Diversity Means Justice: Growing Grassroots Library Staff Diversity Leaders

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Background & Literature Review: Motivation for Creating DASIG

We founded the Diversity Action Staff Interest Group (DASIG) at the University of Texas at Austin Libraries (UT Libraries) in early 2014 as a way to build on a long history of individual advocacy of library staff witnessing and addressing microaggressions and patterns of oppression against people of color, LGBTQ people, and women staff in hiring, evaluation, and promotion, as well as our communities through user service.[1] Our library is not alone in facing this challenge; as we discuss in this introductory section, library scholars have documented a national trend of underrepresentation of people of color in academic library staff positions, microaggressions experienced at academic libraries, and students of historically marginalized identities feeling uncomfortable at academic libraries where there are no visual cues indicating organizational awareness and inclusion of historically marginalized communities.

Our work together began in 2009 around a project that informs our DASIG work. In conversation with a faculty member, Kristen proposed and Jee advocated for and built the infrastructure for the Black Queer Studies Collection, a virtual collection using a local note and named by collaborating faculty in the Department of African and African Diaspora Studies. The need for this collection reiterated the importance of visibility and validation; without a way to access

some Black Queer Studies materials by a shared name in the Catalog, it would be easy to miss materials with no subject headings, inconsistent or varied terminology.[2] This foundational sense that a library for everyone would work to validate and make visible work by and for historically marginalized communities laid the foundation for our discussions about DASIG.

We each brought our own experiences with diversity capacity building to the DASIG collaboration as well. While working at the University of Missouri at Columbia, Jee had been a founding member of the Diversity Action Committee to build staff awareness of and engagement with each other's racial, ethnic, and cultural differences. In 2013-14, Jee participated as a fellow of the Association of Research Libraries Leadership and Career Development Program, a program to support the professional development of librarians of color and which includes analysis of experiences of librarians of color in our still largely white profession. Kristen has experience with antioppression training as a university teacher of Women's and Gender and LGBTQ Studies at the University of Texas at Austin and at Louisiana State University Baton Rouge. She also has experience coordinating antioppression training for staff as the Associate Director of the University of Texas at Austin Center for Women's and Gender Studies and as a co-manager at the Toronto Women's Bookstore. Both have experience mentoring information studies graduate students around issues

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of racial, gender, and LGBTQ justice in librarianship. As our experiences demonstrate, librarians are not interchangeable: our identities and relationships inform how we do our jobs, our perspectives as we analyze data and write papers, how comfortable historically marginalized students feel approaching us at a desk, and our experiences in our workplaces. Jee identifies as an immigrant, Asian, librarian who is a mother of an inter-racial child and believes in equal rights for all. Kristen identifies as a queer cis-gender lesbian feminist temporarily able-bodied white antiracist ally.

As we began talking together about racialized, gendered, disability, and sexual orientation identities at the UT Libraries and in relationship with our campus, we felt a resonance with national conversations about and histories of advocacy for racial, gender, disability, and LGBTQ justice. Within librarianship, the 2012 Association for College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Racial and Ethnic Diversity Committee published their *Diversity Standards: Cultural Competency for Academic Libraries*. This document named a particular responsibility of academic libraries to racial and ethnic diversity: "ACRL understands that if libraries are to continue being indispensable organizations in their campus communities, they must reflect the communities they serve and provide quality services to their increasingly diverse constituencies." The authors see the *Diversity Standards* as a call to action, as "a framework to support libraries in engaging the complexities of providing services to diverse populations, and recruiting and maintaining a diverse library workforce."[3] And library scholars have recently undertaken studies that demonstrate the urgent need for change in academic libraries. In their study of university libraries in 2012-13, Shaneka Morris and Martha Kyrillidou found that librarians of color and indigenous librarians made up only 14.5% of the 8,844 librarians surveyed. Also, these librarians of color largely work on the west, south, and southeast coasts with far fewer librarians of color throughout the rest of the nation.[4] Studies of student perceptions of academic libraries by Dallas Long and by Jennifer L. Bonnet and Benjamin McAlexander make the case

that students of color find librarians of color more approachable.[5] Long points out that Latino students reference a history of experiencing racist and unwelcoming behavior from white people as the motivation for Latino students seeking out perceived Latino librarians, while, as Bonnet and McAlexander find, white students are willing to approach librarians of any ethnic or racial identity. Since, as Long points out, use of libraries is one factor for student success, the underrepresentation of librarians of color on the desk likely negatively affects the success of students of color. Studies of recruitment, hiring, and tenure and promotion of librarians of color indicate a pervasive lack of understanding on the part of largely white institutions about factors involved in hiring and retaining librarians of color.[6] Studies also demonstrate our field's need to address barriers to inclusion of LGBTQ librarians and librarians with disabilities.[7]

