

Recruiting Future Librarians from Diverse Backgrounds: Model Projects in the United States

招募多元背景的未來圖書館員：美國的實施案例

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【Abstract】

Recruiting future librarian from diverse backgrounds continues to be a challenging task. Although thirty percent of the U.S. population is from cultural/ethnic populations, including African Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Hispanic Americans, and American Indian/Alaska Natives, only eleven percent of the librarian workforce is represented by workers from diverse backgrounds, a percentage that is expected to decrease with upcoming retirements. In this context, this paper reviews relevant literature on recruiting students from cultural/ethnic backgrounds, identifies the barriers in recruitment, and offers several model projects

in the United States that recruit the students with diverse backgrounds into LIS programs. These projects were awarded funding from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program.

【摘要】

招募多元文化背景的圖書館員是一項艱巨的任務。雖然美國人口有百分之三十屬於不同文化、種族，包括非裔、亞裔／太平洋島裔、西班牙裔，以及美國印第安人／阿拉斯加原住民等，然而來自上述具有這些多元文化背景的圖書館員，僅占所有館員人數的百分之十一。估計該比率將隨著即將到來的美國圖書館員屆齡退休潮而更為降低。有鑒於此，本文首先

回顧招募多元文化與種族背景的學生進入圖書資訊學研究所就學之相關文獻，提出招募不同文化與種族背景的學生時所遭遇之挑戰。本文並介紹由美國聯邦政府所屬的「博物館與圖書館服務研究院」(Institute of Museum and Library Services)「蘿拉布希 21 世紀圖書館員研究計畫」所贊助的數項示範招募計畫。

Introduction

This paper reviews current literature on recruitment strategies, focusing on recruiting librarians who reflect the communities they serve. In addition, the paper explores effective recruitment strategies; demonstrates the roles that libraries play to help recruitment through activities including internships and mentoring, and summarizes challenges and opportunities in recruitment. Key recruitment efforts will be highlighted including the American Library Association (ALA)'s Spectrum Scholarship Program; Knowledge River at the University of Arizona; Honoring Generations at the University of Texas at Austin; Academic and Cultural Enrichment (ACE) Scholars Program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and Circle of Learning at San Jose State University. These model diversity programs help enhance understanding on issues related to recruiting diverse library workforce.

Literature Reviews

Thirty percent of the U.S. population is from cultural/ethnic populations including African Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Hispanic Americans, and American Indian/Alaska Natives (United States Bureau of Census, 2000). The most recent census data (2010) on demographic changes will be released later this year. Based on a population prediction, by 2050, more than fifty percent of the U.S. population will be from ethnic communities (United States Bureau of Census, 2008). At the same time, only eleven percent of the librarian workforce is from ethnic backgrounds, a percentage that is expected to decrease with upcoming retirements (American Library Association, 2007).

Several factors attribute to the low percentage of ethnic librarians: stereotypical images of librarians; low starting salaries; lack of role models; and lack of recruiting efforts from library and information science (LIS) programs. Furthermore, the lack of ethnic faculty, un-diverse curriculum, few concerted recruitment efforts, and limited financial support are barriers to recruitment. In the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE)'s 1997 statistical report, only nine percent of students graduating from LIS programs reported ethnic/cultural demographics, as it shows in Table 1 (AI-American Indian; AP- Asian or Pacific Islander; B-Black; H-Hispanic; W -White, I - International students):

Table 1 *Degrees and Certificates Awarded by Gender and Ethnic Origin, 1996-1997*

Gender	AI	AP	B	H	W	I	NA	Total
Male	4	20	36	28	851	48	120	1,107
Female	22	111	157	66	3,126	101	378	3,961
Total	26	131	193	94	3,977	149	498	5,068

Source: <http://ils.unc.edu/ALISE/1998/Students/tb2-3c2.html>

The situation has not improved: among 5,951 ALA accredited degree holders in 2003-2004, ethnic

graduates accounted only 596 (10 percent) as shown in Table 2:

Table 2 *Degrees and Certificates Awarded by Gender and Ethnic Origin, 2003-2004*

Gender	AI	AP	B	H	W	I	N/A	Total
Male	2	39	31	45	849	37	177	1,180
Female	18	105	206	150	3,475	161	656	4,771
Total	20	144	237	195	4,324	198	833	5,951

Source: ALISE Library and Information Science Education Statistical Report, 2005, p. 133

The 2008-2009 data see some increase in the number of graduating students of color in Table 3 which is an encouraging sign indicating an increasingly diverse librarian workforce.

