



MIAMI
UNIVERSITY

LIBRARIES

Commitment to
**Inclusive
Excellence**

Final Report and Recommendations

Land Acknowledgment

Miami University is located within the traditional homelands of the Myaamia and Shawnee people, who along with other indigenous groups ceded these lands to the United States in the first Treaty of Greenville in 1795. The Miami people, whose name our university carries, were forcibly removed from these homelands in 1846.

In 1972, a relationship between Miami University and the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma began and evolved into a reciprocal partnership, including the creation of the Myaamia Center at Miami University in 2001. The work of the Myaamia Center serves the Miami Tribe community and is dedicated to the revitalization of Miami language and culture and to restoring that knowledge to the Myaamia people.

Miami University and the Miami Tribe are proud of this work and of the more than 140 Myaamia students who have attended Miami since 1991 through the Myaamia Heritage Award Program.

American Library Association Code of Ethics

As members of the American Library Association, we recognize the importance of codifying and making known to the profession and to the general public the ethical principles that guide the work of librarians, other professionals providing information services, library trustees and library staffs.

Ethical dilemmas occur when values are in conflict. The American Library Association Code of Ethics states the values to which we are committed, and embodies the ethical responsibilities of the profession in this changing information environment.

1. We significantly influence or control the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information. In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information. We have a special obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations.
2. The principles of this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical decision making. These statements provide a framework; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover particular situations.
3. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.
4. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.
5. We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.
6. We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders.
7. We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.
8. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.
9. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.
10. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.
11. We affirm the inherent dignity and rights of every person. We work to recognize and dismantle systemic and individual biases; to confront inequity and oppression; to enhance diversity and inclusion; and to advance racial and social justice in our libraries, communities, profession, and associations through awareness, advocacy, education, collaboration, services, and allocation of resources and spaces.

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Introduction

A library's mission is to serve all users' information needs. As such, the Miami University Libraries are committed to fostering an environment of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility for all. The Libraries strive to be a leader in inclusion initiatives and have developed an Inclusive Excellence Strategic Plan (henceforth referred to as The Plan) to make recommendations for how to demonstrate this commitment.

Motivation

Upholding the guiding principles of Miami University's [Diversity and Inclusion Statement](#), the Miami University Libraries are committed to fostering an environment where inclusion, belonging, and equity are intentionally incorporated into services, processes, and decision-making. This intentional incorporation supports employees, students, staff, faculty, and the university community at large. Inclusive excellence efforts are viewed as fundamental to the Libraries' mission and are integral to the service model on campus and in the broader community.

In order to demonstrate this commitment, the Libraries convened an Inclusive Excellence Strategic Plan workgroup (henceforth referred to as the workgroup) to put forward recommendations for how to further improve inclusion and accessibility within the Libraries. The result is this document and the recommendations within.

Meaningful change takes time and is accomplished through incremental steps. While the goal of this document is to enact measurable and visible progress, the recommendations within will have varying levels of impact. Fostering a culture of inclusion is an ongoing task with no finish line - instead, the focus should be placed on making continual efforts at moving forward. This plan outlines strategies to apply while on this journey.

Methodology

The workgroup researched Miami University's peer and aspirational institutions to identify the issues and ideas addressed in those institutions' inclusion-related strategic plans. This research was used as a foundation for the development of this plan.

To understand the perspectives of the Libraries' internal and external users, the workgroup met with and/or surveyed users and advisory groups, Libraries staff and student employees, and campus partners. Workgroup members met with special interest groups for library walk-throughs and small group discussions. Ideas and recommendations were discussed with staff members who would be involved in implementation. From these surveys and discussions, the workgroup distilled what was learned into action items and prioritized each item based on impact and achievability.

Once the document was drafted, the workgroup shared the draft of The Plan with Libraries staff and leadership to elicit feedback. Feedback and recommendations were applied and the final document was made publicly available through the Libraries' website. A team was established to ensure action on the developed plan and implementation of The Plan's recommendations was incorporated into Catalyst, the Libraries' annual strategic plan.

Categories

The recommendations are framed by four Libraries-specific categories: Collections, People, Services, and Spaces. These categories align with the [Libraries' Diversity Statement](#). An overview of each pillar and a summary of the recommendations is provided below.

Collections

Miami University Libraries' collections include a multitude of perspectives, cultures, and time periods. The Libraries aim to be equitable and culturally sensitive. The Libraries will accomplish this by examining the feasibility and usefulness of a diversity audit of the collections and by examining current purchasing policies.