These defining issues for our profession require a focus on clearly addressing race, gender, LGBTQ identities, and disability both within librarianship and in preparation of all library staff for campus service and workplace interactions. This reparative work will benefit from a foundation in feminist, critical race, and disability studies theories. Such a foundation will help us hone our language and vision for change. For example, despite the studies reviewed above and recent statements that demonstrate issues of race, gender, LGBTQ identity, and disability require particular action by academic libraries,[8] definitions of "diversity" in our field have typically avoided specific mention of these vital identity categories.[9] Feminist philosopher Sara Ahmed maps out a genealogy of feminists of color explaining how an emptying of the term "diversity" has been used by academic institutions for "managing or containing conflict or dissent," that is, a diversity initiative that does not address historical marginalization "allows racism and inequalities to be overlooked" even while producing a false sense of action.[10] As a case in point, we used the term diversity in our DASIG name in order to make the group seem less threatening to the institution, even as the idea that racial, gender, LGBTQ, and disability justice pos-

es a threat indicates the depth of the need for change. We feel constrained by the language of the university. In anchoring our vocabulary and imagining what would become the DASIG, we attended to intersections of power in conversations that resonated with vital foundations for this work. We know that who we are and our relationships with each other influence how we work. Feminist critical race theorist Patricia Hill Collins emphasizes that people from specific historically marginalized identities (groups of people of color, women, LGBT people, people with disabilities, and working class people) share experiences that can produce a standpoint not validated by representations in mainstream media or literature. She points out that there is no "best standpoint from which to understand the mechanisms […] of oppression," but, rather, "[e]ach group speaks from its own standpoint and shares its own partial, situated knowledge." Our own partial, situated knowledge require connection with others to understand different standpoints and to lean towards a whole picture of our realities, including our UT Libraries.[11] Queer feminist disability studies scholar Alison Kafer describes how this might work as she reads Bernice Johnson Reagon's iconic essay on coalition politics. Reagon, addressing a women's music festival in Yosemite National Park, frames her address on racism in the feminist movement by pointing out that it is difficult, even painful, for some people to breathe at high altitudes. Kafer points out that this observation must be more than metaphor: "Reagon is theorizing from the disabled body, using her embodied experience of disability—having a physical limitation in a sociopolitical setting that acts as if that limitation were nonexistent, or at least irrelevant—as a springboard for thinking about difference, relation, and politics."[12] That is, when we talk about hiring people of color, LGBTQ people, and people with disabilities, we are not talking about hiring people who "look" different from dominant group people and "behave" the same; rather, we are saying that a commitment to hiring and building dialogue with people of color, LGBTQ people, and people with disabilities will mean our organizational practices (including workflows, policies,

and more) change, that together we create new ways of thinking about our libraries and our futures.

As Jee and Kristen talked together, our conversations reverberated with these larger histories of feminist, queer, critical race, and disability studies theories, and our experiences within our library felt urgent. We saw the images circulating on the UT Libraries website picture only white-appearing students; we heard from faculty in identity studies programs that new events we had organized around authors of color and in collaboration with identity studies units on campus were "a nice surprise"; we heard from faculty of color that they had noticed a new library staff member of color in the building and were hoping we had a new Black librarian; we heard from students of color that without visual cues to welcome them they felt out of place at the library and they came and went as quickly and infrequently as possible; we heard from staff that they experienced microaggressions around and attributed hiring and promotion decisions to their identities as people of color. Our head of human resources agreed to talk about what a diversity training might look like with our large staff of around 250. We reached out to Dr. Betty Jeanne Taylor, then director of Diversity Education Initiatives at the University of Texas at Austin. She agreed to meet together to talk through the trainings she had coordinated on campus and the commitment involved. We decided to raise the diversity training needs to our UT Libraries administration and ask that diversity training be considered for addition to our strategic initiatives. Inclusion of diversity training as a strategic initiative would generate a working group and implementation recommendations. When the diversity training did not make it onto the strategic initiatives list, we hoped that a grassroots staff organization around diversity would demonstrate the widespread need for training and a cultural shift. We took a deep breath; our new journey was just beginning.

DASIG Foundation and Framework

We are aware that many research libraries have included diversity as one of their top priorities, based

on a recognition of the significance and importance of diversity in higher education. Though there has been a conversation about including diversity as one of the strategic initiatives at the UT Libraries, it has been pushed down on the list due to other strategic priorities. As described in the previous section, we decided to pursue a grassroots approach toward diversity, acknowledging the pressing need for staff diversity training in the UT Libraries. We recognized that there are certain activities that we could immediately begin implement in order to open up a dialogue among library staff, instead of waiting for library administration to address diversity at the policy level. The philosophy behind the grassroots approach around diversity is that we, as library staff, have a responsibility to address the growing need for a new model of providing information services to better serve increasingly diverse user communities on campus; to influence library staff and administration to develop various library services and programs to support the information needs of these user communities; and to collaborate with other campus entities that promote and educate around diversity. We believe that we can build leadership among ourselves as staff to become diversity leaders in our UT Libraries. Ultimately, we want to contribute to build a safe and healthy campus environment and influence diversity practices and policies on campus.

