

# University Libraries' Advisory Task Force on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

## Final Report

### September 2021

During the summer of 2020 in response to our national race and social justice crisis, University Libraries faculty and staff held a virtual town hall to discuss their reactions, concerns, and ideas around diversity, equity, and inclusion at Kent State and within KSUL. Prior to this town hall, KSUL had already been discussing the need to review and reform their Diversity Committee. The town hall identified several additional ideas and concerns to explore and consider. The purpose of this Task Force was to explore issues and ideas raised at our KSUL town hall and recommend actions to be implemented to advance an equitable and inclusive environment for all at KSUL.

The Task Force divided into six subgroups to address the first six of the areas of concern, to discuss ideas and formulate strategies to address them. Everyone on the Task Force served in more than one subgroup; many members took on leadership roles in this process. Each subgroup researched their areas of concern and met with other subgroups as necessary. Most subgroups met jointly in order to discuss convergences and recurring themes. The Task Force met as a whole for the seventh area of concern, a DEI statement, similar to a mission statement. The 2020 UL Self-Study results (<https://intra.library.kent.edu/KSULSelfStudy>) were scoured for relevant information and incorporated into the subgroups' discussion and research.

Contained here are the recommendations of the Task Force in each of the areas of concern. We realize this is a beginning and not an end; for example, "accessibility" was added to DEI as we moved through this process. We will undoubtedly see these vital concepts and language continue to evolve. DEI needs to permeate all our work going forward. It needs to be central to our mission.

The University has taken on its own approach to DEI and will set goals for Colleges, Schools, Departments, and other units to meet yearly. In April, President Todd Diacon announced that \$1 million will be dedicated to University Task Force recommendations. DEI is a four-year strategic planning process, with one goal per year for the process, which units get to select. One of the five focus areas is on recruitment. Feedback is due March 2022.

Additionally, the OhioLINK Luminaries program will be a part of our DEI efforts. Jasmine Jefferson is the Kent State representative to that program; we thank her for her active involvement in this.

We are beyond grateful for the active and honest participation of the Task Force members and their dedicated work, especially during a pandemic in which most all of us were working remotely. We express our gratitude to N.J. Akbar and Gina Campana from UDAC, the University-level DEI Task Force, for their wisdom, support, and guidance throughout this process. We have a special thanks for Pam Lemmons, who scheduled so many meetings and took detailed notes. We are honored to have served.

Sincerely,

Tony Snyder and Cindy Kristof, Co-Chairs

## **Task Force Members**

### **Full members**

Ron Bammerlin, Director of Business, Finance, and Facilities  
Joseph Bell, Resident Librarian for User Experience  
Stephanie Bumbarger, Undergraduate Student and UL Student Employee  
Anita Clary, Special Collections Librarian  
Paul Fehrmann, Research and Instructional Services Librarian, Associate Professor  
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Peggy Nzomo, Resident Librarian for Global Education (through May 2021)  
Kara Robinson, Associate Dean and Associate Professor  
Kat Saunders, Assistant Editor, Kent State University Press  
Edith Serkownek, Head of the Fashion Library and Professor  
Kelly Shook, Director of Circulation Services

### **Ex-officio members**

N.J. Akbar, Associate Vice President, Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
Ken Burhanna, Dean and Professor  
Gina Campana, Assistant Director, Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
Pamela Lemmons, Special Assistant, Dean's Office

## 1 - The need for and role of an equity officer for UL

### Discussion and Research

Should the Equity Officer be a role or a position? Many institutions of higher education and their subunits, including libraries, have hired specialists charged with providing leadership surrounding DEI issues and to provide guidance, ensuring DEI issues are included in decision-making. Although some institutions have hired an individual with this as a sole assignment, others have given the DEI assignment to an employee already on staff. Either way, this person is at an administrative level within the organization, either as an assistant or associate dean/director. Two ARL libraries at the time the subgroup did its research, Brown University and Harvard, were searching for a Director of Library Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and an Associate University Librarian for Antiracism, respectively. Others, including Ohio State and Colorado University at Boulder, were writing job descriptions. At the University of Delaware Library, Museum, and Press, the person in the position of Organizational Development and Learning Librarian recently began reporting to their Executive Team. Reportedly, “EDI and residency program coordination are among her *many responsibilities.*” [Emphasis mine]

N.J. Akbar emphasized throughout the TF meetings that there is a lot of work for this person to do, and whomever carries this assignment will not be able to do it by themselves. This job should not go under “other duties as assigned”; do *not* tokenize it. Real results can be achieved if a position is dedicated to DEI. Outcomes and successes of objectives set should be measured. Assessment is an important part of this job.

