Inclusive and Anti-Racist Collecting at UNLV Libraries

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Purpose

The **University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) University Libraries** recognizes that as both a direct and indirect result of colonialism and white supremacy the historical and contemporary scholarly publishing market atypically centers and prioritizes voices that are white, male, Christian, able-bodied, and heterosexual.[1-3] **In an attempt to redress this imbalance, the UNLV University Libraries is committed to collecting content by and about people and communities that have historically been excluded.** This effort includes but is not limited to the intentional collection of materials about and by groups historically excluded by virtue of their ethnicity, race, religion, sexuality, gender, language, and nationality.

Aims and Scope

A working group was charged in Spring 2021 to tackle this issue. Defining the aims and scope for this work has been the primary focus in order to broadly define inclusive and anti-racist collecting at UNLV and build a foundation on which actionable recommendations can be based.

Aims and Scope of working group:

- **Support UNLV research and programmatic needs** with aligned content to facilitate knowledge, growth, and **understanding of cultural humility, structural racism, white supremacy, heteronormativity, sexism, classism**, and other hidden social structures which intentionally or unintentionally invalidate the lived experiences of historically excluded communities
- **Provide content to support self-directed learning** to facilitate knowledge, growth, and understanding of the areas described in the bullet above
- **Provide content that reflects the diverse and constantly changing demographics of the Southern Nevada region,** enabling UNLV faculty and students to understand the perspectives, experiences, and histories of their communities
- **Provide content from diverse and historically underrepresented authors/creators in all disciplines and all formats**, moving beyond the white-eurocentric view that is dominant
- **Utilize collection content vendors that reflect a variety of perspectives,** including those not often championed by mainstream publishers and fulfillment services. **Divest from vendors that are identified as engaging in exclusionary and/or harmful business and labor practices**

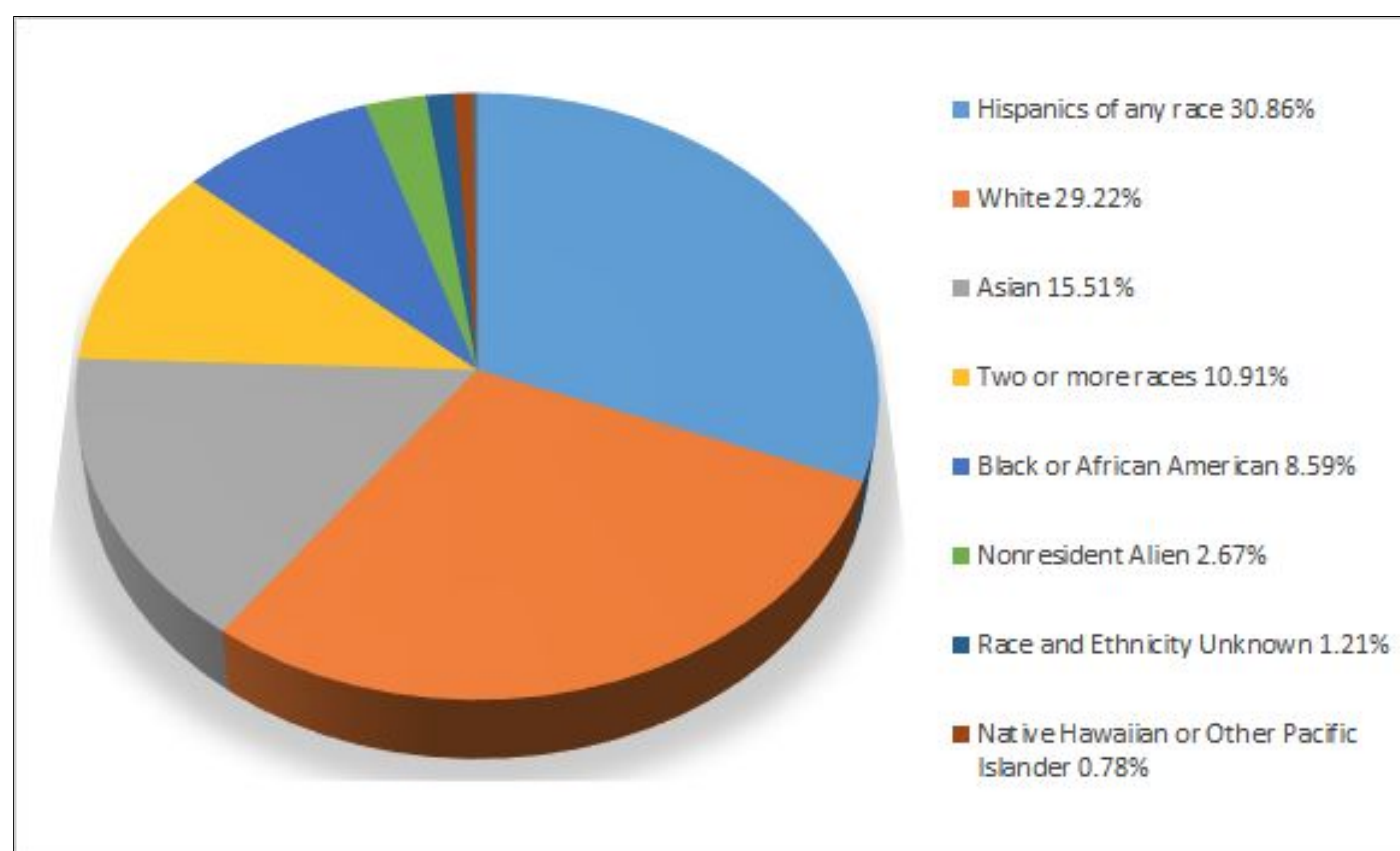## UNLV Institutional Profile and Collections

