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Introduction

With Implementing Excellence in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: A Handbook for Academic Libraries, we intend to capture emerging practices that demonstrate ways academic libraries and librarians can work to create more equitable and representative institutions. The collection of chapters here comprises practical guidance for academic libraries seeking approaches to improving workforce diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

A leading premise of this book is that implementation of DEI initiatives in libraries is dependent on leveraging existing resources available within their parent institutions. Our original framework for organizing was based on the American Association of College and Universities (AACU) model for implementing DEI initiatives in higher education.¹ This institution-wide approach posits that the implementation of inclusive excellence must consider organizational structures and behavior, which must be understood within a five-dimensional framework: systemic (campus relationships with the external environment), bureaucratic/structural (formal structures within a campus), collegial (faculty), political (power dynamics), and symbolic (use of symbolic strategies). However, the chapters of this book are evidence of a more nuanced model for understanding how and why diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts succeed for academic libraries and the institutional changes that are necessary.

Work within Existing University Structures

Academic libraries have indeed leveraged and deployed their institutions' resources to effect DEI improvements in their workforce through a range of measures—from recruitment and hiring, mentoring, and professional development to large scale strategic planning for organizational change and assessment.

Some libraries have leveraged existing institutional structures to work toward implementing systemic solutions while responding to the activism of the university community. Renna Redd, Alydia Sims, and Tara Weekes, in “Framework for Change: Utilizing a University-wide Diversity Strategic Planning Process for an Academic Library,” describe how Clemson University Libraries’ diversity strategic plan was mandated by the university administration and shaped by the university’s strategic plan. The Clemson initiative was particularly urgent, given racially motivated incidents at the university that prompted campus community protests and the recognition that fundamental systemic changes had to be implemented in the library to support diversity, equity, and inclusion. Saira Raza, Melissa Hackman, Hannah Rutledge, Jina DuVernay, Nik Dragovic, and Erica Bruchko’s chapter, “The Making of Emory Libraries’ Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee: A Case Study,” outlines how Emory Libraries’ DEI initiative, led by a committee charged with implementing a wide-ranging plan addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the libraries’ programs, policies, hiring, workforce training, communications, space planning, and assessment, drew from the resources of other offices at the university focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Emory’s initiative, like that at Clemson, responded to demands by the Black students at Emory University for racial justice.

Canadian librarians have responded to a national call to action with ambitious and substantive programs. In “Journeying to Accountability: Labor and Responses of Settler Knowledge Institutions to Indigenous Communities and Issues,” Oy Lein “Jace” Harrison, Jamie Lee Morin, Desmond Wong, and May Chan profile the University of Toronto Library’s wide-ranging program to deeply engage and educate staff about First Nations issues, a program informed and guided by the university’s Elders and Indigenous Student Services. The UTL initiative, driven by mandates of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) to redress cultural genocide of Indigenous communities that occurred through the Indian Residential School System, included cultural competency training, relationship building with Indigenous community members, redressing metadata practices, an environmental scan of Canadian library policy and practices related to Indigenous populations, and development of an Indigenous Library Services tool kit. Similarly, Camille Callison and Lyle Ford’s chapter, “An Introductory Indigenous Cultural Competency Training Program in the Academic Environment,” underscores the primary role of the University of Manitoba’s Indigenous Elders and Cultural Advisor and the Indigenous Student Centre director in

development of a training module aimed to educate library staff about an Indigenous worldview and enable staff to form relationships with the UM Indigenous community. UML's effort was also prompted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, especially with respect to the TRC's specific mandate that all government employees be educated about the history of Aboriginal peoples.

Some chapters highlight collaborations between libraries and campus entities to their mutual benefit. In "A Journey to Hiring with Heart: A Case Study on Implementing Leading Practices in Inclusive Hiring" at Grand Valley State University, Annie Bélanger, Sarah Beaubien, Scott Ayotte, and Abigail Smathers describe how the library's executive team collaborated with the campus's Division of Equity and Inclusion to create an inclusive hiring process, which then was formally adopted and implemented library-wide. Latanya N. Jenkins and Elizabeth L. Sweet at Temple University profile their library's radical compassion and cultural humility workshops for library staff in "Embracing a Culture of Humility, Diversity, and Inclusion: A Case Study of an Academic Library's Radical Compassion Programming." These workshops were informed and shaped by campus-wide training sponsored by the faculty senate Committee on the Status of Faculty of Color and the Academic Center for Research in Diversity.

Creating New Processes and Structures for the Library and Institution

Other chapters illustrate that—in the absence of clear and well-defined formal institutional structures—academic librarians have made grassroots efforts to create processes and structures for DEI initiatives where none existed within their library or institution. In turn, some of these grassroots actions triggered or reinforced and strengthened nascent DEI efforts in external offices in wider institutions. Relevant chapters here include those focused on recruitment, training, and professional development. With regard to recruitment, Amy Tureen's "Transitioning from Passive to Active Diversity Recruitment Strategies: A Case Study" documents a groundswell movement starting with an individual librarian who spearheaded a retooling of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, University Libraries' recruitment process, which was eventually codified and adopted by University Libraries administration. With regard to grassroots efforts leading to institutionalized workforce