Table 3 *Degrees and Certificates Awarded by Gender and Ethnic Origin, 2008-2009*

Gender	AI	AP	B	H	W	I	N/A	Total
Male	5	58	45	78	1,018	37	180	1,421
Female	33	194	268	255	4,014	112	888	5,764
Total	38	252	313	333	5,032	149	1068	7,185

Source: ALISE Library and Information Science Education Statistical Report, 2009, p.124

In Table 4, it shows that the number of awardees with Hispanic backgrounds more than doubled from 1996 to 2004 and increased more than fifty percent from 2004 to 2009. It should be pointed out that, from 2003 to 2009, there was an increase in the number of students of color who received ALA Spectrum scholarships. The number of federal funded LIS programs focusing on diversity recruitment increased as well.

Table 4 *Degrees and Certificates Awarded by Gender and Ethnic Origin*

	AI	AP	B	H	Non-white total (AI, AP, B, and H)	White
1996-1997	26	131	193	94	444	3,077
2003-2004	20	144	237	195	596	4,324
2008-2009	38	252	313	333	936	5,032

Source: Use data on the number of totals from Table 2 and Table 3

Publications about diversity recruitment in LIS appear in a wide range of professional publications, including *American Libraries*, *College and Research Libraries*, *College & Undergraduate Libraries*, *Journal of Library Administration*, *Library Journal*, *Rural Libraries*, and *Public Libraries*. Numerous monographic publications in U.S. also cover the topic (Wheeler, 2005). This indicates that the issue of diversity extends across type of library and is of interest to librarians at varying appointment levels from prospective employees to entry level librarians and administrators. These publications vary in organization, intent, and methodology. Some publications are opinion

based, calling on librarians to commit to diversity (Stringer-Stanback, 2008). Others outline recruitment agenda, including those developed by professional associations or their elected officers (Neely, 2007). Authors present case studies including methodology for gathering data on diversity recruitment (Stanley, 2007). Few pieces present research results such as the survey of the first five years of Spectrum Scholars (Roy, Johnson-Cooper, Tysick, & Waters, 2006). Overall, the writings advocate for recruitment of a diverse student body in LIS programs, provide some strategies of how to accomplish this, and summarize the results of some diversity initiatives.

Effective Recruitment Strategies

Several national efforts have evolved in the United States since the late 1990s to alter the demographics of the librarian workforce to increase the number of professionals from underrepresented cultural communities. The largest financial support to help recruit minority students into LIS programs have so far come from a U.S. federal funding agency. In 2002, the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program was

established within the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The program aims at “the recruitment of new library and information science professionals,” according to former First Lady Laura Bush (Kniffel, 2008). It shows in Table 5 the increasing funds that the U.S. Congress has allocated to the program from 2003 through 2010, with a total of more than \$195 million (Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2011).

Table 5 *IMLS Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program Appropriation History 2003-2010*

(Budget Authority in Thousands of Dollars)	
Year	Amount
FY 2003	9,935
FY 2004	19,882
FY 2005	22,816
FY 2006	23,760
FY 2007	23,760
FY 2008	23,345
FY 2009	24,525
FY 2010	24,525
FY 2011 request	22,962
Total	195,510

Source: IMLS Appropriation History, 2003-2010.

While students of color may be found in any LIS program, these initiatives are noteworthy for their efforts to increase their numbers and to advance understanding of cultural issues among LIS faculty and all students. In this paper, four such programs are briefly described, all of which have received federal funding through IMLS. While announcements of grant funding awards are public, evaluations of funded projects are not always widely available. This may indicate that project managers are extremely busy with daily grants management and may have little time for disseminating project results in the LIS literature.

