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Chapter 12

AUTHENTICITY VS. PROFESSIONALISM: BEING TRUE TO OURSELVES AT WORK

Jennifer Brown and Sofia Leung

For early-career librarians of color, academic librarianship contains a number of unspoken and unacknowledged expectations. While it is widely recognized that the majority of librarianship is white and female,¹ there is still a lack of action that directly addresses the consequences of this dearth of diversity. In fact, we have seen through personal experience that some attempts to remedy this problem have resulted in further marginalization of librarians of color in the workplace. The American Library Association (ALA), among other professional organizations, continually calls for academic and public libraries to increase the representation of marginalized professionals on library staff and to create diversity and inclusion initiatives. These efforts have put increasing expectations on libraries to also diversify programs and collections, and to become more inclusive spaces. However, carrying the burden of planning, promoting, defending, and/or assessing the work of social justice often falls to the very marginalized professionals that institutions struggle to recruit and retain. This tokenization results in the shouldering

1. Myrna Morales, Em Claire Knowles, and Chris Bourg, "Diversity, Social Justice, and the Future of Libraries," *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 14, no. 3 (2014): 439–451, <https://doi.org/10.1353/pla.2014.0017>.

of invisible and emotional labors that burden us further; we operate at a deficit working under these conditions, as this toll then affects the -isms we experience while embodying our intersecting identities in the workplace.

As a black, bisexual, cisgendered, able-bodied woman of color and a Chinese American, heterosexual, cisgendered, able-bodied woman of color in academic librarianship, we, the authors, want to push back against the simplistic narrative that diversity work is the work of people of color (POC). By exploring the personal and professional challenges of balancing the invisibility and hypervisibility of our labor among peers and library administrators, we want the profession to acknowledge the emotional and psychological toll that providing diversity programming, awareness, and education takes on POC, to the point that many of us leave the profession, and how the structural oppression of predominantly white institutions (PWIs) further complicates our undertaking. We want to examine the pressures we feel to perform diversity work as women of color, particularly as many non-POC librarians and staff pay lip service to diversity, but do not show up when the work needs to happen. To add to this burden, administrators often do not protect the librarians of color or others doing this social justice work, nor do they value or give credit to those who do this work. The expectation is that we, as “the experts,” can do it alone, when, in reality, this work cannot be done without the committed contributions of staff and administrators at every level.

Using an intersectional lens, we consider how each author’s identity shapes their perceptions and experiences, so as not to generalize or speak for other librarians with so-called marginalized identities working in the field. We hope that, by using this gaze and incorporating applicable research, our chapter will provide some insight into potential steps library organizations can take to create better work environments for staff to fully embody their identities without incurring further burden or tokenization. Through understanding how our social identities specifically intersect and interact with our work, we as a profession can realize the promise of social justice.

Diversity Work

What do we mean by “diversity work” in academic libraries? For those of us who believe in the work of libraries as the active promotion of diversity and equity, there is a sense that all library work should be diversity work. This seems particularly valid given that “Diversity” and “Social Responsibility” are stated values in the ALA “Core Values of Librarianship.” Diversity is understood by the profession as the need to diversify the people who become librarians.² ALA defines social responsibility as:

the contribution that librarianship can make in ameliorating or solving the critical problems of society; support for efforts to help inform and educate the people of the United States on these problems and to encourage them to examine the many views on and the facts regarding each problem; and the willingness of ALA to take a position on current critical issues with the relationship to libraries and library service set forth in the position statement.³

This policy statement is very close to a definition of social justice. “Diversity” can also be a code word for equity, social justice, or antiracism, but is often used instead of those terms to allow for white fragility.⁴

The very nature of diversity work also begets the idea of “performance,” and we want to be clear and intentional about why we refer to it this way. Sara Ahmed weaves a narrative linking institutional documentation and diversity work to “performance culture,” stating that “Institutional performance involves an increasing self-consciousness

2. Morales, Knowles, and Bourg, “Diversity, Social Justice, and the Future of Libraries,” 439–451.

3. American Library Association, “Core Values of Librarianship,” *Advocacy, Legislation & Issues*, June 29, 2004, <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/statementspols/corevalues>.

