

Library Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commitments

Update April 22, 2021

Commits to establishing a dedicated committee to develop, guide, and assess the library's diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

We decided that all 21 library positions would make up the committee so that we are all truly accountable. We have discussed process and progress in both regularly scheduled and dedicated meetings.

Commits to conducting inclusive searches when vacant positions arise.

Many, if not all, of our search committee members have attended inclusive search training. We expanded our recent job advertising to cast a wider net – with particular attention to venues that might reach more diversity candidates. Our latest staff search resulted in the hiring of a Latina candidate who is bilingual.

Commits to creating a welcoming environment for accessing information, sharing knowledge, and learning from one another.

With COVID, it has been a struggle to be as welcoming as we'd like to be. We don't have the close interactions with students that we've been known for. We are committed to getting that close interaction back once we are able. Update: As more of our staff gets vaccinated, we are sensing more optimism and less trepidation about the possibility of increasing occupancy levels, the number of seats, and the number of face-to-face interactions in the fall – all of which will make it much easier to return the library to the busy, welcoming environment that we have cultivated for many years and always strive to improve. Our current Strategic Plan (Library Disrupted: Change by Design) emphasizes "inclusive environment" as a foundational element and specifically targets support of the neurodiverse student population in our planning. Our current plan is to increase library open hours significantly from COVID-19 hours to near-normal open hours.

Commits to actively collecting archival material from Stetson's historically underrepresented groups, including, but not limited to student multicultural organizations.

We have recently collected oral histories of the first black students at Stetson. These were done this semester by student Chase Brown for his senior research. Our Archivist is reaching out to underrepresented student groups to encourage submission of their materials to the University Archives.

Commits to diversifying our collections, including adding resources on LBGTQIA+ rights, Women's studies, Black studies, and materials on other underrepresented groups of people.

This is going well. Update: We have committed a portion of our budget to diversifying the collections. Along with books by and about underrepresented people/groups, we have purchased (\$6,000+) a number of primary source databases pertaining to Integration, Civil Rights, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Freedom Riders.

Commits to engaging in professional development and to cultivating cultural competencies that address diversity, equity, and inclusive practices.

Regarding training for our staff, they are pursuing cultural competencies on their own (e.g., workshops, webinars, etc.). It is mandatory that they complete at least one workshop or webinar by the beginning of spring semester. Then, we will all come back together to talk about what we've learned. Update: We completed our first initiative of staff choosing their own continuing education focused on a topic related to diversity, equity, and/or inclusion. We conducted sharing sessions of this material – which were really well-received. Out of that effort, a group of library faculty and staff started up their own viewing club – starting with the Netflix documentary “Amend” about the 14th amendment. The group (more than one-third of our faculty/staff) has been meeting to discuss the series and it has turned into a really interesting organic initiative.