Jee and Kristen held a series of meetings before launching DASIG. Both of us have previous experience participating in interest groups, committees, working groups, and professional associations, and we firmly believe that the meaningful success of an interest group relies on active participation among the members of the group working toward a shared vision and mission. We had extensive discussions about how to outline the framework of DASIG including the vision, structure, and roles for the membership (see figure 1). In the course of preparing for DASIG, we acknowledged the challenges and issues of the staff group structure, particularly in terms of member participation. We had witnessed and experienced that the chairs of many staff groups often end up doing all the work due to a lack of member participation. We were convinced that we could create a structure that encourages individual members to contribute to group

FIGURE 1
Framework of Grassroots Diversity Staff Organization in Academic Research Libraries
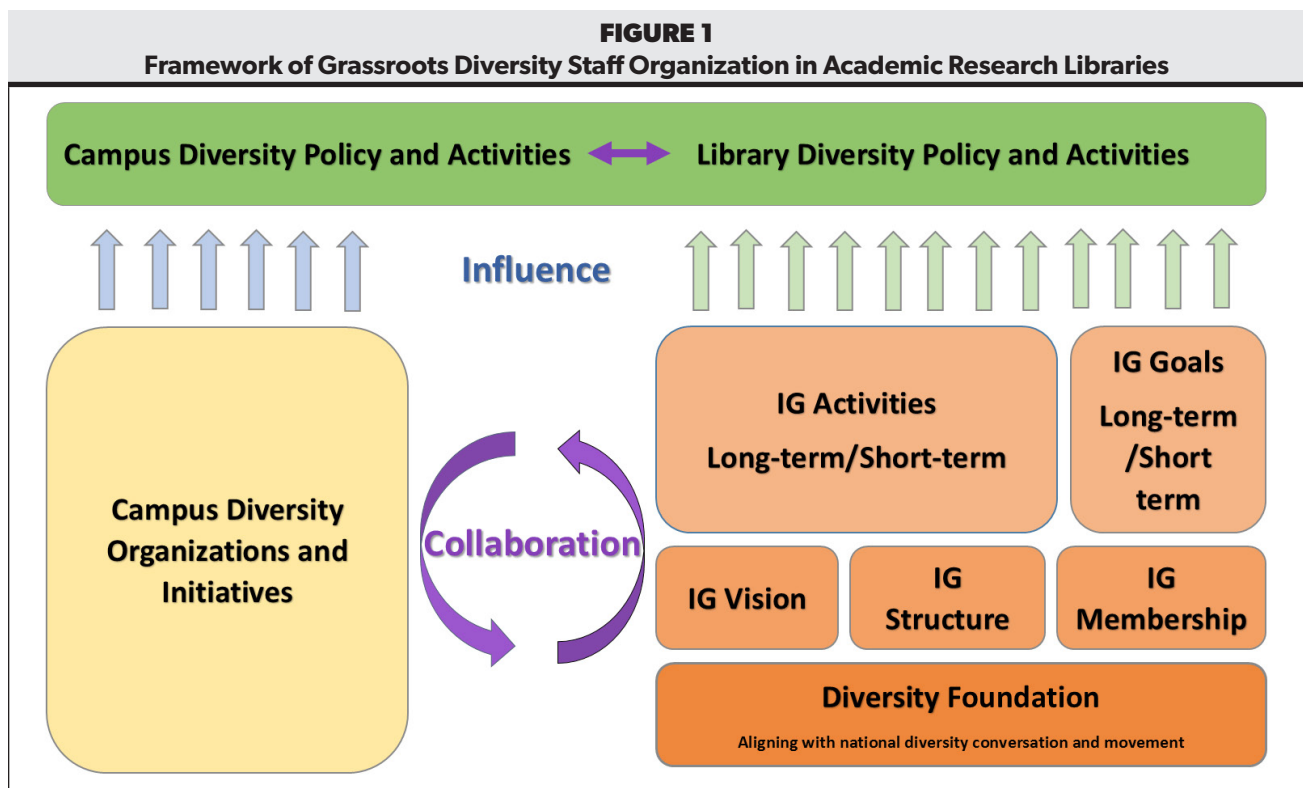
discussion and activities, that motivates self-education to identify diversity issues and challenges in our UT Libraries and articulate solutions, and that helps members embrace individual responsibility for the success of DASIG. To create this type of staff organizational structure seems quite ambitious for a staff interest group, but we are certain that a critical component for DASIG's success is building a solid foundation on which the members can grow their leadership skills and can obtain solid knowledge of diversity matters. We established the structure and membership of DASIG based on these considerations. Using the library distribution mailing list we sent out an e-mail to all staff, calling for volunteers. Ten staff members from various library units signed up in January 2014, and DASIG began its monthly meetings in March 2014.