4. “White Fragility is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves... [including] outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation.” Robin DiAngelo, “White Fragility,” *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy* 3, no. 3 (2011): 55–70.

about how to perform well in these systems, by generating the right kinds of procedures, methods, and materials, where rightness is determined as the fulfillment of the requirements of a system.”⁵ She links this to the notion that “doing well [within the bounds of performance culture] involves generating *the right kinds of appearance*.”⁶

Librarianship has its own set of top-down, hierarchically organized documents that frame acceptable ways for diversity work to be thought of, articulated, and performed across institutions, such as ALA’s “Core Values” document; another example is the Association of College and Research Libraries’ (ACRL) 2012 “Diversity Standards: Cultural Competency for Academic Libraries,” which seeks to “provide a framework to support libraries in engaging the complexities of providing services to diverse populations, and recruiting and maintaining a diverse library workforce.”⁷

As bodies of the larger ALA, the creation of such documents smacks of “rightness” creation, aiding a systemic idea of what diversity efforts *should* look like across institutions. Now, we don’t begrudge the language of these documents; it’s one of the more meaningful examples of what happens when you give groups charged with this work (in the case of the latter document, the Racial and Ethnic Diversity Committee of ACRL) an opportunity to shape the larger discourse. However, these documents aren’t capable of holding individual institutions accountable. We argue that, as a result, institutions will primarily use them to *appear* to perform in professionally acceptable ways. And even if an institution doesn’t officially adopt documents like these, it often looks to its academic peers (who are also being informed by larger professional documents) for direction. Doing the work of diversity and inclusion within our institutions does manifest as a kind of performance, one that’s

5. Sara Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 84.

6. *Ibid.*, 85.

7. Association of College and Research Libraries, “Diversity Standards: Cultural Competency for Academic Libraries (2012),” *Association of College & Research Libraries* (ACRL), May 4, 2012, <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/diversity>.

arguably about performing in pre-existing ways deemed “right”; if the language of these professional statements and standards doesn’t push the boundaries, then neither will our “performances” of their suggestions. If we view social justice as a foundational value of librarianship, shouldn’t diversity work just be considered library work?

In practice, this has never been the case. Diversity work is the dirty work that no one wants to do, because to *do* it means that something is wrong with librarianship, a values-based profession that is meant to help others and to benefit society. How could there be something wrong with our profession? From our personal experience and those of colleagues, there is a refusal to even accept that librarianship has a social justice problem or that, as members of these institutions, we participate daily in systems of oppression.⁸ So what does this mean for diversity work? It means that very few librarians understand or are even interested in dismantling institutional systems of oppression.

Hudson has characterized diversity in LIS as being preoccupied “with demographic inclusion and individual behavioral competence [which] has...left little room in the field for substantive engagement with race as a historically contingent phenomenon.”⁹ The lack of diversity within our profession and the fact that it is so difficult to retain librarians of color in our field (the inclusion piece) are symptoms of these systems of oppression. If white librarians cannot recognize this, the work that we as librarians of color have taken on—to dismantle these systems—will be nearly impossible.

8. For example, Drabinski notes that “the Library of Congress Classification (LCC) and Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) fail to accurately and respectfully organize library materials about social groups and identities that lack social and political power.” (Emily Drabinski, “Queering the Catalog: Queer Theory and the Politics of Correction,” *Library Quarterly* 83, no. 2 [April 1, 2013]: 94–111. doi:10.1086/669547). However, many of our institutions continue to use LCC and LCSH to catalog and organize their collections without challenging these systems at an institutional level and continue to make them a core part of the education that librarians receive in Library and Information Science Master’s programs.

9. David James Hudson, “On ‘Diversity’ as Anti-Racism in Library and Information Studies: A Critique,” *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 0, no. 1 (January 31, 2017), <http://libraryjuicepress.com/journals/index.php/jclis/article/view/6>.

