



# University Libraries Equity Action Plan

January 2021

**Built from UMKC University Libraries BIPOC Workers Seek Equity letter and the ARWAA Policy Recommendations**

## Introduction

On August 25, 2020, a group of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) who work in the UMKC University Libraries issued a letter to their colleagues detailing disparities they face and making concrete recommendations for moving the Libraries forward. Nearly every action item is taken directly from that document, with some additional elements based on the UMKC Anti-Racist and White Allies Affinity Group (ARWAA) Policy Recommendations (shared with campus in June 2020). The detailed actions were developed in collaboration between Libraries' Administration and the Libraries' Equity Committee, and are based on the recommendations and information provided by BIPOC workers and ARWAA as well as other research and input. The actions are listed in general priority order.

It is critical that the people in the Libraries consider and understand the significant labor that our BIPOC colleagues invested in sharing these recommendations, and take action. In building an environment that is actively anti-racist, we must work toward building equity and dismantling inequity. Our BIPOC colleagues have invested in this work extensively, and most of the positive change at UMKC Libraries thus far has been initiated and executed by them. Moving forward it is critical that all employees engage in this work. Thus, in all aspects of this plan our BIPOC workers are expected to be given the opportunity and invitation to support this work, but that they are not expected to lead or even participate if they so choose. They have full agency to determine their level of participation.

## Human resources

**Address salary disparities by race and gender.**

### Details

- Review, analyze, and prioritize adjustment of pay disparities by race and gender for University Libraries faculty and staff. Conduct a transparent conversation about wages.
- Review job classification by race and gender and promote under-classified employees.

- Evaluate the appraisal process, especially who is involved in making merit determinations. Make explicit the criteria and value demonstrated commitment to social justice work over project work.
- Develop and enact consistent rules for pay increases and decreases related to additional or reduced workload and responsibilities.
- Develop multi-year plan for adjusting disparities and ensuring employees receive living wages.

## **Prioritize hiring and retention of BIPOC across all position types**

### **Details**

- Review job descriptions and postings
  - Limit required and remove preferred qualifications wherever possible.
  - Review addition of Diversity Commitment statement used in recent postings; determine if changes need to be made, and ensure the final product is included in all postings
  - Evaluate addition of diversity commitment to job descriptions
  - Determine potential additional requirements for faculty positions in outlining commitment to diversity
- Increase hiring of BIPOC in secure, higher level positions
- Create programs/structures/support to retain BIPOC faculty and staff
- Continue institutional support for We Here group

## **Provide BIPOC equitable access and support to career development and advancement opportunities.**

### **Details**

Develop clear processes for internal restructuring that result in pay and leadership increases

- Ensure a careful evaluation underlies all hiring decisions, similar to hiring of faculty positions
- Develop a process that includes consultation with the Diversity Liaison to provide critical feedback on all hierarchical promotion decisions for individuals.
- Scrutinize why a white candidate is preferred over BIPOC candidates before having to consult with the Diversity Liaison. There is a possibility that this structure will be developed on a campus level, but we encourage University Libraries to take immediate action regardless.
- Provide structural support for development areas when individuals move into increasing leadership positions
- Ensure there is a path back into non-leadership roles whenever possible

## **Acknowledge the “invisible” labor performed by BIPOC library workers by appropriately recognizing and compensating this work.**

### **Details**

Require that all job descriptions include expectations to sustain work toward raising critical consciousness and enacting anti-oppressive work practices. These expectations will be addressed in all annual evaluations.

For those who have expectations of direct work with marginalized communities or who are engaged in work to shape policies and practices toward equity and inclusion, formally acknowledge this work in the job description and ensure other duties are adequately reduced to allow for fair appraisal and engagement in regular service activities.

Explore options for reducing other duties, or when they cannot be reduced for exempt employees, increase compensation or award compensatory time or overtime pay.

Provide formal acknowledgment of mentoring work that leads to retention of BIPOC faculty, staff, and students.

## **Create anti-oppressive structures or revise existing structures that guide our daily work interactions.**

### **Review and revise the Safe and Respectful Environment policy**

See “Develop a strong statement to minimize police presence in University Libraries and invest in de-escalation training.”

