IN THIS ISSUE

This first issue of Synergy for 2014 features three brief articles on a wide range of topics. First, Camille Salas (2012 Diversity Scholar), reflects on a service learning project that was implemented as a product of formal library and information science coursework on universal design, and the nexus with the “makerspace” movement in libraries. Both of these areas are a matter of growing concern and programmatic emphasis for academic and research libraries as well. The lessons learned from implementations such as this can inform similar efforts in all types of libraries and archives.

Harrison Inefuku, 2010 Career Enhancement Program Fellow, provides an update on the ARL/Society of American Archivists (SAA) Mosaic Program. This collaborative diversity recruitment program is entering its second year. Inefuku is serving as the chair of the program’s selection committee, and as the liaison to the ARL/SAA Mosaic Program advisory group.

The final article features a virtual fireside chat with three participants in the ARL/Music Library Association Diversity and Inclusion Initiative (DII). Members of the 2013–2014 DII, cohort offer reflections on their experiences from the past year, highlighting the developmental opportunities that are provided as core components of the DII, as well as ways in which the internship partner institutions contributed to the overall fellowship experience.

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About the ARL Diversity Programs

The ARL Initiative to Recruit a Diverse Workforce, offers a stipend of up to $10,000 to each ARL Diversity Scholar in support of graduate library and information science education. ARL Diversity Scholars participate in the annual ARL Leadership Symposium, a research library visit and a mentoring relationship with a research library professional. For more information about the Initiative to Recruit a Diverse Workforce, visit www.arl.org/irdw.

The ARL/Music Library Association (MLA) Diversity and Inclusion Initiative (DII), funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), MLA, and ARL member libraries, seeks to recruit diverse students with advanced degrees in music to careers in academic and research libraries. The program offers tuition support and a paid internship for up to one year in a partner music/research library. Other components of the ARL/MLA DII include a formal mentor program and support to attend the MLA annual conference where participants will receive specialized instruction in the areas of career development and effective job-search strategies. For more information about the Diversity and Inclusion Initiative, visit: www.arl.org/arl-mla-dii.

The ARL Career Enhancement Program (CEP), funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and ARL member libraries, offers MLIS graduate students from underrepresented groups an opportunity to jump-start their careers in research libraries by providing a robust internship experience in an ARL member library. Each CEP fellow participates in a six- to twelve-week paid internship in an ARL library, a mentoring relationship with a professional librarian while on campus for the internship, and an opportunity to attend the annual ARL Leadership Symposium during the American Library Association (ALA) Midwinter Meeting. There is also potential for academic credit. For more information about the CEP, visit www.arl.org/cep.

The ARL Leadership and Career Development Program (LCDP) is an 18-month program to prepare midcareer librarians from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups to take on increasingly demanding leadership roles in ARL libraries. The LCDP design includes: two LCDP Institutes, an opening and closing event held in conjunction with national professional meetings, a career-coaching relationship with an ARL library director or staff member, and a personalized visit to an ARL member library. For more information about the LCDP, visit www.arl.org/lcdp.

The ARL/Society of American Archivists (SAA) Mosaic Program, funded by IMLS, promotes much-needed diversification of the archives and special collections professional workforce by providing financial support, a paid internship in a partner library or archives, mentoring, career placement assistance, and leadership development to emerging professionals from underrepresented racial and ethnic minority groups. An important objective of the program is to attract and retain individuals who demonstrate excellent potential for scholastic and personal achievement and who manifest a commitment both to the archives and special collections profession and to advancing diversity concerns within it. For more information about the Mosaic Program, visit www.arl.org/mosaic.

Synergy: News from ARL Diversity Programs is a forum in which to share information about programs and opportunities centered on increasing the diversity of staff in research libraries.
Making Space for All: Accessible Makerspaces

In the last few years, academic and public libraries across the United States have created “makerspaces.” These spaces offer library users the opportunity to learn and experiment with a variety of tools and emerging technologies such as 3-D printers, laser cutters, and other electronic devices such as MaKey MaKeys. The latter can be used to turn all types of objects, such as bananas or pieces of paper, into keyboards. Makerspaces can also include hand- and power tools, sewing machines, or low-tech items such as craft supplies. Libraries can also use makerspaces to target specific audiences, such as the one at the Detroit Public Library that facilitates science and technological experimentation by teenagers. I first learned about library makerspaces during a course taught by Mega Subramaniam1 at the University of Maryland’s College of Information Studies. In this article I describe the experience that three classmates and I had in researching library makerspaces and collaborating with FutureMakers2 to implement an accessible, pop-up makerspace at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library of the District of Columbia Public Library (DCPL) system.