Diversity work means questioning our job conditions every day. Why is this system in place? Who was originally intended to benefit from this service? Who benefits from it now? How can we dismantle these systems of oppression and create a better system—one that benefits those in the margins of our community? The answer cannot be “this is how it’s always been done, so that’s how we should continue to do it.” For us, entering the profession as early career librarians of color, to be hit with the stark reality of academic librarianship and its whiteness was very much like thinking you were about to hug a friendly dog but it turns out to be a hungry anaconda. In a profession that claims “diversity” and “social responsibility” as its core values, it is difficult for those of us who became values-based librarians to swallow the reality of how those values do or don’t show up in the field.

White librarians do not want to face the fact that there’s something wrong in their own house. In this work, we actively incorporate April Hathcock’s definition of “whiteness”—“I use ‘whiteness’ to refer not only to the socio-cultural differential of power and privilege that results from categories of race and ethnicity; it also stands as a marker for the privilege and power that acts to reinforce itself through hegemonic cultural practice that excludes all who are different.”¹⁰ In a panel presentation during the 2017 Identity, Agency, and Culture in Academic Libraries conference, Fobazi Ettarh built upon these concepts of whiteness and privilege when she coined the term “vocational awe,” which is the assumption that because libraries are inherently good (and well-intentioned), there is “some core aspect of the profession [that] is beyond critique.”¹¹ A small subset of librarians seems to be willing to engage with critical librarianship¹² to the extent that it serves their users, but

10. April Hathcock, “White Librarianship in Blackface: Diversity Initiatives in LIS,” *In the Library with the Lead Pipe*, October 7, 2015, <http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2015/lis-diversity/>.

11. Fobazi Ettarh et al., “I Love Being a Librarian, But...?: Reconciling Vocational Awe, Emotional Labor, and Social Change in Librarianship” (presentation: Identity, Agency, and Culture in Academic Libraries Conference, Los Angeles, CA, May 22, 2017).

12. Critical librarianship is “a movement of library workers dedicated to bringing social justice principles into our work in libraries... Recognizing that we all work under

asking them to question their own complicity in the system becomes problematic. As Ahmed writes, “statements of commitment (to equality and diversity) can be used *in* or even *as* an institutional response to racism, often taking the form of an assertion disguised as a question: ‘how can we be racist if we are committed to equality and diversity?’”¹³ This circular argument removes the possibility of actively engaging with what equality, diversity, and social justice mean, both systemically and individually.

In the instances where libraries do want to be seen doing diversity work, sometimes because it makes them look good to care about diversity, the work is assigned to either a position (e.g., Diversity Librarian) or a committee as though that will be enough. It’s easy to point to these as clear evidence that diversity work is being done—after all, it’s in the name—and that absolves anyone else in the organization from having to do diversity work. “The uneven distribution of responsibility for equality can become a mechanism for reproducing inequality.”¹⁴ We have seen this ourselves, in situations where both we the authors and colleagues of color at other institutions end up on the diversity committee or in a diversity residency. This checks many boxes for the organization; not only do they have one or two “diverse” staff members—and usually not in positions of power—but those staff are also responsible for diversity work. This box-checking means the organization doesn’t have to address structural issues of inequity, such as the barriers many POC face when trying to enter the profession.¹⁵

Oftentimes, those of us doing the diversity work find ourselves in a position where we have to call out these uncomfortable truths, because

regimes of white supremacy, capitalism, and a range of structural inequalities, how can our work as librarians intervene in and disrupt those systems?” “About / Join the Discussion.” Accessed August 30, 2017. <http://critlib.org/about/>.

13. Ahmed, *On Being Included*, 116.

14. *Ibid.*, 91.

15. Some of the barriers to entry are low representation in the field (which means many POC can’t imagine themselves as librarians or educators), the requirement of an expensive Master’s degree, and sometimes a second Master’s if you want to be in higher education.

