

## **Library Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commitments**

**Updated September 1, 2022**

**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. Due to the ways in which we advertise, it is easier to reach diverse audiences with national faculty searches than it is with mostly local candidates for staff positions. So far in 2022, we conducted and concluded seven (one faculty and six staff) searches. Without exception, the pools were small and not particularly diverse – likely due to a strong jobs economy and lingering market effects of Covid-19. We hired five women (four White and one Black) and two men (both White) to fill those positions. Although national library organizations embrace and promote diverse hiring practices, and we are strongly committed to an inclusive work environment, the library profession remains overwhelmingly white and female.*

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

*It is too early in the semester to have much data, but our sense is that library use has increased significantly during the first few weeks of the semester (over post-Covid semesters). In July 2022, our gate count was up 50% over last July – and down just 7% from our last pre-pandemic July. Similarly, in August, gate count was up 34% over last August, and down just 18% over our last pre-pandemic August. Our gate count has increased from about 15% of pre-COVID library use to 40-50% of pre-COVID gate counts throughout 2021-22.*

*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. In July 2022, the library faculty and staff screened and discussed the documentary, Autism Goes to College – which outlined the challenges (and opportunities) in serving the student population that identifies as being on the autism spectrum.*

*The first step in having an inclusive environment, however, is to get the students back through the library doors. We believe we will continue to see an increase as the new students develop habits that include the library and the returning students re-discover the library.*

**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. In response to a suggestion by an alumnus, the Archivist, Kelly Larson, has taken steps to develop an LGBTQ Stetson oral history project. Kelly has researched similar programs, as well as LGBTQ perspectives on oral histories. She is currently working to identify potential interviewees and recruit student interviewers.*

*As part of the University Climate Plan, Dean Susan Ryan (DeLand) and Director Roy Balleste (Gulfport) created a DEI historical timeline (<https://www.stetson.edu/administration/diversity/history.php>). From that information we have gathered primary source documents to include in a DEI Collection that will become 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.**

*We continue making progress in this area. We made a direct effort to collect as many banned books as possible for our juvenile, YA, and regular collections. We used the ALA List ([Banned & Challenged Classics | Advocacy, Legislation & Issues \(ala.org\)](#)) as well as some of the lists from different states (Texas, Florida, etc.) where titles were being challenged or banned in school and public libraries. We already owned many of the titles, but we bought or made accessible those titles missing from our collections. While sometimes books are banned for reasons unrelated to diversity, equity or inclusion, they are often targeted because of representations of diverse or non-traditional family units or gender- or sexual-identity issues. This is particularly true of children’s literature.*

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

*In 2021, library faculty and staff pursued at least one DEI cultural competency activity of their choice (e.g., workshops, webinars) and then shared what they had learned with the entire library staff. We are undertaking that exercise again in fall 2022 so that we continue to learn and explore new avenues to improve our DEI initiatives.*