People

The Libraries are committed to creating and maintaining a positive and inclusive climate and culture through recruitment, retention, and advancement practices. As part of Catalyst 2022-2023, an initiative workgroup focused on developing and implementing a recruitment plan and building marketing tools to attract skilled and diverse talent. The Plan will continue to build upon the efforts of that initiative workgroup.

Services

The Libraries openly and proactively share services, resources, and expertise with all who visit the Libraries, both physically and virtually. In sharing these services, the Libraries aim to create a safe environment for all and offer an intellectual sanctuary for the Miami community. In order to ensure all patrons have access to the Libraries' services, signage around the Libraries will be added, modified, and/or clarified. Additionally, training will be developed to support staff in understanding and providing accessibility resources to students. These actions will improve transparency, which ensures all patrons have access to services.

Spaces

Physical and virtual library spaces must be accessible, welcoming, and affirming to all. Based on feedback from student tours of the facilities, this document provides recommendations on how to improve the accessibility of library spaces and create an environment that further promotes inclusivity.

Recommendations

The Plan is divided into four categories: Collections, People, Services, and Spaces. Each of these categories includes one or two recommendations to investigate and/or implement in the next two to three years. It is understood that many of these recommendations have a financial component, and the fulfillment of the recommendations may be limited by financial considerations.

Each recommendation is presented as an initiative. The term initiative was selected as it mirrors Catalyst, the Libraries' strategic planning process. As the Libraries continue engaging in meaningful work to promote inclusivity, these recommendations for initiatives should serve as guidance for what projects and activities to pursue next.

Each initiative has a central theme, or area of focus, and includes a series of actions in order to increase inclusion, access, or representation in the respective area. Initiatives include an executive summary, a detailed initiative outline, and recommendations for task ownership and timelines. The initiative outlines contain a series of actions, rather than one large task. As the workgroup was drafting the initiatives, they reached the conclusion that multiple small changes were needed within the Libraries to promote systemic change rather than one, substantial project.

The following initiatives are included in the section below:

1. Collections

- a. Collection Definition and Evaluation

2. People

- a. Recruitment and Hiring Practices

3. Services

- a. Standardized Accessibility Training
- b. Signage and Documentation

4. Spaces

- a. Physical Accessibility

Collections

Collection Definition and Evaluation

Executive Summary

Within the next two to three years, the Miami University Libraries will examine methodologies that can be used to evaluate the Libraries' collections' diversity content. This may include taking a retrospective look at the collections, as well as current purchasing practices. Outcomes will be a revision of collection development policies that are made publicly available and plans for collection and ordering practices evaluation. It is anticipated that the examination will include representatives from the many stakeholders in the collections' development, management, and acquisition areas.

Initiative Overview

Collections are one of the most public faces of a library's commitment to inclusion. They can be defined as any item for public use accessible to Miami University patrons. These can take the form of books, journals, magazines, newspapers, documents, rare and special collections materials, manuscripts, print or electronic materials, audio visual materials, databases, and more. Collections are curated, acquired, managed, and preserved. They support the curricular and general needs of a diverse population of students, faculty and staff, and strive to reflect all voices as outlined in the Libraries' Diversity Statement. The Libraries are committed to intellectual freedom and representing the diversity of thought. Some materials that are part of Miami University Libraries' collections may be considered offensive, harmful, or contain sensitive content. The Libraries strive to provide context for many of our materials through descriptive records and additional subject headings when necessary.

While OhioLINK and Interlibrary Loan provide access to many collections that are outside of Miami's curriculum and the Libraries' financial resources, the collections to be examined will be the ones owned by the Miami University Libraries system, including regional campus library locations.

1. Establish or designate a group to facilitate the creation and/or revision of collection policies, practices, and procedures with emphasis on diverse collections.

The established group should be in conjunction with the Collection Development and Management Committee and the Social Sciences/Science and Humanities Collection Management groups. In the spirit of being transparent, the resulting documents will be made publicly available through the Libraries' website and/or other means.

- a. Revise the overall Collections Policy statement explaining the philosophy and methodology of Miami's collection development practices with respect to diversity and university curriculum.
- b. Revise or create collection development policies by subject/collections area to reflect current practices and identify future goals.
- c. Establish a group to create a document to be made public explaining the rules and required methods of classification and descriptions and the bias within those rules. Highlight internal and external efforts to counter bias in library systems, for example, OhioLINK's [Resource Challenges in Academic Libraries' Community of Interest](#) and the Inclusive Cataloging Project (part of [Database Improvement and Discoverability Team](#)).

2. Assess the Libraries' collection for diversity content

Develop subcommittee(s)/task force(s), formed by the Collection Development and Management Committee, to explore the initiatives below.

Stakeholders include, but are not limited to, the Collection Development and Management Committee, subject selectors, Technical Services, Special Collections, and regional campus librarians.

