- Communicating across Cultures
- Power and Influence
- Strategic Thinking and Acting

Week 3: Transition Week

- This week will allow space for reflection and application of the material from the first two weeks, along with additional live sessions with DJA faculty

Week 4: Getting the Best from Others

- Hiring, Onboarding, Motivation, Coaching, and Mentoring
- Mindful Feedback—Soliciting Feedback
- Meaningful Feedback—Giving Feedback
- Meaningful Feedback—From Vicious to Virtuous

Week 5: Groups and Teams

- High-Performance Teams
- Effective Team Practices
- Making Meetings Work
- Decision-Making

Week 6: Transition Week

- This week will allow space for reflection and application of material from the last two weeks along with additional live sessions with DJA faculty

Week 7: Organizational Culture

- Strategy, Structure, and Organizational Culture
- Engagement, Creativity, and Innovation
- The Importance of Values
- Transforming Workplace Culture

Week 8: Leading Change

- Change That Works
- Establishing Vision, Setting Direction
- Communicating through Change
- Integration and Sustainability

Week 9: Transition Week

- This week will allow space for reflection and application of the material from the last two weeks along with additional live sessions with DJA faculty

Week 10: Your Ongoing Development

- Positioning Yourself for Your Next Steps
- Leading in Place
- Interviewing and Negotiating
- From Your Vision to Reality

DJA's methodology centers on developing understanding; determining the needs of an organization's internal and external stakeholders; and creating measurable, attainable, and transparent action plans to increase inclusion (including strategies to address bad behavior). Dialogue, mentoring, recruitment, and constant reassessment feature heavily in DJA's strategies for developing long-term buy-in and organizational change.

Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE)

The Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE)³³ uses a racial equity framework built upon the premise that there is no substitute for doing the work.³⁴ This model includes significant time for pre-work, and internalization. It assumes there are no shortcuts and the work will be done for as long as it takes to produce change. GARE emphasizes that organizations should use racial equity tools as soon as possible to prevent problems and provide a variety of case studies in their supplemental materials highlighted below.³⁵ Also listed below is GARE's "Six-Part Strategic Approach to Institutional Change." GARE's publication *Advancing Racial Equity in Public Libraries: Case Studies from the Field* provides multiple examples and case studies of how the GARE framework is being used create and drive action plans in public libraries.³⁶ Other Issue Paper publications, found in the Tools & Resources section of GARE's website, that may interest readers highlight their work with local governments and public sector jobs.³⁷

Six-Part Strategic Approach to Institutional Change

Normalize

- Use a racial equity framework
- Operate with urgency and accountability

Organize

- Build organizational capacity
- Partner with other organizations and communities

Operationalize

- Implement racial equity tools
- Be data-driven

Racial Equity Tools and Resources

- *Racial Equity Core Teams: The Engines of Institutional Change*
- *Racial Equity: Getting to Results*
- *Racial Equity Action Plans: A How-To Manual*
- *Racial Equity Toolkit: An Opportunity to Operationalize Equity*
- *Advancing Racial Equity and Transforming Government: A Resource Guide to Put Ideas into Action*
- Issue Papers examine equity in a variety of contexts, most notably *Advancing Racial Equity in Public Libraries: Case Studies from the Field* mentioned above.

Korn Ferry

Korn Ferry is a company that focuses on talent development and acquisition.³⁸ Korn Ferry’s Self-Disruptive Leadership model,³⁹ which they describe as a way to “Future Proof Yourself,” and their Leadership Accelerator Portfolio⁴⁰ contain elements of DEI.

Self-Disruptive Leadership

In regards to diversity, their Self-Disruptive Leadership model focuses on creating a competitive advantage through the following strategies:

ADAPT (Anticipate, Drive, Accelerate, Partner, Trust)

- **Anticipate:** Demonstrate contextual intelligence to make quick judgments and create opportunities; focus on the societal needs that the organization wants to serve; provide a direction to unify collective efforts even among disoriented environments.
- **Drive:** Energize people by fostering a sense of purpose; manage the mental and physical energy of themselves and others; nurture a positive environment to keep people hopeful, optimistic, and intrinsically motivated.
- **Accelerate:** Manage the flow of knowledge to produce constant innovation and desired business outcomes; use agile processes, quick prototyping, and iterative approaches to rapidly implement and commercialize ideas.
- **Partner:** Connect and form partnerships across increasingly permeable functional and organizational boundaries; enable the exchange of ideas; combine complementary capabilities to enable high performance.
- **Trust:** Form a new relationship between the organization and the individual that centers on mutual growth; integrate diverse perspectives and values; help individuals to uncover their sense of purpose and facilitate them in providing their maximum contribution.

