UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LIBRARIES

PLAN FOR ADVANCING DIVERSITY & INCLUSION
Introduction

The University of Houston (UH) Libraries is an integral part of one of the most diverse public research universities in the country. In the UH Libraries’ Strategic Plan 2017-2021, we articulate a diversity and inclusion (D&I) value to “respect all aspects of diversity and create an inclusive virtual and physical environment for all learners, researchers, and library staff.” In support of this value, the UH Libraries dean established the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (CoDI), which created the UH Libraries Plan for Advancing Diversity & Inclusion.

Purpose and Intent

The purpose of this plan is to encourage proactive development of spaces, services, programs, and resources that embrace and promote the transformative power of diversity. This plan is intended to help foster an inclusive virtual and physical environment that welcomes diverse learners, researchers, and library staff.

We hope this plan and our diversity will shape and mold us, and move us toward excellence. UH Libraries will continually assess the goals outlined in this plan to ensure its successful outcome.

Goals for Advancing Diversity and Inclusion

Foster Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion through Dialogue and Learning

As members of a diverse community, it is important to create opportunities for individuals to develop an appreciation of the value and benefits of diverse perspectives. Dialogue and learning equip us with knowledge and understanding, and empower us to contribute to inclusive and welcoming environments. Building on a collective understanding derived from learning and shared experiences, we develop a culture of practice that demonstrates a commitment to diversity and inclusion. This commitment is essential to the continuing success of the organization.

Objectives:

• Raise awareness about the value of D&I
• Promote events and opportunities designed to increase D&I competencies
• Offer multiple avenues for dialogue and learning to cultivate sharing of diverse perspectives
• Work to eliminate barriers to engaging openly in dialogue and learning
• Integrate knowledge learned about D&I into the practices and norms of the organizational culture

Reflect Diversity and Inclusion through our Recruitment and Retention Practices

The UH Libraries’ recruitment of employees with diverse backgrounds has been relatively successful compared to that of other ARL libraries. The library staff is particularly diverse and the diversity of librarians is growing through a variety of recruitment and retention efforts. Building on these facts, we can better articulate our commitment to and impact on diversity and inclusion. We can make UH Libraries a destination where diverse perspectives are visible and valued, and where inclusivity leads to better ideas, rich conversation, and expanded learning opportunities for one another, students, and faculty.

Objectives:

• Articulate our commitment to D&I externally
• Develop programs and partnerships that increase D&I
• Promote leadership development for both librarians and staff
• Create an inclusive environment that attracts and retains employees

Remove Access Barriers to Services, Resources, and Spaces

We recognize that our actions and choices are not exempt from biases or the influence of larger systemic issues. As an outgrowth of intentional dialogue and learning, we can be mindful of how these issues affect the design and provision of our services, resources and spaces. By examining UH Libraries through a diversity lens, we can provide welcoming and equitable access regardless of the visible or hidden identities our users and employees bring to our community.

Objectives:

• Ensure that equity of facilities is an integral part of planning for the renovation and creation of library spaces
• Promote diversity of existing print, electronic, and special collections through virtual and physical methods
• Advocate for the diverse needs of our users in the development of and access to collections and research tools
• Be mindful of visible and hidden identities in the creation and delivery of services
• Support ongoing initiatives to ensure an accessible web presence