### **Revise and develop other policies and guiding documents**

#### **Details**

Documents must include but are not limited to the Personnel Toolkit, supervisor guidance, codes of conduct, community agreements to govern discussions, appraisal calibration, and all policies addressed by the DEI Committee Supervisor’s Group Policy Review Task Force. Add information on completing [bias reports](#) to both incident report and LIT documentation.

### **Require regular training and engagement with anti-racism work for all Libraries’ employees**

## **Details**

Train all library workers in anti-racist and anti-oppressive techniques. Require all supervisors and department heads develop and use anti-oppressive facilitation techniques. Specifically:

1. In 2021, pursue anti-oppressive facilitation training that was canceled due to COVID
2. Requirement to engage in active discussions on issues of anti-racism
3. Requirement to attend professional development in at least two opportunities annually
4. Requirement that all employees engage in training on key topics on a regular cycle
  1. Key topics to be developed by Equity Committee, but could include bias, privilege, microaggressions, oppression, anti-racism, etc.

## **Revisit involvement with police and processes for identifying and handling incidents.**

*Unless systemic changes occur to the UMKC Police Department, work internally with our interactions with UMKC Police as well as on related policies*

### **Invest in de-escalation training**

#### **Details**

- Train public-facing staff on bias in reporting and community issues with policing
- Provide regular, structured training on intervention strategies

### **Evaluate Safe and Respectful Environment policy and relationship with UMKC Police Department**

#### **Details**

- Ensure a strong statement regarding police presence in the Libraries is public and either a supplement to, or separate from the Safe and Respectful Environment Policy
- Review all access the UMKC Police have to our spaces, including via security cameras
- Revise the Safe and Respectful Environment policy documentation to add more clarity to language and process
- Ensure clear training (see above) is provided with scenario-based training to those who are likely to engage in incidents
- Clearly and frequently reinforce a change from the historic guidance of “when in doubt, call the police” in order to minimize police presence
- Develop relationships with other campus units that broaden resources for public-facing staff support when dealing with incidents

### **Explore opportunities for security guard position**

## **Details**

Identify whether security guard is the appropriate title/position to meet our needs; evaluate expectations, roles, and responsibilities for that position

- Evaluate public-facing staff needs for this position
- Escorts for late-night/after dark closings
- Ready presence when building has less population
- Assistance with clearing building
- Response to incidents
- Other needs

Evaluate other ways these needs may be met

## **Require that all departments develop an anti-racist action plan.**

### **Details**

Per the recommendation from the Equity statement, all departments must start by accessing literature that documents critical practice in your service area. Then, use what is learned to critically examine your own work practices and policies. Develop anti-racist action plans with clear deadlines, priorities, and accountability measures. Plans should focus on critically examining the specific work of the department, rather than on broader initiatives related to the Libraries as a whole.

## **Require that all library workers read and discuss the 2020 Social Justice Lecture book, “How to be an anti-racist” by Ibram X. Kendi.**

### **Details**

Each individual must read and engage in a discussion with at least one other person on this book. Structured opportunities will be shared with library workers, but individuals are free to choose other ways to engage with this book.

## **Retain the Diversity Liaison role and enhance support to Equity Committee**

### **Details**

Search within the Libraries for a diversity liaison on a long-term appointment

1. Develop documentation for liaison role
2. Determine process for determining stipend based on the level of work expected, and required time commitment. The process may vary depending on appointment type.
3. Will be empowered to make decisions related to the Postlethwaite Possibilities Fund,
4. Expected to work with UMKC Foundation and the Deans' Leadership Group to establish more stable and ongoing funding sources.

Consult with Equity Committee to ensure they have sufficient support, guidance, and autonomy

## **Prioritize remote work for those who are disproportionately impacted by COVID and less likely to receive quality health care**

### **Details**

While we are unable to make changes to the UMKC and UM System HR policy, the current policy makes allowance for COVID-19 related accommodations that may not meet the standard of ADA. To support access to this, work with Libraries supervisors to provide some remote work opportunities as much as possible

## **Spaces and facilities**

### **Change the name of the Library.**

#### **Details**

Participate and advocate as members of the Roos Advocate for Community Change task force on naming.

### **Ensure spaces are more inclusive**

#### **Details**

Review Libraries' artwork and wall hangings to evaluate representation of BIPOC; replace as appropriate

Incorporate land acknowledgement as appropriate