OLA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Task Force Recommendations

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OUR FOCUS

- OLA as an anti-racist organization committed to anti-oppression
- Develop an anti-racist education and guidance for Oregon Libraries
- Improve the recruitment and retention of OLA members from underrepresented groups

EDI TASK FORCE STATEMENT

We recognize libraries serve a vast range of individuals with unique experiences and characteristics. We encourage an inclusive environment that promotes freedom of speech in conjunction with strong policies that protect patrons and library staff of all gender, national origin, ethnicity, religion, race, sexual orientation, disability, income level, age and all other personal, social, cultural and economic perspectives.

EDI TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

1. Affirm OLA's commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and anti-racism

Recommended actions:

- Develop an anti-racist statement or policy that applies to all OLA activities. The committee noticed very little on the OLA website that spoke to a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

- Develop EDI-focused training for OLA Leaders and committee members to help them increase inclusiveness and identify equity issues in current policies and practices.

- Convert the EDI Task Force into permanent committee or division with representation and a voting role on the board.

- The EDI Committee's Charge should include auditing existing OLA and OLA unit activities to look for equity gaps and ways to increase diversity.

- Each OLA division should have one of their unit board members or leaders serve on the OLA EDI Committee. This will ensure that the EDI Committee is aware of the breadth of what is happening in OLA and that anti-racist library workers are embedded in all OLA divisions.

- Create guidelines and/or a checklist for guest editors for OLAQ to refer to as they consider article proposals. A member of the OLAQ Editorial Board should also serve on the EDI Committee.

- OLA units should consider adding criteria to all scholarships that give preference to applicants from diverse cultural/ethnic backgrounds and/or historically marginalized groups.

- Communicate to library leadership in Oregon the necessity of enhancing the cultural awareness of current staff.

- The OLA Board and other unit leaders should develop a practice of asking "how could this better support OLA's EDI goals?" when developing new programs,

services, or policies or evaluating current ones. The Board should require that all proposals that come to the OLA Board include information on how they support OLA's EDI goals.

- Develop an award for individuals or libraries who have demonstrated success in building environments and/or programs that foster diversity and inclusiveness.

2. Improve the diversity within OLA with recruitment, retention, and support.

Recommended actions:

- Develop and conduct a survey of non-and-former-members to assess recruitment, retention, and inclusiveness issues OR conduct a needs assessment of Oregon Library workers from underrepresented groups to determine how OLA can better recruit, retain, and support them. Responses from the survey/assessment should inform OLA's strategic planning work.

- To encourage the development of leaders of color in Oregon, the OLA Leadership Committee should offer one of its three leadership development scholarships explicitly to applicants from diverse cultural/ethnic backgrounds and/or historically marginalized groups. LIOLA should also explicitly give preference to accepting applicants from diverse cultural/ethnic backgrounds and/or historically marginalized groups.

- Consider developing a mentoring program specifically for early-career library workers of color that pairs them with experienced mentors of color. OR Train a group of library workers to listen to other library workers when they have issues regarding bias, discrimination, etc. This allows people to vent, have someone listen to them in a non-judgemental manner and then decide what to do next. Similar to the LITE Listener program at Portland Community College.

3. Support anti-racist libraries and librarianship in Oregon with educational resources.

Recommended actions:

- OLA, perhaps in collaboration with the State Library should develop an EDI Toolkit for library administrators and managers focused on EDI management that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- ○ enhancing the cultural awareness of staff and hiring for cultural awareness;
- ○ increasing diversity through job postings and hiring practices to bring library staffing in line with community demographics;
- ○ supporting staff from underrepresented groups;
- ○ developing anti-racist policies;
- ○ developing specific recommendations for holding employees of Oregon libraries accountable for biased racist behavior;
- ○ adding a statement on the library's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion to position descriptions open for library staff;
- ○ conducting ongoing equity evaluations to determine whether library policies, procedures, services, programming, or collections inequitably impact or inequitably serve members of their community. Re-examine and set goals;
- ○ providing examples of antiracist analysis of library policies;
- ○ providing guidelines for responding to hate speech, hate crimes, and hate propaganda at the library;
- ○ developing a pathway for library staff to report microaggressions, emotional labor, or to share library experiences and scenarios that reflect racial inequity, disadvantages, or oppression;
- ○ recommending library directors and managers let BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) library employees and volunteers to participate in affinity groups and safe spaces.

- ● OLA, perhaps in collaboration with the State Library, should develop standalone educational experiences and toolkits to support learning about EDI issues for all library workers. We suggest the following topics:
  - ○ examining privilege and biases;
  - ○ becoming an ally (bystander training);
  - ○ looking at policies and practices for equity gaps;
  - ○ creating inclusive organizations.

- ● Develop ways to showcase projects, policies, and efforts from all types of Oregon libraries recognizing outstanding achievement in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- Promote existing educational resources on EDI initiatives and make them available to library staff as a resource for discussion.

- Offer ongoing opportunities for OLA members to discuss EDI and what it means for them and their libraries.

- Create EDI discussion guidelines for all OLA meetings, conferences, and workshops. These could also be used by individual libraries.

- Develop an equity collection development tool that can help selectors determine the validity of work about BIPOC and other underrepresented groups.