Trevor Dawes indicated in his speech to the OhioLINK Summit held on May 27, 2021 that DEI must be integrated into every aspect of management of the organization; it cannot be an afterthought. Amy Pawlowski indicated that within OhioLINK, DEI would be a part of how they look at everything going forward. DEI requires a built-in eternal vigilance. The end goal is to remove all systemic barriers. Leadership must come from a DEI and social justice perspective.

This position could play a key role in coordinating missions involving the work of other subgroups. For example, the Equity Officer would undoubtedly be involved in the reporting process for DEI concerns as well as a revamped Diversity Committee. This position would play a role in development of procedures and official library policies and in helping to decolonize our collections. Access to UL, to its services, materials, and facilities, is a vital component for consideration. Finally, this position would be essential to formulating and adapting an agile professional development agenda.

Messaging and communication need to be inclusive, welcoming all types of library patrons, including those who work for us, especially students. Though workplace inclusion can lead to recruitment for the information profession, broadly speaking, a library that provides an inclusive environment can work as both a recruitment and retention tool for the University at large. We need to look for ways for underrepresented people to see themselves in the Libraries.

What would success mean? How would it look? Storytelling can be very effective. How can we collect stories from students? Library programming can provide these opportunities to reach students; however, each encounter has the potential to move UL in the direction of DEI.

### Recommendations

The TF recommends that, budget permitting, a knowledgeable full-time Equity Officer with demonstrable experience be hired or assigned to adequately respond to DEI needs, concerns, and issues. The Equity Officer

would report directly to the UL Dean and be a full participant on the Dean's Executive Cabinet. The Equity Officer's responsibilities would include hearing and directing DEI concerns in the best direction for resolution, participating in a revamped Diversity Committee, being involved with personnel and hiring decisions as well as the formulation of new policy, reviewing procedures and policies periodically for DEI issues, reviewing and recommending professional development offerings, and participation in collection decolonization endeavors. If a full-time Equity Officer cannot be hired, it is recommended that these duties be assigned to an Associate/Assistant Dean for whom a significant amount of workload can be transferred to another A/A Dean.

## **2 - The creation of a mechanism or process for reporting DEI concerns in a safe and meaningful way.**

### Discussion and Research

A safe place to discuss DEI issues that arise is essential for advancing DEI goals. Issues discussed in this area might range from suggestions for improving mentorship, for example, to filing serious concerns regarding harassment or discrimination. There is a tension between a need for anonymity for some instances to a need for resolution, for which anonymity may not be able to be maintained. The party receiving the report must be committed to privacy and confidentiality. It is possible that the very individual who receives reports such as this may be the object of a such a concern. As Ohio University states:

Providing your contact information is optional. If you choose not to provide this information, the form will be submitted anonymously. While all reports will be reviewed, please note that submitting this report anonymously will significantly impede the university's ability to address the incident and, in most cases, the university will be unable to investigate or resolve the incident.

([https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?OhioUniv&layout\\_id=90](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?OhioUniv&layout_id=90))

Research conducted of MAC institutions has shown that most have a means for reporting, but those are institution-wide and not exclusively for the libraries. This topic has been a difficult thing to research on the web because university systems require log-ins.

Buffalo has a Silent Witness mechanism, but it is more akin to a tip line for crime committed on or near campus. Here is Buffalo's Information Intake Form: <http://www.buffalo.edu/equity/reporting-discrimination-and-harassment/information-intake-form.html> One business day is their stated turnaround time for contacting those that use this form. Please note that this is from the University itself, not the Libraries.

Commercial reporting systems are used for DEI reporting at some institutions. Some examples include:

- Pluto: Combines Anonymous Reporting with DEI Metrics, etc. - <https://pluto.life/>
- EthicsPoint from Navex: <https://www.navexglobal.com/en-us/campaigns/ethicspoint-hotline-incident-management-software-ppc> - University of Akron uses EthicsPoint.
- STOPit App: <https://stopitsolutions.com/> - Delaware High Schools uses this; case study at <https://why.org/articles/safety-app-lets-delaware-students-report-bullying-dangerous-situations/>
- Anonymous Alerts- Reporting app - <https://www.anonymoualerts.com/>

Here at Kent State, multiple pathways currently exist for filing and seeking resolutions to different types of situations, concerns, and complaints. These include but may not be limited to, the Office of the Student Ombuds, Dean of Students, Student Accessibility Services, Human Resources Office of Compliance, with two Title IX reporting forms (at <https://www.kent.edu/hr/title-ix-0/title-ix-report-incidentfile-complaint>), Equal

Opportunity and Affirmative Action, Faculty Ethics Committee, and AAUP. Are they effective? No single service currently assists everyone, and the pathways can be confusing to navigate.