Leadership Accelerator Portfolio

The Leadership Accelerator Portfolio's Diversity & Inclusion section includes 13 learning opportunities:

- *A Taste of D&I*
- *Activators*
- *Building Trusting Relationships (eLearning)*
- *Conscious Inclusion (eLearning or in-person)*
- *Creating an Inclusive Experience*
- *Faststart Pairs*
- *Getting Started: Real Talk*
- *Inclusive Hiring*

- *Inclusive Recruiting (eLearning)*
- *Leading Inclusion: Executive Briefing*
- *Making Inclusive Hiring Decisions (eLearning)*
- *Managing Inclusion (eLearning or in-person)*
- *The Power of Choice*

Other offerings for leaders and individual contributors include:

- *Activating Personal Agility*
- *Activators*
- *Coaching Accelerator*
- *Effective Communicating*
- *Emotional Intelligence for Leadership Success*
- *Inspiring Innovation*
- *Leadership Accelerators*
- *Leadership Development Series*
- *Leadership Principles*
- *Leading Change*
- *Leading for Impact*
- *Leading Virtually in Disruptive Times*
- *Self-Disruptive Leadership*
- *TalentDevelopment (eLearning or in-person)*
- *TalentSelection (eLearning or in-person)*
- *Your Leadership Aspiration (eLearning)*

These categories provide a loose framework of DEI-related competencies. Paid services are available in the areas of organizational strategy, assessment and succession, talent acquisition, leadership development, and rewards for individuals, groups, and institutions. No prices are available online but individuals are encouraged to call and speak to a representative or browse their list of consultants.⁴¹ A large amount of free blog posts about everything from negotiating a salary to taking over a team are available on the Korn Ferry Institute portion of the website providing self-guided mentoring and learning.⁴²

Racial Equity Institute (REI)

The Racial Equity Institute (REI)⁴³ is a limited liability corporation based in Greensboro, North Carolina, that offers training throughout the US, although much of its work is concentrated in the southeastern United States and in North Carolina.⁴⁴ REI's principal offering is a series of two-day institutes in a sequential pattern (Phase I and Phase II). The workshops are offered (typically) to groups of 30–40. The organization recommends that participants repeat the Phase I Institute several times (at a reduced cost) prior to participating in Phase II. REI offers an abbreviated form of the Phase I Institute entitled the “Groundwater Approach” for organizations/constituencies seeking an introduction (three- to four-hour workshop) to the program content.

The curriculum of the Phase I Institute includes:

- An in-depth historical and contemporaneous analysis of the structures and policies that sustain inequity on the basis of race/ethnicity, specifically in the US
- The power of implicit bias and how it affects our decisions and policy making and how it is socialized within larger systems
- The relationship between racism and poverty
- The concept of power and its relationship/interplay with systems, institutions (policies) and communities, particularly communities of color
- The historical and enduring construction of “race” and how it has been leveraged throughout history to create disadvantage for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and create advantage for people of majority cultures and identities
 - Definitions of race and racism
- Internalized racial oppression (colorism)

The REI Phase I Institute content forms the basis for moving into a deliberately anti-racist frame, further explored in the Phase II Institute. Following a review of the core concepts presented in Phase I, this experience focuses on the development of racial identity and the

socialization and institutionalization of inferiority and superiority based on racial/ethnic identity. Phase II challenges participants to develop a vision (personal, institutional, societal) for an equitable future and for one's place in realizing that vision.

REI contains several related institutes including the “Latino Experience” and “Racial Equity Leadership Institute for Youth,” as well as process consulting for organizations, institutions, and affinity groups that are designed to move the entity toward deeper commitments to abolishing racism.

