

University Library Council (ULC) Meeting

Monday, April 12th, 2021

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Attendees met online

Present: Progyan Basu, John Bertot, Brian Butler [chair], Linda Coleman, Mark DeMorra, James Farquhar, Judi Kidd [note taker], Adriene Lim, John Laub, Marcio Oliveira, Dan Mack, Ellen Williams

Guests:

Tahirah Akbar-Williams: Education and African American Studies Librarian

Joni Floyd: Curator, Maryland & Historical Collections

Cindy Frank: Architecture & Visual Resource Librarian, Head of Architecture Library

Lae'l Hughes-Watkins: University Archivist

1. Revise the ULC bylaws by removing gender-specific pronouns

The Senate has asked that all committees and councils review their bylaws looking to replace gender-specific pronouns. One such instance was found in the ULC bylaws: in section 4/a. ULC members present voted unanimously to adopt a change to incorporate non-gender-specific language and to fix any non-substantive formatting issues or typographical errors found. It will now be passed to the Senate for final approval.

2. Libraries' inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility [IDEA] work

Adriene outlined the Libraries' DEI programs and initiatives. Examples include examining our librarianship, teaching and collections-based work to address racism, and working collaboratively across campus. DEI is a cornerstone of the strategic plan.

Additionally

- All position descriptions now include DEI language.
- Library-wide DEI training will be offered on a regular basis. Staff/faculty attendance at training events will be addressed during annual reviews.
- See the [Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility pages](#) on the website for the Libraries' commitment to Anti-Racism and Social Justice

Adriene then introduced

Tahirah Akbar-Williams and Cindy Frank; Co-Chairs of the Library IDEA Committee and Diversity Co-Officers; Subject librarians

Joni Floyd, Curator for the State of Maryland and Historical Collections; Co-Chair, 1856 Project

Lae'l Hughes-Watkins, University Archivist; Founder, Project STAND; Co-Chair, 1856 Project

Tahirah Akbar-Williams and Cindy Frank

Over the past two years the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee has introduced several activities and initiatives to foster a more equitable and inclusive library culture. They described the following initiatives that address social justice, anti-racism, and anti-black racism.

[The Diversity Immersion Institute](#) (DII) was founded and Co-Directed by Tahirah in 2016 and 2018. It was created as a social justice project to introduce African American male high school students to career possibilities in Librarians and Information Science(LIS) and to expose them to college life. Simultaneously, it provides LIS students (future librarians) an immersive opportunity to work with students and librarians of color and learn concepts of DEI and advocacy.

In 2021 UMD Libraries created an [Employee Resource Group \(ERG\)](#) for BIPOC employees to address recruitment and retention within the libraries. This group is sponsored by the Dean of Libraries and the Libraries Human Resources (LHR).

Participating in the [Office of Diversity and Inclusion \(ODI\) Anti-Racist Learning Community](#) was “created for the purpose of developing the knowledge and relationships necessary to move forward anti-racist practices in University of Maryland classrooms, workspaces, and decision making.” There are two groups of library employees who meet once per week to read and discuss issues of DEI and anti-racism.

In February 2020, for [Black History Month](#), we held a 5 hour read-a-thon to celebrate Black authors. We had people read their favorite authors, we used the [Race Card](#) Activity (to discuss and challenge ideas of racism), watched videos and speeches of African American leaders, scholars, intellectuals and we introduced the [Brave Spaces](#) concept. The readathon also inspired the purchase of books that are missing from our collections. This year, for our [Second Annual BHM Read-a-thon](#), we pivoted to an online format with ZOOM and streamed it live over the library's [Youtube](#) channel. We provided a Google Whiteboard for comments about readings as well.

For years the Library has awarded 3 monetary awards for excellence in [Undergraduate Research](#). This year we added a fourth award that would recognize undergraduate research specifically related to IDEA.

We are working with Library HR to incorporate training opportunities into the annual offerings for library employees.

Last June we encouraged our colleagues to attend the Celebration of the 30 years of the [Americans With Disabilities Act](#). The libraries sponsored the closed captions.

This year 2021 the libraries are co-sponsors of the [UMD Disabilities Summit](#).

We organized the StepUp Forum to discuss the murder of George Floyd and anti-black violence in the US and discuss what library faculty and staff could advance anti-racist ideas.

We secured funding for our cataloguers to attend a one-day workshop on "[Listening to Many Voices: Ethics in Technical Services](#)"

Started weekly blog posts on our internal staff blog - Bright IDEAs, focused on and educating colleagues about the intersection of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and ableism.