Through vigorous group brainstorming exercises, DASIG, which is composed of two chairs (Jee and Kristen) and ten members from across the UT Libraries, started structuring the monthly meeting format to facilitate group discussion and exercises. The members discussed the norms of DASIG to set member expectations and defined certain roles within DASIG. The following list serves as the group's general guiding principles:

- The members respect the norms of the group. → Establishing the norms of the group through group discussion at the beginning of DASIG sets clear expectations among the members, provides a sense of belonging, and emphasizes individual responsibilities as members of the group.
- Each meeting should have two facilitators and one blogger, and every member is expected to volunteer for these roles. → Rotating the facilitator's and blogger's role among the members helps remind the group that everyone is involved in group activities and provides opportunities to play a leading role in group discussion.
- Monthly meetings should always be driven by an agenda. The chairs and facilitators are responsible for building a meeting

agenda and planning the monthly meetings; the blogger is responsible for the meeting minutes. → Agenda-less meetings can be ineffective and fruitless when there are clear goals to be achieved in a workplace. Most importantly, an agenda can enable the members to feel a sense of achievement, which can build morale and confidence in the group.

- Each meeting begins with "What I remember from last meeting…" and ends with "…it made me think."[13] → This group reflection exercise provides an opportunity for the members to recall the group's discussion from the previous meeting and share their thoughts from the current meeting with the rest of the group.
- DASIG utilizes different tools for communication and to document its activities. → Identifying communication tools for internal and external communication helps document group activities and serves as the group's archives.[14]

These principles have guided us in governing our monthly meetings effectively and have helped develop diversity leadership among the members.

DASIG Self-Education Process and Activities

After establishing the structure of our monthly meetings and defining the roles in DASIG, the members decided to start DASIG with a self-education process. Though DASIG members were gathered with a strong sense of purpose to bring a conversation about diversity to the UT Libraries and to foster a culture of racial, sexuality, and disability diversity in the UT Libraries we recognized the need for a self-education process to have a clear understanding of the current diversity issues in academic libraries, the UT campus diversity climate, and national diversity movements and activities in librarianship.

Jee and Kristen contacted Dr. Taylor to ask if she could provide a workshop for DASIG to begin exploring the DASIG self-education. We discussed the fo-

cal points of the workshop and expected outcomes to assist Dr. Taylor to design the workshop. As a result, Dr. Taylor planned and facilitated two workshops for DASIG which have become a foundational piece of DASIG education. The first workshop, held in May 2014, focused on a group discussion to think about how we define diversity, the status of diversity in the field of library science and librarianship, and what diversity-focused changes we want to see in the UT Libraries. As a result of this workshop, the members felt that they had a better understanding of one another and were able to grow a sense of optimism toward our future diversity work together. The second workshop, delivered in September 2014, provided the members an opportunity to learn about intersections of identities. The premise of intersectionality is "that people live multiple, layered identities derived from social relations, history and the operation of structures of power. People are members of more than one community at the same time, and can simultaneously experience oppression and privilege."[15] Dr. Taylor brought worksheets to map out the intersections of our identities across various categories of social identity, such as gender, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, race, etc., and asked the members to think about their social identities based on the categories. Through this exercise we experienced the difficulty of categorizing ourselves into multiple social identities and recognized our privileges and disadvantages measured from these identities. While these two workshops cannot satisfy all of DASIG's diversity education needs, they did help to provide a starting point for DASIG to explore self-education and help us understand the complexity of diversity matters, issues derived from social identities, and the urgent need for social justice in our workplace.

While continuing our group education, we also realized that we had a responsibility (and staff requested us) to create diversity activities and recommendations for the UT Libraries staff. We divided into small groups to divvy up research topics and started collecting more concrete information about diversity standards and activities in academic libraries and

about campus entities that we could collaborate with around diversity efforts. This small group research exercise has helped DASIG define diversity for the UT Libraries, identify future DASIG events and programs for the public, and compile diversity recommendations for the UT Libraries. As part of DASIG diversity relationship building as well as self-education, we planned a panel discussion for the DASIG June 2014 meeting. We invited six campus specialists from the Multicultural Engagement Center (MEC), the Gender and Sexuality Center: Serving Women and LGBTQA Communities (GSC), the Campus Climate Response Team, and the Department of African and African Diaspora Studies (AADS). This panel discussion, only open to DASIG members, was an excellent opportunity to engage diversity matters on campus and to build relationships with campus diversity experts. The DASIG discussion with the panelists reaffirmed how much work needs to be done in the UT Libraries in order to provide a safe and welcoming space to our library users and staff in recognition of their race, gender, disability, sexuality, etc.