Key Concepts

The course, entitled Universal Usability, focused on how to serve the information needs of diverse populations and in particular, individuals with disabilities. Universal usability means that communication and information technology products and interfaces are made usable and accessible for the widest group of individuals. Screen readers might quickly come to mind as an example. The course also examined universal design and universal design for learning (UDL), which requires taking into consideration the unique backgrounds of students and lifelong learners so that curricula and technologies used in classrooms and libraries are usable and accessible to individuals with disabilities. Universal design denotes that products and environments are usable and comfortable for all individuals. One of the most popular examples of universal design is a sidewalk curb cut, which allows people to move more easily if they are in a wheelchair, using a stroller, or riding a bike. Thus, the curb cut not only benefits people in wheelchairs but many other populations. UDL is similar to a curb cut in the same way that a curriculum can be designed to benefit all learners.

Planning and Implementation

In addition to these concepts, my classmates and I learned that one in five Americans has a disability according to a 2012 Census Bureau report. The statistics immediately changed my perspective on potential library patrons, especially as the daughter of a parent who has a hearing impairment. As my group reviewed the literature on library makerspaces, we noticed there was no mention of how these spaces accommodated the needs of those who might have limited cognitive or physical abilities to “make” or “experiment.” In other words, these spaces were unintentionally excluding the needs of many persons who could enrich their lives by tinkering with technologies.

As makerspace novices, we were grateful to collaborate with several individuals involved in the makerspace movement and who knew the informational needs of individuals with disabilities. A team of experienced makers from FutureMakers that serves the Washington, DC-area gave us a better understanding of makerspaces and provided the physical materials to co-facilitate the pop-up event. Patrick Timony, an adaptive technology librarian in the Adaptive Services Department at DCPL, shared his knowledge about working with patrons with disabilities and coordinated the attendees and space for the event.

After learning that our attendees would either have visual impairments or cognitive limitations, the group met with the FutureMakers team to discuss how to adapt five makerspace activities. We thought about how an individual with no vision would interact with the activities and hypothesized that this group would benefit from tactile materials and auditory interaction. An individual with limited cognitive abilities would benefit from working with an activity that did not require complicated instructions or was more tactile in nature. Our challenge was to ensure that every activity in the space would be accessible to our attendees, and they indeed were to varying degrees. On the day of the event, about a dozen participants...
were able to engage with at least two or more of the five activity stations.

We spent much of our planning time thinking about how to adapt the activities. However, we overlooked the fact that making the space accessible also meant that we as facilitators had to be adaptable. This quickly became apparent during an activity in which participants constructed a wiggle robot made out of a plastic cup, a battery, tape, a wax stick, markers, and a couple of wires. We iterated and innovated on the fly as we described the robot to someone who had no vision. We guided attendees’ hands as they created the robot. They could feel whether they were successful, because the robot would vibrate once completed. Even after completing a robot, attendees were enthusiastic about repeating the experience of building and receiving a tactile response. The experience taught us to adjust our expectations just as we imagined our attendees have to on a daily basis.

Observations

After the event, the group made the following observations about accessible makerspaces that could serve to inform those who work in libraries with makerspaces or those who are planning them.

- Makerspaces can be made accessible to more diverse populations with thoughtful consideration of the varying abilities of patrons.
- Makerspaces should challenge participant comfort zones—and can do the same for those who plan and facilitate them.
- When made accessible to all users, makerspaces augment the fundamental mission of libraries—to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and information to create a better society.

As librarians work with students and lifelong learners with diverse backgrounds, learning needs, and interests, it is critical that the needs of individuals with disabilities are also included in the planning of events and spaces that could positively impact their lives. Accessible makerspaces allow more diverse groups to interact with emerging technologies and with one another. We can only imagine the types of activities and knowledge transfer that will occur when more of these spaces are inclusive of those who can share the lessons they have learned in a world that is not always made accessible.