Started an [IDEA Book FUND](#) to increase our ownership of diverse materials. We take requests from the University Community as well as our own Library Staff.

Lae'I Hughes-Watkins

- In the summer of 2017, [Project STAND](#) was officially launched. Lae'I founded Project STAND along with nearly 70 colleges and universities. They have created a radical grassroots archival consortium, establishing a centralized digital space highlighting analog and digital collections emphasizing student activism in marginalized communities. Project STAND aims to foster ethical documentation of contemporary and past social justice movements in under documented student populations. Project STAND advocates for centering student-driven collections by collaborating with student organizers. We also work with educators to provide pedagogical support; creating digital resources; and hosting workshops and forums. We facilitate the building of sustainable relationships with student organizers and their communities leading to inclusive physical and digital spaces of accountability, diversity, and equity.

Goals

- Create a community for thoughtful discourse on the ethical documentation of student activism in marginalized communities
- Develop and distribute a suite of educational resources to assist student organizers and archivists/memory workers in documenting activism in vulnerable communities
- Assist in enhancing the discoverability and visibility of histories of student organizing in historically under documented student populations
- Provide an understanding of the role of student activists in the trajectory of academic institutions and their cultural development
- Assist in broadly impacting the archival profession by prompting a shift in collecting priorities and increase engagement with student organizers

- Over \$800k in funding, with recent generous funding from the Mellon Foundation for a \$750,000 project that is in partnership with Robert Woodruff Library and will support, workshops, residencies, and digitization projects.

Archives Collection Development Statement, Lae'I Hughes-Watkins

- [Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Reparative ArchivingStatement](#)

During a recent review of our University Archives Collection Development Statement, it became clear that we needed to provide language that went beyond diversity but also spoke to equity and inclusion. Our new EDI statement also embraces the tenets outlined by the IDEA's committee, with a particular focus on democratization and transformation. As UMD Libraries, along with other colleges and universities around the country, working to actively create documentation that reflects an anti-racist praxis and focus on advocating for the historically marginalized communities in the aftermath of the protest from the summer of 2020 after the murder of George Floyd, and in honor of so many others, our documentation needed not to reflect, not just a moment but a shift in ideology that needed to be threaded into how we document and preserve the histories of our organization. We wanted our statement to be not just reactive but proactive as well.

Joni Floyd

1856 Project

- In April 2020, UMD officially joined [Universities Studying Slavery](#) (USS) an international consortium of [78] academic intuitions that seek to acknowledge and understand their historical connections to slavery and its legacies.
- USS at the UMD is known as the [1856 Project](#). Our mission is to: (1) Investigate the history of the African American experience on the campus and in the surrounding Maryland community; (2) Conduct detailed analysis of documentation identifying the University's historical connections to US slavery and its legacies; and (3) Disseminate our findings to campus stakeholders and to the public with clearly defined reparative outcomes.
- The 1856 Project Outcomes to: (1) **foster teaching, scholarly research, and programming** that will advance our mission through conferences, publications, lesson plans, and new undergraduate courses; (2) create a **digital presence** to provide a central hub for content and regular project updates to all stakeholders; and (3) establish a **physical space** on campus to remember and make visible Black people's vital contributions to our campus and community.

University of Maryland/Georgetown University Partnership

- The Libraries have been invited by Georgetown University Libraries to collaborate on the first phase of its Digital Migration Museum project. This phase will focus on telling stories from the Filipino American experience in the DMV in the form of an interactive exhibit. As stewards of the Filipino American Community Archives, UM Libraries plans to share its content and also provide reference and instruction assistance to the UM Filipino American history course that will collaborate through curation, scriptwriting, and generating new content (photos, interviews, scholarship). Future phases will invite other immigrant communities to contribute content and projects.

In response to a question, ULC members were invited to share the DEI initiatives with their colleagues to increase cross-campus support.

3. UC/Elsevier contract

Dan updated the group on the transformative agreement between UC and Elsevier. He added that the UC system is extremely well funded and this agreement only works at the UC scale. The model differs from both the Harvard and UMD PACT models.

In response to a question regarding recent PACT visits to campus communities, ULC members noted positive reception and support. A suggestion was made to create a “layperson’s” summary of terms with scenarios to add to the information for campus.

4. Finally

The next ULC meeting is Monday, May 10th at 2 pm. This is the last meeting in this session.

ULC members are welcome to attend the next PACT meeting [April 19th] with guest Peter Suber, Director of the Harvard Office for Scholarly Communication and Director of the Harvard Open Access Project.

JKidd 2021-04-12