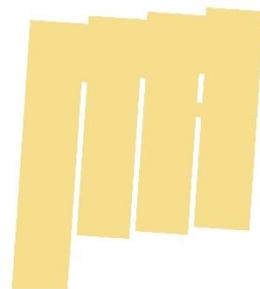# COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY | LIBRARIES

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Audit:

Final Report

Submitted by:

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Executive Summary

Colorado State University Libraries has taken part in university climate assessments and used the Multicultural Organization Development (MCOD) Stage Model to conduct a self-assessment of the Libraries' climate for diversity. To complement these efforts, the Libraries engaged Mark A. Puente & Associates to conduct an internal diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) audit as part of its strategic planning process. Similar questions, issues, and concerns emerged in the qualitative and quantitative data collected through this process. This report offers eight recommendations to assist the Libraries in moving the organizational culture toward Stage 4 of the MCOD model, The Affirming Organization, with the knowledge that labor and commitment are required to move in this direction.

The Audit Instrument

The DEISAA instrument was administered during the first phase of the audit process. The Audit tool assessed the Libraries' level of engagement with DEI in six areas: Strategy, Structure, Processes, Rewards, People, and External DEI Efforts. Respondents rated the Libraries at a Novice level in the Strategy, Rewards, People, and External DEI Efforts areas. Structure and Processes ranked a bit higher, at Intermediate and Novice-Intermediate, respectively. Staff who are higher in the organizational hierarchy tended to assign higher ratings than other groups. Comments generally supported these rankings. Misalignments occurred, but these did not impact the overall ratings. Comments suggested a lack of clear communication about the Libraries' DEI efforts and a desire to be better informed about the Libraries DEI-related activities. There were also positive comments acknowledging efforts occurring throughout the organization. Although the Audit indicated a mostly Novice level of effort towards DEI work, this baseline is positive and promising, indicating that the impact of activity in support of DEI is beginning to surface. This positive trajectory bodes well for future DEI-related efforts.

Focus Group Discussions

Associates conducted three focus groups to gain deeper insights about the DEISAA results. Four significant themes emerged: Principles of Community, Communication, DEI Work, and Organizational Climate. Focus group participants felt that the Principles of Community are a good starting point for the Libraries' DEI work and that adaptation and continued engagement could make them more meaningful. The communication theme revealed the need for concrete, visible messages that trickle down the organizational hierarchy equitably and effectively, coupled with the desire for a safe way to communicate about DEI issues without fear of repercussions. Staff feel that DEI work is hard but important and acknowledged the Libraries' slow, steady process in this area. Discussions about who is doing DEI-related work in the Libraries identified confusion due to overlaps among task forces and concerns that others were not engaged in DEI work. Staff voiced a desire to include DEI goals in the employee evaluation process while also candidly sharing trepidation about how to achieve this in practice. Trust, power differentials, and the impact of organizational history on the Libraries' DEI change-making efforts emerged as focal points of the organizational climate theme. The need to develop trust in order to do DEI work was paramount for some participants. Discussions revealed that power differentials are tied heavily to the hierarchical structure of the Libraries and are potentially problematic for communication. Associates noted that organizational history could be a potential hindrance to the Libraries' progress.

The focus groups yielded many suggestions for DEI work, both as spontaneous ideas and in response to a prompt presented by the facilitators. These suggestions coalesced around three themes: connecting with students, visibility of communications, and community connections on campus and in the wider Ft. Collins community. Though there were many concerns shared during the focus group discussions, there was also a sincere earnestness to do the hard work of changing the Libraries' climate and increasing inclusivity in all areas.

Broad Recommendations

Analysis of audit survey data, audit comments, and focus group data resulted in eight recommendations that can be integrated into individual goal setting and organizational practices. Broadly, the recommendations are:

- **Recommendation #1:** Develop a DEI communication plan (with a decision-making tree to determine individual contributors and channels).
- **Recommendation #2**: Provide better access to training (professional development (PD) opportunities), and community building to staff and other employee classifications outside of (but inclusive of) faculty, to advance the DEI agenda collectively.
- **Recommendation #3**: Explore best practices and tools/methods for analyzing and supporting pay equity across employee classifications.
- **Recommendation #4**: Systematically track demographic data about employees and analyze disaggregated data to inform the development of strategies for the improvement of climate for marginalized or underrepresented populations in the CSUL. (See Recommendation 5)
- **Recommendation #5**: Analyze and openly discuss climate survey efforts so that there is clarity about processes, goals, and what action steps (improvement strategies) are being undertaken as a result.
- **Recommendation #6**: Develop clarity around "policies" and emerging best practices currently in place regarding diversity recruitment and apply those policies as consistently and systematically as possible.
- **Recommendation #7**: Develop an award or set of awards to recognize contributions to DEI efforts made by individuals, units, etc.
- **Recommendation #8**: Weave a DEI focus throughout the strategic plan by including DEI-related objectives in each area of the plan, rather than as a single, separate goal or objective.

