

**Florida Educational Equity Act Report**  
**George A. Smathers Libraries**  
**July 2016 – June 2017**

The George A. Smathers Libraries is strongly committed to a comprehensive approach to diversity and continuously seeks to improve its outreach to diverse users, to conserve historical records from underrepresented cultures and groups, and to increase the diversity of its staff.

## **I. Equal Opportunity Compliance**

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Describe internal and external policies that are followed to encourage non-discrimination practices. What were the results of any assessment, self-assessment, and monitoring of your program services?

The following are part of the Libraries standing procedures for recruitment:

Ensure that all Search Committees and hiring authorities are aware of, and conform to, the applicable UF policies and procedures with regards to inclusivity and seeking a broad and diverse pool of applicants. All position vacancy announcements for faculty positions include the following language in the job summary: *"To support all students and faculty and foster excellence in a diverse and global society, the <<title>> will be expected to include individuals of diverse backgrounds, experiences, races, ethnicities, genders, and perspectives in work activities."* In addition, the following describes a standard preferred qualification for all professional positions: *"Record of including individuals of diverse backgrounds, experiences, races, ethnicities, genders, and perspectives in research, teaching, service and other work activities."* This is one of the evaluation criteria used by search committees in making a recommendation for hire.

For each search, employees are specifically encouraged to nominate and circulate position vacancies to maximize exposure and diversity. *"The Search Committee and the Department Chair identify at least five professional peers from institutions comparable to UF who have knowledge of minority candidates qualified for the vacant position. The Library HR Office contacts the individuals, inviting them to nominate candidates for the position. The Search Committee and Department Chair identify five potential minority candidates who are qualified for the position. They promptly forward the names and contact information to the LHRO, who invites the individuals to apply."*

## **II. Equity Accountabilities**

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List or describe specific programs, visits, outreach activities and statements used to support diversity.

### **❖ Committees Dedicated to Diversity**

The Libraries have two formal committees established to address and support diversity initiatives in the Libraries and beyond.

**The Committee on Diversity** brings leadership to the Libraries' internal and external diversity and inclusion initiatives. The internal initiatives focus on developing concrete steps for staff to increase their understanding of diversity issues and facilitating opportunities for broadening awareness of diversity as an essential way of creating a fair and open-minded work environment. The external diversity initiatives seek to inform library user oriented practices, assessment endeavors, collection development, provision of services and of course, customer service.

**This year the Committee:**

- Co-sponsored and hosted the President's Council on Diversity – Diversity Symposium Reception.
- Created a values statement on diversity and inclusion to be displayed on digital signage throughout the Libraries

**UF Libraries Accessibility Advisory Committee** - founded in August 2014 and replacing the prior Services for Students with Disabilities Task Force. This committee is charged to ensure the Libraries is responsive to patrons needing disability accommodation and our policies, services, and resources are up to date, best meet the needs of our patrons as well as the standards set in the Americans with Disabilities Act. The committee works to implement as many recommendations as possible and continually assess the Libraries' ADA-related policies, services, and resources for our patrons and strive to ensure consistency and excellence throughout the branches. Each of the Library branches has a designated Accessibility Liaison to assist any patron with accommodation needs.

**This year the Committee:**

- Represented the Libraries and promoted library resources and services at UF Collegiate Veterans Success Center Campus Resources Fair in September 2016.
- Updated the Libraries accessibility webpages

❖ **Sought financial support for a number of diversity initiatives through the following grant proposals:**

- **Digitization of a UNESCO World Memory Collection: Mexico's Jewish Heritage Newspapers** - The Libraries, in partnership with the Centro de Documentación e Investigación Judío de México (CDIJUM), are digitizing 75,548 pages of Jewish- Mexican newspapers.
- **A Prototype for the Digitization of Latin American Jewish Newspapers** – In partnership with the Centro de Documentación e Investigación Judío de México, the project team plans to digitize 275 issues of the Jewish Mexican newspaper Keshet.
- **Listín Diario: Preserving and Digitizing an At-risk Dominican Republic Newspaper** - The Libraries plan to complete reel preparation activities and vended digitization related to digitizing 70,800 pages of UF microfilm holdings of the Dominican Republic newspaper *Listín Diario* from 1923-1942.
- **Promoting Health Information Access through Community Partnerships** - The goal of this project is to improve the public's access to reliable health information resources by empowering librarians and community educators to provide their users with the best evidence in health research, enabling them to make informed decisions about their health.
- **Partnering to Provide HIV/AIDS Information Outreach** - Librarians from the Gainesville Health Science Center Libraries partnered with numerous units within UF (HealthStreet, Mobile Health Clinic, Arts in Medicine, UFCARES, Center for Health Equity and Quality Research) and beyond (Alachua County Health Department, Library Partnership, Jacksonville Public Library, and Alachua County Library District Headquarters) to provide HIV/AIDS information outreach to clinicians, social service organizations, librarians, educators and the general public. The project had four main components – fostering collaboration among these groups involved in HIV/AIDS; creating curricula and teaching workshops on authoritative HIV/AIDS information resources targeted to these constituencies; creating locally useful

easy-to-read information resources and engaging educational videos on HIV/AIDS; and fostering general awareness of HIV/AIDS issues through exhibit and presentations. During 2016-17 the locally relevant print materials and brief videos were completed.