Special thanks to Dr. Mega Subramanian; my classmates Tara Brady, Ayah Nuriddin, and Walter Rodgers; Patrick Timony from DCPL; and Michael Smith-Welch and Matt Barnholtz from FutureMakers for their work on this project.

Endnotes

2. https://kidsmakethingsbetter.com

Harrison W. Inefuku is the digital repository coordinator at Iowa State University, where he oversees the management of Iowa State’s institutional repository. His research focuses on the application of archival theory and practice to the management of institutional repositories. Harrison holds an MAS and MLIS from the University of British Columbia.

Putting the Tiles Together: Building Diversity in the Archival Profession

In 2004, the Society of American Archivists’ (SAA) A*Census revealed that only 7% of American archivists were of color. In her analysis of these numbers, Brenda Banks writes, “To say that these numbers are no surprise is an understatement. The results from the A*CENSUS simply confirmed information already known—that there are very few minorities in the profession, with the largest identifiable group being African Americans at 2.8%.” Indeed, the percentage of minority archivists in the United States was significantly lower than the percentage of minorities in the country as a whole. The United States Census Bureau estimated that in 2004, slightly over 20% of the population was either non-white, or was of two or more races.

In September of 2012, SAA and ARL partnered to apply for an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant to develop the Mosaic Program, to recruit racial and ethnic minorities to the archival profession. In light of this effort, this article provides a brief history of SAA’s minority recruitment efforts.
In 1987, the Minorities Roundtable was established as the first SAA component group to support the interests of minority archivists. As a continuation of the Minorities Task Force, which advised the SAA Council on the status of minorities in the profession, the roundtable aimed to:

- identify and address the concerns facing minorities within the archival profession and its professional organizations;
- serve as a clearinghouse for minorities in promoting their wider participation at all levels of the profession and the SAA and to enhance the membership base of the SAA; and
- support and promote all efforts to genuinely improve the status of minorities within the profession.5

In 1988, the roundtable’s name was changed to African-American and Third World Archivists Roundtable (AATWAR) and in 1994, the roundtable settled on its current name, Archivists and Archives of Color (AAC). According to its current mission statement, one of AAC’s purposes is to “promote wider participation” of “archivists of African, Asian, Latino, Native American and Pacific Islander descent.” Today, the Native American Archives Roundtable (established 2005) and the Latin American & Caribbean Cultural Heritage Archives Roundtable (established 2008) also exist to support archivists and archives of color.

In 1993, SAA established the Minority Student Award. Proposed and sponsored by AATWAR/AAC, the award provides support to two students to attend the society’s annual meeting, “[i]n an effort to encourage an awareness of and interest in the archival field by minority students.”9 In 1999, the award was renamed in honor of Harold T. Pinkett, the first African American archivist to work at the National Archives.

In 2003, SAA Council approved the creation of a Diversity Committee, “to ensure that the organization’s services, activities, policies, communications, and products support the goal of a more diverse SAA and professional archival community.”7 In 2005, SAA named diversity as one of its three strategic priorities and placed an emphasis on recruiting more minorities to the profession. In response, SAA established scholarships to attract and support minority students.

The Mosaic Scholarship was first awarded in 2009, providing tuition support to up to two minority graduate students in archival programs and registration to the society’s annual meeting. With the sponsorship of the General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church, the Josephine Forman Scholarship was established in 2010 to provide tuition support for a minority student enrolled in a graduate program in archival administration. With the creation of these scholarships, two of three scholarships currently offered by SAA are aimed at increasing diversity.

While providing financial support to minority students is important in recruiting new archivists, more needs to be done to ensure that these students remain engaged in the profession and rise to leadership positions within SAA and other archival associations. The initial recipients of the SAA Mosaic Scholarship in 2009–2010 lauded the potential of the Mosaic Scholarship program, but identified the development of a program to support networking, mentoring, and career and leadership development as an element that would support the retention of minority students.8