Further discussion and supporting evidence for these recommendations are provided within this report. It is believed that these recommendations supply the Libraries with actionable guidance to further its commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice.

Respectfully submitted, March 10, 2021
Mark A. Puente & Associates

Recommendations

Based on the quantitative and qualitative data collection through the DEI audit process, as well as analysis of qualitative data from the focus groups conducted, the consultants have developed the following list of recommendations for the CSU Libraries in order to improve DEI efforts.

Some recommendations provided (and supporting text that offers additional context for those recommendations) may appear obvious to some in the organization. Analysis of the data collected through this process provides evidence that similar questions, issues, and concerns about the organization's DEI efforts are surfacing across groups. Inspection of the data show strong convergence and coherence of themes that surfaced through multiple access points in this process. The recommendations are as follows:

Recommendation #1

Develop a DEI communication plan (with a decision-making tree to determine individual contributors and channels).

- Solicit input from library employees about how best to make communication about DEI timely, consistent, systematic, and comprehensive.

- Seek out diverse platforms for the dissemination of information.

    - Use various platforms (beyond just Teams or e-mails) for information sharing and dissemination.

- Provide clear channels and mechanisms for sharing feedback regarding DEI initiatives in the library.

- Develop and articulate a process for addressing microaggressions and instances of racism, sexism, or other actions and instances of inequity. This may require training for staff and leadership around how to facilitate these dialogs.

    - The Kaleel Jamison Consulting Group makes available a number of pocket cards on their website that help organizations structure dialogs around diversity, equity and inclusivity.

Comments provided within the Audit submissions showed clear pockets of confusion about DEI communication, particularly for those at the Employees level and external community members. This was reiterated in the Focus Groups as participants noted the difficulty in getting " the message all the way down in a consistent way," and "...feeling like somehow the message doesn't quite make it down to the base level of the employees. Like at the top we're really good at talking about it. But I've noticed that it feels like people aren't always quite up to date with what's happening or confused about...what we're doing."

Focus group data indicated that the mechanisms for providing feedback are unclear. There was also reticence about providing feedback due in part to fear of retribution if the information shared could be tied back to individual employees. "There might be some opportunities for people to be able to participate and give feedback, but people don't always know about them...and it's kind of been inconsistent. You could maybe put [it] into Teams, but that's public, and obviously, some of these issues are sensitive."

Recommendation #2

Provide better access to training (developmental opportunities), and community building to staff and other employee classifications outside of (but inclusive of) faculty, to advance the DEI agenda collectively.

- Develop a DEI-specific plan or prioritization matrix to help inform the training to be provided and the sequencing of events.
  - o Note: this refers to a plan for training, specifically, and is not in conflict with Recommendation 8, below.
- Encourage even interpretation/application of policies for staff who engage in DEI development opportunities (i.e. explore a work-around to the requirement that staff take personal time to attend DEI training events).
- Build internal capacity (employee development) for provision of professional development content (DEI-focused) for the library and beyond.
- Build a three-pronged culture of accountability that includes formal acknowledgement, appreciation, and recognition for participating in DEI-related training and other professional development opportunities; incentives/rewards for participating in these opportunities; (see Recommendation 7) and signals and mechanisms for avoiding backlash and performative behavior/activity that are clearly communicated and consistently applied.
- Ensure that library administration prioritizes and participates in DEI PD opportunities, building a learning community throughout the organization.

The uneven distribution of professional development (PD) opportunities was noted strongly in the Audit comments and referenced within the focus groups. It was shared that while a "considerable amount of money" has been spent on PD, there are times when some are "told there's no money. And then, ironically...oh, you're too busy to do that." The concern about having the time to participate was also noted, as there was apparently a "history" of some staff being required to take annual leave in order to participate in PD. At the other end of the spectrum, there was a sense that those in administration did not participate in DEI PD as often as other employees, and a desire to see everyone participate throughout the organization.

It was also noted that incentives for DEI work need to be considered and provided. In particular, the need to recognize that DEI work is "high labor, high emotional work" and thus additional compensation may be needed to support that work. Suggested incentives were not always monetary in nature. The need was expressed for more formalized recognition when someone is successfully engaging in DEI work, or engaging in "collaborative projects that reach across departments...that would not only accomplish something and make people feel good about what they've accomplished, but also it's an opportunity for them to be evaluated on the project."