❖ **Organized, hosted and/or participated in a number of exhibits, events and projects including:**

- **Emotional Intelligence: What it is and why it matters in the library workplace** – Training. While human beings function on both rational and emotional levels, emotions are at the heart of our energy, commitment and motivation. Feelings are also fundamental in forming our reactions to the differences we see in others, whether we approach or avoid, like or dislike, accept or reject. The more we understand and manage our emotional responses, the more we enjoy greater comfort in relationships, effectiveness in interactions and peace within ourselves.
- **Strategies for Engaging Underserved Communities** – Training. It takes a village to improve the health of persons living in medically underserved areas. Librarians will learn strategies for partnering with communities to promote health information; to understand the Health Research Service Administration (HRSA), its history and importance to the medically underserved populations; to gain insights into socioeconomic determinants in order to develop effective health information outreach projects funded by the National Library of Medicine; to learn strategies for identifying and engaging with local communities to promote and improve health information using National Library of Medicine resources.
- **Journey to Smathers: A Human Library Project** – Event. The project originated in Copenhagen in 2000 and has now expanded to more than 70 countries around the world, most of them in partnership with local organizers. “The Human Library™” is designed to build a positive framework for conversations that can challenge stereotypes and prejudices through dialogue. The Human Library is a place where real people are on loan to readers. A place where difficult questions are expected, appreciated and answered.” The Human Library Projects are celebrations of diversity, sharing one’s life experience, challenging assumptions, breaking down stereotypes and prejudices, safe environment.
- **Girls Technology Camp** – 5 Day Summer Camp for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls including coding, augmentation reality, 3D printing and scanning, crafting with technology, and video production.
- **Congo - Kinshasa meets Gainesville** – Events. An interactive archival and exhibition workshop featuring the recently acquired Papa Mfumu’eto Comics Papers, brought together scholars, artists, and students to the writing, design and production of street literature from Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.
- **Screening and Discussion of 13<sup>th</sup>** – Movie. Co-sponsored the screening and discussion of 13<sup>th</sup>, an Academy Award nominated film by Ava DuVernay. The film closely examines mass incarceration in the United States, exploring the intersection of race, justice and the prison system.
- **Authors@UF: Dr. Ibram X. Kendi on “Stamped from the Beginning – The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America** – Presentation. In this deeply researched and fast-moving narrative, Kendi chronicles the entire story of anti-Black racist ideas and their staggering power over the course of American history. *Stamped from the Beginning* uses the life stories of five major American intellectuals to offer a window into the contentious debates between assimilationists and segregationists and between racists and antiracists.

- **The Haggadah: A Mirror of Jewish History, its Agony and Triumph** - A talk by Herbert Wollowisk – The Passover Haggadah (meaning “to tell”) evolved from the story of the exodus and the biblical injunction “and thou shalt tell your son on that day saying it is because of that which the Lord did for me when I came forth from Egypt.”
- **The Jews of Mexico: History, Culture and Libraries** - A talk by Enrique Chmelnik Lubinsky, Director, Center of Documentation and Research for the Jewish Communities in Mexico.
- **East and West, Cuban and American: The Foods of Home** - A talk by Ruth Behar - Growing up in a mixed Sephardic- Ashkenazi home, the author was educated in the Jewish cuisines of East and West, of Islamic Europe and Christian Europe, and in their gradual fusion as our family moved from Cuba to the United States. The foods of home became a reflection of a diaspora journey.
- **The English Language Institute: Gateway to the University of Florida for International Students** – Presentation by Victoria C. Shelly, The English Language Institute, University of Florida. This focused on the mission of the English Language Institute and how non-native speakers are introduced to the American educational system and campus life.
- **A fireside Chat with Justice Rosemary Barkett & Justice Joseph Hatchett** – The distinguished guests, both of whom served as Florida Supreme Court justices and federal appeals court judges, provided a historic perspective on race, gender and justice in the Florida court system.
- **Surviving and Thriving: AIDS, Politics and Culture** – Exhibit. The Health Science Center Library hosted the National Library of Medicine’s traveling exhibit. The exhibit and related programming explore the history of struggles and successes of those battling with HIV/AIDS and the changes in how they are viewed by society from the 1980’s to today.
- **Between Two Oceans** – Exhibit. Traces the history of the Panama Canal from initial construction through the centennial celebration in 2014.
- **Why (not) Argentina** – Exhibit. Surveys the forces of attraction and repulsion that initiated Jewish immigration to Argentina, made Jews leave for other countries, and continue to affect the Jewish people’s connection to Argentina today.
- **The Cuban American Dream** - Exhibit. Cuban immigration to the territory of Florida spans centuries. The history of such immigration provides a glimpse into the impact of Cuban culture on the United States.
- ❖ **Library Staff contributed to the literature and gave presentations/taught classes on diversity in the field of library and information science:**
  - **Fighting HIV/AIDS with Information**, contributed lightning talk, Science Boot Camp for Librarians.
  - **Re-Thinking Information Outreach on HIV/AIDS**, contributed talk, Southern Chapter – Medical Library Association Annual Meeting.