### Recommendations

Because most institutions have a unified means of reporting, and because UL is not the only unit on campus with such a need, the TF recommends that UL utilize available University resources. The Equity Officer should play a role in hearing personnel concerns within UL, maintaining anonymity and confidentiality when requested, resolving issues and conflicts where applicable, escalating issues when necessary, and directing people to resources at the University level as needed.

## **3 - What should the diversity committee look like in structure, membership, and charge?**

### Discussion and Research

The charge of the current committee (see <https://intra.library.kent.edu/node/15079>) needs to be broadened to include equity, inclusion, and accessibility. A mission or purpose statement is needed. Language needs to be action-oriented, promoting belonging, learning, and accountability. We want to bring everyone in, and we welcome all voices.

The Equity Officer would be a permanent member of this committee as a member of the Executive Team, perhaps as a co-chair or as an ex-officio, with an important advisory role.

Regarding other members, does this committee need active recruitment? Does membership need to rotate, and if so, how? Does it need to be voluntary? Ultimately, we need members who are dedicated to DEI who will actively address areas of concern and work towards DEI goals. Princeton University Libraries has an application process for serving on their DEISC. Their charge reads: "Members will be selected by application review process with the current DEISC co-chairs and PUL Library Leadership Team in partnership with University HR/Diversity & Inclusion." This process may prove too extensive for UL, but something similar could be adapted. With DEI as a priority, students should be involved as part of their paid work, for their resumes and as an incentive.

The goal is to have and welcome diversity, but how do we define it? We would like to create a sense of belonging for everyone where all types of people feel safe and respected. During one of the UL DEI TF meetings, N.J. Akbar noted that "All" can miss someone, so we need to know what we mean by that statement. Specificity is key. See discussion of "Who is all" under the subgroup 4 discussion below.

Accessibility is a part of DEI. In relation to libraries, it involves access to services and materials we provide, the programming we sponsor, as well as the buildings and facilities we occupy.

### Recommendations

A draft purpose statement for the committee reads:

"The Kent State University Libraries Diversity Committee will foster belonging, engagement, and bridge building in our work to bring about the fullest expression of diversity, equity, and inclusion for all by promoting an environment of respect, care, compassion, and dynamic learning."

The TF recommends the committee's charge be broadened in scope to include equity, inclusion, and accessibility as well as diversity. Subcommittees or Task Forces may be formed as needed to bring concerted attention and expertise to a special project or area of concern. To reflect this, a name change for the committee may be

advised. One suggestion is **IDEAL**, which is an acronym for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility in the Library. This recommendation is in line with other libraries' who have broadened the scope of their existing diversity committees. These libraries include but are not limited to USCB, Virginia Commonwealth, NYU, UVA, NCSU, and Princeton.

The TF recommends that the membership of this committee be as inclusive as possible, with a broad membership to fully represent personnel in UL and the community we serve. Selection of members might include an application process with a statement of interest such as Princeton University has in place.

Student assistants are a significant portion of our workforce in UL. They should be encouraged to participate in this committee; moreover, their participation should be paid.

The TF recommends that committee members participate in training so they can be a resource working alongside and in support of the Equity Officer.

The concept of belonging is an important component of DEI. We need to consider ways for under-represented groups to envision themselves within UL. This can happen through social media, library programming and events, promotion of collections, and other types of outreach and educational endeavors. This committee would likely play a role in professional development, addressed below by subgroup 5.

This committee should address issues related to culture of the library. Some anecdotal concerns may not rise to the level of university or other official reporting or may not be expressed within a self-study but are nevertheless vital to a DEI positive environment.

Some work, such as community outreach and involvement, may not be adequately rewarded in academia. The TF recommends this committee look for this involvement among UL personnel, including students, in order to recognize and reward it.

This committee should also be charged with implementation of applicable suggestions from the Self-Study with an emphasis on putting ideas into action. The committee should be involved with policy formation, evaluation, and revision. Likewise, this committee can be a resource for incorporating elements of the University-level DEI Strategic Plan.