Strategies may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Establish a group to explore the efficacy of and potential procedures for a diversity audit of the Libraries' collections.
 - Among other tasks, this group will define what a diversity audit is, explore other libraries' methodologies, and assess cost both in terms of funds for software/vendors' services and of time of labor.
 - Statewide initiatives should also be addressed.
 - A resulting document from this group should include suggestions for conducting a diversity audit, discuss practical implications for collection development and management practices, and a means of evaluating the process.
 - Composition of the group should include representatives from the stakeholders and others as deemed necessary.
- b. Establish a group to design and possibly conduct a study evaluating the recent two to three years of book orders, considering diversity of publishers, subjects, and authors.
 - The methodology will be determined by the committee/task force/participants.
 - A resulting document from this group should include suggestions highlighting what is working in the selection process and highlight changes to selection practices.

People

Recruitment and Hiring Practices

Executive Summary

In AY23, the Libraries committed to reviewing recruitment and hiring practices through the Pipeline of Inclusive Talent initiative in Catalyst, the Libraries' strategic plan. The charge of this initiative was to, "Develop and implement a recruitment plan and build marketing tools to attract skilled and diverse talent." This group made great progress over the 2022-2023 academic year and has ideas for how the initiative can be further developed. This initiative looks to continue the work that was started through the Catalyst initiative.

Initiative Overview

Recruitment and hiring practices are central to the discussion of inclusive excellence within universities and academic libraries. The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) states that "Recruitment of the next generation of librarians is one of the most pressing issues facing the profession and the association today"^[1]. In the 2023 academic year, Miami University made changes to the hiring and recruitment practices, such as releasing a revised training for search committees. With recruitment and hiring a central focus of Miami University and ACRL, it is necessary for the Libraries to continue to build capacity in this area.

Catalyst '23 included a Pipeline of Inclusive Talent initiative, charged with developing and implementing a recruitment plan and building marketing tools to attract skilled and diverse talent. This workgroup accomplished two main objectives: 1) Develop substantive "why work at Miami?"/Oxford & environs marketing materials (in development as of June 2023) and 2) Develop a checklist of preferred/best practices for postings, job descriptions, and interviews. Members of this workgroup created quality resources, but admit that their work was a catalyst for further developments.

1. Association of College & Research Libraries. (2023). Recruiting to the Profession. Association of College & Research Libraries.
<https://www.ala.org/acrl/proftools/recruiting>

This initiative looks to continue the activities of the Pipeline of Inclusive Talent initiative workgroup. This includes incorporating their recommendations into existing documentation, further exploring where jobs are posted, and evaluating the effectiveness of these activities.

Whenever possible and appropriate, completing these recommendations should stem from processes and structures that are already in place to streamline completion.

1. Update and maintain Employee Search, Onboard, Off-board documents within the Staff Manual

Documentation of the search process is crucial. It helps with transparency, consistency, and equitable treatment of candidates. The following recommendations will ensure that best practices for hiring are not only shared but implemented.

- a. Designate an individual or team who is responsible for review and maintenance of the employee search, onboard, off-board documents. This individual or team will determine a review schedule.
- b. Incorporate the best practices (link to be added) from the Pipeline of Inclusive Talent initiative workgroup directly into the documents in this section. Add additional inclusivity and accessibility processes into the documents as necessary.
 - Before best practices are incorporated into the documentation, ensure they align with University policy.
- c. Require that search committee members complete the University Search Committee Training prior to engaging in search activities.
- d. Train search committee chairs on how to use Employee Search, Onboard, Off-board documents. This may require developing a training or could be a personal discussion with the Assistant Dean and Administrative Services Coordinator before beginning the recruitment process.
- e. Create templates that can be used during the search process to ensure consistency and incorporation of inclusivity and accessibility recommendations. These could include email templates, schedule templates, sample interview questions, etc.
- f. Increase the focus on inclusive hiring practices for classified staff. To date, the primary focus has been on unclassified staff and librarians.
 - Complete the recommendations above separately for classified staff and unclassified staff/librarians so proper consideration is given to the unique needs of each employee group.

- g. Develop tools and procedures to provide feedback on the hiring process in the following ways:
- Require a debrief among the search committee members after submitting the non-ranked evaluation to reflect upon the search process and identify any barriers or biases.
 - Develop a procedure for search committee chairs to report any steps in the [Employee Search, Onboard, Off-board documents](#) that are unclear or no longer relevant or applicable.
 - Develop a mechanism for continuous improvement whereby Libraries staff can make recommendations to make the hiring process more inclusive.
 - o As a subset of this recommendation, develop a process for following up and potentially implementing staff recommendations for inclusive hiring processes.
- h. Review off-boarding practice to improve inclusivity and equitable procedures. To date, the primary focus has been on the employee search process. The first step would be to apply the recommendations in this document to off-board documents, as applicable.

