

Library Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commitments

Update December 8, 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. In the 2020-21 academic year, our one full-time staff search resulted in the hiring of a Latina candidate who is bilingual. In fall 2021, we have conducting, or are conducting, four searches – all with attention to attracting a diverse candidate pool. The COVID-19 workforce environment, however, has resulted in much smaller than usual pools, and attracting qualified candidates has been difficult – which, of course, affects attracting a diverse pool.

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

We have seen a significant increase in library use in fall 2021 with greatly reduced COVID-19 restrictions. With mandatory employee vaccinations, we have increased occupancy levels, the number of seats, and the number of face-to-face interactions – 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. We have increased library open hours significantly from COVID-19 hours to near-normal open hours. Our gate count has increased from about 15% of pre-COVID library use to 40-50% of pre-COVID gate counts. If the mask-optional environment continues into the spring semester, we expect to continue to see increased library use. Our current Strategic Plan (Library Disrupted: Change by Design) emphasizes an “inclusive environment” as a foundational element and specifically targets support of the neurodiverse student population in our planning.

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 in spring 2021 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. As part of the University Climate Plan, we are creating a DEI historical timeline, and, from that information, we are gathering primary source documents to include in a DEI Collection that will be part of our Digital Archives.

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

This is going well. 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.

Library faculty and staff are pursuing cultural competencies on their own (e.g., workshops, webinars, etc.). Each library employee completed at least one workshop or webinar by the beginning of the spring 2021 semester. Upon completion, we came together in fall 2021 to talk about what we have learned – a session that was 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) met regularly to discuss the series and the DEI-related viewing club has turned into an interesting organic initiative.