- Note: A critical discussion took place within one of the focus groups concerning the inherent inequity in having to create incentives for employees to participate in DEI training, particularly for those from majority cultures and identities. When employees from historically underrepresented groups engage in DEI work, rarely are incentives considered and provided, and it is assumed that they have intrinsic motivations for committing to the work. This points to an underlying assumption that employees from groups that do not identify as marginalized or historically underrepresented wouldn't engage in DEI work without incentives or rewards, and creates a double standard wherein these individuals are rewarded when they do the work that their colleagues from underrepresented groups have been laboring under for far longer, often without the benefit of said incentives.

  The common denominator here is that all staff who engage in DEI work would like to be recognized and rewarded for their efforts, from the beginning, explicitly, and consistently. A better approach is to develop a culture of accountability by setting expectations that all CSUL employees will participate in PD activities that are DEI-related or will otherwise advance the work within the libraries or on campus. These accountability, recognition, and incentivization measures should be approached on an individual level, as well as by unit or functional grouping (e.g. those responsible for cataloging/metadata/archival description). Building and incorporating such expectations into performance evaluation processes may or may not be practicable, but building some measures of accountability is desirable. It was noted that establishing this accountability would require work: "I think we still probably have work to do...to actually hold people accountable in terms of criteria in annual evaluations and supervisor discussions, and that kind of thing. To say...that all of us should be engaged in that work."

Recommendation #3

Explore best practices and tools/methods for analyzing and supporting pay equity across employee classifications.

- Explore tools and resources that are used across campus units to determine applicability to the CSUL, or processes employed at peer institutions that can be replicated locally.

- Communicate broadly how these analyses are conducted, the results, if and how the data will be shared, and actions the analysis and subsequent data will inform.

> ### Evidence
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> Comments from the audit indicate that people feel that compensation guidelines and merit raise criteria are inconsistent and are unsure how decisions are made regarding raises. Comments from the audit also indicate that people feel that guidelines for promotion and tenure vary widely across departments.

Recommendation #4

Systematically track demographic data about employees and analyze disaggregated data to inform the development of strategies for the improvement of climate for marginalized or underrepresented populations in the CSUL. (See Recommendation 5)

- Collect data regarding representation, recruitment, retention, advancement, and attrition of employees, particularly those who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) or from other marginalized and minoritized populations

- Exit interviews should be conducted in order to gather data about reasons for attrition, especially from BIPOC individuals or otherwise marginalized identities.

> ### Evidence
>
> The Audit noted some demographic data collection, limited to ARL statistics and University climate surveys. Most comments suggest that data collection in this area is either happening at a higher level that is not known to most employees, or there is a lack of collection due to privacy concerns - having so few minority employees means anonymity cannot be guaranteed. However, best practices for tracking recruitment and retention will require, at a minimum, basic demographic data collection that should be used only for baselining and future trend analysis. This data should not be linked to other information (perceptions, attitudes, or testimonials), due to the need to protect employee privacy.

Recommendation #5

Analyze and openly discuss climate survey efforts so that there is clarity about processes, goals, and what action steps (improvement strategies) are being undertaken as a result.

- Harmonize data and/or results from the weekly Pulse surveys, the university climate assessments, and the assessment of the organization through the lens of the Multicultural Organization Development (MCOD) Stage Model to create a 360 view of the Libraries' DEI work.
- Communicate what action steps/improvement strategies will be put into place as a result of the climate assessment(s).
- At appropriate intervals, measure the effect of the improvement strategies on the individuals for whom the interventions were created or on the organization.
- Ensure that projects and initiatives that are related to assessment measures (i.e. Pulse surveys, are framed and marketed as efforts to measure and improve climate.
- Ensure that climate assessments are conducted systematically (e.g. every three years).
- Develop and test a set of operational norms that honor the voices and experiences of those from marginalized groups.
  - A model is the *Antiracism Toolkit for Allies* published by the Coalition for Diversity and Inclusion in Scholarly Communications.

> ### Evidence
>
> Comments about climate assessments revealed a high level of confusion surrounding whether certain surveys completed in the libraries constituted climate assessments and what happened to the data collected by University-wide climate assessments ("...information went into a black hole and never got acted upon"). Comments also indicated that not all employees had participated in a climate assessment, suggesting incomplete data for the Libraries to work with.

Recommendation #6

Develop clarity around "policies" and emerging best practices* currently in place regarding diversity recruitment and apply those policies as consistently and systematically as possible.

*Slightly revised. The intention here is to explore, implement, and perhaps experiment with emerging best practices in diversity recruitment.

- Track progress by the CSU Commission for Diversity and Inclusion which revitalized a committee from the President's Commission on Diversity and Inclusion (PCDI) to address recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and staff.

- Develop relationships with major recruitment programs within library and information science (LIS) (i.e. the ALA Spectrum Scholarship Program, the ARL Kaleidoscope Program, and the University of Arizona's Knowledge River Program) in the effort to recruit emerging talent.