2. Expand where jobs are posted and keep documentation of recommended job boards

In order to reach a diverse group of applicants, job postings must be distributed strategically. In addition to the standard job boards provided by Miami University's Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity (OEEEO), the Libraries should intentionally post to library, subject, and/or diversity-specific job boards, groups, or listservs. It is recommended that jobs are posted on job boards that attract diverse candidates. As posting to job boards is not free, a portion of the existing recruitment budget should be dedicated to this. Additionally, the Libraries should leverage the networks and groups current staff and librarians are a part of, and foster a culture in which all staff are encouraged to distribute job postings.

For local searches:

- a. Make a list of job boards positions are posted to. Add this list to the [Employee Search, Onboard, Off-board documents](#) within the Staff Manual.
- b. Form a workgroup for identifying local job boards (within a 45-mile radius) positions can be posted to, including ones that reach diverse communities.
- c. Track how applicants learned about the position to make data-informed decisions about where to post future positions.
 - Develop a tracking procedure
 - The Administrative Services Coordinator should document the feedback at the end of the search process, before the Employment Recommendation is provided in PageUp.

For national searches

- a. Make a list of job boards positions are posted to. Add this list to the [Employee Search, Onboard, Off-board documents](#) within the Staff Manual.
- b. Commit funds from the existing recruitment budget for posting jobs to diversity-focused job boards such as Black Caucus of the American Library Association (\$249), Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association (\$199), Chinese American Librarians Association (\$250), REFORMA (\$25), and American Indian Library Association (\$50). Set guidelines for which positions are posted to specific job boards.

- c. Create a process in which librarians share the job posting to their networks, as appropriate and applicable once the standard dissemination of job postings has occurred.
- d. Track how applicants learned about the position to make data-informed decisions about where to post future positions.
 - Develop a tracking procedure.
 - The Administrative Services Coordinator should document the feedback at the end of the search process, before the Employment Recommendation is provided in PageUp.

3. After implementing the two previous recommendations, review processes and improve inclusive practices

Recruitment and hiring practices are not static, but rather should evolve with workforce trends. Inclusive practices take time, attention, and consideration. As the Libraries implement the best practices from the Pipeline of Inclusive Talent initiative workgroup, it is necessary to review the effectiveness of these practices and look for additional opportunities to support a diverse pool of candidates.

- a. Select a representative to meet with search committee chairs after the hiring process has been completed to discuss inclusion and accessibility efforts. The goal of this meeting is to reveal opportunities for future improvement for inclusivity in the hiring process.
- b. Once the hired candidate has started their role within the Libraries, an inclusive excellence representative can meet with them to discuss their experience during the interview process. This will be optional for newly hired employees. Prior to implementation, this recommendation would require a detailed procedure.
- c. Update best practices in [Employee Search, Onboard, Off-board documents](#) according to emerging research.
- d. Identify recommendations that can not be implemented due to institutional processes. Collaborate with other units on campus to advocate for institutional change, as appropriate.

Services

Standardized Accessibility Training

Executive Summary

In order to better serve the Libraries' patrons of all abilities/disabilities, standardized training will be developed and implemented for staff and student employees on the accessibility resources and services that are currently available in and through the University Libraries, and across campus more broadly. This will empower any person who acts as a point of contact for the Libraries to direct patrons to the most relevant accessibility resources that meet their individual needs.

Initiative Overview

The University Libraries, along with other entities on campus, provide various accessibility resources and services for patrons, however they are underutilized by the Libraries' patrons because all staff, as well as patrons, are not aware of or particularly familiar with all of them.

This is problematic because it may lead to patrons being unable to participate in events or access the resources they need in a way that best suits their individual needs. This would be detrimental to their success and may cause patrons to not feel welcome or included in the Libraries.

As such, it is vital that all Libraries staff, as well as student employees who work in public service points (physical and virtual) receive standardized training regarding all of the accessibility resources, services, and reasonable accommodations that the Libraries has to offer, or can help patrons access.

This job training will ensure that all employees who interact with patrons are knowledgeable about the accessibility resources and services that are available, and they can direct patrons to what they need.

1. Development

For ease and flexibility of use, the standard accessibility training is recommended to be made available in a virtual format that employees can complete asynchronously.

These training materials will be developed by:

- a. Library Accessibility Liaison
- b. Manager of Library Operations and Planning
- c. Student Disability Services office
- d. AccessMU

In consultation with:

- a. DEIA Committee members
- b. DEIA Strategic Plan workgroup members

2. Participation

Who will be required to complete the standardized accessibility training?

