Increasing Diversity in the Profession: What Works?

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Increasing Diversity in the Profession: What Works?

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Presented by Toni Greider
University of Kentucky Libraries
• Brief definition of “diversity” and why it is important in our libraries.
• Review of promising efforts to attract and assist people of under-represented groups to librarianship.
• Diversity Task Force at University of Kentucky Libraries
For this talk, diversity refers to a library staff that reflects the demographics of its library users. May include race, ethnicity, gender, age, etc., and is likely to vary by type of library and geographic location. The terms inclusivity and diversity are now frequently linked.
Why is a diverse profession desirable?

- Human beings are creatures of habit and routine; diversity brings new and different ideas.

- Our libraries and communities are changing; a diverse workforce can help us provide effective service to our users.
Old models of limited leadership and participation will not be as effective as an inclusive and diverse organizational model.

Why is a diverse profession desirable?
• Diversity programs and officers in individual institutions are fairly common in larger public library systems and academic libraries.

• One effective method: internal leadership training programs for existing staff and new librarians with leadership potential.
• Internships and residencies for post-MLS students from under-represented groups. Examples: U of Louisville, U of Tennessee, NC State

• Benefit: Provides experience for new professionals

• Grow-your-own program; can lead to increased diversity in short term, mixed results in long term for the institution sponsoring the program.

• Often the residents and interns move to other institutions once their residency (usually 2 years) ends.
Professional Organization Efforts

- American Library Association Spectrum Scholars
- Kentucky Library Association minority scholarships
- Other state and professional association scholarships
• ARL Diversity Office currently manages 5 programs designed to attract and develop members of under-represented groups to academic librarianship, specifically to ARL libraries.

www.arl.org/leadership-recruitment/diversity-recruitment
New program by ARL and the Music Library Association to address under-representation by those with racial and ethnic minority backgrounds.

Purpose: to attract professionals to performing arts and music libraries who better reflect evolving demographics of students and faculty in the field.

ARL/MLA Diversity and Inclusion Initiative (DIT)
Also a new program
ARL and Society of American Archivists
Provides work experience, financial aid, mentoring, leadership development, job placement help
Goal: recruit 15 diverse students in special collections librarianship or archival studies from 2013 – 2016.
ARL Initiative to Recruit a Diverse Workforce (IRDW)

- Funded by IMLS grants and Association of Research Libraries members
- Purpose: attract students from racial and ethnic minorities to careers in academic and research libraries
- Program: gives stipend of up to $10,000 to currently enrolled students enrolled in MLS or equivalent programs
ARL Leadership & Career Development Program (LCDP)

• Goal: prepare mid-career librarians from under-represented racial and ethnic groups to take on “increasingly demanding” leadership roles in ARL libraries
• 18-month program
• Exposes participants to major strategic issues shaping future of research libraries
• Funded by IMLS grants and ARL member libraries
• Provides travel and living expense stipend for current or MLS students completing their degrees
• CEP Fellows complete 8-12 week internship at an ARL library
• Fellows attend ARL Leadership Symposium at ALA midwinter, gratis
• UK has been a participant since its inception 5 years ago
• 7 CEP interns to date:
  4 females, 3 males
  3 African-Americans, 2 Asians, 1 Latino, 1 Native American
• 1 CEP graduate hired for faculty position at UK
• 3 others in academic positions or residencies
• UK Libraries committed to hosting 2 additional fellows in 2014
• Overall, more than 35 CEP Fellows are employed in academic and research libraries
Benefits to students:

- practical experience not gained in library school
- professional contacts & cohort contacts
- mentoring by a senior professional
- opportunity to view everyday operations of a research library
- project and presentation assignment
• Benefits to UK Libraries:
  • interaction with new generation of MLS students with impressive skills
  • increased contact with individuals from diverse racial and ethnic groups
  • important work projects completed by the Fellows
  • service contribution to the profession
• Proposal for minority residency program prepared—awaiting funding
• Diversity education involvement including highest number of participants in week-long campus Humanity Academy diversity training
• Diversity initiatives included in strategic plan
• Increased involvement with international activities and programs
• Diversity Task Force with five members
• Charged with planning and recommending ideas for increased diversity in library workforce
• Planning student assistant diversity internships for undergraduate in any field
Idea: by working in academic library, with mentoring and individualized attention, some students will become interested in MLS degree or staff position after graduation.

Library technicians at UK are able to attend graduate programs tuition-free; many complete MLS degrees.

Planning of proposal due by June 30, 2014.
Elements for Successful Programs

- Providing practical experience
- Mentoring
- Financial incentive (stipend and/or employment)
- Positive interaction with professional librarians
- Opportunity for leadership training and/or observation
2008 the campus focus turned toward globalization
- International Office increased in size
- Certificate of International Studies developed
- Increase in international students
- Increase in students going abroad
- Library’s community became more diverse with diverse needs
• Support the international campus activity
  ◦ A & S Passport on the World
  ◦ Confucius Center
  ◦ Asia Center
• Support international students
  ◦ Info Literacy in ESL programs
  ◦ Providing virtual keyboards
  ◦ Promoting language interfaces
• Support Education Abroad
  ◦ Developed a research guide which is imbedded in EA orientation
• Supporting our Faculty to engage internationally
  ◦ IFLA committees
  ◦ Fulbright programs
  ◦ Librarian exchanges
    • China
    • South Africa
Thank you for your time and attention!