Annual goals set by this committee should have accountability built in so that the relative success of its endeavors can be measured yearly and over periods of time.

#### **4 - A systematic review of organizational policies and procedures, making sure to consider the invisible patterns of behavior by which people enact them.**

##### Discussion and Research

What should standards for evaluation of policies be?

Balancing personal behaviors with policies and procedures that take diverse populations and their situations into account can go a long way. Our DEI statement, once finalized, can help set standards.

Whereas policy is written, vetted by University Counsel, and posted publicly, procedures typically are not. Are procedures more vulnerable to invisible patterns of behavior that go against DEI? These may be difficult to identify and examine. We may wish to start with written policies.

We can develop a rubric or evaluation instrument to review our policies and procedures to give them a DEI score. The Equity Officer likely would be charged with reviewing for DEI concerns any proposed or existing policy, examining unwritten or traditional procedures, and be involved with formulation of future policies.

What are other libraries doing?

The ITHAKA S & R 2020 Library Survey can help answer this question. See <https://sr.ithaka.org/publications/national-movements-for-racial-justice-and-academic-library-leadership/>. Ohio State University Libraries have done some work on this; we can reach out for models. See <https://library.osu.edu/equity-diversity-inclusion>.

Who are “all”?

During one of the UL DEI TF meetings, N.J. Akbar cautioned the group to use the word “all” or “everyone” with care, that the phrase “all voices” potentially could be less than inclusive. Subsequently, not just this subgroup but other subgroups have had discussions about N.J.’s point. During one discussion a list was made of groups of people that historically have not been included or duly considered, or whose equality has been dismissed or disregarded. The subgroup came up with the following list, with a reminder that we also must consider *intersectionality*, that some people belong to more than one group:

- LGBTQIA
- BIPOC
- People with physical disabilities of all types, including people with chronic illnesses
- People with mental disabilities, including people with mental illnesses
- People who are neurodivergent
- International or immigrant status, including refugees and undocumented persons
- Native populations
- Asian American
- Latino/Latina/Latinx
- Religions
- Non-religious
- Age (young people; elderly people)
- Women
- Veteran status
- People experiencing poverty
- People experiencing homelessness
- Caregiver status such as parent or non-parent; caring for an elderly person or person with a disability

We find that it may be impossible to list every group. For example, the last four groups were added long after the discussions took place. However, each group needs to be considered, not unwittingly excluded when using the word “all.”

## Recommendations

The draft Policy Evaluation Form, attached as Appendix B, was developed over the course of several meetings. It guides the reader through the policy to look for problem points. Each policy is given a DEI score so that it may be improved.

### **5 - A suggested professional development agenda around issues of race, equity, and inclusion.**

#### Discussion and Research

People of color have different experiences than white people; people with disabilities have different experiences than people without them. This goes for user experiences at libraries. How do experiences differ? How can we make them more equitable?

Customer service training is important. Things such as pointing, for example, which is commonly done when helping patrons at services desks, is considered offensive in some cultures.

What do we mean by professional development? Do we include training? “How to be Anti-Racist”? Do we include Title IV training? Internally, UDAC exists as a resource group to help others “do diversity” better; our first look should be at their offerings.

The subgroup discussed past professional development sessions and feeling surrounding what worked and what did not:

- Many staff have sat through “disappointing” professional development trainings at KSU and KSUL. There have been some feelings of being excluded or that the training is not relevant for them.
- Personal moments of enlightenment can make a training worthwhile. We want people to get to a point where they understand others’ struggles; the kind of programming that can push people to: “Yes, I get it.” We are looking for those lightbulb moments.
- An emphasis on listening is needed. Listening can be a key: “I hear you” and “I believe you” can go a long way towards understanding the situations diverse populations encounter.
- There need to be opportunities for all KSUL employees to experience safe open accepting discussions.
- Some discussions will be personally challenging and trigger uncomfortable or defensive feelings.
- People may feel vulnerable. People may need outside acknowledgement that these feelings are normal and that all people experience vulnerability...and accept those feelings as okay.
- People relate differently to different issues and focus on different parts of those issues.
- There may be a benefit to proceeding “organically,” not too structured or programmatic.
- A number of things in the OSU approach were seen by subgroup members as intriguing and helpful, particularly “small involvement/actions” as identified by their staff. (OSU’s EDI Final Report at <https://kb.osu.edu/handle/1811/92067>).
- We need more than understanding and learning, we need to take action taken as a result of that learning.
- One concern is that it may be perceived that only University or UL leaders can “make changes”; we can all implement change to an extent.
- Everyone should be able to see and experience the impact they can have, based on small things they identify and choose to try as individuals.