- a. All Libraries staff:
 - Classified
 - Unclassified and Librarians
 - Upper-level Administrators
- b. Student employees who work in public service point positions where they interact with patrons.
- c. This training will be incorporated into the on-boarding process for all coming into the above positions.

3. Maintenance/Updating

The content of the accessibility training materials will be reviewed and updated every two years by the staff in the positions listed under the Development section above who created the materials.

- a. Minor updates to the information can be disseminated to staff via email by a staff member who was involved in the update.
- b. Major updates and/or new additions to the Libraries' accessibility resources or services may necessitate that staff completes additional training.
- c. This training will also connect with the Signage and Documentation recommendation for accessibility resources.

Signage and Documentation

Executive Summary

When developing The Plan, the workgroup members met with multiple advisory groups. In each meeting, a common sentiment was shared that students were not fully aware of the services, resources, and procedures within the Libraries. This section includes a series of recommendations for signage, discovery, and awareness-building to promote the Libraries' services to diverse audiences.

Initiative Overview

The Libraries offer numerous services and resources to support students, faculty, and the community. Librarians and staff also engage in behind-the-scenes projects to promote inclusivity in resources and services. While these resources and services may be available, patrons are not always aware they exist. As a result, resources and services within the Libraries are sometimes underutilized and certain populations may be unintentionally excluded.

Updating signage and documentation promotes inclusion in the Libraries as it ensures all patrons have access to information and resources. Transparency in information sharing challenges systems of power and privilege by allowing all patrons access to information.

There are four areas addressed within this initiative: adding signage, updating and maintaining existing signage, documenting resources, and wayfinding. Each area has a series of recommendations.

1. Add the following signage:

Cafe doors

- Clearly post the hours the cafe doors are locked.
- An alternative is to post a link to the website which provides the cafe hours.
- The current sign reads “These doors are locked when King Cafe is closed” and the hours listed at the entrance are the Libraries’ hours. With this language, it is not evident when the cafe entrance is (un)locked.

Stacks

a. Add two types of information in the stacks:

- How to request assistance in retrieving a book.
- A reminder to keep the stacks aisles clear and to return kickstools to the end after use.

Staff elevator

- Add clearer signage to the staff elevator so patrons do not attempt to use it.

Family restroom

- Add signage to the two restrooms closest to the cafe to indicate they are family restrooms with changing tables available.
- Add signage in or near other restrooms within the building indicating the location of the family restrooms.

2. Updates to existing signage and general maintenance:

Correct misinformation

- Not all of the signage within the Libraries is up-to-date.
- For example, the directional signage near the front entrance doors lists locations that are no longer available.
- Additionally, language on fire exit doors states “Fire Door Do Not Prop Open,” but they are held open magnetically.
- Signage with misinformation should be corrected or additional clarification should be added.

Add QR codes

- Add QR codes to select signage so patrons have the ability to access the information online. This would provide better access for patrons with low vision.
- The advisory groups specifically recommended QR codes for Government Documents shelving and the labels in Special Collections displays.

Make signage more accessible

- Print new directories in accessible fonts and with more appropriate contrast ratios.

Regular signage review

- After the initial updates to signage are made, establish a regular review process.
- The review should include a review of the accuracy and relevance of signage, links and QR codes, and general appearance/readability (such as contrast) that may have changed over time.

3. Document the following resources available (documentation could be in the form of a sign, website listing, or other modality):

Adjustable height tables

- Increase awareness of where adjustable height tables are available.

Accessibility resources

- While [a current page exists for accessibility resources](#), many staff and patrons are unaware of its presence. Increasing awareness of this page could connect with the Standardized Accessibility Training initiative.

Renovations

- As renovation plans unfold over the next few years, highlight accessibility features within the plans.

Collections

- Create language for the website about alternative subject headings that can be used when researching topics that may have problematic language.
- Additionally, create language for the website that shares why some materials that are problematic can still be found in the collections.

4. Wayfinding

Online map

- It is recommended that a map of the Libraries is made available on the website.
- This will allow patrons the opportunity to navigate the spaces with greater ease, provide patrons with dis/abilities an understanding of navigation options, and reduce the need to seek assistance from Libraries staff.

Improve wayfinding signage in King Library

- Echoing the above, update King Library's directories and wayfinding maps to reflect current facilities.

Strategically improve the location of wayfinding

- Examine the location of current signage and make updates to the locations of directories and maps to better support patrons in finding their way around the Libraries.