Figure 1. Fall 2021 Headcount by Race/Ethnicity
UNLV Office of Decision Support

- Hispanics of any race 30.86%
- White 29.22%
- Asian 15.51%
- Two or more races 10.91%
- Black or African American 8.59%
- Nonresident Alien 2.67%
- Race and Ethnicity Unknown 1.21%
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander 0.78%

UNLV is designated a Minority-Serving Institution **(MSI)**, a Hispanic-Serving Institution **(HSI)**, and an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution **(AANAPISI)**, with approximately **63%** of students identifying as a racial or ethnic minority. **Providing access to scholarly content that reflects our students' perspectives, experiences, communities and history is an essential element of an an inclusive campus and facilitates UNLV's efforts to center, embrace, promote, and celebrate its diversity**.

Quasi-Delphi Approach to Creating Recommendations

The goal of this approach is to gather structured feedback on the draft recommendations in a way that is as anonymized as possible, from a broad set of individuals who have experience in collections either as a selector or as a user, in order to improve and finalize the recommendations.

1. **Complete an initial draft** of the working group's recommendations
2. **Select a group of experts** that serve as an external panel (eg. selectors, liaison librarians, library users)
3. **ROUND 1: Present list of recommendations via a Qualtrics survey**
4. **Share Qualtrics survey results** with working group
5. **ROUND 2: Present list of new recommended changes to external panel via Qualtrics survey**
6. **Share Qualtrics survey results** with working group
7. Final report recommendations shared with panel
8. **Final report recommendations shared with Library Council** (an information sharing and advisory group charged by the Dean to provide input in areas of strategic planning and policies).
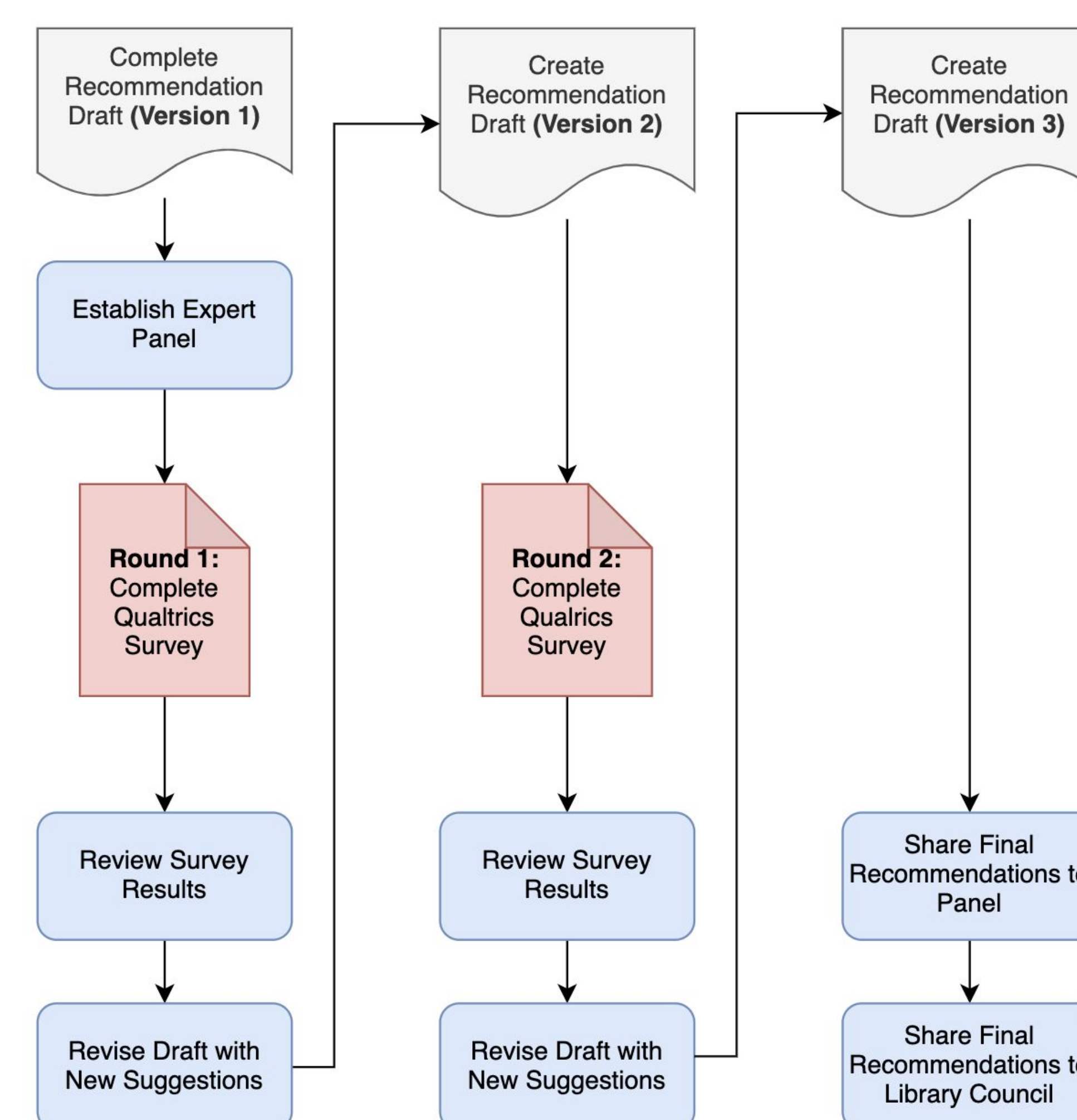