The fees for attending the REI institutes vary depending on who is coordinating them. Organizing Against Racism (OAR), a network of anti-racism groups in the Research Triangle area of North Carolina, currently offers REI workshops virtually.⁴⁵ They charge a \$295 registration fee, \$275 for groups of three or more, \$175 for students, and a sliding scale for those without the financial resources to pay in full. Prior to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the institutes were offered exclusively in-person. OAR also offers REI alumni the opportunity to caucus by racial identity to dive more deeply into the content presented in the institutes, and to explore collective ways to address racism and heal from impacts of it in society.⁴⁶

White Men as Full Diversity Partners

White Men as Full Diversity Partners (WMFDP)⁴⁷ has several programs⁴⁸ targeted at leaders, but open to anyone, in addition to developing customized strategies and programming for organizations. As with many organizations their programming has shifted from in-person residential and on-site offering when this article was first drafted to virtual offerings since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. White Men's Virtual Caucus (\$3,000) is focused completely on white men and how they can work to eliminate racism, sexism, and homophobia from organizations. Full Diversity Partners Virtual (\$3,000) is open to all and focuses on creating and/or deepening partnerships to create inclusive organizations. There are several shorter programs and consultation options listed on the website.

WMFDP's methodology is based on the premise that buy-in and commitment by leadership to put in the time and resources necessary to work towards personal transformation is vital to successfully leading organizational change. There is an emphasis on leveraging ambiguity and uncertainty, which acknowledges that this type of transformation is a difficult and uncomfortable task. Three case studies⁴⁹ are available that provide the challenges, solutions, and outcomes of their work with Applied Materials, Northwestern Mutual, and Rockwell Automation. WMFDP programming is built around "8 Critical Leadership Skills"⁵⁰ and "understands that D&I is an essential part of leadership development achieved through experiential learning."⁵¹ The critical leadership skills are listed below.

8 Critical Leadership Skills

1. Courage of Their Convictions
2. Integrating Head and Heart
3. Listening
4. Balancing Key Paradoxes
5. Leveraging Ambiguity and Turbulence
6. Managing Difficult Conversations
7. Seeing/Thinking Systemically
8. Being an Agent of Change

For those who prefer to develop their own programming, WMFDP provides several resources including articles they have written,⁵² such as "White Men & Diversity: What White Men, White Women, and People of Color Can Do to Make a Real Difference in Their Workplace Diversity,"⁵³ webinars and podcasts they have produced, and case studies.⁵⁴

Global Diversity Practice Coca-Cola Enterprises

In 2013 Coca-Cola Enterprises (CCE) began implementing their "European Strategy Policy on Diversity and Inclusion," which included "a Diversity and Inclusion learning deck for roll out across

key regions.”⁵⁵ According to Global Diversity Practice (GDP), “The toolkit was built to be dynamic, highly relevant and business focused as well as being transferable to all areas of the business from sales and marketing to the bottling plants. CCE trainers were trained to deliver in a memorable fashion; the toolkit included a deck with full trainer notes and a set of diversity sound bites.” The focus of the strategy was to develop “competence and confidence” of executive leadership in order to ensure that Coca-Cola Enterprises demonstrated inclusive leadership and would “produce business results and effective management of talent in all its diversities.” The format included a one-day workshop with three- and six-month follow-ups focused on accountability, unconscious bias, and gender. A notebook was also provided that included tips and techniques that participants could consult as needed.

This program was designed to incorporate the “Heart, Head, and Hands” model⁵⁶ and “D&I Window.”

Desired Outcome

Leaders across all areas “are capable of understanding, valuing and managing differences effectively.”

Learning Outcomes

- “Articulating the business case for Diversity and Unconscious Bias”
- “Understanding the Unconscious Bias mechanism”
- “Developing behaviour and practices consistently fair, inclusive and proactive”
- “Creating a gender bilingual working environment Action Planning for change”

Conceptual Areas

- “CCE D&I Strategy—linked to Leadership framework / corporate values”
- “Unconscious Bias / Micro Inequities” [Please note microinequities and microaggressions overlap but are not equivalent terms.]
- “Inclusive Leadership”
- “Being Gender Bilingual” [Gender-multilingual would be more inclusive.]

