Robert E. Kennedy Library DEI Action Plan

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Robert E. Kennedy Library
DEI Action Plan

Dec. 6, 2022 (finalized April 12, 2023)

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Introduction

Creating a library that is more diverse, equitable and inclusive requires that we look openly and critically at any racist or otherwise oppressive structures, systems and practices in the library, and take impactful, comprehensive actions. We also recognize that these types of structural barriers may not be readily obvious without introspection. Recent diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives and efforts in the library have included formations of the Kennedy Inclusive Culture Committee (KICC), 2012-15; the Coordinating Committee on Inclusivity and Diversity (CCID), 2015-16; and the Library Advisory Committee on Diversity (LACD), 2018-20. Moving forward, the library aims to advance from these temporary initiatives to a more sustainable vision of the library’s commitment to DEI. With this in mind, we have generated a strategic, integrated, data-driven, people-centered DEI Action Plan, which will guide us over the next five years in forming a more diverse, equitable and anti-racist workplace, and an inclusive, accessible and welcoming environment for all library employees, visitors, and campus and community patrons. This plan will be shared with our campus community and reflects the library’s commitment to enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion at Cal Poly.
Library Diversity Statement

Systemic racism and inequity persist in United States’ culture, including in our institution and organization. In the context of academic and scholarly pursuits at Cal Poly and activities across academic library networks, the library has the responsibility to encourage, build and sustain a just and democratic society; to engage in comprehensive racial and social justice practices; and to be accountable to the campus community and each other.

Through education and action, the library will disrupt the processes and structures that encourage inequity and racism and create an equitable and inclusive environment where all people feel welcome, seen, heard and represented, especially those who are from groups that have been historically or are currently marginalized or disenfranchised because of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, social class, religion, national origin and other social and cultural identities.

As a library community, we will interrogate our role in sustaining an oppressive and discriminatory culture, re-examine power structures and take direct action to confront and dismantle systems of oppression and the conditions under which they persist.
**Process**

In fall 2020, the Library Management Team (LMT) and the library faculty chair (LFC) consulted with the interim associate vice president for Academic Affairs at the Office of University Diversity and Inclusion (OUDI), Jennifer Teramoto Pedrotti, to develop a draft Kennedy Library DEI Action Plan. In spring 2021, the first draft plan moved forward for further consultation and development by the LMT, including the LFC. The draft was shared with library personnel in spring 2021. In summer 2021, the LMT, the new LFC and the former LFC worked with Teramoto Pedrotti to integrate feedback on the draft.

In fall 2021, the library contracted with Kawanna Bright, assistant professor of library science at East Carolina University, to perform a baseline DEI assessment audit to identify gaps and make recommendations based upon her analysis of the data in the areas of organization structure, collections, program and services, culture, and hiring and recruitment practices. Bright submitted her report, titled “A Path Forward: Cal Poly Kennedy Library DEI Audit Final Report,” on March 28, 2022. In spring 2022, a DEI Action Plan Working Group comprised of library employees was formed and made recommendations on the DEI Action Plan, integrating the results of the assessment audit. In spring 2022, the library contracted with Bright to provide feedback on the revised plan, which the working group incorporated into the draft.

In summer and fall 2022, the library awarded Farah Al-Nakib, associate professor of history at Cal Poly, the Kennedy Library’s first DEI Faculty Fellowship. Al-Nakib developed a final draft of the DEI Action Plan goals that built on the draft prepared by the DEI Action Plan Working Group and on Bright’s audit report. Al-Nakib workedshopped the revised goals and commitments with all library departments during fall 2022, and every library employee, including students who work at the library, had the opportunity to provide input on the draft plan through these workshops or in one-on-one meetings. Based on this feedback, Al-Nakib prepared a final plan, which she presented to all library employees on Dec. 6, 2022. This plan was officially adopted by the Kennedy Library.

During winter and spring quarters 2023, the library’s new DEI Committee will finalize the metrics to be included under each of the DEI Action Plan goals, in consultation with Teramoto Pedrotti. In the process of developing metrics to assess the following DEI goals, the library will rely on information from employee and applicant self-reported identification within underrepresented groups. These sources may include campus climate surveys or job applications managed by campus Human Resources. To the extent that these data can be reported in aggregate by the library, for internal or external reporting, these data will be shared for the purposes of transparency and organizational accountability to reflect organization in relation to these stated goals. Processes and procedures for managing and reporting these data will be developed in consultation with campus partners.
Goals

Goal 1: Recruit a diverse group of employees (among library faculty, staff and students) who value and are invested in cultural humility and competence.

Build relationships and pipelines with outside organizations and the greater university that ensure direct outreach to candidates from underrepresented minority groups to increase diversity in applicant pools for library employees.

Include library’s value for diversity, equity and inclusion in all marketing and outreach materials and in all job vacancy postings.

Prioritize knowledge of DEI and specialized skills related to cultural competence in hiring decisions for all library employees.

Continue to improve search committee training and practices that avoid bias and encourage broad representation on search committees for faculty and staff.