- Each UL department may have something unique it can offer. How can departments identify and set goals for this?
- Contacting and taking advantage of professional trainers on identified issues can be beneficial, but these need to be carefully vetted: would any potential trainings or trainers leave some individuals feeling left out or that the training may be irrelevant for them?
- Typically, the library leaders decide on professional development programs; however, can such an endeavor come from the bottom? Can staff get involved in decision-making surrounding professional development? If so, how?

### Recommendations

The TF recommends that UL employees engage in professional development of their own choice, that they find personally meaningful. Although fee-based professional development opportunities are important, participation may be delayed due to COVID-19, funding restrictions, and the decision-making process itself. However, small, personally-directed actions can be taken immediately.

Programs must be manageable within the time we have at work; there is a time management aspect for all personnel. If people are overwhelmed, they may not attend or not participate fully.

Discussions of what people learned should also take place, so that there is follow-through as well as an opportunity to share with colleagues, not just forgotten once the program is over. The latter happens all too frequently. Effective conversation may involve some discomfort, at least at first.

UL personnel should be encouraged to set individual, personally meaningful goals for professional development for DEI. DEI training needs or goals may vary widely. Formal, professionally-led DEI programs can be excellent but may not be necessary. Someone's goal could be as simple as starting out with programming offered by Office of DEI or HR such as Beyond Compliance and reading a set of articles or a book or two. As a model for DEI conversations, the KSUL 4UL Reading Group and their discussions was noted. A relaxed, "water-cooler" model may increase comfort level and encourage sharing.

As previously mentioned, UDAC offerings should be given first consideration for professional development sessions. Their web site at <https://www.kent.edu/diversity/training> contains a repository of resources.

UL should consider DEI related programming primarily focused on learning about our own history. Hearing about things can be a basis for insight. For example, in our discussion this AM we noted the Tulsa Race Massacre and the Sundown Towns. Some people may never have heard of these events.

Other local programs and opportunities for involvement should not be overlooked. Some examples include the Society of Global Cultures' Endangered Languages within CCI, LGBTQI group activities, Student Wellness and Recreation Center, Wick Poetry, and the Office of Sustainability Book Group.

External programs we might explore include UGA's Anti-Racism in Academia - <https://ariajourney.org/> and DeEtta Jones Inclusive Manager's Toolkit - <https://www.deettajones.com/>. UL personnel have participated in both programs and can attest to their quality.

## **6 - How do we help decolonize our collections and develop strategies for acquiring inclusive materials?**

### Discussion and Research

Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) can be inherently offensive. They were created within a society infused with values, systems, and characteristics unfriendly to DEI. There is a need for updated headings that reflect inclusive values. Consider the differences in focus when these headings are updated:

- “Slaves” to “Enslaved persons”
- “Illegal aliens” to “Undocumented immigrants”
- “Blacks” to “Black people”
- “Whites” to “White people”

Over the years, LCSH has received petitions from librarians and others seeking changes to make the language used in the headings more inclusive. ALA has already done a lot of work on this topic; we can learn a great deal and avoid reinventing the wheel by reviewing what is being done in other libraries and documentation made available by our professional organizations.

Some items we have in our collections may be “objectionable.” The idea is not to censor or remove such items but make them findable and place them in their historical and social contexts.

1 – What is in our collections?

2 – How do we label things to make them findable but describe them with DEI in mind. Examples of “objectionable materials” can include Nazi literature, minstrel show music, or racially-charged ephemera.

For what materials might we need a trigger warning or a “heads up” notice regarding content? Special Collections does this with its True Crime Collection. Contextualization done right, can be helpful.

GOBI profiles can be amended to ensure we collect materials that might otherwise be overlooked. Hack the Stacks is a pre-task-force effort to help broaden our collections and include a diversity of voices.

<https://www.library.kent.edu/hackthestacks>

What is our Collection Development Policy or Policies? How do we decide what materials to purchase or license? The Hack the Stacks program allows students and others to suggest materials to make our collection more representative to multiple points of view. See <https://www.library.kent.edu/hackthestacks>.

