

# Spring Diversity Efforts

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<https://poynterdean.wordpress.com/2015/01/21/spring-diversity-efforts/>

As I welcome everyone to the spring 2015 semester, I wanted to renew my emphasis on the importance of diversity and inclusion as a guiding principle of the Poynter Library.

In a recent [message from American Library Association \(ALA\) President Courtney Young](#), she noted that “diversity is an essential value for everyone working in a library or pursuing a degree in library and information science or a related field. Libraries that have the most significant impact on their communities understand and embrace the importance of diversity. They showcase their librarians, staff, and volunteers as members of a vibrant community and their library as a place where difference is welcome.” She has recently established a Diversity Membership Initiative Group whose mission is to “provide:

- A space for success stories and best practices and broadly highlight examples of activities that have improved services and fostered organizational change;
- A community of practice for members to discuss ideas, concepts, and methods to positively impact library services to increasingly diverse populations;
- A base for deepening our discussion and collective understanding of diversity and inclusion issues across our professional organizations.”

Like ALA, the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library has made increasing awareness and celebration of diversity a top priority. The Library’s Diversity Committee is charged to make recommendations to me as Dean on:

- defining the scope of diversity needs within the context of the System’s, the University’s and the Library’s strategic plans and mission statements
- reviewing Poynter Library services, collections, and technology to ensure full support for people of all backgrounds and perspectives
- the development of signature events, services, collections, and exhibits to promote diversity and inclusion
- improving the library’s work environment to ensure a safe, welcoming, supportive environment for all Library faculty and staff
- arranging staff development opportunities to increase awareness and appreciation of different backgrounds and perspectives
- reviewing recruitment and hiring practices within the Library to promote diversity and inclusion
- reviewing policies and procedures to remove obstacles and promote greater diversity and inclusion
- developing the Library as a role model for diversity for the USFSP community

The Diversity Committee made a tremendous start with the fall [Multicultural Day](#) the centerpiece of which was the Living Library event. For the spring, the Committee is working on a new program to explore tensions between police and African-American communities across the United States.

Every librarian and library staff member is committed to providing a safe haven for every member of the USFSP community and the broader community of which we are a part. I encourage students, faculty, and community members to tell me their concerns, send me their suggestions, and show up for our events in support of a truly diverse and inclusive community.

As author Scott Page notes in The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools, and Societies, *“When a collection of people work together, and one person makes an improvement, the others can often improve on this new solution even further: improvements build on improvements. Diverse perspectives and diverse heuristics apply sequentially: one gets applied after the other, and in combination. One plus one often exceeds two”* (2007, p. 340).

This is the goal of the Poynter Library’s diversity awareness programming. Please join us and let your voice and your perspective be heard.