Metrics:
- Increased diversity in applicant pools and hires/yield. Increased diversity and DEI expertise in search and recruitment committees.
- Increased outreach to staff, students and faculty from organizations with diverse populations.
- Increased knowledge and application of specialized skills related to DEI and cultural competence among library faculty and staff.
- Expanded visibility of a diverse population and visible value of DEI within marketing, outreach and communication materials.

Goal 2: Retain a diverse group of employees (among library faculty, staff and students) who value and are invested in cultural humility and competence.

Improve equity between library faculty and staff in areas such as professional development and growth opportunities, representation on committees and work validation and recognition.

Periodically implement a library internal climate assessment to fully identify concerns and issues as experienced by employees, and utilize findings to update efforts to improve morale and remove obstacles to equal opportunity.
Conduct optional exit interviews with library employees who have chosen to leave their positions to gather general insights and suggestions for improving the library environment.

Provide all library employees with explicit support and value for training and education related to DEI issues and the development and maintenance of cultural competence (e.g., implicit bias, mutual accountability).

Demonstrate explicit value for DEI knowledge, awareness, skills and accountability among all library management team and leadership team members to ensure that employees of diverse backgrounds feel safe and supported.

Metrics:

- Increase number of years in service for underrepresented staff and faculty.
- Increase satisfaction of library climate and sense of belonging for faculty, staff and students from underrepresented groups (climate survey in partnership with university).
- Increase staff representation rates in decision-making processes (e.g., committees).
- Increase success of staff professional growth and mobility within the library organization.
- Increase DEI-related professional development opportunities to all employees.
- Increase and maintain library management and leadership members with demonstrated training in DEI.

**Goal 3: Develop institutionalized practices and guidelines that reflect and contribute to increased diversity, equity and inclusion within the library.**

Request funding to create and maintain a dedicated DEI librarian position to ensure leadership, continuity and follow-through of the library’s DEI goals.

Retain standing status of a library DEI Committee composed of representatives from all departments. Members are tasked with supporting the organization’s DEI work and promoting critical and open dialogue about DEI within the library.

Improve channels of internal communication between library management, faculty, staff and students to increase transparency and accountability in decision-making and to ensure employees at all levels feel heard.

Integrate the library’s value for diversity, equity and inclusion more visibly in annual performance reviews.

Develop and implement a DEI data plan to support both analysis and assessment of library work toward DEI.
Metrics:

- DEI work is catalogued and valued in personnel review.
- Timely access to regular LMT, LLT and committee meeting agendas and minutes.
- Increased value of DEI awareness, knowledge and skills in selection of leadership roles in the library.
- Accountability of departments and units for end-of-year reports’ inclusion of achievements and goals for DEI.

**Goal 4: Promote the advancement of DEI in the library’s collections and services.**

Apply antiracist and inclusive approaches to archival and cataloging practices.

Conduct regular open reviews or audits of the library’s collections, databases and other e-resources to increase representation of marginalized groups and better reflect the diversity of our campus and regional community.

Expand outreach and public engagement efforts to strengthen partnerships with campus populations and with communities of color in our county to amplify more diverse local voices in our collections and archives.

Center DEI in the library’s foundational experiences curriculum and other instructional and cocurricular programming and materials, including evaluation of the university’s Diversity Learning Objectives.

Support opportunities for library employees to engage in collaborative DEI-related projects that help eliminate workplace silos and/or improve library engagement with and support for Cal Poly faculty and students in scholarly and creative works.

Continue to generate and critically review more inclusive library research guides that center the perspectives, experiences and contributions to knowledge of people from current and historically underrepresented groups.

Metrics:

- Increased representation and authorship by marginalized groups (emphasis with the local community) in the library’s collections, databases, e-resources and programming.
- Increased use of rubric assessment of the Diversity Learning Objectives in curricular process (including library research guides).
- Increased collaboration between library faculty and staff in DEI-focused work.
• Increased visibility and participation of library faculty and staff in DEI-focused initiatives and academic and scholarly work within the university.

**Goal 5: Use the physical spaces of the library building and our digital spaces to foster a welcoming, safe and inclusive environment.**

Emphasize the library’s value for diversity, equity and inclusion and clearly showcase the library’s efforts and activities that promote the advancement of DEI on the REKL website.

Ensure that the library website and building are fully accessible and, as educational spaces, express the diverse cultures and identities of our campus and regional community.

Provide library employees and campus community members with opportunities and space to share, explore and give voice to current and historically underrepresented groups and stories, especially those not yet told in our archives and collections (e.g., digital and physical exhibits, book/author talks, community events).

Protect the library as a physical and digital space free from discrimination or harassment directed at an individual or group because of their age, disability, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, nationality, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and/or veteran or military status, or any other legally protected groups.

Resolve health and personal safety issues with minimal policing and invest in campus partnerships to support our community’s needs more directly.

