



Building the Future and Ourselves:

What We have Learned About Ourselves and the Library Profession by
Developing a Training Program for Underrepresented High School Students

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 #coreforum2022

Hello!



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What obstacles have you faced in your efforts to recruit diverse library staff?

Topics:

- ▷ Lack of Diversity in Librarianship
- ▷ Developing an IMLS Grant
- ▷ Lessons
- ▷ Looking Forward

Lack of Diversity in Librarianship

2017 ALA Member Survey: Demographics Survey

ALA Members by Race or Family Origin *% of members self-identifying*

	2014	2017
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1.1	1.2
Asian	3.5	3.6
Black or African American	4.3	4.4
Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.3	0.2
White	87.1	86.7
Other	3.7	4.0

#LibrariesSoWhite

Diversity and Demographics of Library Professionals

- ▷ The librarian profession suffers from a persistent lack of racial and ethnic diversity that has not changed significantly over the past 15 years.
- ▷ Just over 83 percent of librarians identified as white in 2020. Library technicians and assistants were slightly more diverse. Among library technicians and assistants, 78.6 percent identified as white in 2020.
- ▷ In 2020, just 9.5 percent of librarians identified as Black or African American, 9.9 percent as Hispanic or Latino (of any race), and 3.5 percent as Asian-American or Pacific Islander.
- ▷ Librarians are slightly less diverse than the workforce of professionals in all education, training, and library occupations, which is 82 percent white. Black and African American professionals make up 10 percent of the education workforce, while Hispanic and Asian professionals represented 10.9 percent and 4.9 percent of the education workforce, respectively.
- ▷ Librarians and other library professionals are also older than the general workforce. While Americans over 55 accounted for 19.6 percent of the total workforce in 2018, 31.5 percent of the library workforce was over the age of 55.

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Table 11: Employed persons by detailed occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, Annual Averages, 2020. Available at <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.pdf>

Value of Diverse Workforce

IMLS Positioning Report

“...recruiters need to go where diverse populations already are. It is important to consider recruitment early – perhaps as early as middle school and high school – how to expose students to the value of careers in LIS.”

- IMLS Positioning Report

The IMLS Grant

IMLS Laura Bush 21st Century Librarianship

Program Overview:

The Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program (LB21) supports the development of a diverse workforce of librarians and archivists in order to meet the information needs of their communities by enhancing the training and professional development of library and archives professionals; developing faculty and information leaders; and recruiting, educating, and retaining the next generation of library and archives professionals.

SIUE Diverse Librarianship Career Training and Education Program

We aim to recruit students from East St. Louis School District 189 Career Technical Education (CTE) program, which is part of a national initiative to provide skills-based, hands-on training to high school students.

This project seeks to address and reduce the most pervasive issues related to recruiting and retaining diverse library employees by providing a pathway to the profession prior to entering an LIS graduate program and by developing a more equitable approach to recruitment and retention.

Program Goals

- ▶ Recruit two cohorts of five high school seniors from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds
- ▶ Partner with library/cultural organizations
- ▶ Mentor cohort students; encourage them to pursue library careers
- ▶ Cohort students attend ALA Conference
- ▶ Develop & Disseminate Toolkit

Career & Technical Education

According to the National Center for Education Statistics

- ▶ 98 percent of public-school districts had high school CTE programs in 2016-2017 (Gray and Lewis, 2018).
- ▶ 82 percent of students who earned at least 1 high school CTE credit were Black (U.S. DOE, 2013).

By partnering with a high school CTE program, especially one that serves diverse and underrepresented minority groups such as East St. Louis Sr. High, the grant team focused on getting students interested in librarianship before leaving high school.

Mentoring

Modeled in part after the “Mentoring in Medicine” program, founded in 2006, which uses interventions such as individual mentoring, conference attendance, hands-on experience, and special instruction in health careers (Holden, 2014).

Each student is paired with a library mentor from SIUE.

- ▷ Weekly check-ins
- ▷ Act as a resource to students
- ▷ Help guide students through the program curriculum
- ▷ Guides students through life obstacles as they come up while in the program

Curriculum

Part 1: Competencies & Communication

- Unit 1: Internship Competencies
- Unit 2: Communication & Teamwork

Part 2: All About Libraries

- Unit 3: Introduction to libraries
- Unit 4: Reference, Information Literacy, Outreach
- Unit 5: Circulation, Cataloging, & Access
- Unit 6: Technology Services and Digital Libraries

Part 3: ALA Summer Institute

- Unit 7: Careers in Library & Information Services

Why are we here?

What We have Learned About Ourselves and the
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for Underrepresented High School Students

Program Reflections

- ▷ Academic Libraries
 - Tenure process
- ▷ Leadership crisis
- ▷ Traditional recruitment practices
- ▷ Recruitment crisis
- ▷ Maybe librarian's aren't cool – we don't have the "it" factor
- ▷ Characteristics of library workers
 - Controlling, anal retentive
- ▷ Evolving nature of the profession
 - Analog to digital paradigm
 - Traditionalists versus innovators (early career librarians ready to collaborate per their training!)
- ▷ Toxic Work Cultures and Environments
- ▷ Defunding libraries (political landscape)

Program Reflections (continued)

▷ Being black in LIS

- No hiding/hypervisible
- Dealing with uneven workloads and being overlooked for promotion
- Favoritism
- Microaggressions
- Not fitting in with organizational culture
- DEIA performative actions
- Educational supremacy
- Isolation
- Questioning of authority/micromanaging
- Thoughts of leaving profession

▷ Program shifts

- No longer focusing on target population of grant
- Inclusion leads to exclusion

Program Reflections (continued)

- Ignoring intersectionality
- Alienating already underserved community in East Saint Louis
- Equity doesn't mean equality
- Continuation of failure of LIS diversity initiatives
- Is the term diversity problematic?
- Is program advancing students or us?

What's Next?

How Do We Move Forward?

- ▶ Being critical of LIS
 - Addressing toxic workplaces
 - Evolving with profession
 - Moving out of the way
 - Challenging whiteness
 - Challenging how we discuss diversity
 - Lifting as we climb

Thanks!

Any questions?

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