

# Diversity and Inclusion (Liberty and Justice) for All

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<https://faulibrarydean.wordpress.com/2017/02/04/diversity-and-inclusion-liberty-and-justice-for-all/>

The FAU Libraries as a whole and I personally as Dean are committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all students, faculty, and staff of the University, regardless of their background and personal experiences. This means celebrating diversity and including everyone. It means working to ensure that everyone feels valued and safe to express their thoughts while also being exposed to and exploring other perspectives. In a university and surrounding community that is home to people from so many different backgrounds and experiences, it is challenging sometimes. Within the United States right now there is a great deal of discussion – and action – that underscores our differences in ways that make it hard to find common ground. But we in the Libraries are committed to trying.

Library associations, individual libraries, and thousands of librarians and library staff around the world are taking stands on a daily basis in support of people from all backgrounds. The International Federation of Library Associations proclaimed their support for all people of all backgrounds in their [Open Societies are Healthy Societies](#) document in which they stated that “Libraries are at the heart of healthy societies. By bringing people together – students, researchers, creators, citizens – they support learning, sharing, and the creation of new ideas. They also support the delivery of key human rights, as set out both in national constitutions and international conventions, most importantly the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: freedom of expression and access to information, as well as the right to participate in cultural life and enjoy the benefits of scientific progress.”

The Association of Research Libraries, which has numerous [programs supporting diversity](#) in the profession, and the American Association of University Presses issued a [joint statement](#) in which they said that “President Trump’s recent [executive order](#) temporarily barring entry into the US by individuals from seven countries is contrary to the values held by libraries and presses, and the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and the Association of American University Presses (AAUP) stand unequivocally opposed to this immigration ban.”

The FAU Libraries’ [Diversity and Inclusion Committee](#) has recently developed a statement to guide the Libraries in the development of services and programs that will promote a safe and welcoming environment for all. That statement reads:

***Diversity and inclusion are fundamental values of the FAU Libraries and integral parts of our strategic plan. We seek and provide opportunities to gain experience working and collaborating in diverse, multicultural, and inclusive settings. Our appreciation and dedication for diversity allows us to serve our increasingly diverse community with sensitivity and adaptability. We define diversity to include race, sex, gender identity, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, disability, national origin, and religion.***

***We also recognize inequity can accompany diversity. We acknowledge that providing all users with the same level of resources and support is not necessarily an issue of equal access. Our goal of removing barriers that might impede or discourage access and engagement is as important as providing information across space and time to our users.***

This month, the FAU Libraries are celebrating the diversity of our students and our community through several events. In honor of [Black History Month](#), the [Libraries Exhibitions Committee](#) has created the “**Pursuit of Equality**” exhibition to highlight local and national efforts to achieve equality for African Americans. Displayed in the Wimberly Library’s atrium and featuring materials culled from the Libraries’ Special Collections, Digital Library and other sources, the multi-media exhibit celebrates the efforts of residents of Boca Raton’s historic Pearl City community, as well as the unsung heroes in the exploration of space and advancements in math and science; featured in the film [Hidden Figures](#) and some pivotal moments in Black history, including the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church bombing and the Little Rock Nine.



On February 10, from 7 to 10 p.m. the Wimberly Library will also be hosting “Blazers and the Arts 2017,” an evening of entertainment developed and sponsored by the FAU student chapter of [Progressive Black Men \(PBM\)](#). Chartered at FAU in November 2012, PBM focuses on academic excellence, community support and fellowship. This event gives artists an opportunity to display their talents through music. The evening will feature poetry, dance, music, a fashion show, paintings, and food. Also, on February 28, we will be in the lobby of the Wimberly Library from 10 to 11:30 a.m. to encourage students and others to sign a congratulatory banner for [Carla Hayden, the first woman and the first black Librarian of Congress](#) appointed by President Barack Obama in 2016. In the Jupiter campus library, the staff will be hosting a scaled down version of the [Human Library](#) event first hosted in the Wimberly Library in November 2016.

There are many other events and activities in the works for this spring and beyond. I encourage students and faculty to bring your ideas to us so that the FAU Libraries will become known as *the* place for people to learn about the world through engagement with other people as much as through study and research.