**Metrics:**

• Increased visibility of library’s DEI values and efforts on the REKL website and social media.
• Increased use of DEI rubric assessment of REKL website content.
• Increased use of library spaces to amplify voices and experiences of current and historically underrepresented groups and stories.
• Decreased reliance on campus police to resolve patron health and safety incidents.
Next Steps

The Kennedy Library recognizes that enhancing DEI is not a stand-alone project for any institution, and that centering DEI in the library’s organization and work will require structural and cultural changes to achieve the library’s overarching objective of creating a more diverse, equitable and antiracist workplace, and an inclusive, accessible and welcoming environment for all library employees, visitors, and campus and community patrons. The dean of library services has established a new Library DEI Committee, composed of library faculty, staff and student employees, that will permanently play a leadership role in developing, implementing and sustaining the Kennedy Library’s DEI goals and commitments. We also recognize, however, that DEI is the responsibility of everyone in the library rather than just one person or committee, and that every department must be involved in the process of turning these goals into measurable achievements.

We recognize that for a portion of the five-year period covered by this action plan, the Kennedy Library will be undergoing a major renovation, during which the building will be closed to the public. While maintaining our services to the campus community will be challenging during the renovation, we will not allow these challenges to impede our commitment to fulfilling our DEI goals.

The following steps will be taken to ensure the successful implementation of this DEI Action Plan:

- The DEI Committee finalized the metrics to be used to track the progress of the DEI Action Plan goals in April 2023. Next step is to develop a plan to collect data for analysis and assessment of library work toward DEI.
- Beginning winter 2022, each library department will create actionable goals devoted to progress on the DEI Action Plan, to be updated annually for the next five years.
- Department heads will annually report to the dean on their DEI achievements and how these align with the Action Plan goals.
- The Kennedy Library DEI Action Plan will be revised in 2027.
## Appendix

### Alignment of REKL DEI Action Plan Goals with the University Strategic Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Priority 1: Enhance the success of all Cal Poly students.</th>
<th>REKL Goal 1</th>
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<th>REKL Goal 3</th>
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<th>Strategic Priority 2: Cultivate the excellence of all employees.</th>
<th>REKL Goal 1</th>
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<th>Strategic Priority 3: Enrich the campus culture of diversity, equity and inclusion.</th>
<th>REKL Goal 1</th>
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<th>REKL Goal 3</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 3A:</strong> Create an aligned and cohesive focus on diversity and inclusion across the university.</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 3B:</strong> Create and sustain a more diverse, equitable and inclusive community that reflects and serves the diverse people of California.</td>
<td><strong>X</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Goal 3C:</strong> Prepare all students for their future through an education that includes diversity learning and reflects the principles of Inclusive Excellence.</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 3D:</strong> Further develop a campus climate that reflects the values of diversity, equity and inclusion, as well as free inquiry and mutual respect.</td>
<td><strong>X</strong></td>
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<th>Strategic Priority 4: Strengthen our portfolio of academic programs.</th>
<th>REKL Goal 1</th>
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<th>Strategic Priority 5: Create an engaged, vibrant and healthy community for students.</th>
<th>REKL Goal 1</th>
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<th>Strategic Priority 6: Leverage data and technology to support the institution’s mission.</th>
<th>REKL Goal 1</th>
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<th>Strategic Priority 7: Secure our future by improving finances, facilities and systems.</th>
<th>REKL Goal 1</th>
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Credits

Most Kennedy Library faculty and staff, and many student employees, provided their feedback on the last draft of the DEI Action Plan before it was finalized. The following individuals worked on drafts of the plan or provided extensive feedback on drafts.

Robert E. Kennedy Library Management Team (first draft of DEI Action Plan)

- Adriana Popescu, Dean of Library Services
- Katherine O’Clair, Associate Dean for Academic Services
- Timothy Strawn, Executive Director of Collection Strategies, Access and Systems
- Jessica Holada, Director of Special Collections and Archives
- Cheryl May, Executive Director of Library Operations (former)
- Mark Bieraugel, Business Librarian, Library Faculty Council Chair (2021-22)
- Sarah Lester, Librarian, College of Engineering, Library Faculty Council Chair (2022-present)

DEI Action Plan Working Group Members (revised draft of DEI Action Plan)

- Mark Bieraugel (co-facilitator), Business Librarian
- Heather Cribbs, Systems Librarian
- Tricia Kobielusz, Financial Analyst
- Sarah Lester (co-facilitator), College of Engineering Librarian
- Caleb Nichols, Course Reserves and Circulation Desk Coordinator
- Mercedes Rutherford-Patten, Academic Services Librarian

Kennedy Library DEI Faculty Fellow (final draft of DEI Action Plan)

- Farah Al-Nakib, Associate Professor of History

Special Thanks (for their expertise, consultation services and professional development support)

- Kawanna Bright, Assistant Professor of Library Science, East Carolina University
- Jennifer Teramoto Pedrotti, College of Liberal Arts Associate Dean for Diversity and Curriculum and Interim Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs at the Office of University Diversity and Inclusion
- Sarah Macdonald, Assistant Director for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Instruction, Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology
- Michael V. Nguyen, Director of Academic Assessment, Academic Programs and Planning (former)