- **Call to Action for Diversity and Inclusion: Perspectives for Our Patrons and Our Profession** - contributed special content session, Medical Library Association Annual Meeting.
- **Working with Community Partners to Develop Locally-Relevant HIV/AIDS Video Resources**, contributed poster, Medical Library Association Annual Meeting.
- **Developing Locally-Relevant, Easy-to-Read HIV/AIDS Print Resources**, contributed presentation, Medical Library Association Annual Meeting.

### **III. Diversity in Services**

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Provide data, population statistics, cost, awards, participants and staffing that reflects diversity in services.

The George A. Smathers Libraries seek to improve access to spaces and services for students with disabilities. To that end the Libraries:

- Designed and designated four study worktables to be wheelchair accessible.
- Added sections to online library guides on the topics of Black Lives Matter and Self-Care and Mental Health
- Installed “Welcome” signs in multiple languages at service points to express support for the library as a welcoming environment for all patrons.

George A. Smathers Libraries currently employs 235 faculty and staff with a general composition of 24% from underrepresented groups (American Indian/Alaskan; Asian; Black/African American; Hispanic/Latino) and 60% women. The composition of the faculty at the George A. Smathers Libraries is 69% women and 11% from underrepresented ethnic groups (Asian; Black/African American; Hispanic/Latino).

#### IV. New Initiatives

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What are your plans for 2016-2017 to support equity and increased diversity?

##### **Assessment**

Assessment is the mechanism by which diversity initiatives are identified, implemented, measures and acknowledged within an organization (Love, 2001). As a result, the George A. Smathers Libraries' Strategic Directions intend to both capture and measure diversity initiatives. For the 2016-2017 academic year, three assessments are planned that include: 1) Understanding graduate students' needs within library spaces; 2) Identifying and capturing library instruction impact on student learning; and, 3) Examining patron-driven acquisitions (PDA) – also called demand driven acquisitions (DDA). All three of these studies will include both diversity and international components. In addition, the Assessment Librarian is participating in a collaborative study with ITHAKA S+R, an outside research consulting firm, to assess the needs of researchers and scholars in the area of agriculture research. All studies will build in a diversity component that is relative to the discipline as identified by the literature and the UF demographic context.

Love, J. B. (2001). The assessment of diversity initiatives in academic libraries. *Journal of Library Administration*, 33(1-2), 73-103. doi: 10.1300/J111v33n01\_07

##### **Organizational Climate and Diversity Assessment**

The Libraries (and the Legal Information Center) participated in the Association of Research Libraries' 'ClimateQUAL®: Organizational Climate and Diversity Assessment' at the end of 2014. In 2015-2016 we completed the interpretation of the ClimateQUAL® results included library-wide, unit level and other meetings and conversations. A group of library staff and administrators developed innovative data visualization methods to maximize the usability of the results. This innovative work was selected for a presentation at the National Diversity in Libraries Conference in Los Angeles, CA to take place in August 2016. In 2016-2017 we will continue to use the data as an opportunity to inform conversations about, amongst other things, the workplace elements which support or hinder diversity. This will be coordinated with the results of UF Faculty and Staff Climate Survey.

- Assess services and respond to needs of patrons and employees with disabilities.
- Diversity Committee will review recruitment strategies with the goal of increasing diversity of applicants and ensuring equitable experiences of all staff.

#### V. Accolades

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What events afforded you the best results in equity and diversity in this reporting year?

The George A. Smathers Libraries is consistently focused on recruiting, servicing, highlighting and reaching traditionally underrepresented groups, cultures and ethnicities. It is the combination of programs, events, and trainings for both internal and external audiences that make the diversity efforts of the George A. Smathers Libraries outstanding. These programs, events, visits, outreach activities and collaborations sponsored, organized and implemented by the George A. Smathers Libraries reached thousands of people this past year and will have a lasting impact.

The Libraries engaged in a long and broadly participative process to develop documentation of the Mission, Vision, and Strategic Directions for the Smathers Libraries and importantly, these “an internal environment with equal partnership among all employees, based on the principles and practices of courtesy, professionalism and mutual respect”. As described above, the Libraries (and the Legal Information Center) participated in the Association of Research Libraries’ ‘ClimateQUAL®: Organizational Climate and Diversity Assessment’ and this is proving to be an opportunity to inform conversations about the workplace elements which support or hinder diversity. The response rate to the inquiry by library staff was 92 percent. The interpretation of the ClimateQUAL® results are underway and include library-wide, unit level and other meetings and conversations. The attention and focus on diversity afforded by process has been very productive.