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S Y S T E M S A N D P R O C E D U R E S E X C H A N G E C E N T E R

Flyer 225

ARL Partnerships Program
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Introduction

Multicultural understanding, cross-cultural communication, and diversity awareness are all terms that describe the movement toward encouraging and supporting the cultural, educational, and social differences of all people to create workplace environments in which *everyone* can flourish. Most professions are developing and implementing programs to recruit and retain underrepresented groups because they understand the benefits of an environment that encompasses a universe of experience, opinion, and knowledge. Visionary administrators are being appointed. Diversity Committees are being established. Diversity sessions are being conducted. These and other efforts are underway to assist new employees, students, and faculty in acculturating into academic and research library organizations and to encourage diverse applicants to seek positions for which they would not otherwise apply. Developers of these programs understand that a diverse workforce will maximize the benefits for the constituencies they serve.

The ARL Partnerships Program was created to enhance diversity in research libraries and allied associations. The goal was to actively engage more libraries and library-related organizations in advancing diversity initiatives. Partners represent a range of participants who are:

- committed to diversity;
- interested in moving ahead with an active agenda; and
- prepared to be involved in an experience where the knowledge gained is shared to benefit the profession at large.

This process was nurtured through the development of a relationship with the ARL Diversity Program, which provided educational opportunities and strategic guidance for various diversity-related endeavors.

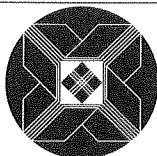
This compilation of diversity programs and activities highlights the efforts of libraries and library associations participating in the *Opportunities for Success* Partnerships Program. This special issue represents a departure from the normal survey-based instrument. It contains reports from the Michigan Library Association, the University of Michigan, the University of Missouri-Columbia, and the Pennsylvania State University that describe the strategies employed within these institutions to create a more inclusive working environment for all. Creating a climate for diversity in libraries involves strategic planning, recruitment and retention activities, on-going educational programs, and consistent organizational assessment and adjustment. This special edition contains actual working documents, memos, and other materials that the participants used to promote their agendas, educate their constituencies, and rally their communities.

The Michigan Library Association

MLA's cultural diversity initiative, like most, is a work in progress. In 1992, a Task Force was appointed to examine the structure, policies, and procedures that would best institutionalize MLA's diversity efforts. The Association officers then began to actively seek people of color to fill positions on the Board and Committees, to offer diversity training, and to seek publications and other resources that would assist with incorporating diversity throughout the Association.

University of Michigan

In 1985, the University Library first made a strong public commitment to diversity. A Task Force was formed to enact programming and examine staff composition with the goal of recruiting a more racially diverse workforce. The Task Force evolved into a Diversity Committee with a rotating membership and an institutional charge, leading the



way for the development of a broader, more inclusive definition of diversity.

University of Missouri-Columbia

UM joined the Partnerships Program in 1994 in order to gain structure and support for expanding their diversity efforts. A joint commitment from the University and the Library allowed for sharing vital programmatic and financial resources to increase the number of minority faculty and students. The program was anchored by a common vision of building a long-standing partnership between a graduate program and a major research library.

Pennsylvania State University

Steps were initiated by the administration in 1993 to incorporate diversity into the managerial framework of the University. *Guidelines for Developing Unit Strategic Plans for Diversity* and a *Diversity Planning Schedule* were developed. An important first step in the process included reaching consensus on the meaning of diversity and outlining a common vision for the future.

In this issue we provide a vehicle for the partners to tell their stories and relate their experiences with implementing diversity initiatives. The information included documents that there are indeed libraries and library organizations that are focusing on diversity and making progress toward meeting organizational goals for inclusive workplace environments. While there are no survey-based results nor analysis, there are concrete ideas and discussion of the successes and difficulties in developing, implementing, and nurturing diversity programs and inclusive environments. In some instances, these examples can be viewed as models, and in others they simply offer ideas. These policies, strategies, and procedures are being presented and distributed as a means of exchanging vital information on what works and what doesn't and as a way of engaging an issue of vital importance to all communities.

This Kit and Flyer were compiled by Allyn Fitzgerald, ARL Marketing and Production Coordinator, and DeEtta Jones, ARL Program Officer for Diversity.