University Libraries Diversity Plan, 2018-2023

Preface

The University Libraries Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Group (DIAG) was created and charged with devising a plan that would move the Libraries closer to the goal of creating an environment where all feel welcomed, safe, and included. The DIAG is comprised of faculty and staff from the Libraries and students from the University of Louisville.

The University expects each unit to have a diversity committee and a defined plan for demonstrating progress in specific areas such as campus climate and student success, faculty/staff recruitment and retention, organizational climate, and community engagement. With our current approach, diversity and inclusion-related projects are undertaken both at the unit-level and for the University Libraries as a whole; however, it has been challenging to identify and measure meaningful progress in the University’s required areas in the absence of a strategic plan for achieving unit-level diversity. In addition, progress has been somewhat uneven since activities have not necessarily been linked to specific, coordinated goals.

After careful review of the University of Louisville Diversity Plan, statements from the Association of Research Libraries, the American Library Association, as well as several of our peer institutions, we have identified several areas within the Libraries that we feel could have the biggest impact on making the Libraries more diverse and inclusive. We also believe the specific steps outlined in our Diversity Action Plan Spreadsheet are practical and manageable changes that can be made given resources and staffing.

This plan encompasses the broad diversity and inclusion philosophy and goals of the Libraries and will be reviewed periodically. Information about the Libraries’ specific yearly goals, evaluation/assessment measures, and communication and promotion can be found in the Libraries Diversity Action Plan Spreadsheet.

I. Introduction

The University Libraries endorses the definition found in the University of Louisville’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan:

*Diversity embraces all human differences while building on the commonalities that bind us together. It serves to eliminate discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion based on race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status,*
disability, religion, national origin or military status. Diversity also includes diversity of thought and political ideologies.

Libraries have a long tradition of promoting freedom of thought and speech by attempting to collect and organize materials from all points of the ideological spectrum (see 1939 Library Bill of Rights http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill); however, we also recognize that Libraries also have participated in marginalization and exclusion (Drabinski, 2013). Through this document, we aspire to examine all facets of our space, resources, and workforce to determine if and where barriers to inclusivity exist and to dismantle them if possible.

II. Accessible & Inclusive Space (Physical & Virtual)

The Libraries spaces and the policies that govern those spaces will promote equitable access and eliminate physical barriers to learning and discovery.

A. Renovation: Any renovation plan should consider the diversity implications of the new space by conferring with experts in accessibility.

B. Stewardship of buildings:
   1. Maintenance of current accessibility features.
   2. Responding in a timely manner to new needs as they arise.
   3. All library faculty and staff will make an effort to detect and report any issues with accessibility and inclusion in the library. Any issues should be escalated to the Library Director.
   4. Move as quickly as possible toward having all library buildings that are ADA Compliant.

C. Library Policies: Regular review of library policies to detect barriers that might be inadvertently created.

D. Website: The Libraries website will be compliant with ADA Accessibility requirements. In addition, the Libraries will include accessibility as an evaluation criterion in the purchase of electronic resources and will work with library vendors to promote the consideration of accessibility as a priority.

III. Resources

The University Libraries will attempt to ensure that its collections reflect the diversity of viewpoints, authors, and topics present in the population it serves. The Libraries will also work to make sure access to these collection resources are equitable to all of the University Community. Strategies we will use to accomplish this include....
A. Modes of Learning: The Libraries will take into consideration different modes of learning when evaluating our website and the resources we acquire for the collection.

B. Promotion of Resources: The Libraries will promote the accessibility of the resources as appropriate. For example, if there is an audio version of a resource, we will work to make sure that users are aware of that.

C. Instruction: Provide inclusive, diverse, and culturally-sensitive examples in our information literacy instruction; recognize the need to teach to diverse learning styles and create teaching outlines that accommodate those styles.

D. Programming: Provide programming that highlights the diversity of the UofL and broader communities. This could be in on our own or in conjunction with campus partners (see Section IV Collaboration). Programming could include read-ins, exhibits, talks, book groups, cultural festivals, etc. that fits within the parameters of the goals of the library.

IV. Collaboration

A. Campus Involvement: The University Libraries will make every effort to collaborate with campus organizations by serving on campus committees and participating in campus initiatives. We believe that these types of partnerships are fruitful for both parties and that together we can be more effective to promote student success. These partnerships will be prioritized.

B. Community Engagement: The Libraries supports the University’s efforts to engage the broader Louisville community. We do this in a variety of ways with partners that provide strategic and logical opportunities for us to highlight our collections or utilize our direct skillsets.

C. Resource List: DIAG will maintain a resource webpage that includes links to potential partners and promotion of their events.

V. Hiring/Workforce Development

A. Education of Staff About Diversity and Bias: The University Libraries will sponsor workshops, provide educational materials, and in other ways promote employee awareness of diversity and bias issues in the workplace and society. Department heads will also be encouraged to organize diversity activities for their own divisions, as well as supporting employees to seek out University activities and organizations individually.

B. Proactive Recruitment: The University Libraries recognize that libraries and librarianship in particular have a need for a more diverse workforce in order to better represent the communities we serve; consequently, we believe strongly in proactively
recruiting a diverse candidate pool. This might include, but is not limited to, diversity networking, reaching out individually to candidates from underrepresented populations, and best practices in our hiring protocols. The Associate Dean of Assessment, Personnel, and Research will maintain a handbook of best practices for diversity in hiring for both faculty and staff positions.

C. Retention: Hand-in-hand with proactive recruitment, retaining employees from underrepresented groups will be a priority.

VI. Delegation of Responsibilities Towards Achievement of the Plan

The Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group provides the roadmap for our diversity efforts in the organization, but the action items (listed on the Libraries Diversity Action Plan Spreadsheet) will be integrated into all parts of the University Libraries work and included where applicable on job factors and workplans.

VII. A Statement of Accountability

While all library employees share in the responsibility for promoting efforts to foster diversity and inclusion, the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the completion of the Libraries’ goals lies with the Library Administration including directors, department heads, and the Dean.

References

Plan completed May 15, 2018

2018 Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Group Members

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