

Joint Conference of Librarians of Color

Main Issues Addressed:

Why is Diversity Important?

- Improves the quality of communication and information-sharing about issues and communities within the library profession.
- Fosters a sense of trust and reciprocity, and a sense of belonging and membership.
- Enriches society by offering more opportunities to experience, learn, and understand one another.

What is currently happening?

- All across the country, the lack of diversity among librarians and library staff are not keeping up with the diverse populations they serve. Despite efforts by some library schools to recruit and retain students of color, the proportion of ethnic minorities in the student population has remained significantly lower than that observed in the US population.

What did this conference provide?

- Strategies for impacting communities and improving the productivity of libraries in regards to diversity and multiculturalism.
- Suggestions on improving the recruitment and retention of library students of color and identifying effective recruitment and retention strategies.

What do we need to do to increase Diversity?

- Recruit and educate a new generation of ethnically diverse librarians and enable pre-professional library staff to make the transition to librarianship. Target groups are library student workers, undergraduates, graduates, high school.

Effective Strategies for Recruitment:

Encourage diverse students to apply to MLIS programs by offering:

1. Assistantships, scholarships, financial aid
2. An ethnic and diverse faculty
3. Special programs and opportunities to work with LIS faculty and librarians
4. Internships or field work in diverse communities
5. A diverse and multicultural curriculum - UCLA information studies webpage at <http://is.qseis.ucla.edu/diversity/index.htm>
6. More diverse librarians
7. Publicity, posters reflecting diversity
8. Invitations for diverse librarians to speak
9. Communication, advertising in media, publications for people of color
10. Websites: www.becomealibrarian.org
11. Availability of career services, job placement in the LIS school program
12. Promotional materials to promote librarians and librarianship
13. Outreach to schools and communities
14. MLIS listserves, bulletin boards
15. Participation and visibility in community events
16. Role models from ethnic groups
17. Part time employment with training, flexible schedules

18. A supportive atmosphere
19. Advising meetings, Peer counseling

Encourage librarians to apply for jobs by offering:

1. Presence of librarians of color in the recruitment process
2. Publicity and Advertising reflecting diversity
3. Active solicitation and personal contact
4. More ethnic diversity of librarians in general

Effective Strategies for Retention:

Encourage MLIS students to stay in programs and become librarians by offering:

1. Mentoring programs in the library schools
2. Flexible class times
3. A diverse and multicultural curriculum
4. Partnerships between MLIS programs and ethnic associations
5. Faculty and staff sensitivity to the needs and concerns of students of color
6. Effective career advising
7. Career services and job placement assistance

Encourage librarians to stay in their jobs by offering:

1. Support groups and systems at the workplace
2. Diversity training and workshops
3. Promotion and reinforcement of diversity
4. Mentoring
5. Diversity awareness among colleagues

Ideas that might help with retention on campus:

Web Survey – to assess librarians on campus about diversity issues
Developing an Effective Mentoring Program

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