Over a short nine-month period, between March and November 2014, DASIG devoted its efforts to self-education and campus relationship building. The DASIG members were gradually experiencing group bonding and trust-building through intense group discussion and self-reflection. December 2014 was quite a significant month for DASIG. For the first time in the history of the UT Libraries, a diversity staff event was held in the *Perry-Castañeda* Library, the main library of the UT Libraries, hosted by DASIG. This event was composed of a panel discussion and a workshop, and the event was open to all library staff including student workers. The invitation to this event was sent out via library mailing lists and the response was overwhelming. Staff events are normally underattended due to the more-with-less staffing model used in UT Libraries, but we received 68 RSVPs and had 64 actual attendees for this event. Five panelists and three facilitators from the newly reorganized university office of Diversity Education Initiatives did a great job engaging and facilitating discussion about

racial and LGBTQ justice, including challenges in our working environment and service to our users.

The first year of DASIG was adventurous and productive. We strived to bring a meaningful conversation to the UT Libraries and to successfully connect with campus diversity experts and units. Though DASIG is determined to help foster diversity and inclusion in the UT Libraries, we recognize the limitations of a staff interest group whose members have other full-time jobs in their units. In February 2015, the UT Libraries welcomed a new Vice Provost and Director of the UT Libraries. Many units and working groups have been preparing reports for our new Director. DASIG saw this as an opportunity and have thus compiled a report summarizing the rationale of DASIG and its 2014 activities. In this report we have also included recommendations to the UT Libraries in order to create an organizational culture of diversity for staff and students and to build a reputation for diversity and service on campus.

DASIG Building UT Libraries Reputation across Campus and Profession

In addition to the events, research, and recommendations DASIG has built within the UT Libraries, our members have created new relationships across campus and the profession that build the reputation of the UT Libraries. This aspect of the DASIG work demonstrates another way that diversity capacity building supports the organization as a whole.

Our new relationships on campus have put us in regular dialogue with campus diversity education professionals, have shaped our UT Libraries, and have built our UT Libraries reputation on campus. In September we saw an opportunity to build on the conversations we took part in during our DASIG panel with campus specialists and to propose some of these suggestions to the group of staff planning the new Learning Commons on the ground floor of our main library. In particular, Jee and Kristen focused on the need for gender inclusive bathrooms in the main library and on suggestions from campus specialists to have other visual cues for belonging and inclusion of

students of color and LGBTQ students. We met with the campus director of Student Diversity Initiatives and director of the GSC to talk strategy, and we gathered information for action. Brett-Genny Janiczek Beemyn, in a report for the Transgender Law & Policy Institute, explains that gender inclusive bathrooms are important "because gender-diverse students are often subject to harassment and violence when using male- or female-specific campus restrooms."[16] Gender inclusive, single-stall bathrooms support gender non-conforming people, people with disabilities, and people with children. Alison Kafer participated in and writes about her work with PISSAR (People in Search of Safe and Accessible Restrooms), founded at the University of California-Santa Barbara in 2003 as a student coalition that "explicitly linked disability access with gender access, creating a bathroom checklist that assessed a restroom's disability-accessibility (e.g., door width, dispenser heights, Braille signage) right alongside its genderqueer-accessibility (e.g., functioning door locks, gender-specific signage, location)."[17] By 2014, *The Huffington Post* announced that "gender-neutral bathrooms are quietly becoming the new thing at colleges."[18] On the University of Texas at Austin campus, the Gender and Sexuality Center (GSC) leadership, staff, and students, had, over its ten years on campus, advocated for the development of new gender-neutral bathrooms and the dedication of existing single-stall bathrooms as gender-neutral bathrooms. By 2014, the GSC list included 49 gender inclusive bathrooms in 29 buildings on the Austin campus.[19] While a few of the buildings that house branch libraries are on the list, the main library was not. Our campus specialists had also pointed out that students of color and LGBTQ students experience greater inclusion in spaces that work to create visual cues, representations of people of color and LGBTQ people, in the space.[20] Gender inclusive bathrooms could provide visual cues and provide an opportunity for staff education around gender identity and disability accessibility.

The UT Libraries project managers of the Learning Commons building project agreed to meet with us, and they agreed that gender inclusive bathrooms

and visual cues are important for the new Learning Commons. Recent representations of the design of the space, still in construction, show five single-use gender inclusive bathrooms. In another move towards creating vital visual cues, one member of the Learning Commons team connected with the campus specialists (through relationships DASIG had built) and with DASIG members to gather quotes by authors of color and LGBTQ authors (and both) to include these as design elements and visual cues in the new space. Acting here as liaisons between the information our campus specialists have and the work of our UT Libraries staff, we took a further step to directly connect the two. Two members of the Learning Commons project management team participated in a dialogue about the space at a meeting of our campus Student Diversity Initiatives team, and they continue to be in conversation.