However, we are here primarily to support the curricular and research needs of students and faculty; our collections are tied to the curriculum. How is DEI part of the curriculum? What are instructors teaching and what do they need? What services might they need? One endeavor is decolonization of syllabi...do we need a workshop or a LibGuide on “How to Decolonize a Syllabus”? How can we work with departmental Library Representatives and Subject Librarians to learn more?

Library programming such as Fashion Library’s Black History Month 2021 video on books about Black fashion designers is a great example of both highlighting our collection and providing library users with a learning opportunity. We can do things like this year-round, for example, addressing issues that arise in the news such as the Dr. Seuss announcement. The Libraries can take a leadership role in encouraging open conversations. What are peer and aspirational institution libraries doing in this regard?

The Self-Study student survey did not ask participants to self-identify with a demographic or other type of group, so we don't have information there that could help inform us about how comfortable various groups of students feel in the library's spaces. Future surveys should include this information.

## Recommendations

### The Collections themselves:

- Explore conducting a diversity-related assessment of our collections and resources.
- Is our system of Library Reps and Liaisons working to keep our collecting current with changes in the KSU curriculum and to meet the research needs of students and faculty?
- Review UL's GOBI profiles to include selection of diversity resources both on a macro-level and in each subject profile (for example: Fashion, Performing Arts, and Architecture).

### How collections are described/labeled/contextualized:

- Recommend that the UL Metadata & Catalog Department and the Cataloging Committee study OhioLINK's *Guidelines for Addressing Outdated or Offensive Subject Terms* ([https://www.ohiolink.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/Guidelines\\_for\\_Outdated\\_Terms\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.ohiolink.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/Guidelines_for_Outdated_Terms_FINAL.pdf)) and determine which of the three options presented would be best to implement in KentLINK. To identify offensive/outdated terms beyond those already listed by OhioLINK and other groups (such as the SACO African American Subject Funnel Project), we recommend seeking stakeholder input to help us identify additional problematic descriptive tags. (See also second bullet point under "Outreach and instruction" below).
- Study and consider other cataloging/tagging options to increase discoverability of diverse materials in the collections. For example, UL Metadata & Catalog Department could consider tagging KentLINK records with the demographic group of the author/creator, whenever possible or appropriate, in order to facilitate access to works by members of underrepresented groups.
- Consider broader policies/language as part of the discoverability of collections and materials that have outdated or offensive content, but which have documentational, historical, or cultural value in retention.

### Enlist input/partnership for decolonization:

- Establish regular communication with the new Equity Officer.
- The Collection Strategist position description should include DEI concerns.
- Consider adding questions in the next self-study survey about how users access information, about how collection is developed/managed, or what information they might want to know.
- Continue to promote the "Hack the Stacks" initiative to both faculty and students and consider building on it with additional programming.
- Given how important our spaces are to students: Explore ways to highlight diverse aspects of our collection in spaces where students go to study, similar to the way that the poetry collection is highlighted in the Wick Poetry Corner. Maybe a BUS or Black scholars' corner or an LGBTQ students' space?

### Outreach and instruction:

- How well are we doing with Lib Guides and class sessions that have a component of researching our collections for diversity topics? Is there a way to assess this and determine whether we are improving from year to year?
- Potentially having some either in-person “conversations” and/or a web presence of some kind such as a Library Guide to help educate students/faculty/staff/community about potential naming/tagging issues in the library catalog and why they are the way they are (e.g., most non-librarians may not know that library catalogs use terminology in the LCSH controlled vocabulary and how slow it can be to adapt and evolve) and how to find/search for either work by diverse authors (see above, about tagging authors) or research sensitive topics. Catalogers and other interested non-cataloging faculty and staff could construct an initial list of problematic terms and headings; additional terms could be “patron-driven,” added as questions or perceived need arises.

## **7 - Develop a DEI statement, similar to a mission statement, to communicate UL’s commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.**

### Discussion and Research

The UL DEI Task Force held a broad discussion of what a DEI statement should include. The elements of such a statement should encompass and address the first six issues/concerns brought to the Town Hall discussion last summer. Research on other libraries’ DEI statements reveals a basic framework that includes verbs indicating action to be taken. The following notes include points that were discussed.

Conversations on DEI issues can be difficult. We need to “lean into our discomfort.” Can we create a climate in which fear is not the dominant force? Can we disagree without devaluing the persons involved? The answer to “Can I really say this and be safe?” should be unequivocally YES. It should also be okay to say the following:

- “I hear you, although I may not agree with you.”
- “I don’t understand but I am listening.”
- “I went into this conversation not knowing much, but I am open to learning.”

