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## Together We Learn: Collaborating with Medical Students to Build an Online Anti-Racism Guide

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# Together We Learn: Collaborating with Medical Students to Build an Online Anti-Racism Collection Gary S. Atwood, MA, MSLIS | Dana Medical Library

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## **Project Overview**

In the summer of 2020, students from the Larner College of Medicine's (LCOM) Social Justice Coalition (SJC) asked if the library could provide support for a project to build a digital collection of anti-racism resources. Specifically, they hoped that the library could host the collection in some kind of digital space and purchase relevant materials when possible. The students would be responsible for the selection and management of the guide's content. After clarification of specific roles and responsibilities, the poster authors agreed to join the project in June 2020. All members of the collaboration felt that a resource addressing topics on race and racism was vitally important to our medical community, specifically titles that pertain to the health sciences. Step one was to agree to a set of specifications for the collection. We then adopted a rapid prototyping process to develop the guide's structure and content. The project team encountered a number of unexpected technical and policy-related challenges during the development phase. These challenges are highlighted in the timeline below, but center around the use of LibGuides to build the portal and interpreting the library's collection development policy. Final decision-making power rested with the SJC students and their advisor with input from the poster authors. The portal was launched in early December, 2020. The LibGuide can be found at: <u>https://researchguides.uvm.edu/UVMLarnerMedLearnTogether</u>

June 17: SJC asked if the library could assist in creating an antiracism collection similar to one at New York University:

https://hslguides.med.nyu.edu/rac eandracism. SJC will select & curate materials with the approval of the LCOM Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Dana Medical Library will create and maintain the resource in conjunction with the SJC.

# June

End of July - Beginning of September: Question about guide authorship resolved.

- Library policy limited LibGuide administrative access to library employees. Can outside groups be a guide author?
- LibGuides Working Group determined that the SJC could be responsible for the content and marketing, but that a library employee had to be the "author" responsible for editing the guide.
- Also decided to set the guide's status to "private" so that it would not appear in the library's A-Z list of guides. SJC would be given the URL and be responsible for publishing it on LCOM web pages & promoting it.

August

July 27: After reviewing content management software options, SJC agreed to use LibGuides. **Discussions about** site design and guide promotion started.

July

# **Project Outcomes**

**Primary Outcome:** 

The creation and successful launch of the guide. Secondary Outcomes: Educational – The students and their advisor gained in-depth knowledge about (1) how the library acquires and provides secure access to resources and (2) LibGuides functionality. Outreach – The library was able to demonstrate a commitment to support diversity, equity, and inclusion programming (DEI); a topic of growing importance in the LCOM and the University Libraries.

Professional Development – Kate Bright learned how to create and edit content in LibGuides, while both poster authors expanded their knowledge of DEI resources.

September 23: Initial list of resources compiled and decision to organize by resource type (e.g. articles, books, videos, etc.) made. First draft of guide completed.

October 2: Kate Bright trained to edit LibGuides and became main editor.

pages addressed.

Beginning of October: To streamline communication, SJC agreed that their departmental advisor will be the point person to work with guide authors. Focus this month was on content, layout, and functionality issues. Guide authors met with the advisor for demo.

# September

**September:** Core design questions addressed, e.g. "What resources should be included," "How should content be arranged," etc. Guide authors explained to SJC how various technical aspects of LibGuides (e.g. how navigation is autogenerated, customization options) work and what options were available. SJC encouraged to focus first on content and user experience and then technical issues.

Late October: Book purchasing issues addressed: (1) SJC requested that Dana create a permanent fund to purchase books for the collection. Collections Team reviewed request, but declined based on collection development policy & funding limitations. SJC requests will be fast tracked for consideration. (2) Pros and cons of electronic vs. print book copies discussed. Library cannot afford to purchase both. Team decided to purchase print for now due to ease of use, but will review in the near future based on input from guide users.

> **October 30:** Enhancement request for electronic feedback form so that viewers can suggest new resources submitted. Form built in LibWizard and embedded into the guide.

## Next Steps

collection.





- One of the SJC's visions for the collection is for it to grow over time. The following ideas have been proposed to accomplish that goal:
- **Relaunch the guide** The original launch was overshadowed by the COVID-19 outbreak. Relaunching the guide may help boost visibility.
- **Expand Methods to Contribute** The "Suggest a Resource" function is a good start, but are there other ways that people can contribute content to the guide?
- **Increase Exposure** The SJC has asked if a permanent link to the guide can be posted on the library's webpage in order to reach a larger audience.
- **Create Related Programming** E.g. a joint Dana/SJC book group could focus on one book title from the