Inclusive and Welcoming Library Spaces Task Force

Background

"The Libraries value…UCI's diversity and principles of community, which we uphold, incorporate, and exemplify in our actions." – from the UCI Libraries' Strategic Plan

We seek to uphold these values and enhance the Libraries contributions to anti-racism, diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and accessibility at UCI.

The Libraries have articulated a Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Commitment and Plan, including general goals, and we have established a standing Diversity Team that has contributed to advancing this plan. National and local events have emphasized the critical need for urgent action. To energize and sustain these efforts, the Leadership Council, with library-wide input and feedback, developed an Action Plan for 2021-2022.

Providing inclusive spaces was one of the major themes articulated in this Action Plan. All members of the UCI community should feel like they belong when they enter physical and virtual library spaces. We should proactively signal that they are welcome, safe, and in the right place, regardless of their background or experience with academic libraries.

Charge

The goals for the Inclusive and Welcoming Library Spaces Task Force are to recommend changes, improvements, or other initiatives to enhance inclusiveness and accessibility in library spaces.

Appointment and Reporting

The Inclusive and Welcoming Library Spaces Task Force will report to Kevin Ruminson, AUL for Administrative Services.

Key Tasks and Responsibilities

- Conduct an "environmental scan" regarding similar efforts at US and Canadian libraries, museums, or other relevant institutions.
- Consult with the Office of Inclusive Excellence, student government (AGS/ASUCI), campus affinity groups, and other relevant stakeholders regarding suggestions for enhancing inclusiveness and accessibility.

- Consult with the Office of Inclusive Excellence and other relevant stakeholders regarding a respectful way to honor and acknowledge the Tongva and Acjachemen peoples on whose ancestral land the Libraries are located.
- Consult with Disability Services regarding potential accessibility issues and recommendations.
- Develop and recommend proposals for changes to enhance inclusiveness and accessibility in library spaces, potentially including, but not limited to:
  - Opportunities to enhance a sense of belonging for patrons through the use library signage, digital presence, social media, displays, programs or other tools.
  - Options for enhancing all students' sense of physical safety in library spaces.
  - Changes to improve accessibility.
  - Ongoing methods for gathering feedback from students regarding their sense of safety, comfort, and belonging and their suggestions for improvements.
- Present options and recommendations to Leadership Council including:
  - cost estimates or other resource needs where possible,
  - recommendations for sustaining future inclusive spaces planning efforts.

Special Considerations and Challenges

The primary purpose of the Inclusive and Welcoming Library Spaces Task Force is the development of recommendations for future projects, but the group may propose and participate in implementation of improvements while the group is active. In addition, the group should consider whether to propose that the timeline for the group be extended beyond this initial planning phase either to become a longer term planning and advisory team or to participate in implementation working groups.

The Task Force may wish to consult with the Libraries Diversity Team if it determines that a library-wide focus groups or other programming might be helpful. The Diversity Team may be able to assist with this programming, depending on other projects or priorities. In addition, the Task Force may wish to consult with the DEIA Planning & Advisory Task Force, which is addressing longer term DEIA planning efforts (see Appendix).

While engaging in its work, the Task Force should consult broadly throughout the Libraries and with relevant stakeholders to ensure that the process and final products are models of the inclusiveness and diverse perspectives that the Libraries strive to achieve.

Expected Outcomes

Develop a report and presentation outlining recommendations for consideration by Leadership Council, including recommendations for sustaining future inclusive spaces planning efforts.

Timetable

While membership of the group will be identified in Fall 2021, the group will likely begin its work in spring/summer 2022 with a goal of developing a final report by summer 2023.   This timeline may be extended if necessary, and the group may recommend projects for potential implementation throughout the period of their work.

Communication by the Group

The group will communicate regularly with Leadership Council and other relevant individuals and groups to ensure that the proposal reflects the Libraries' strategic goals. The group should consult broadly throughout the Libraries and with external stakeholders as appropriate.

Membership and Term of Appointment

- Kristine Ferry, Chair
- Becky Imamoto
- Melissa García
- Joshua Gladieux
- Carolyn Downey
- Rhonda Bradley
- Sylvia Irving

Members will serve until the charge has been completed.

APPENDIX

Diversity Team (existing, ongoing)	DEIA Planning & Advisory Team (new, temporary)	Inclusive and Welcoming Library Spaces Task Force (new, temporary)	Incident Response Working Group (new, temporary)

• Promoting and engaging in dialogue among colleagues on DEI related topics.
• identifying and organizing relevant programming and discussions.
• Advising on the Libraries' Diversity website.
• Exploring how Libraries & library employees can contribute to campus-wide initiatives.
• Recommending strategies for highlighting relevant collections.
• Suggesting ideas for public facing activities.
• Making suggestions about highlighting Libraries' DEI activities to broader audience.
	• Prepare the groundwork for integrating the Director of Library Diversity, Equity Inclusion & Accessibility and Training & Organizational Development Coordinator positions into the broader organizational structure and facilitate the success of these roles by:
	  o Engaging library-wide involvement and support,
	  o Collecting relevant documentation to aid in understanding of the UCI and UCI Libraries DEIA landscape,
	  o Developing suggestions for potential initial projects & areas of focus.
		• Conduct an "environmental scan" regarding similar efforts at US and Canadian libraries, museums, or other relevant institutions.
		• Consult with campus experts and relevant stakeholders regarding suggestions for enhancing inclusiveness and accessibility.
		• Consult with the Office of Inclusive Excellence on potential for land acknowledgements in physical spaces.
		• Develop and recommend proposals for changes to enhance inclusiveness and accessibility in library spaces, such as:
		  o Opportunities to enhance a sense of belonging for patrons.
		  o Options for enhancing sense of physical safety in library spaces.
		  o Changes to improve accessibility.
		  o Methods for gathering feedback from students regarding safety, comfort, and belonging
			• Review the Libraries' procedures for responding to incidents
			• Considers the impact of policies and procedures on potentially vulnerable individuals and groups.
			• Review the new UC Community Safety Plan and consider whether changes to policies or procedures should be made to be in alignment with the spirt of this plan.