“nobody else will say them.”¹⁶ This leaves it to the person of color to point out the fact that a particular policy or procedure is not equitable or that activists of color on campus do not want the university administrators to offer them workshops on self-care, as one author has done. This author explicitly stated to library administrators that these students were asking administrators to make the campus safe for black students, for queer and trans students, and for women. Instead, when this author voiced that concern and others, she was either told that these experiences cannot be true because our other colleagues can’t see it for themselves or, worse, she was met with silence and ignored. In fact, some of these colleagues and administrators will read this very paragraph and scoff at these words.

“Performing” Diversity Work

What does the “performance” of diversity work look like in practice? Let’s consider things like the blanket diversity or anti-discrimination statement featured on many job ads in and outside of librarianship. Institutions might be willing to admit that they should “review recruitment, hiring, and promotion policies, procedures, and practices to remedy inadvertent exclusion of or discrimination toward underrepresented, underserved, and historically oppressed groups,”¹⁷ as the ACRL Cultural Competencies document suggests, but are they also comfortable with exchanging that boilerplate blurb for language that explicitly calls for dedication to anti-oppression frameworks? Or would a performance like that be deemed *too* radical, within the confines of “rightness” they’ve devised? It’s also likely that institutions put this language forward to comply with federal regulations surrounding equal opportunity hiring practices, so it’s unlikely that they feel a need to push the boundaries in these circumstances when standard rhetoric meets the qualifications.

16. Ahmed, *On Being Included*, 61-62.

17. Association of College and Research Libraries, “Diversity Standards.”

The authors' "performance" of diversity work within institutional systems has taken many forms: serving on or chairing institutional and national diversity and inclusion committees, collaborating with colleagues and administrators on diversity and inclusion mission statements, devising programming directly serving marginalized students, and the like. But as we've come to critique these performances, we've asked ourselves whether they do what Ahmed suggests, which is to value a "community of voices"¹⁸ we don't normally hear from? And, more importantly, are we holding our performances, and by extension ourselves, accountable? As Nicole Cooke states in her powerful autoethnographic article, "while diversity is desirable on paper, it is often resisted in practice."¹⁹

Emotional Burden and Authenticity in the Workplace

For some, performing diversity work is a conscious choice that is focused on understanding the ways that systemic forms of power, privilege, and oppression are reflected—both in libraries and the larger society. However, it's also a fairly personal choice, and the degree to which (or ways in which) it's performed depend on a variety of factors—the level of risk one is willing to take within their institution, the willingness to decenter one's own identit[ies] (and, in particular, one's whiteness) to amplify voices and perspectives at the margins, and others. Still, what seems to be a conscious choice for our white, able-bodied, cisgender peers looking to support diversity and anti-oppression initiatives isn't so for us. As marginalized women of color, the navigation of systemic inequalities and the overall distance from whiteness means that performing the "work" of diversity *isn't* a choice. We live its reality in our everyday lives by having to justify our mere existence in a myriad of white spaces and places. Examining our positionality and cracks within the system often comes as second nature.

18. Ahmed, *On Being Included*, 29.

19. Nicole A. Cooke, "Pushing Back from the Table: Fighting to Maintain My Voice as a Pre-Tenure Minority Female in the White Academy," *Polymath: An Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences Journal* 4, no. 2 (June 28, 2014): 39.

The decision to take on diversity work at the office begets conversations about its impact on one's perceived professionalism; generally, it's fine to "do the work"²⁰ outside of the institution on our own time but bringing anti-oppression, anti-racist, or other frameworks into the academy is typically only sanctioned in specific ways. Thus, being authentic to the selves we embody outside the workplace becomes fraught with peril. Do we speak our minds and risk angering those who think this work doesn't pertain to them, or to the library overall? Do we risk being devalued or derailed in institutions that would rather ignore our efforts? Do we hide our frustrations and pain when we encounter microaggressions²¹ or outright racism at work, not to mention sexism or ageism? And, even if the academy welcomes this work and our actions within it, are we willing to deal with the constant co-opting of our ideas and efforts by white colleagues doing the work alongside us? These questions aren't exhaustive, and they certainly don't represent the thought process or reality of *every* marginalized librarian in the profession, but they are central to the ways that we navigate diversity work within the field.

