A Change Is Gonna Come:
Renewing Information Workers’ Commitment to Social Justice

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University’s Mission Statement

Encouragement of learning
The education of the whole person
The service of faith and the promotion of justice
Purpose

• Priority issues: Communication, Psychological Safety, Teambuilding

• “What do you value most about your role in the library?”

• Library Staff and Organizational Development Committee (LSOD) Charge: Training, Continuing Education, Assessment, All-library Staff Meetings and Retreats
Outcomes

• Discuss connections between our institutional heritage, libraries, and social justice issues.
• Identify potential actions or areas for improvement in our library.
• Share experiences with and reflect on microaggressions, stereotypes, and unconscious bias.
• Facilitate collegiality and social bonding to promote psychological safety (ClimateQUAL).
Resource Guide

- Distributed ahead of time to all staff
- Common understandings
- Campus demographics
- Definitions of social justice, stereotyping, microaggressions, and unconscious bias
Outline of Day
What is Unconscious Bias?

- Bias that happens automatically and is triggered by our brain making quick judgments and assessments of people and situations
- Influenced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences
- Phenomenon in which stereotypes, positive or negative, influence decisions and behaviors without the individual consciously acting on the stereotype or being aware that he or she is doing so
- Can occur even when individuals know or believe the stereotype to be false
Name an event in your life that impacted how you see or think about authority in the workplace.

How does this event impact your interactions with others at work?

What can you do to manage this bias?
NOTES:

Cops! unchecked power.
campus safety
bias - comes from being a
- pursuit of color.
- news

Be aware of our bias & try to treat cops & campus safely w/ respect.

NOTES:

Unconscious biases come from experiences and the idea of how one should act or think. Being aware of when one is being biased can make a difference.

NOTES:

I have family member who is a police officer, and that had initially formed my perception of authority/police. As an adult I have had to reconcile my probably naive ideas. I try to live up to the police I understand should be in society. I manage my way being more aware of other perspectives.

Customer service in court.
Christmas Eve - other mgm
glamored court face a man abuse of power.

Colleague discriminated against me - eroding trust.

Find something in common & build on that.
Activity: Libraries & Social Justice

How do power dynamics shape our building, services, and policies as they are now? What can we do about it?

Example: Faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students often have different privileges and opportunities at academic libraries (including borrowing limits, loan periods, fines, and so on). When is the library justified in treating these groups differently? When are these privileges barriers for patrons?

Raise your hand if you would like to share to the whole group.
Power dynamics.

- Things we have made improvements on:
  - Increasing student access to collections (ex: media)
  - Paging items
  - Being flexible w/ fines
- Burden:
  - I.R. policy favors FT faculty only
  - Outside visitors (altho our policies more inclusive than other private U's)

Helen Keller

Building Navigation

- Invest in physical nav./usability studies. Invest $$ in professional signage
- Put ourselves in our users' shoes - where are the barriers/roadblocks?
- Posters/signage that translate LC call no. into plain language

Flow of Information

- Department Chair, Librarian, Staff, Student Worker
- Not everyone has same access to information
- People with more power have more information
Lessons Learned

1. Limit jargon, or choose carefully and explain clearly
2. Build in time for the whole group to hear from one another after every activity or topic
3. Plan ample time to discuss in small groups
4. Designate one MC for the day to handle introductions and smooth transitions
Lessons Learned

5. Allow more time to recruit speakers. Make your expectations very explicit.

6. Staff loved getting out of the library together.

7. Send thank you notes and small gifts of appreciation.
Results, or So What?

Reporting Out
  • Summary of discussions and post-event survey shared

Changes for our Patrons
  • Borrowing policies: extended loan periods, eliminating fines?
  • Signage Task Force

Communication & Transparency within the Library
  • All-Staff Meeting on Communication
  • Sharing meeting minutes & upcoming agenda
Results, or So What?

Volunteering
  • Conversations about staff performing community service
  • Children’s Institute, Inc.

Renewing Our Commitment
  • Dean's “State of the Library” address & Annual Report
  • “Social justice” more visible, more of an explicit part of our decision-making
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Social Justice Toolkit
https://lmu.box.com/v/sjtoolkit

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Questions?