Draft Recommendations

The working group has outlined **draft recommendations** based on brainstorming discussions. These recommendations are a work in progress and will be developed and refined as the group continues and the quasi-delphi analysis is incorporated.

- **Establish permanent ownership and oversight** of this work through the Libraries' Collections Committee. This is essential in defining priorities, setting timelines and identifying specific tasks/steps
- **Develop a community of practice approach for content selectors.** Key elements will be an internal website resource with tools and strategies and facilitated discussions to enable the sharing of strategies, ideas, challenges and successes
- Dean and Libraries **Leadership should endorse and support their staff in managing their commitments and priorities to participate in this collection development work**
- UNLV Libraries should not undertake a collection wide audit to assess for diversity in our existing collections. Instead it is recommended that an overview and analysis of current collecting practices and methods is created. It is our collecting practices - the vendors, publishers, and selection methods we use that enable or limit our ability to develop inclusive collections. **Understanding how our current practices do, or do not facilitate our inclusive collecting goals will allow us to identify and implement necessary changes**
- **Dedicated funding** for the development and sustainability of diverse collecting at UNLV Libraries should be established
- Outreach and communication to **increase awareness and use** of these collections across UNLV should be developed
- Create a guide for new vendors who are not familiar with working with large non-profits

Next Steps

- **Quasi-Delphi analysis work to be completed by the end of 2021**
- The working group will develop a report with finalized recommendations by Spring 2022
- Dean and Libraries Leadership will review and endorse report
- **Libraries' Collections Committee will utilize report recommendations to develop priorities and a timeline** for key stakeholders in collection development throughout the Libraries

Citations
[1]Muka, S. (2018, December 20). *The myth of meritocracy in academic publishing*. The New Inquiry. https://thenewinquiry.com/blog/the-myth-of-meritocracy-in-academic-publishing/
Ray, V. (2018, April 27). The racial politics of citation. *Inside Higher Education*. https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2018/04/27/racial-exclusions-scholarly-citations-opinion
[2]Baffoe, M., Asimeng-Boahene, L., & Buster, B. (2014). Their way or no way: "whiteness" as agent for marginalizing and silencing minority voices in academic research and publication. *European Journal of Sustainable Development*, *3*(1), 13-32. https://doi.org/10.14207/ejsd.2014.v3n1p13
[3]Buggs, S.G., Sims, J.P. & Kramer, R. (2020) Rejecting white distraction: a critique of the white logic and white methods in academic publishing, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *43*:8, 1384-1392, https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2020.1718728