Diversity Equity Inclusion

The State of the State

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An ACRL Priority

Objective #4 of the [ACRL Strategic Plan](#) is to, "support libraries in articulating their role in advancing issues of equity, access, diversity, and inclusion in higher education."

A statement from
Karen Munro,
ACRL Past-President:

Diversity

The condition of having or being composed of differing elements: the inclusion of people of different races, cultures, etc. in a group or organization

In academia, convening a diverse group involves looking at factors in addition to race and culture.
Examples:
- University role (students, staff, faculty, alum)
- Discipline (Field)
- On-campus / Off-campus
- Extra- or co-curricular affiliations

Equity

Fairness or justice in the way people are treated

This is the part of the equity slide where you would normally see the graphic of people trying to look over a fence or trying to pick some fruit. The people are different heights and need boxes of different sizes to see over the fence or to pick the fruit. The graphic isn't here because I don't understand it. Achieving equity involves tackling systemic issues rather than addressing individual biology. I don't have an alternative graphic. Do you have one to share or do you have a different perspective on the height/equity graphics?

Inclusion

The act or practice of including and accommodating people who have historically been excluded (as because of their race, gender, sexuality, or ability)

Librarians are already superstars at inclusivity – at inviting everyone to the table.

When we look at our tables, we may find that there are missing voices. Are there people or groups who hesitated to respond to our invitation? Recruitment is also important to inclusivity.

Best Practices

Three DEI-related practices are prevalent throughout many of Montana's academic libraries today:

- Land Acknowledgements

- Dedicated Resources

- Cultivating Cultural Change

Land Acknowledgements

- Librarianship was among the first professions to begin professional conferences and activities with land acknowledgements.

- Universities and libraries are updating land acknowledgements to guard against them becoming performative. A current best practice in crafting land acknowledgements is to include action statements in the acknowledgement. For example, the University of Montana Missoula recently updated their land acknowledgement to include this action statement, "The University of Montana strives to improve education, service, and scholarship for all Indigenous peoples through actions aimed at respecting tribal sovereignty, empowering indigenous scholars, and creating safe learning environments for all students to live, work, and learn together in equitable and positive ways."

- A resource specifically for helping you to write or update a land acknowledgement:

  Native Governance Center. (2021). *Beyond land acknowledgement: a guide.*

  https://nativegov.org/resources/beyond-land-acknowledgment-a-guide/

Dedicated Resources

The NWCCU revised 2020 standards refer to equity in the first sentence of the new accreditation document, "The institution articulates its commitment to student success, primarily measured through student learning and achievement, for all students, with a focus on equity and closure of achievement gaps, and establishes a mission statement, acceptable thresholds, and benchmarks for effectiveness with meaningful indicators."

Although libraries have never waited for Northwest or other accreditation bodies to initiate DEI efforts, with the strong DEI language of the most recent update, universities are seeing an increase in dedicated resources (personnel, space, etc.). Libraries can play important leadership roles and supportive roles in increased DEI efforts.

Cultivating Cultural Change

Montana Universities are demonstrating efforts to create changes in the ways we approach diversity, equity, and inclusion. Notable efforts include:

- Revising mission statements and strategic plans to clearly articulate commitment to DEI

- Hiring practices: prioritizing diversity when hiring, but also recruiting DEI advocates

- Establishing new initiatives and promoting new and existing DEI efforts

What can I do to contribute to DEI efforts right now?

- Collection development and personal consultation. Provide resources and advice for others on your campus who are engaging in DEI work.

- Go to DEI-related or tangentially related events at your institution and in your community. Find the people who want to give you input.

- If you are a funding authority, pay for your employees to go to institutional and community events.

- Provide space and promotion for events and displays at your library – be the hub.

Handy Resources:

- Welcome to Dr. Jennifer Oates, new Library Director at Carroll College. She just completed the University of South Florida's "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Workplace Certificate." She has graciously offered to be a resource for anyone who'd like to reach out to her.

- ACRL maintains a LibGuide to provide information on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, including links to continuing education opportunities. https://www.ala.org/acrl/issues/edi

- ACRL's Diversity Standards Toolkit aims to provide ideas for implementing Diversity Standards https://acrl.libguides.com/diversity/standardstoolkit

- Northwest Commission on College's and Universities (NWCCU) provides extensive resources to assist institutions in cultivating DEI https://nwccu.org/equity-resource-library/

Selected Current Campus Initiatives

Examples of universities and libraries that are dedicating resources to formal activities in support of DEI:

- Dedicated Offices / personnel:
  * MSU Bozeman located a Diversity and Inclusion Student Commons in the student union building
  * MSU Billings located the Diversity Center in the Student Union Building

- Including DEI in formal mission statements / strategic plans:
  *FVCC tied DEI to a specific goal in their Strategic Plan
  *MSU Bozeman Library's mission, vision, values statement

- Committees / Teams / Task Forces:
  * Great Falls College has a standing DEI Team
  * UM Missoula list of DEI-related committees and task forces

Selected Current Campus Initiatives

- Conferences / events:

  *Dawson Community College implemented Indigenous People's Day programming

  *UM Missoula's annual diversity symposium

- Formal documentation of efforts:

  * UM Missoula's DEI plan is posted prominently on their website

  * MT Tech posts their diversity statement to their website and to a plaque in the student union

- Leadership statements:

  * Miles City College inclusivity statement by administration

  *DEI- focused statement from the President in the Fort Peck Community College annual report

- Recruitment

  *MSU Bozeman includes this statement in their job announcements, "Montana State University values diverse perspectives and is committed to continually supporting, promoting and building an inclusive and culturally diverse campus environment."

Next Step

As librarians, all of you do DEI-informed work everyday because DEI principles are foundational to library work. As campuses as a whole become more attentive to DEI, many of you are engaged in the work of fostering and implementing formal or campus-wide DEI-related projects and initiatives. The list in the previous slides only reflects a sample of efforts. Please send me any information, links, or artifacts about what you are doing in your library or on your campus. I'll compile those and make that compilation available at the Academic Symposium in May. I'm inspired by the work that I can see you all doing and I'm excited to continue to learn from all of you!

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