> **Evidence**
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> Comments indicate a reliance on University-level policies and offices for practices related to diversity recruitment. There was no indication of effort within the Libraries to supplement or strengthen these practices in a way that acknowledges the distinction of recruiting within the LIS field.

Recommendation #7

Develop an award or set of awards to recognize contributions to DEI efforts made by individuals, units, etc.

- Rewards need not be monetary, although they should be meaningful and clearly connected to the values and mission of the organization.

- If there are existing awards, determine if the organization has any latitude to incorporate DEI-type considerations in the award criteria.

> **Evidence**
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> Comments suggest that DEI work is acknowledged, often informally, during meetings or in emails. However, more formal acknowledgment was seen as needed. What this acknowledgement would look like was not clear; however something within annual evaluations was noted as a possible method of acknowledgement - one that was seen as an incentive or something that would "spur" them on. Recognitions also need to be distributed consistently, so that everyone engaged in DEI work, regardless of the level, knows that their work is appreciated. This would also avoid the concern that only certain people are being acknowledged for their DEI work, implying they are the only ones doing that work.

Recommendation #8

Weave a DEI focus throughout the strategic plan by including DEI-related objectives in each area of the plan, rather than as a single, separate goal or objective.

- Ensure that functional groups within the Libraries (i.e. departments, units, etc.) set and track annual goals to advance DEI.

- Ensure that advisory groups and committees, in addition to ESJAG, set and track annual goals to advance DEI. As an example, at least one goal/objective per committee per year could relate to DEI.

> **Evidence**
>
> There is an acknowledgement of the effort that it takes to contribute to DEI work in substantive ways and perceptions that it takes additional human and financial resources at a time when personnel capacity and budgets are already stretched thin. Integrating DEI throughout the strategic plan, and thus throughout the work the Libraries will be doing to implement that plan, will help to alleviate the sense that DEI work is "extra" work or solely the responsibility of one group.

Acknowledgements

We would be remiss if we did not thank the dean, ESJAG, and specifically Jimena Sagas for her leadership in this effort. The level of engagement in the process was impressive, with 15 subgroups submitting surveys in addition to the individually submitted responses. The hard work and tireless support of ESJAG members was essential to the success of this process. ESJAG's DEI-related work was acknowledged and praised in both the quantitative data and the focus groups, and their dedication and passionate commitment to creating actionable change has laid a strong foundation for the library's continued efforts in creating a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and just workplace and research environment that meets the information needs of CSU's faculty, students, and staff.

About Mark A. Puente & Associates

Mark A. Puente

Mark A. Puente is Associate Professor and Associate Dean for Organizational Development, Diversity, and Inclusion at the Purdue University Libraries and School of Information Studies (LSIS). He began this role in August of 2020 after having served for over 11 years as the Senior Director of Diversity and Leadership Programs at the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). At Purdue, Puente is leading the formation and implementation of an organization development strategy designed through an equity lens. He has a broad range and depth of experience designing and managing programs focused on diversity recruitment and retention within libraries and archives, assessing and improving organizational climate, mentoring, leadership development, racial equity, and numerous other topics.

Kawanna Bright, PhD, MLIS

Dr. Bright is an Assistant Professor of Library Science at East Carolina University where she teaches courses in Library Administration & Management, Services to Diverse Populations, Academic Librarianship, and Collection Development. Dr. Bright earned her doctorate in Research Methods & Statistics from the University of Denver in 2018 and her MLIS from the University of Washington iSchool in 2003. Prior to earning her doctorate, Dr. Bright worked as an academic librarian specializing in public services. Her research focuses on assessment in libraries, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in libraries, the application of research methodology to the study of library and information science, and the importance of the liaison librarianship role in academic libraries.

Shaneka Morris, MSLS

Shaneka has spent nearly two decades honing her unique skill set in the data and information landscape. Shaped by her early research in experimental psychology and social psychology and her training with the National Coalition Building institute, an international organization that provides diversity, equity, and inclusion training, Shaneka's expertise sits at the nexus of research methods, data analysis, and racial equity praxis. Her 10-year tenure at the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) began in September of 2010. She engaged with over 100 libraries in the U.S. and Canada and nearly 400 survey coordinators annually, scaling up her data collection, management, and training skills to successfully support and coordinate ARL's international annual data collection for the Association's seminal data products, the ARL Salary Survey and the ARL Statistics survey. For nearly ten years she managed these two surveys and coordinated the biannual ClimateQUAL survey cycles, eventually becoming the point person for custom analyses of ARL's longitudinal data sets and for inquiries regarding the use of ARL data. Anti-racist, equity-driven, and empowerment-focused long before the current racial reckoning, Shaneka has engaged with groups and individuals as a catalyst for positive and sustainable change. Her professional interests include survey design, data strategy, data analysis techniques, and evaluation. Shaneka received her MS in Library Science in May of 2010.