Model Program: The Spectrum Scholarship Program

The American Library Association (ALA) launched the Spectrum Scholarship Program in 1997 and each

year since then has provided support to from 25 to 60 students of color seeking graduate LIS degrees or certification as school librarians. The 680 Spectrum Scholars have each received \$5,000 to apply to their expenses in attending a LIS program of their choice. In addition, Scholars attend a national summer Spectrum Leadership Institute. In 2009, ALA President Camila Alire announced the Spectrum Presidential Initiative whose goal is to raise \$1 million U.S. dollars toward the support of Spectrum. By January 2011, over one half of that amount was raised. In addition to funding from the IMLS, some Spectrum Scholarships are endowed by individuals. Funding for Spectrum Scholarships comes through a number of sources, including ALA’s annual Scholarship Bash; the Medical Library Association; REFORMA: National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to

Latinos and the Spanish Speaking; Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL); Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC); and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). LIS programs and/or state library associations may also provide additional support to Spectrum Scholars. The Spectrum Scholarship program is highly visible nationally and continues to serve as a key recruitment device.

Model Program: Knowledge River at Ua-Sirls

In 2001, the School of Information Resources and Library Science (SIRLS) at the University of Arizona founded Knowledge River, a center aimed to increase the number of Hispanic and American Indian librarians. Now, nearly ten years later, the 100 Knowledge River alumni are making a great impact in the field as local and even national leaders. In addition to providing students with financial support, Knowledge River developed curriculum for all SIRLS students, including courses entitled “Information Environments from Hispanic and Native Perspectives,” “Equity of Access,” “Diverse Cultures, Communities, and Libraries,” “Issues in Indigenous Information Services,” and “Health Information in Ethnic-Cultural Communities and Environments;” courses are often taught by librarians and professors known as national leaders in diversity. Through collaborations with area libraries including the University of Arizona University Library, the Pima County Public Library, the Arizona Health Sciences Library, and the Arizona State Library Archives and Records, Knowledge River students engaged in practice and outreach. The partners have provided support for Scholars and additional funding was received through several IMLS grants. Knowledge River graduates presence is seen at national conferences, including the annual conference of the American Library Association and the national conference on tribal libraries, museums, and archives.

Model Program: Honoring Generations

From 2003 through 2007, the School of Information at the University of Texas at Austin was supported through an IMLS Librarians for the Twenty-First Century grant to support the education and professionalization of indigenous graduate students to prepare them for careers in the information sciences. Honoring Generations students completed customized academic programs that included service learning experiences with tribal nations, attendance at events including the International Indigenous Librarians Forums held in Canada and Australia and the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The seven graduates include the current Knowledge River Program Manager, the director of a tribal community/public library, an academic librarian in Mexico City, the Digital Initiatives Librarian at the University of Miami at Ohio, a musician and music cataloger, an intern in a church history library, and an archivist at a public library district in Colorado. Future plans for Honoring Generations include recruiting indigenous students who will also complete a master’s portfolio in indigenous studies.

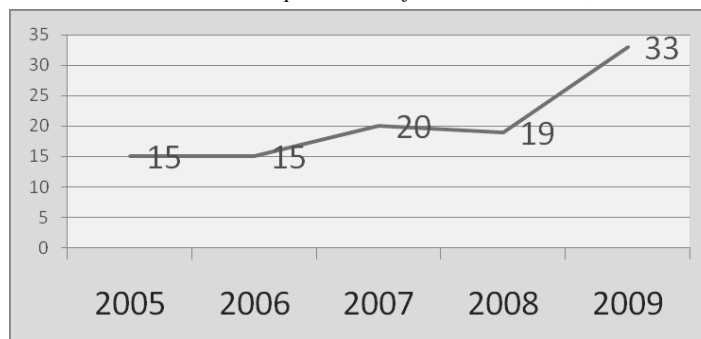
Model Program: Ace Scholars Program

The University Libraries and the Department of Library and Information Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG), along with partners from ten North Carolina academic libraries in Bennett College for Women, Elon University, Guilford College, High Point University, Johnson C. Smith University, Livingstone College, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, Wake Forest University, and Winston-Salem State University, applied for and received a federal grant from IMLS’s Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program in July 2008. The grant helped create the Academic and Cultural

Enrichment (ACE) Scholars Program at UNCG. Since August 2009, the program has recruited fourteen students of color interested in working in academic libraries to a master's degree in library and information science (MLIS) at the university, with graduating dates in May 2011. Students received financial support covering tuition, stipends, and travel to conferences. In addition, internship opportunities at the participating libraries were provided; students were paired with experienced librarians for mentoring, and a series of

cultural enrichment activities were planned and offered to these students during their two-year MLIS program. Due to much media attention from the local, state, and nation-wide, the program received the largest application pool ever, enabling the program to select highly qualified students from very strong candidates. With the infusion of the IMLS grant, the total number of the students of color at the LIS Department in fall 2009 was thirty-three, representing a 60 percent increase from the previous year, as it shows in Table 6.