We can learn more if we allow ourselves to wonder why we respond the way we do, observe ourselves.

We will make mistakes; this is expected and accepted. Foster an environment of forgiveness and empathy. Forgiveness is an antidote to fear.

Do we need that list of “all, everyone” or and intersectionality...who experiences systematic inequality?

People of color, immigrants, adherents of all belief systems or religions and those that do not profess or practice a religion, people of all genders and sexual orientations, and all other members of marginalized communities or oppressed groups.

These endeavors require intentionality to succeed.

Accessibility needs to be included. The acronym IDEA puts inclusion first.

With regard to lived experiences, what do people experience when they experience exclusion? We seek to protect everyone from all forms of hostility and oppression, including sexism, misogyny, ableism, racism, classism, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, and religious persecution.

What do we provide as a library? Books, resources, searching tools, research assistance, library spaces (physical and virtual; safe spaces), services, outreach, instruction, access, professional development, personnel, procedures, and policies.

### Recommendation

Draft DEI statement:

University Libraries (UL) is committed to the highest ideals of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) in support of its community of teaching, learning, and research.

UL works to provide equitable access to materials representing the lived experiences of diverse populations, both past and present, as well as to materials representing the highest levels of ethical, peer-reviewed research.

UL resolves to create welcoming, accessible environments in both its physical and virtual spaces, providing all members of its community with a sense of belonging and acceptance to encourage a culture of curiosity and life-long learning.

UL upholds intellectual freedom, opposes censorship, and supports a free exchange of ideas through its services, collections, exhibits, and programming.

UL strives to incorporate DEIA principles in recruitment, hiring, and retention efforts at all levels.

## APPENDIX A

### Kent State Resources

UDAC Web site - <https://www.kent.edu/university-diversity-action-council>

### Books, Articles, Movies, TV

13<sup>th</sup> [film] <https://www.netflix.com/title/80091741> - "In this thought-provoking documentary, scholars, activists and politicians analyze the criminalization of African Americans and the U.S. prison boom."

De Los Monteros, Pamela Espinosa and Sandra Enimil. "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as Action: Designing a Collective DEI Strategy with Library Staff" in *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Action: Planning, Leadership, and Programming*, edited by Christine Bombaro. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.82.1.132> (accessed 8/20/2021).

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Victoria and Albert Museum - "Opening the Cabinet of Curiosities" - <https://youtu.be/AYy5NL-zZRo> - Dr Hannah Young has sought to uncover the links between British slave-ownership and the development of the V&A. Absentee slave-owners used their wealth, rooted in the exploitation of enslaved people, to invest in collections that are now found throughout the Museum.

ARL Communications - *Making the Library More Inclusive by Learning from Black Students* – February 16, 2021 - <https://www.arl.org/blog/making-the-library-more-inclusive-by-learning-from-black-students/>

## Examples from Other Institutions

**Ohio State University Libraries- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion** - <https://library.osu.edu/equity-diversity-inclusion>

“We strive to weave DEIA into the very fabric of University Libraries, including into our collections, events, exhibits and experiences.”

**Central Michigan University – Collection Development** -

<https://www.cmich.edu/library/policies/Pages/collection-development.aspx> - see DEI Statement and links at bottom of the page.

**Simon Fraser University - Decolonizing the Library: What we're doing** -

<https://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/academic-integrity/indigenous-initiatives/decolonization/activities>

**LSE Impact Blog** - <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2019/10/04/how-to-decolonise-the-library/>

## Learning Programs Outside Kent State

**Femifesto** - <https://femifesto.github.io/Femifesto/>

We explore how feminist principles embodied in our Femifesto, a multilingual feminist-centered framework for collaborative scholarly communication, can be used to explore scenarios and use cases that arise in a variety of international as well as local scholarly communication contexts. We explore how to enact an ethic of care to ensure that marginalized voices and perspectives are given the space they deserve and that invisible emotional labor is recognized and valued.

**UGA’s Anti-Racism in Academia** - <https://ariajourney.org/>

Anti-Racism in Academia (ARiA): A Learning Journey is a grassroots, volunteer-led effort. We provide a way for higher ed employees to engage in self-examination through national, intersectional conversations. We believe in a shared humanity where open hearts open minds. We insist that change at the individual level complements work at the organizational level, and the strength of both can push forward the systemic transformations necessary to create an inherently inclusive and just academy. ARiA’s signature program, #ROLLAP, is a 5-part facilitated discussion series outlining an actionable approach to leading change from where you are. Participants engage in frank, small group virtual discussions designed to better understand racism issues, examine their own biases, and think critically about effective ways to build a more inclusive culture in academia.