Participant feedback from the 30 sessions held in 2014 showed that 94% of participants felt they could “promote Diversity and Inclusion,” compared to a pre-survey where 74% indicated they could not. The success of this work led to a similar GDP session for the European D&I Council and 10 additional sessions for Coca-Cola Enterprises in 2015. Of particular note, one of the participants included the following comment in their feedback, “The learning style is very participative and is centred upon learning through not only sharing group experiences but also **practically applying the insight models introduced as part of the course** [emphasis added].” The accountability check-ins were positively linked by participants to “increasing sales, production, innovation and also connecting to customers, which has been a key component of its success and credibility.”

KAIROS Blanket Exercise

In Canada, perhaps one of the most well-known and impactful experiences related to DEI training is the KAIROS Blanket Exercise (KBE).⁵⁷ Named after the organization that manages and facilitates the KBE, the effort is a kinesthetic activity that chronicles the history of Indigenous populations in Canada, particularly with respect to their treatment by the colonial settler populations that occupied Canada beginning in the late 17th century and the modern implications of that history. The KBE was originally developed in 1997 by the Aboriginal Rights Coalition (ARC), which preceded KAIROS, “an ecumenical

movement for ecological justice and human rights around the globe.” The KBE, used throughout sectors in Canada and throughout the world, is two to four hours in duration, depending on the size of the group participating in the activity. The ideal group size for the exercise is 30–40 people, although much larger groups have been accommodated.

The content of the KBE is described as quite compelling, if not unsettling, and was intended to “introduce Canadians to the major themes and findings of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). ARC brought together Indigenous Elders and educators with allies who wanted to make sure that RCAP and its recommendations were not shelved and forgotten.”⁵⁸ The experience has been modified, over time, to reflect contemporary historical analyses, particularly following the activities of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada from 2007 to 2015. The KBE follows a set of protocols to ensure that KBE facilitators are either from Indigenous backgrounds or that the events are led by “Indigenous Leadership” and that Elders and Knowledge Keepers are consulted throughout the execution of the exercise.⁵⁹ Each KBE concludes with a debrief experience called a “talking circle” where the participants have an opportunity to reflect on their experience, come to terms with and discuss their emotional reactions to the exercise, and explore the content more deeply.

In response to the global pandemic, KAIROS Canada has developed an online version of the KBE meant to replicate the in-person experience, due to be rolled out in 2021. The website contains numerous other resources to help develop knowledge about the deep effects of colonization and oppression on Indigenous populations and suggestions for strengthening the relationships with those communities.

Next Steps for ARL

From the Desk of Mary Lee Kennedy, ARL Executive Director

This has been a year of tremendous turmoil and uncertainty—the negative impact on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and their communities has been devastating. With the heightened awareness of too-long-existing systemic societal inequities and a renewed commitment to enduring social justice, particularly as it relates to racism and systems of oppression, the Association of Research Libraries reviewed and deepened its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in all it does, as well as its own structures.

ARL will enhance its diversity fellows and scholars programs by a commitment to recruiting, retaining, and advancing participants' careers. ARL will formalize its mentorship program to focus on long-term relationships including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color sponsorship. At the same time, as this article articulates, library leaders need the support and resources to develop the necessary skills and habits to design and implement systems of structural equity, and to lead inclusive organizations. Steps ARL is taking in 2021 include the following:

- ARL will review and, as appropriate, adopt the recommendations of the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL)–ARL–ALA–Public Library Association (PLA) Task Force on Building Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity Framework⁶⁰ in ARL's professional development programs. ARL received a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to plan a Diversity Institute and will launch the planning later in 2021 to take advantage of the Racial Equity Framework recommendations.
- Recently the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) completed their work on strategies and practices for hiring and retaining diverse talent. ARL will review the CARL toolkit in the context of helping members to use it.

- All ARL leadership and organizational development programs are being designed with the diversity, equity, and inclusion lens. This is evident in the soon to be relaunched Leadership Fellows program.
- The Association policies and practices are under review and the recent changes to the committee and task force recruitment process reflects the Association’s work to ensure structural equity. This includes strengthening partnerships with research libraries in historically Black colleges and universities and in Hispanic-serving institutions, as well as working with library associations representing Black, Indigenous, and People of Color colleagues.

With so few Black, Indigenous, and People of Color leaders and staff members, our profession has much to do to create the diverse and inclusive cultures that represent the communities we serve and the full range of talent in our society. ARL is committed now and for the long term.

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Association of Research Libraries

21 Dupont Circle, NW
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20036
T 202.296.2296
F 202.872.0884

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