Table 6 *The UNCG LIS Dept. Student of Color Enrollment, 2005-2009*



Source: UNCG Fact Book, 2005-2009, at <http://ire.uncg.edu/SDP>

Built on the success of the first cohort through this collaborative project, UNCG applied for and received funding from IMLS for a second cohort of the ACE Scholars Program in June 2010. Fifteen or more students from under-represented communities will be recruited into the LIS program at the university in fall 2011 with anticipated graduating dates in May 2013.

Model Program: The Circle of Learning

In June 2010, San Jose State University's School of Library and Information Science received an IMLS grant to support Circle of Learning to fund the graduate education of American Indian and Alaska Native students. Partnering with the American Indian Library Association, Circle of Learning covers the expenses for students to attend a fully online program beginning in

January 2011. In addition to taking courses, students will interact with a professional network of Native librarians; conferences will provide opportunities for mentors and students to meet face-to-face.

Recommendations

Libraries/librarians can serve important roles in recruiting diverse students especially when they collaborate with LIS programs. The following recommendations have emerged that aim to address librarian diversity.

1. IMLS funded initiatives have shown that one time infiltration of funding can introduce students to the field. More challenging is the continuing sustainability of IMLS initiated programs. This requires a commitment that extends beyond the granting years. Commitment needs to be made not

only on the level of the students and faculty involved with the grant, but also on the part of other faculty and, more importantly, university administration.

2. Recruitment of students of color should take several forms. This includes maintaining a website, advertising by word of mouth, reaching graduating undergraduates who have worked in libraries in the past, and converting recruitment material content to easily understood content that is jargon free.
3. Recruitment efforts should include faculty—especially faculty of color—and current students. Recruitment can take place at all levels, extending from elementary level students to adults seeking new careers. Scholarship recipients especially should be called on to assist prospective students.
4. LIS programs should review their admissions criteria and process. The object is not to institute differing criteria to increase student diversity but to make the process as transparent as possible. Flexibility in admissions might mean working with prospective students on a case-by-case basis, extending deadlines when possible, and taking into consideration criteria beyond grade point averages and test scores such as personal essays, reference letters, and attributes that might lead to success in working with communities of color.
5. Consider the demands placed on students of color. Foremost, faculty and mentors should assist students in completing their academic studies. This is especially true with grant funds that have limited calendars; students are often pressured to complete their studies during the grant funding regardless of their family or work situations.
6. Challenge the views of mentoring relationships. Often, a few words of encouragement from an unexpected source is all it takes to plant the idea

in a prospective student's mind that he or she should consider applying for a graduate program. While the presence of librarians and faculty of color cannot be underestimated, anyone can serve as a mentor at opportune moments.

7. Those interested in recruitment of a diverse workforce should also work toward retention and placement. Retention relates not only to working toward keeping LIS students on track with their studies, but also retaining graduates in the LIS professions. In a challenging employment environment, students and new graduates would benefit from attention to placement throughout their studies. Optimally, this support not only points students to on-campus services and access to job vacancy postings but also provides customized and personalized support such as resume review services and interview rehearsal.
8. Practitioners at academic, public, and special libraries can play an important role in introducing potential students with cultural diverse backgrounds into a LIS program. They may have more occasions to interact with these potential students through their regular library services at libraries or other social gatherings.
9. Ethnic library associations such as the American Indian Library Association (AILA), Asian Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA), Black Caucus of American Library Association (BCALA), Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA), and the National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking (REFORMA) in the U.S. can also help with recruitment efforts of the students with culturally diverse backgrounds. Currently, these ethnic organizations offer annual scholarships to LIS students who have the similar cultural heritage. These organizations also contributed funding to support ALA's Spectrum Scholarship Program.

Ongoing support and contributions from these organizations will have significant impact in helping sustain recruitment efforts of a diverse workforce in library profession.

Notes

This paper was expanded and revised based on the conference proceedings, "Libraries in a Multicultural Society – Possibilities for the future," held in Copenhagen, Denmark, August 16th – 18th, 2010.

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