

**In Their Own Words: A Qualitative Study of Diversity
Initiatives and the Careers of Librarians From
Underrepresented Groups**

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There are a many initiatives devoted to the recruitment and retention of librarians of color. They include fellowships, scholarships, leadership institutes, and residency programs. A qualitative research study was conducted to bring a much needed dimension to the research on diversity in the profession, and hear directly from participants. The speakers will presented data from in-depth interviews, discussed the effectiveness of the institutes, and outlined the implications for diversity in librarianship.

In Their Own Words

A Qualitative Study of Diversity Initiatives and the
Careers of Librarian

Background

- Initiatives devoted to the recruitment and retention of librarians of color
 - Fellowships, scholarships, leadership institutes, and residency programs
- Need understanding initiatives effectiveness and the implications for diversity in librarianship
- Identify possible areas of improvement

Study Design

- Qualitative Case Study
 - Multidisciplinary
 - Describes one or more cases in-dept
 - Holistic description & search for themes

Participation

- Involved the voluntary completion of a 45 to 60 minute telephone interview
 - Sept. 11th-18th
- Demographic questions
- Open ended questions
 - Opinions on how participation in a diversity program impacted careers

Demographics

- Gender
 - 3 Men
 - 3 Women

- Years Librarian
 - 2-3.5 years (3)
 - 6-8 years (3)

Demographics cont.

- Library Types
 - 1 Public
 - 4 Academic
 - 1 Specialized
 - 1 Government Library
- Current Positions
 - 3 Department Heads
 - 2 Public Services
 - 1 Technical Services

Diversity Programs

- Minority Residency/Fellowship (4)
- Leadership Institute (5)
 - Minnesota
 - LCDP
- Scholarships (7)
 - Spectrum
 - Knowledge River

Effective Experience

- Quality of speakers and facilitators
- Professional exposure/development
 - Led to other experiences
- Contacts/mentoring

Benefits of Participation

- Professional exposure/development
 - Access
 - Career goals
- Financial incentives
 - Tuition
 - Conference attendance
- Cohort interaction
 - Peer network
 - Safe environment

Negative Aspects

- Length of time
- Tension with larger library community
 - Perceptions of program
 - Need for programs in the first place
 - Wanting to be seen as a librarian rather than a diversity.....
- Entitlement issues
 - Participation isn't guarantee

Mentoring

- Developed and maintained relationships with peers (other librarians of color) over time
 - Helped to build network
 - Sustained through social networking & list-servs
- Formal Mentorsip within programs were significant in career advancement
- Some long-lasting relationships with mentors and peers that are helpful socially and professionally
 - Sounding board

Mentoring Others

- Informal Mentoring
 - Discussion with students and others new to the profession
 - Helping others get acclimated to profession and organizations
 - Relating Experiences in diversity programs
- Formal programs
 - with students in Library School
 - Within organizations(ALA and Affiliates)
- Mentoring settings
 - In the Work place in in a supervisory capacity
 - Within the diversity programs for current participants

Diversity Programs-Necessity

Are Diversity Programs Necessary

- All respondents said yes
- Recruit and Retain Librarians of Color
- Support Network
- Removes Isolation

Diversity Programs

Marginalization?

- Three Respondents agree the programs do marginalized
 - Recognized that it is a painful important first step to diversifying the profession
 - Outsiders tend to marginalize program participants

Diversity Programs-Cont.

- Two respondents said they don't
 - Represents space for learning and creating contacts
- One believed that the responsibility was on the individual participant
 - Depends on how the librarian uses what they learn

Career Effectiveness

Career Trajectory

- Has confidence to apply and moved forward with career
- Helped in all phases from student, applicant, fellow to specialist
- Resume enhancement
- Exposure to programs and opportunities

Career Effectivness cont.

Accomplishment without Participation?

- Programs help put participants on tract
- Boost timing in career advancement
- Leads to other opportunities

Thank you!

Questions??

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