Amongst the tasks undertaken by the Diversity Committee is the development of the ARL/SAA Mosaic Program, which expands on the awards and scholarships available to minority students. In exploring the development of the Mosaic Program, SAA’s Diversity Committee stated, “We believe that development of programs to attract and retain minority archivists is essential to the profession’s and SAA’s long-term viability.”9 SAA and ARL were awarded the IMLS grant in support of the Mosaic Program in April of 2013. The program incorporates critical design elements similar to the American Library Association’s (ALA) Spectrum Program, and ARL’s Initiative to Recruit a Diverse Workforce (IRDW) and Career Enhancement Program (CEP). Through the grant, the organizations seek to develop a comprehensive recruitment program incorporating tuition stipends in support of graduate archives education, paid internships, and financial support for students to attend the SAA Annual Meeting. The Mosaic Program would also include an annual symposium, in the same vein as the Spectrum Scholar Leadership Institute, or the ARL Leadership Symposium.10

In her presidential address, former SAA president Elizabeth Adkins said, “[Diversity has] also been a somewhat uncomfortable topic for SAA leadership over the years, because while it’s easy to embrace the value of diversity, it’s difficult to change the demographic makeup of a profession. But I believe it’s essential for our future success.”11 Indeed, attracting and welcoming minorities into the profession will only work to improve the quality of the pool of archivists entering the profession. And although this article has focused on diversity amongst archivists, a diverse profession will strengthen efforts to ensure a diverse archival record. As former SAA president Rand Jimerson put
“A diverse and representative archival record can only be sustained over time by a diverse profession of archivists.”

Through the establishment of records retention schedules and the acquisition, appraisal, and preservation of records, archivists help to determine what makes it into the archival record. Through archival arrangement and description, reference, instruction, and outreach, archivists raise awareness of the archives and influence the interpretation of the archival record. As archives play a vital role in preserving America’s history, diversifying the profession is indeed an essential goal.

In December of 2014, the inaugural class of ARL/SAA Mosaic Program fellows was announced. A group of five students pursuing master’s degrees in archival science is currently participating in paid internships at partner institutions, being supported for their graduate work, and convened at a leadership development event held in conjunction with the SAA Annual Meeting on August 12, 2014, in Washington, DC. Mosaic Program fellows also participate in a mentoring program, being paired with professional archivists from the internship host institutions. The participants were also given the opportunity to attend the 2014 ARL Leadership Symposium last January where they met the participants in ARL’s other diversity recruitment programs. The outputs for this IMLS-funded project will be closely monitored, but the long-range effect of this program on the archives profession will need to be tracked over time. It is key that retention strategies are also developed and measured in order to ensure that the archives profession becomes more diverse and inclusive in the coming years.

For more information about the ARL/SAA Mosaic Program, and for photos and biographies of current participants, visit the ARL website:

http://www.arl.org/mosaic

Applications for awards are due on February 28 of every year. Visit SAA’s Fellows, Awards, and Scholarships page for more information:

http://www2.archivists.org/recognition

Endnotes

1. Although diversity is multi-faceted, the focus of this article is on racial and ethnic diversity in the archival profession as well as diversity within the profession, rather than on diversity in the archival record.


4. The Hispanic population, which is counted separately from the racial groups, was estimated at 14% of the population.

5. Ibid.


A Virtual Fireside Chat with ARL/MLA Diversity and Inclusion Initiative Fellows

Tell us about any highlights of your internship experience.

Rahni Kennedy: A few weeks ago, the music library staff at the University of North Texas organized a mock interview day for me. This included a complete committee question-and-answer session followed by a formal presentation that I made to the staff. The most important part of this experience was getting immediate feedback at the end so that I left knowing what I did well and what I needed to improve upon. I think every fellow should experience something like this at the end of his/her internship.

Patrick Sifuentes: Having a dean of libraries who is committed to building a diverse library population greatly enhanced my experience at Northwestern. Also, the music librarians encouraged my active involvement by including me in departmental and system-wide administrative meetings. From this insider’s vantage point I experienced organizational and structural areas only alluded to in library school.

As part of this fellowship program, you attended both the ARL Leadership Symposium in Philadelphia in January and the Music Library Association Annual Meeting in Atlanta in February. What can you tell us about these experiences?

Rahni Kennedy: Both experiences were beneficial in different ways. The leadership symposium provided a basis for academic librarianship while framing it around issues of diversity. This was very important because diversity issues are sometimes neglected in higher education and the symposium gave an outlet to directly talk about these issues in an environment that welcomed it. However, for me the most impactful
part of the symposium was meeting so many peers who have had similar experiences both academically and professionally. We bonded over the three days and I made some lifelong colleagues and friends.