Research shows that, regardless of our choice between authenticity or professionalism, the academy tends to *expect* people of color (especially women of color) to perform diversity work in ways not required of our white colleagues. Mignon R. Moore addresses this in her piece "Women of Color in the Academy: Navigating Multiple Intersections and Multiple Hierarchies," stating "The service that women of color are consistently asked to perform, and sometimes feel a personal obligation to participate in, tends to go unreported and unacknowledged, many

20. April Hathcock, "DO THE WORK!!! #libleadgender Chat March 9," *At The Intersection* (blog), March 4, 2016, <https://aprilhathcock.wordpress.com/2016/03/04/do-the-work-libleadgender-chat-march-9/>.

21. "Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color." Derald Wing Sue et al., "Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Implications for Clinical Practice," *American Psychologist* 62, no. 4 (2007): 271–86, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.62.4.271>.

times even to the individuals doing the work.”²² Moore also cites Thomas and Hollenshead,²³ who found that black women faculty experience “organizational barriers that disproportionately rely on them for student mentoring activities and other types of work that are not rewarded in department evaluations.”²⁴ When service expectations aren’t equitably distributed and women of color are implicitly (or explicitly) asked to shoulder the burden, is it any wonder that we become overwhelmed or burn out altogether? Even beyond diversity or service work, themes from an in-depth survey of the literature on experiences of faculty of color across academe highlight issues of “isolation, perceived biases in the hiring process, unrealistic expectations of doing [our] work and being representatives of [our] racial/ethnic group.”²⁵ This suggests that we already navigate this profession feeling overtaxed and unsupported as we work to deconstruct legacies of oppression that bedrock the academy. Why should we take on diversity work when we know that those efforts won’t help with tenure or promotional portfolios in the ways they should? Results from the survey also highlight that:

Although service can be detrimental to faculty of color as they progress toward tenure and promotion, it can also be what provides inspiration and passion as they fulfill their desire to serve in response to the needs of their communities.²⁶

22. Mignon R. Moore, “Women of Color in the Academy: Navigating Multiple Intersections and Multiple Hierarchies,” *Social Problems* 64, no. 2 (May 1, 2017): 200, doi:10.1093/socpro/spx009.

23. Gloria D. Thomas and Carol Hollenshead, “Resisting from the Margins: The Coping Strategies of Black Women and Other Women of Color Faculty Members at a Research University,” *Journal of Negro Education* 70, no. 3 (2001): 166–75, doi:10.2307/3211208.

24. Moore, “Women of Color in the Academy,” 201.

25. Caroline Sotello Viernes Turner, Juan Carlos González, and J. Luke, “Faculty of Color in Academe: What 20 Years of Literature Tells Us,” *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* 1, no. 3 (2008): 143, doi:10.1037/a0012837.

26. *Ibid.*

To be authentic to our beliefs and passions is to cultivate a professional identity unique to ourselves; it's akin to making ourselves visible within a profession that often values careful neutrality, devoid of the personal.

Invisibility vs. Hypervisibility

“It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings...”²⁷

The duality of invisibility and hypervisibility in the academy pervasively affects librarians who identify as multiply marginalized; it's a type of double-consciousness wherein we're acutely aware of the academy's measuring stick (proximity to whiteness) and how well we meet it. Here, invisibility refers to the unseen-ness that passing begets; it stems from trying to navigate an organization that implicitly or explicitly says you need to minimize difference: “You have to pass by passing your way through whiteness. If whiteness is what the institution is oriented around, then even bodies that do not appear white have to inhabit whiteness.”²⁸ This is where we get into conversations about institutional “fit” and assimilation, which cross boundaries to suggest “fitting” into perceived notions of gender, sexuality, class, ability, and socially constructed identities all centered around whiteness as a primary identity marker. The closer your proximity to straight, white, cisgender, middle/upper class, able-bodiedness gets, the better you fit.