Spaces

Physical Accessibility

Executive Summary

Over the next two years, the Libraries will improve the physical accessibility of several aspects of King Library. These improvements come in response to needs identified in a review of the current building status and feedback from the Libraries' constituents, including representatives from the University's Students with Disabilities Advisory Committee. Some specific improvements are specified here, while other items will require further investigation to devise satisfactory solutions.

Initiative Overview

Early in the development process, the workgroup identified Accessibility as a key component of inclusion initiatives - one that is especially important when thinking about the Libraries' built environment. In light of that, the workgroup included accessibility considerations as they conducted surveys and discussions with the Libraries' constituents.

After an initial meeting with the University's Students with Disabilities Advisory Committee, the workgroup invited representatives from the group to tour King Library to look at the building with an eye toward improving accessibility. Some of the items identified were known concerns, and others were challenges of which the workgroup had not previously been aware.

In some cases this initiative proposes specific improvements to King Library's spaces; in others, there is a range of possibilities, and implementation teams will need to choose how to proceed. All of the changes will require financial resources. In many cases, incremental improvements may be possible over time, and initial successes may take the form of creating a concrete plan of action to be implemented over a specific timeline.

1. Refurbish two study rooms to be designated as accessible, and reserve them for students/groups with accessibility needs

Desired accessibility features include:

- Automated door openers, or easier-to-open doors.
- More open space for maneuvering wheelchairs or other assistive devices.
- Adjustable height desks.
- Adjustable height, lower-to-the-ground, or taller whiteboards.
- Adjustable lighting levels.

Teams, individuals, and campus partners involved: Access & Borrow, Manager of Library Operations and Planning, Physical Facilities Department

2. Improve accessibility of the stacks on the Second Floor of King Library

- Increase knowledge of and access to reasonable accommodations for those who have difficulty reaching materials.
- Increase space between shelves in all of the stacks to 36”.
- Create a plan for keeping aisles clear of kickstools to improve accessibility.

Teams, individuals, and campus partners involved: Access & Borrow, Advise & Instruct, Manager of Library Operations and Planning

3. Add more accessible furnishings to public spaces:

- Adjustable height desks in library work areas on each floor.
- Adjustable height self-checkout stations on the first floor.
- Add stools in accessible restrooms for those who can't reach the sinks.

4. Create parent-friendly spaces and a sensory room:

Parent-friendly features could include:

- Additional diaper-changing stations.
- Lactation room.
- Sensory room features could include:
 - Adjustable lighting.
 - Curtains or other privacy measures.
 - Soft seating.
 - Sound insulation.
 - Nap pods.

Seek out opportunities to partner with other entities on campus, such as TriHealth and the Miller Center, to develop these spaces

Teams, individuals, and campus partners involved: Manager of Library Operations and Planning, Learning & Engagement, Office of the Dean

5. Devise a plan to improve King Library entry access when King Cafe is closed

Currently, the ground floor doors are locked during times when the cafe is closed, but it is difficult to reach the front door from the driveway for users for whom stairs are a barrier.

A solution to this barrier must take into consideration the security of our users as well as accessibility.

Possible solutions may include but are not limited to:

- Improving clarity of signage about ground floor doors open/closed times;
- Providing security staffing for the ground floor doors when the cafe is closed;
- Providing key-card access to the ground floor doors for users who need it. This would include establishing a process by which students, faculty, and staff could be identified and granted access;
- Having circulation staff manage access to the ground floor doors for users who need it;

- Adding door monitors and security cameras to the cafe doors; and/or
- Adding a ramp from the ground floor to the front doors outside King Library.

If the solution does involve granting expanded access to specific students, faculty, and staff members, the solution also should include a plan for supporting visitors who are not included in that system.

Teams, individuals, and campus partners involved: Manager of Library Operations and Planning, Access & Borrow, Office of the Dean, MUPD, Physical Facilities Department, Miller Center for Student Disability Services, Access MU

6. Explore possibilities for improving compact shelving accessibility:

Currently, the handles used to move the book carriages are parallel to the carriage making operation by mobility impaired users difficult.

Possible solutions include but are not limited to:

- The addition of new handles with a perpendicular “crank” would make the shelving much more accessibility friendly.
- The addition of electric drive to the carriages so they can be moved with the press of a button.

Teams, individuals, and campus partners involved: Manager of Library Operations and Planning, Access & Borrow, Office of the Dean, Physical Facilities Department

Conclusion

The Miami University Libraries are committed to fostering an environment where the highest ideals of inclusion, belonging, accessibility, and equity support our employees, students, staff, faculty, and university community at large. The initiatives recommended in this strategic plan lay out a path toward achieving those goals. Each of the major areas that the Libraries' inclusive excellence work is focused on are represented: Collections, People, Services, and Spaces.