The MLA conference was beneficial because it provided an opportunity to meet the music library community in-person before entering in as a professional. Since the fellowship funding allowed me to be there for the entire conference, I was able to take advantage of both the career advisory and résumé review services while still having time to attend many of the presentations.

**Patrick Sifuentes:** Affirming is the single word I associate with my experience at the leadership symposium. Meeting peers from across the nation and across library disciplines provided a sense of community among our cohort that will last forever. The symposium reinforced every theoretical aspect of MLIS coursework and added practical exposure to library directors, résumé reviews, and hours of stimulating lectures on 21st-century librarianship.

**What advice might you have for other ARL/MLA fellows to make the best of the support to attend the MLA Annual Meeting?**

**Joy Doan:** I attended the conference three years as a student. My first year was a bit clunky; I was very green. However, I regrouped and developed a plan-of-action. It was very successful, and I would suggest the following to other student attendees:

- Begin planning for the conference in January.
- Create a schedule for each day of the conference.
- Look at the agenda on MLA’s website and check off which sessions you plan to attend.
- Set up an appointment for a résumé review and/or career advice. (These services are offered at no extra cost and are administered by vetted members of the MLA community.)
- Identify several (three to five) professionals that work in your area(s) of interest. Reach out to them and see if they are 1) attending the conference and 2) have time to meet with you for an informational interview. This is a great way to learn about the day-to-day occurrences of the profession and to identify mentors. (For example, my involvement in the ARL/MLA fellowship developed as a result of one of these informational meetings.)
- Plan for future involvement in MLA.
- A lot of member involvement occurs at the regional, committee, and roundtable levels, and these are great arenas for young professionals to build rapport. Attend your region’s chapter business meeting, or a committee or roundtable meeting that interests you. Learn how these sectors of MLA run—ask questions.
- Have fun!
- MLA is a fun conference. There are meet-and-greets every evening; join in.

The opportunity to attend MLA as a student can be an illuminating experience, as well as an optimal opportunity to network. As a whole, this group of librarians and scholars is very inviting and willing to share knowledge. The key for making the best of the support to attend MLA is to plan ahead and organize your time well in advance of the conference.

**Patrick Sifuentes:** The MLA annual meeting is your time to network! Make certain to self-identify with a “First Time Attendee” ribbon on your conference badge. Students, other first timers, and longtime MLA members are more likely to approach you and connect you with those you should meet. Even if networking is not your strong point, no one else can do it but you. Start simple with a few one-on-one conversations, and you will be amazed at how much overlap exists within MLA circles!

**Patrick, the Northwestern University music librarians seem to have taken their mentorship role very seriously. What has this experience meant for you? Do you have any tips for future fellows on how to make the best of this program component?**

**Patrick Sifuentes:** The mentor/protégé bond is one that cannot be fabricated. The music librarians and professional staff at the Northwestern University Music Library are absolutely instrumental in fostering my success in this field. Offering encouragement and directional advice are only part of the relationship. I am fortunate that the mentor/protégé relationship is one that will last a lifetime.

**What has the internship experience meant for you? Do you have any tips for future fellows on how to make the best of the internship component?**

**Patrick Sifuentes:** Learn about and participate in every opportunity possible. The entire Northwestern University Library system fully supported my experience, making it an amazing
place to complete a library fellowship. I received individualized attention from the dean of libraries, six assistant university librarians, department heads, and of course, my mentor and supervisor. At every turn there is another librarian encouraging me to succeed, making for a very positive environment.

Close collaboration with my mentor and supervisor in developing an outline of goals within the learning plan helped me grow in my particular areas of interest. I expressed interest in public service, collection development, preservation, special collections, and archives as part of my learning goals. These departments reserved special projects in areas for me to undertake. Now I will enter the job market with a full year of post-graduate, professional experience and am ready to hit the ground running.

This is your learning opportunity so customize your goals and objectives the way you wish.

The ARL/MLA DII recently announced the acceptance of four fellows for 2014–2015. A full announcement can be found on the ARL website:


Applications for the ARL/MLA DII are accepted on a rolling basis. For further information and application guidelines, consult:

http://www.arl.org/leadership-recruitment/diversity-recruitment/arl-mla-diversity-inclusion-initiative

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