Our attempt to influence the UT Libraries also affects our national reputation as well as our capacity for change within the organization. In August, UT Libraries staff met for staff question and answer sessions with each of the candidates for our new Vice Provost and Director of the UT Libraries. DASIG had submitted to the search committee a statement urging them "to consider candidates with strong track records generating organizational strengths in diversity through hiring, promotion, training, and services initiatives." We sought to offer additional staff support for what we anticipated were already strengths under discussion. All UT Libraries staff were invited to submit questions for the candidates, and Jee and Kristen each asked a question on behalf of the DASIG. Our questions addressed the importance and practice of achieving racial diversity among librarians as well as the importance and practice of building capacity for all UT Libraries staff to work with our communities of color. We hope that these questions are part of a growing public reputation of the UT Libraries working on issues of racial, gender, and disability justice. As a result of this public work, UT Libraries staff come to DASIG members as resources on issues of diversity and campus climate from how to address hate-speech

material left behind on a UT Libraries table (we encouraged a report to our Campus Climate Response Team) to what information we can share with an inquiring new diversity officer at another library.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

As we've indicated thus far, throughout our first year we have learned through our successes and exciting new relationships. We have also learned through challenges. Here we discuss three recurring challenges to our process and to diversity training at large; we frame these challenges as opportunities in order to make space to imagine creative and generative responses.

One challenge has been generally diffuse definitions of "diversity"; we see this as an opportunity to think about how to bring social justice organizing into the UT Libraries and librarianship. As we discussed in the first section, workplaces (in particular in the academy) often water down the meaning of "diversity." In our University President's introductory letter on the website of our University's Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, he writes: "America draws much of its strength from its diversity—diversity of color, certainly, but diversity of culture, ideas, points of view, and skills as well."[21] Within our Library staff we hear echoes of this diversion from an important focus on historically marginalized communities; differences in values, ideas, and communication styles seem to constitute some definitions of "diversity." At the same time, our University has repeatedly been at the center of national conversations about race-based admissions policies. In 2014 the Fifth Circuit US Court of Appeals ruled "in favor of UT Austin," recognizing as constitutional the University of Texas at Austin's "consideration of race in admissions decisions" for those not automatically admitted under the "Top 10 Percent Law" (which admits the top 10% of each Texas high school graduating class).[22] The court argued "that universities may use race as part of a holistic admissions program where it cannot otherwise achieve diversity. […] This interest is compelled by the reality that university education is more the shaping of lives than the filling of heads with facts—the

classic assertion of the humanities."[23] When institutions like the court recognize the significance of racial diversity and broader justice for historically marginalized communities, they offer an opportunity to define "diversity" more specifically. It benefits all of us to address unearned privilege and learn with people of color, working class people, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ people. This January, Brian Krzanich, Intel CEO, partnered with longtime activist Jesse Jackson and his Rainbow Coalition to create a plan to achieve racial diversity at Intel, and to tie executive compensation, including his own, to the success of this change by 2020.[24] By bringing in the Rainbow Coalition, Krzanich acknowledged the capacity of social justice organizers in defining and understanding obstacles to racial diversity. This model for creating new definitions through partnerships between activists and institutions offers an exciting model for our work together.

Another related challenge is that, at our first Library-wide staff training on racial and LGBTQ justice with campus specialists, a group of staff committed to disability justice expressed a sense that disability discrimination seems more prevalent at our University than racial or LGBTQ discrimination. We see this as an opportunity to enact training in intersectionality. Activists and social justice educators point out that one common response to discussions of racial discrimination is to move to discussions of class or disability discrimination.[25] We want to build our skills in attending to racial, LGBTQ, disability, and socioeconomic discrimination, while acknowledging that no one of these identities exists without the others. A Black woman who identifies as straight, for example, experiences racial discrimination differently from a Black woman who identifies as a lesbian, and differently from a Black lesbian who identifies as a person with a disability, and so on. As discussed in the first section, Black feminists, including Patricia Hill Collins and Kimberlé Crenshaw, developed the concept of intersectionality to describe this attention to the ways in which differences within historically marginalized communities affect experiences of discrimination and

require different institutional changes to address.

A third challenge for us has been how to encourage DASIG members to claim shared leadership in our process; we see this as an opportunity to explore how to build leadership within our organization. Both of us came to this work with a sense of what issues and approaches are important and exciting for us, and we both hoped that we could voice these as members and, as chairs, support all of the members to voice their priorities and approaches. We rotate co-facilitators for our monthly meetings while both of us share the role of holding the overall vision for what the group has decided we want to accomplish. While this approach seems to save time (not everyone must keep up with what has been done and what needs to be done to carry out our goals), it does not make the move we want to see towards recognizing the leadership each of us must take to create organizational change. Certainly this has long been a challenge of organizing, and we are seeking a model for the leadership-sharing organizational practice we long for.