**DeEtta Jones - Inclusive Manager’s Toolkit** - <https://www.deettajones.com/>

Join us for The Inclusive Manager’s Toolkit™ course - 10 weeks of comprehensive core content, plus an extensive library of bonus trainings, webinars, and master classes on managerial effectiveness that fully integrates equity, diversity, and inclusion into its language, skills, and tools for immediate and long-term application.

**YWCA 21 Day Racial Equity and Social Justice Challenge** - <https://www.ywcaofcleveland.org/eliminate-racism/21-day-racial-equity-challenge/>

The challenge is designed to create dedicated time and space to build more effective social justice habits, particularly those dealing with issues of race, power, privilege, and leadership. You will be presented with challenges such as reading an article, listening to a podcast, reflecting on personal experience and more. Participation in an activity like this helps us to discover how racial injustice and social injustice impact our community, to connect with one another, and to identify ways to dismantle racism and other forms of discrimination. This is an exciting opportunity to dive deep into racial equity and social justice. We hope you will join us on this journey, and we can't wait to get started!



**Appendix B**

DEI EVALUATION for policies and procedures								
DEI	Diversity evaluation	1 - Problematic elements to improve	2- Neutral	3- Accounts for DEI		<b>Actions for improvement?</b>	1	Problematic elements to improve
	Does anything in this policy disempower an individual?	1			1		2	Neutral
	Does it constrict opportunities?		2		2		3	Accounts for DEI
	Do we provide reasonable accommodations for accessibility?		2		2			
	Does it meaningfully honor diverse voices?			3	3			LGBTQIA BIPOC ADA International Native
	Does this contribute to a safe and diverse community?			3	3			Women
	Does this policy show preference?			3	3			Asians & Asian-Americans

	Does this policy create unnecessary obstacles ?	1			1			LatinX
	Does the practice of implementing this create problems?	1			1			non-Christian
	Does this honor others experiences?		2					Non-religious

DEI Score		8					
Diversity	Diversity evaluation	Evaluation standard #1	Evaluation standard #2	Evaluation standard #3	Evaluation standard #4	Average	Diversity Score
	Policy #1	4	3	4	0	3	3
	Policy #2	0	3	3	3	2	
	Policy #3	2	1	3	3	2	
	Policy #4	4	4	4	4	4	

Equity	Equity evaluation	Evaluation standard #1	Evaluation standard #2	Evaluation standard #3	Evaluation standard #4	Average	Equity Score
	Policy #1	4	3	4	0	11	11
	Policy #2	0	3	3	3	9	
	Policy #3	2	1	3	3	9	
	Policy #4	4	4	4	4	16	
Inclusion	Inclusion evaluation	Evaluation standard #1	Evaluation standard #2	Evaluation standard #3	Evaluation standard #4	Average	Inclusion Score
	Policy #1	4	3	4	0	11	11
	Policy #2	0	3	3	3	9	
	Policy #3	2	1	3	3	9	
	Policy #4	4	4	4	4	16	

DEI Score	3
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DEI	Diversity evaluation	Does anything in this policy disempower an individual?	Does it constrict opportunities?	Does it meaningfully honor all voices?	Does this contribute to a safe and diverse community?	What standards we use will likely be reflective of our diversity policy				Average	Diversity Score
	Policy #1	4	3	4	0					3	3
	Policy #2	0	3	3	3					2	
	Policy #3	2	1	3	3					2	
	Policy #4	4	4	4	4					4	
	Policy #5	4	2	3	2					3	
	Policy #6	4	2	2	1					2	
	Policy #7	3	1	3	2					2	
	Policy #8	1	4	4	4					3	
	Policy #9	2	3	1	3					2	

Questions

Does anything in this policy disempower an individual?
Does it constrict opportunities?
Does it meaningfully honor all voices?
Does this contribute to a safe and diverse community?
Does this policy balance between.
What standards we use will likely be reflective of our diversity policy
Do we provide reasonable accommodations for accessibility?
Does the policy have an underlying discriminatory practice?
Does this policy show preference?
Does this policy create unnecessary obstacles?
Does the policy align with university standards?
Does the practice of implementing this create problems?