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Nelson Poynter Memorial Library  
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November 12, 2010

## Diversity



[Carol Hixson](#)

This message is the second in a series addressing the values seen in the sculpted bronze hands that are embedded in the walls of the Poynter Library. One of those sculptures extols the value of DIVERSITY.

What is diversity and why do we consider it one of the core values of the University of South Florida St. Petersburg and the Library? Diversity in the U.S. has often been a political hot-button, serving to divide rather than unite us. One of the definitions given in the Oxford English Dictionary is "a point of unlikeness; a difference, distinction; a different kind, a variety." One simple definition, then, is variety in who we are and how we live. Wikipedia lists many kinds of [diversity](#), including political diversity, ethnic diversity, diversity training, biodiversity and more.

Under political diversity, Wikipedia asserts that the term is used "to describe differences in racial or ethnic classifications, age, gender, religion, philosophy, physical abilities, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, gender identity, intelligence, mental health, physical health, genetic attributes, behavior, attractiveness, cultural values, or political view as well as other identifying features."

In its statement on diversity, the University of South Florida St. Petersburg asserts its "dedication to the diversity of human beings as well as diversity of ideas and viewpoints." Respect and tolerance for different backgrounds, different abilities, different physical characteristics, different points of view, and different modes of self-expression are the cornerstones of our university. By accepting our right to be different and to be uniquely ourselves, we are able to call on a wider array of resources as we face new challenges. In diversity, we are strong.

We in the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library support and celebrate the diversity of our students and faculty, the university, our local community, and the world around us. To this end, we will continue to host a wide variety of lectures and debates representing diverse points of view; mount exhibitions on military history, Black history, Gay pride, Native American identity, Jewish culture, and more; develop collections of materials that reflect the range of viewpoints on important topics and support the University's courses and programs; enhance services to students with special needs through improving our Assistive Technologies Room

and more; respect your need to relax and meet with friends, get a cup of coffee to keep you going, log in to your email, or just read a book for fun; celebrate campus life through special events such as Mardi Gras and Halloween; and reach out to our students and faculty in person, over the Internet, through chat, email, texting, Facebook and other media.

The Nelson Poynter Memorial Library is a safe haven for all people and ideas. Come to the library (physically or virtually) where we will strive to make you feel safe to ask questions and explore the world around you, value you for who you are, and encourage you in your journey of self-discovery, self-expression and lifelong learning.

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