

Loyola Notre Dame Library Equity Audit: Final Report

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Overview

The Loyola Notre Dame Library Equity Audit took place from January through May 2021, following the seven-step process outlined by Loyola. Speaking with library employees during Step 1 (Reflect on perceptions of equity and potential areas of inquiry) surfaced many strengths of the library, as well as many potential avenues of inquiry. The audit team did not speak with most part-time employees or senior administrators when gathering data from staff to inform the recommendations included in this report and will strive to make future DEI initiatives at the library inclusive of all staff. We have included recommended future areas for exploration in Appendix A of this report. It is our hope that the library will continue the process of reflection, data gathering, and goal setting initiated by this audit to address these ideas in the coming months.

Research question

After evaluating the feedback gathered from library staff on LNDL's strengths and areas for improvement in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), it became clear that the most important issue to staff was a lack of racial diversity in our organization. One employee noted that "racial equity in hiring practices is foundational, and it must be there for any other DEI initiatives in the library to make sense." The question we explored during this audit is:

How can articulation of core values and enhancements to the hiring process support greater racial diversity in library staff?

Data gathered and analyzed (and missing data)

With the help of our colleagues in library administration, we gathered the following data:

- Hiring-related documents for librarian searches from March 2016-March 2021 (such as job announcements, rubrics, and interview questions)
- Hiring-related documents for the last three non-librarian professional searches
- A list of places where job announcements are posted
- The library's current mission statement and former/inactive mission, vision, and values statements
- A survey of our AJCU and comparable schools' websites for mission, vision, and values statements
- Published research and presentations on equity in hiring from the library, education, business, and HR fields
- Reports and handbooks on equitable hiring from other academic libraries

We also attempted to gather data on the current and past racial/ethnic demographics of library staff and applicant pools. This data has not been collected by the library.

Analysis of data

Based on an analysis of the data collected, the audit team identified ways in which the library is already supporting greater racial diversity of staff in the hiring process, as well as areas where there are opportunities to encourage an even more equitable and inclusive hiring process.

Strengths

- The library conducts a well-structured hiring process, with standardized evaluation rubrics and interview questions for each search.
- The library has created a checklist for search committees that can be expanded to provide more in-depth guidance, especially on equity-related issues.
- Library staff are enthusiastic about creating a culture of DEI in the library and updating our hiring practices to support greater racial diversity in our hiring pools and library staff. Enhancements to DEI-related text in library job descriptions were made during this audit.

Opportunities

- The library's mission statement does not currently reflect the strong personal and professional commitment to DEI that library staff have expressed. It is also not publicly available to the communities we serve and potential job candidates, which would demonstrate the culture and commitment to DEI being cultivated at the library. We found that 88% of AJCU libraries include a mission statement on their website, and 50% include some combination of vision, values, and/or diversity/Black Lives Matter statements.
- Demographic data on current library staff and applicant pools is currently unavailable, making it impossible to assess any changes in the diversity of library staff or to know if the diversity of applicant pools is reflective of the profession.
- While the library already engages in many best practices related to hiring for diversity, equity, and inclusion, there are other recommended best practices not currently being implemented.

Recommendations

The audit team recommends that the library adopt the following goals to better articulate its core values and enhance the hiring process to support greater racial diversity in library staff:

1. Revisit the library's current mission statement and previous vision and values statements, updating them to reflect the library's organizational culture and commitment to DEI values. Share these publicly via the library website and make them a living part of the organizational culture of the library.
2. Work with the library's HR consultant, PSA, to determine whether the library can begin collecting data on race and ethnicity for current staff and for applicant pools.
3. Create and implement library guidelines for best practices in hiring for diversity, equity and inclusion.
4. Create a search committee handbook to guide staff in consistent and equitable hiring practices for librarian and non-librarian staff.
5. Create a LNDL Diversity Committee, to provide continuity and a commitment to ensuring that issues of equity and inclusion are incorporated into hiring and all other aspects of library work.