So we shrink—we stuff down the parts of ourselves deemed too far from normative identities—and we *cope*. But the reality is that no amount of pretending or silence erases who we are, and it certainly doesn't stop

27. W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co, 1903), 3, accessed May 30, 2017, <http://www.bartleby.com/114/index.html>.

28. Ahmed, *On Being Included*, 41.

us from being made hypervisible at will. In this context, hypervisibility stems from being singled out *solely* on some basis (such as one's identity); it's ephemeral in nature, primarily undertaken when the majority needs its token(s) to address, act, or influence institutional or sociopolitical spheres that the majority doesn't know how to. Constantine et. al. communicate the results of a study about how black faculty in Counseling and Psychology experience these intertwined phenomena:

Most of the Black faculty members in this study (n = 10) indicated that they had experienced alternating feelings of invisibility/marginalization and hypervisibility in their departments and institutions, depending on the situation or context. These participants generally reported feeling that many individuals on campus, especially White faculty members and administrators, often did not 'notice' their presence on campus until their expertise (particularly with regard to racial or ethnic minority issues) was needed or valued. When their expertise was needed or when they were asked to help recruit an applicant of color for an available position, many of the research participants reported feeling "hypervisible" and overexposed.²⁹

There's a special kind of visibility that comes from being asked "What should we do about our institution's diversity problems?" in the middle of a meeting comprised of all-white colleagues, as one author was. One of us was invisible until it was decided that we *needed* to speak on behalf of our entire race, explicitly feeling as though we'd become "exotic spectacles" or "racial/ethnic/gender/other-category experts."³⁰ You might argue that this was an effort to value that "community of voices" Ahmed mentions, but it's actually a prime example of the duality between invisibility and hypervisibility. This author was expected to modulate their proximity to whiteness (and everything that is non-other-ness) *until* called upon to solve an institutional challenge.

29. Madonna G. Constantine et al., "Racial Microaggressions Against Black Counseling and Counseling Psychology Faculty: A Central Challenge in the Multicultural Counseling Movement," *Journal of Counseling & Development* 86, no. 3 (Summer 2008): 351.

30. Katrina Bell McDonald and Adia M. Harvey Wingfield, "(In)visibility Blues: The Paradox of Institutional Racism," *Sociological Spectrum* 29, no. 1 (December 5, 2008): 32, doi:10.1080/02732170802480501.

If you're aware that marginalized librarians already carry the emotional burden of conforming to whiteness *and* shouldering the brunt of the institution's diversity work, then you should know that dictating *when* and *where* they perform their identity (as they're tasked with solving all your institution's problems) actually devalues their work. By doing so, you essentially bind them to identity expression on your terms, positioned right alongside epicenters of power, privilege, and whiteness that your institution operates from. If you're really about encouraging communities of voices, ensure such questions are asked of *everyone*, right on up to chancellors, provosts, and university presidents.

Why Do We Still Do This Work?

If serving within these institutional structures (like diversity and equity committees) is so difficult and we suffer for it, why do we keep doing it? The simple answer is that we have to. It is essential for us to remain in the profession. For the authors, and for many librarians of color that we know, we joined this profession to help people, to make a difference for those less fortunate than us. For those of us who have made it into this profession, we know what it took to battle structural and systemic racism to get to where we are today, but what about those of us who did not make it or decided they couldn't stay once they made it? Those who either could not take the daily microaggressions, the narrow qualifications to enter the profession, the isolation of being one of the few or only people of color, or the questioning of your work ethic, your right to be in this profession, to exist in this space. We do this work for all of those who did not make it, those who did and are made small by the system, those who did and are fighting alongside us, and for those who might come after us. Our individual achievements are meaningless without our community achieving alongside us.