training, Melanie Bopp's contribution, "Your Workforce Is More Than You Think: Looking at Diversity and Inclusion with Student Workers," outlines how those responsible for Northeastern University Library's student hiring and training approached the university's Office of Division and Inclusion for assistance with developing a student workforce program. The Office of Division and Inclusion, in response, promoted the library's diversity training for student workers to other departments of the university. In "Mentoring and Diversity," Barbara Lewis, Matt Torrence, Tomaro Taylor, and Meghan Cook document how a volunteer committee of library faculty and staff at the University of South Florida, Tampa Campus, formed and created the blueprint for a libraries-wide mentoring program incorporating diversity goals for all levels of employees. Katherine Kapsidelis and Elizabeth Galoozis, in their chapter "Introducing Cultural Competency in Libraries: A Case Study in Grassroots Professional Development," describe how an ad hoc group within the University of Southern California Libraries responded to a high-level call from the university and library administration for diversity and inclusion in the libraries and developed an internal training program for all library employees from the ground up. These examples show how individual libraries and librarians themselves initiated DEI workforce improvements and, in so doing, facilitated development of library-wide or institution-wide changes.

Promotion, Professional Development, and Representation

Also included are emerging methods and approaches for promotion and professional development. Kimberley Bugg's research on advancement of librarians of color from mid-level into library dean roles, summarized in "Bare Witness: Library Leaders of Color Tell Their Stories of Advancing into Senior Leadership Positions," points to specific recommendations that organizations can implement to support promotion of librarians of color into executive leadership. Michelle Villagran's chapter, "Cultural Intelligence in Academic Libraries," explains the concept of cultural intelligence and asserts that it should be a focus of professional development in academic libraries for diversity training.

Not all communities are individually represented in this book, but two chapters remind us to complicate our understanding of identity and what it means to have a diverse workforce. Sally Stieglitz makes the case that academic libraries

should recognize employment discrimination against older women applying for full-time academic librarian positions in “Gendered Ageism as a Barrier to Tenure-Track Librarianship.” Kenneth Litwak’s contribution, “Desperately Seeking Librarians with a Disability,” explores the apparent lack of full-time academic librarians with visible disabilities and suggests through survey research that ableism is a discriminatory factor in hiring of academic librarians.

Internal and External Politics and Communication

The other primary factors in the AACU model for implementing DEI change pertain broadly to institutional factors related to collegial networks, politics, and communications. Our chapters include evidence of both internal and external collegial and social-political dynamics that can affect success of DEI implementation in academic libraries. In “Bridging the Gap between Residencies and Retention: A Case Study of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro’s Diversity Resident Librarian Program and the Inception of the Library Diversity Institute,” LaTasha Velez underscores the value of UNC Greensboro’s development in collaboration with the ACRL Diversity Alliance of a cohort model for improving the experience of diversity residents at individual libraries, as well as fostering a professional network for the cohort members. Shannon Jones, Kelsa Bartley, Melissa DeSantis, Ryan Harris, Don Jason, and Dede Rios outline how Medical Library Association resources were deployed to foster dialogue and awareness of implicit bias among librarians at multiple institutions in their contribution, “Braving Our Blind Spots: Using a Virtual Book Discussion Group to Continue Conversations on Implicit Bias in Libraries.” V. Dozier, Sandra Enimil, and Adebola Fabiku’s chapter, “Critical Analysis of ARL Member Institutions’ Diversity Statements,” considers the way ARL libraries communicate their commitment to diversity.

Assessment and Accountability

Besides all these contributions related specifically to the AACU five-dimensional framework for implementing DEI excellence, the final section of our book focuses on overall assessment of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in academic libraries. As emphasized in the AACU model, it is through the lens of assessment

that the framework for implementing DEI change in libraries can be examined. However, unlike the general performance scorecard assessment presented in the AACU model, our contributions pertaining to assessment are specific to academic libraries. In “Assessing DEI Efforts in Academic Libraries: More Than a Body Count,” Kawanna Bright describes the continuing development of a DEI assessment instrument she designed to holistically measure academic libraries’ DEI efforts. The chapter is also a preview of a soon-to-be-released finalized DEI assessment resource based on her original pilot. Toni Anaya and Charlene Maxey Harris’s summative chapter, “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plans and Programs in ARL Libraries,” comparatively analyzes the outcomes of two surveys conducted in 2010 and in 2017 on diversity plans and programs in ARL libraries. The authors underscore how ARL libraries’ DEI efforts are increasingly a response to larger social justice and political movements, especially in the 2020s.

In the end, the original framework for this book merits reconsideration. Academic librarians often make use of systemic, bureaucratic, political, collegial, and symbolic dimensions of organizational behavior to achieve their diversity, equity, and inclusion goals, but many of the authors included in this book find themselves pushing back at the systems they are employing in ways small and large. This is most obvious in section V, on Organizational Change, in which authors are leveraging their organizational structures in order to change them from within. The chapters on cultural competency, cultural humility, cultural intelligence, and implicit bias training all seek to fundamentally change our concepts of ourselves and others. The chapters focusing on hiring, retention, and promotion remind us that, although the library field has failed to diversify its ranks decades after establishing this as a goal, we must continue to try to hire, retain, and promote the change we want to see in the world regardless of existing structures and systems, and to improve those structures and systems for the future.

Note

1. Damon A. Williams, Joseph B. Berger, and Shederick A. McClendon, *Toward a Model of Inclusive Excellence and Change in Postsecondary Institutions* (Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2005), https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/mei/williams_et_al.pdf.

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