Looking Forward

Just after submitting this paper, we will attend the February DASIG meeting where a campus facilitator will guide us in an assessment of our successes and productive failures in our first year. We hope that this conversation will build a strong foundation for our second year. As we look to the future, we hope for administrative response to and support for the proposals our full membership has researched and proposed, we hope that the relationships we have built with other university diversity initiatives will continue to grow and support this work, and we hope to be able to address the challenges listed above with energy and innovation from our current and future members. We have established a foundation to build on and for others, including our incoming new Vice Provost and UT Libraries Director, to draw on to demonstrate how racial, gender, LGBTQ, and disability diversity is vital to hiring, retention, and promotion of staff and to the recruitment, retention, and graduation rate of our students. We began this journey hoping that a

groundswell of grassroots energy would support administrative movement to work towards racial, gender, LGBTQ, and disability diversity in our workplace and diversity competencies in our work. A year later, with well-researched proposals, a first-year cohort, and a stunningly well-attended staff session on our list of accomplishments, we seek to put that list to work for change in our organization.

Notes

1. We have not run a study of experiences of oppression; rather, we have collected anecdotal narratives together both in individual conversations and at the organized workshops we coordinated through the DASIG, connected these anecdotes with a national literature, and looked to available statistics on racial demographics to put our staff representation in context. Theorists describe racial microaggressions as "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racial minority group. These exchanges are so pervasive and automatic in daily interactions that they are often dismissed […] as being innocuous" (Sue et al. 88). Studies have shown that racial microaggressions create a hostile environment that damages the physical and mental health of people of color (Lewis et al. 53). Social justice theorists have also used the term microaggressions to describe such interactions targeting the overlapping identities of people with disabilities, women, and LGBTQ people. Jioni A. Lews, Ruby Mendenhall, Stacy A. Harwood, Margaret Browne Huntt, "Coping with Gendered Racial Microaggressions among Black Women College Students," *Journal of African American Studies* 17 (2013): 51-73; Derald Wing Sue, Jennifer Bucceri, Annie I. Lin, Kevin L. Nadal, and Gina C. Torino, "Racial Microaggressions and the Asian American Experience," *Asian American Journal of Psychology* S, no. 1 (2009): 88-101; Paul C. McCabe, Eliza A. Dragowski, Florence Rubinson, "What Is Homophobic Bias Anyway? Defining and Recognizing Microaggressions and Harassment of LGBTQ Youth," *Journal of School Violence* 12, no. 1 (January 2013): 7-26; Brianne Dávila, *Race Ethnicity and Education* (December 2014): 1-26.

2. For detail on the UT Black Queer Studies Collection, see Hogan, "'Breaking Secrets in the Catalog: Proposing the Black Queer Studies Collection at the University of Texas at Austin," *Progressive Librarian* 34/35 (October 2010): 50-57, 106. For detail on new directions in cataloging departments that encourage participation in such innovative collaborations, see Davis, "Technical Services Report: Transforming a Traditional Catalog Department. A Report of the ALCTS CaMMS Heads of Cataloging Interest Group Program. American Library Association Midwinter Meeting, Philadelphia, January 2014," *Technical Services Quarterly* 31, no. 3 (July 2014): 282-289.

3. Racial and Ethnic Diversity Committee, Association of College and Research Libraries, *Diversity Standards: Cultural Competencies for Academic Libraries*, Association of College and Research Libraries, 2012, http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/diversity.

4. Shaneka Morris and Martha Kyrillidou, "Minority Representation in US ARL University Libraries as of 2012-2013: Taking a Closer Look at the Evidence," Association of Research Libraries, 2014, http://libraryassessment.org/bm~doc/24morrisposter.pdf.

5. Dallas Long, "Latino Students' Perceptions of the Academic Library," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 37, no. 6 (November 2011): 504-511; "Jennifer L. Bonnet and Benjamin McAlexander, "Structural Diversity in Academic Libraries: A Study of Librarian Approachability," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 38, no. 5 (September 2012): 277-286.

6. Ione T. Damasco and Dracine Hodges, "Tenure and Promotion Experiences of Academic Librarians of Color," *College & Research Libraries* (May 2012): 279-301; Sha Li Zhang and Loriene Roy, "Recruiting Future Librarians from Diverse Backgrounds: Model Projects in the United States," *Journal of Library and Information Science* 37.1 (April 2011): 73-80.

7. David Faucheux, "Is There a Place for Us? Toward the Full Inclusion of Blind and Other Librarians with Disabilities," *Interface* 25 (April 2003): 4-7; Tracy Marie Nectoux, Editor, *Out Behind the Desk: Workplace Issues for LGBTQ Librarians* (Duluth, Minn.: Library Juice Press, 2011).