If we do not do this work, who else will do it? Who else is supporting and mentoring people of color in our profession? Who else is questioning these systems of oppression and the traditional ways of library work? Who else is putting themselves at risk to do any of this? The risk

of taking on this work is burnout; it's having to work alongside white folks who want you to educate them constantly, so that they can do the work alongside you using only half as much effort. For one of us, that risk involved facing mockery from white colleagues who felt diversity work was unnecessary and fruitless. But not doing the work? That means enduring tasteless jokes about microaggressions and colloquial expressions like Cinco De "Drinko"; it means hearing folks extol the importance of free speech without regard to intersectional identities. Not doing the work means silence, complacency. It means *acceptance* of the status quo, which is...unacceptable.

What Can YOU Do to Make This Better for Current and Future Librarians of Color Doing Diversity Work?

We want to round out our chapter by providing potential recommendations for librarians who want to do and be better with "doing the work" (especially upper-level administrators). It's important to note that none of these should be considered exhaustive or all encompassing — each is just a small piece of the larger whole, and doing one alone won't change anything.³¹

Hiring

While the statistics from as recently as 2010 show that librarianship is still approximately 88% white,³² the reality is that having fewer marginalized librarians within the profession means more of us have to shoulder the burden of diversity efforts within our organizations anyway. Efforts should be made to transition from talking about diversity hiring initiatives to enacting them meaningfully; to actively recruit or attract, and then put effort into maintaining POC/LGBTQ/differently-abled

31. Hudson, "On 'Diversity' as Anti-Racism in Library and Information Studies."

32. Chris Bourg, "The Unbearable Whiteness of Librarianship," *Feral Librarian*, March 4, 2014, <https://chrisbourg.wordpress.com/2014/03/03/the-unbearable-whiteness-of-librarianship/>.

folks, particularly in leadership roles where authority is given to make real change.

Support Programs

Given that the literature (and the authors' personal experiences) reflect feelings of isolation and ostracization, efforts should be made to create opportunities for mentorship and connection wherever possible; while such efforts benefit all librarians, particular emphasis should be placed on establishing programs that directly benefit librarians outside centers of whiteness, able-bodied-ness, neurotypical-ness, and others. If queer/trans/disabled/POC librarians are going to take this work on, they shouldn't have to do it without support networks. Particular emphasis should be put on matching staff with others who occupy similar positionalities or identities, and if the institution can't accommodate this, then prioritize funding for librarians to attend conferences, workshops, or other professional development opportunities that *do* afford such connections.

Accountability

Holding upper-level administrators accountable for moving beyond acceptable diversity performances to meaningful action is crucial; it's the difference between our work being responded to versus it being swept under the proverbial academic rug. Administrators and others who occupy positions of power should use their authority to advance this work (preferably without being prompted to do so by librarians of color). Real institutional change might be achieved if diversity efforts focused on ensuring that upper-level administrative positions are made up of diverse candidates. Don't just hire librarians of color in entry-level roles; consider us for leadership opportunities in the same way you do mediocre white folks.

Accountability should also encompass keeping white colleagues who don't traditionally do (or want to do) this work honest about their lack of effort.

Conclusion

We've attempted to lay out a meaningful roadmap for understanding diversity work and emotional burden as they relate to how two women of color have traversed such experiences. However, the core of this centers around choice—we may be subject to –isms and –aggressions while serving on these committees, speaking at national conferences, or writing about our struggles, but we've worked to *choose* how we engage within those spheres while drawing important boundaries that help us reclaim (or restructure) those performances. One of us, for example, has chosen to perform diversity work on a university-wide committee composed of students and administrators of color. It took withdrawing from the library to find a place where that author could work toward equity without the burden of invisibility or tokenization. Another of us has chosen to create informal structures of support, mentoring, and professional development for librarians of color, since there are far fewer formal opportunities available. If we put ourselves at risk, we choose to do so knowing that we are at least trying to make things better with the resources available to us and within the boundaries we set. We encourage you, reader, to draw those boundaries in ways that empower and embolden you—to decide when, where, and how your performance occurs.

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