The recommendations being made by The Plan workgroup are based on feedback received from multiple parties across campus, as the main objective of this plan is to prioritize the everyday needs of the Libraries' diverse population of constituents. The clear steps suggested for each initiative, paired with recommended task ownership (see Appendix 1), will help make each initiative successful.

The workgroup also recommends that any documentation and/or policy developments/changes that are created as a result of implementing the initiatives in this plan should be made publicly available, as transparency in decision-making and information-sharing challenges systems of power and privilege by allowing all people access to information.

Additionally, work related to these initiatives that is already in progress is noted in this plan (see Appendix 2), as are ideas for other potential initiatives for future iterations of The Plan (see Appendix 3). This will serve to keep the progress of the strategic plan going in both its current and future forms.

It is the workgroup's intention that the strategic plan continues to be updated every two years and evolve to meet new and changing needs that arise in the Libraries over time. The workgroup feels that this type of ongoing incremental work will result in the sort of systemic changes that will continue to improve the Libraries in the areas of inclusive excellence.

Appendix 1

Recommendations Implementation

While much effort, thought, and consideration were placed into developing this document, the contents within are only impactful if executed. The workgroup recommends that a team is formed to oversee implementation of this plan and that implementation is an initiative under Goal 2 of Catalyst '24.

Responsibilities of the implementation team

- Coordinating with Libraries staff to implement the recommended initiatives
- Connecting with partners, as necessary
- Monitoring the timeline for implementation, providing suggestions for the order and time in which to complete recommendations
- Reporting on progress
- Serving as a representative for the work being completed
- Completing any documentation needed during the implementation

Structure for implementing the initiative recommendations

Project implementation co-facilitators

- Ken Irwin
- Elizabeth Kerr

Collection Definition and Evaluation

Representative

- Stefanie Hilles

Others involved

- Kevin Messner
- Members of the Collection Development and Management Committee
- Members of the Social Sciences/Science and Humanities Collection Management groups
- Subject selectors
- Technical Services
- Special Collections
- Regional campus librarians

Recruitment and Hiring Practices

Representative

- John Millard

Others involved

- Donna Richardson
- Elizabeth Kerr
- Department Heads

Offices involved

- Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity
- Academic Personnel

Standardized Accessibility Training

Representative

- Katie Gibson

Others involved

- Mike Smith
- DEI Committee members
- Sabrina Mason
- Kris Abney

Offices involved

- Student Disability Services
- AccessMU Center

Signage and Documentation

Representative

- Mike Smith

Others involved

- Nick Kneer
- Kris Abney
- Katie Gibson
- Web Services team
- Members and/or representatives of the Collection Development and Management Committee

Offices involved

- Physical Facilities Sign Shop

Physical Accessibility

Representative

- Mike Smith

Others involved

- Katie Gibson
- Kris Abney
- Laura Birkenhauer
- Various members of the Access & Borrow team
- Various members of the Advise & Instruct team

Offices involved

- Physical Facilities Department
- Student Disability Services
- MUPD
- AccessMU Center

Appendix 2

Work in Progress

Although the primary task of the working group was to create a plan for efforts to be undertaken in the coming years, some of the needs the workgroup identified have already begun to be addressed.

Collections

- Social Science Librarian Abi Morgan is already working on a diversity audit for the Children's Collection in the Instructional Materials Center.
- Student Success Librarian Laura Birkenhauer will conduct a diversity audit of the leisure reading collection in Summer 2023.
- Social Science Librarian Abi Morgan is participating in the OhioLINK Community of Interest on Resource Challenges; that group's work may support plans for how the Libraries articulate and communicate policies for handling challenges.
- [OhioLINK is coordinating the purchase](#) of a collection of unlimited- and perpetual-access Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) e-books.
- Arts and Humanities Librarian Stefanie Hilles is creating a semi-permanent exhibit of BIPOC posters for the Wertz Art and Architecture Library.
- The DEI Committee's Textbooks on Reserve Task Force, co-chaired by Cara Calabrese and Laura Birkenhauer, are looking at how the Libraries select reserve textbooks with diversity in mind, and raising awareness of these resources.
- Acquisitions and Access Librarian Cara Calabrese and Library Associate Elizabeth Staarman are reviewing titles in the Instructional Materials Center to identify and evaluate books known to mis-represent indigenous and other cultural experiences.
- Coordinator of Cataloging Masha Stepanova is working to improve the language used to describe materials related to personal and cultural identities.
- Acquisitions and Access Librarian Cara Calabrese is working with Laura Fathauer (Senior Web Accessibility Specialist at AccessMU) to better integrate accessibility evaluation into the Libraries' acquisitions process, and to evaluate existing products.