8. The 2014 joint statement from the presidents of the American Indian Library Association, Asian Pacific American Librarians Association, Black Caucus of the American Library Association, Chinese American Librarians Association, REFORMA, and American Library Association saw the "values of diversity, equity, and inclusion" that "form the foundation of the library profession" in contradiction to the "discriminatory enforcement of the 'Stand Your Ground' law in Florida" and committed to action specifically around "racial diversity and inclusion in our profession" at the 2016 ALA in Florida, and the "Statement of Appropriate Conduct at ALA Conferences" issued in 2014 specifically banned "harassment or intimidation based on race, religion, language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, appearance, or other group status." "Joint Statement from the Presidents of AILA, APALA, BCALA, CALA, REFORMA, and ALA," *ALAnews*, American Library Association, 28 March 2014, http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2014/03/joint-statement-presidents-aila-apala-bcala-cala-reforma-and-ala; American Library Association, "Statement of Appropriate Conduct at ALA Conferences," 2014, http://alamw14.ala.org/statement-of-appropriate-conduct.

9. The "American Library Association Staff Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan" asserts that "in addition to race, creed, color, religion, gender, disability, and national origin, there are a multitude of differences (language origin, regional and geographic background, economic class, education, learning and communication styles, sexual orientation and personal lifestyle) that individuals bring into their work." The *Diversity Standards* define "diversity" as the "state or fact of being diverse; different characteristics and experiences that define individuals." "American Library Association Staff Diversity

and Inclusion Action Plan," American Library Association, 2003, http://www.ala.org/offices/sites/ala.org.offices/files/content/diversity/ALA_Diversity_Action_and_Inclusion_Plan.pdf.

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

11. Patricia Hill Collins 270. Patricia Hill Collins also warns against both tokenism (for example, asking one Black woman to speak for or represent all Black women) and essentialism (for example, considering it possible for one Black woman to speak for all Black women: "No homogeneous Black *woman's* standpoint exists. There is no essential or archetypal Black woman whose experiences stand as normal, normative, and thereby authentic." Instead, "Since Black feminist thought both arises within and aims to articulate a Black *women's* group standpoint regarding experiences associated with intersecting oppressions, stressing this group standpoint's heterogeneous composition is important" (28). Black feminist legal and critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw described the concept of intersectionality as the experience of a person with multiple historically marginalized identities (for example, Black women) "within discourses that are shaped to respond to one *or* the other" (1244), that is, there are many differences within a particular identity group that affect the sociopolitical situation of people differently. Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, (New York: Routledge, 2000); Kimberlé Crenshaw, *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1991): 1241-1299.

12. Alison Kafer 152. Alison Kafer, *Feminist Queer Crip* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

13. Thank you to Megan Alrutz for this community-building check in and check out structure. Alrutz, Megan, *Digital Storytelling, Applied Theatre, and Youth: Performing Possibility* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

14. DASIG created a blog to document its monthly meeting agenda and minutes for the purpose of external communication. It is available at http://blogs.lib.utexas.edu/dasig/ and open to the public. For the purpose of internal communication and member collaborative working space, we use wiki and Google Docs.

15. Alison Symington, "Intersectionality: A Tool for Gender and Economic Justice," *Women's Rights and Economic Change* no. 9 (August 2004): 1-8, http://www.awid.org/Library/Intersectionality-A-Tool-for-Gender-and-Economic-Justice.

16. Brett-Genny Janiczek Beemyn for the Transgender Law and Policy Institute, "Ways that U.S. Colleges and Universities Meet the Day-to-Day Needs of Transgender Students," Transgender Law and Policy Institute, http://www.transgenderlaw.org/college/guidelines.htm.

17. Kafer 155.

18. Kim Bellware, "Gender-Neutral Bathrooms Are Quietly becoming the New Thing at Colleges," *The Huffington Post* 18 July 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/07/18/gender-neutral-bathrooms-colleges_n_5597362.html.

19. "Gender Neutral Restrooms," Gender and Sexuality Center, http://ddce.utexas.edu/genderandsexuality/gender-neutral-restrooms/.

20. Dallas Long also makes this point in their study in which Latin@ students "were obviously conscious of this absence from their academic library by noting the lack of Spanish language materials or visual representations of Latino people, both in posters and signage" (509).

21. Bill Powers, "Message from President Powers," Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, The University of Texas at Austin, http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/about/message-powers.php.

22. "Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin," Tarlton Guides, The University of Texas at Austin, http://tarltonguides.law.utexas.edu/fisher-ut.

23. Bill Powers, "Court Rules for UT Austin in Fisher Case," *Tower Talk*, 15 July 2014, http://towertalk.utexas.edu/2014/07/15/court-rules-for-ut-austin-in-fisher-case/.

24. Roger Cheng, "Intel Pledges $300M to Build a More Diverse Work Force," *CNet* 6 January 2015, http://www.cnet.com/news/intel-pledges-300m-to-build-a-more-diverse-work-force/.

25. Urvashi Vaid, "What Can Brown Do for You?," *Irresistible Revolution: Confronting Race, Class, and the Assumptions of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Politics* (New York: Magnus Books, 2012).