People

- The Pipeline of Inclusive Talent initiative workgroup (an initiative within Catalyst '23) has made recommendations for improving staff hiring and retention, and many of those recommendations were implemented in two staff searches during Spring 2023. The next steps for these efforts are outlined in the People section of this document.
- Outside of this plan, there are future activities planned to support staff through Catalyst, the Libraries' Strategic Plan. Catalyst '24 will include an initiative focused on new staff onboarding and Catalyst '24 will include an initiative to support the retention and growth of current staff.

Services

- The workgroup's surveys revealed that inclusive excellence information was hard to find on the Libraries' website; The Libraries' Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee is currently working with Web Design Librarian Meng Qu to build an inclusive excellence presence on the website.
- Review of policies related to access to electronic resources between the Oxford Libraries and Regional Libraries is taking place.

Spaces

- Changing stations have been added to the ground floor bathrooms near the cafe.
- Create + Innovate took feedback from the accessibility review with the Students with Disabilities Advisory Council and is working to support students who will benefit from lower-sensory environments. They have noise canceling headphones available and are working to carve out an office space where students can work separate from the busy-ness of the Makerspace.
- Manager of Library Operations and Planning Mike Smith is planning to order additional electric-powered adjustable-height tables & checkout stations (two of each) for King Library in FY24.

- Manager of Library Operations and Planning Mike Smith is looking into whether more accommodating compact shelving handles exist for the shelves in the IMC, and into the possibility of converting the compact shelving to electric-powered shelving.
- Manager of Access and Administrative Services Kris Abney and Manager of Library Operations and Planning Mike Smith are starting conversations about how to manage providing access to tall shelves in second floor stacks while also keeping aisles clear of kickstools.
- The Circulation Department and Associate Dean Aaron Shrimplin have begun evaluating the options for re-spacing the shelves on the second floor. Coordinator of Access Service Rob Withers estimates that there are about 479,550 items in the 2,200+ ranges of shelves affected by a potential move.

Appendix 3:

Parking Lot

The parking lot is a place to save ideas that didn't quite fit into the current plan and need further exploration. Some of the ideas require further definition or development or direct correlation to inclusive excellence services. The workgroup wanted to document these ideas here to keep a record of their ideation—future inclusive excellence plans may choose to include and expand some of these ideas.

Collections

- Extending from the evaluation of book orders, also examine e-resource acquisitions, including opt-ins from OhioLINK - both those accepted and those rejected.
- Create lists of diverse and small publishers to assist in identifying smaller presses not well covered in our traditional ordering tools such as YBP.

People

- Plan for more in-depth focus groups over the next two years following up on inclusion ideas or concerns that may have been missed. Focus groups may include existing groups on campus (e.g. the University's Students with Disabilities Advisory Committee) or targeted community groups (e.g. BIPOC students, LGBTQIA+ students, faculty groups, alumni).
- Assign a mentor for each new employee.
- With the lack of internal growth opportunities for some positions, look for alternative opportunities for staff to grow, develop and flourish.
- Conduct recurring job audits of current Libraries staff.
- Increase transparency of pay equity. Ideas to do so include, but are not limited to, posting pay range within job postings (this is currently a recommendation from the Pipeline of Inclusive Talent workgroup) and standardizing pay ranges that employees are offered upon hire.

- Conduct recurring, anonymous climate and job satisfaction surveys.
- Request that search committees create a rubric to evaluate candidates prior to reviewing applications. A rubric can also be created to evaluate candidates during interviews and presentations.

Services

- Address the sentiment expressed by some users who live on campus that the Libraries are far from residence halls. How might appropriate services be more widely available?
- Create advertising materials for use with the Miller Center and first-year orientation.
- Expand the Library on Location model to additional diverse populations.
- Create a statement about practices of inclusive excellence principles in instruction.
- Look for better ways to tweak discovery services to better “discover” resources.
- Review all policies with a diversity lens. Conduct an complete review of the lending and borrowing policies.

Spaces

- Address quiet spaces and the unwritten rule that King Library gets quieter as you move upstairs.
- Add QR codes for displays and locations in King Library to identify a user’s place in the library and descriptions of the contents of displays for the visually impaired.

Appendix 4:

Inclusive Excellence Strategic Plan Workgroup Members

- Ken Irwin, Web Services Librarian
- Elizabeth Kerr, Coordinator of Strategy, Assessment, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Candace Pine, Rare Books and Manuscripts Librarian
- Jenny Presnell, Humanities and Social Science Librarian
- Elizabeth Staarmann, Library Associate

