

Lafayette College Libraries Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan 2021-2024

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Introduction

The Lafayette College Libraries are committed to creating and maintaining a diverse and equitable environment through collections, instruction, services, physical spaces, and virtual environments.

Lafayette College aspires to create an environment in which [“difference is valued, equity is sought, and inclusiveness is practiced.”](#) In trying to foster such an environment within the Libraries, we embrace differences in race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, languages, place of origin and immigration status, ideas and perspectives, and other factors. We welcome input from the Lafayette community as well as the broader community about how to improve inclusiveness and equity in the Libraries.

Pursuant to the [Lafayette College Libraries mission and values](#), we continually aspire to create an inclusive environment through the following ongoing efforts.

Summary

The Lafayette College Libraries Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) plan is an effort to hold ourselves accountable to our commitments, mission, and values by articulating them as concrete, actionable, and measurable goals. The plan is consciously ambitious, and uses an action-oriented approach to temper that ambition with pragmatism. We strive to balance individual actions and collective actions, with the intention of them working in concert to center DEI in our personal work and institutional culture.

The Detailed Plan is rooted in a series of assertions we seek to make reality through our actions. These assertions are:

- The Lafayette College Libraries support diverse and inclusive collections and collection development practices.
- The Lafayette College Libraries support accessible access to resources and information in our physical and virtual environments, and advocate for accessibility across campus.
- The Lafayette College Libraries’ physical spaces are accessible and welcoming to all.

- The Lafayette College Libraries offer programming and exhibitions that embrace diversity and inclusion.
- The Lafayette College Libraries engage in equitable, inclusive, and proactive practices in recruiting, hiring, retaining, and advancing library staff.
- The Lafayette College Libraries ensure an inclusive and equitable environment for all library staff.
- The Lafayette College Libraries ensure accessibility and inclusivity of outreach efforts.
- The Lafayette College Libraries integrate DEI into the instruction program.
- The Lafayette College Libraries will institutionalize and assess diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Each statement is expanded into measurable goals, and each goal is articulated as specific actions. The intention is to provide ourselves with a way to practice these statements, as well as measure and assess our practice of these statements, and in doing so, turn these aspirations into reality.

Detailed Plan of Action

1. Statement: The Lafayette College Libraries support diverse and inclusive collections and collection development practices.
 - 1.1. **Goal: Be more intentional about purchasing works from underrepresented authors and about underrepresented groups as defined in the [introduction](#).**
 - 1.1.1. **Action Item:** Electronic resources relating to DEI will automatically receive a minimum of a one-level bump in priority in our four-tier rating system, and at least 50% of each fiscal year's expenditures on large purchases will be used for new resources relating to DEI.
 - 1.1.2. **Action Item:** Develop a policy for the browsing collection that ensures substantial purchases of materials from underrepresented authors as defined in the [introduction](#).
 - 1.2. **Goal: Continue to purchase special collections materials that support inclusive narratives in humanities, social sciences and STEM.**

- 1.3. **Goal: Continue to serve as a steward of college archives that include the experience of diverse current and future student populations.**
- 1.4. **Goal: Collaborate with community partners on collection development, creating opportunities for students to lead and contribute to community-engaged collecting projects.**
 - 1.4.1. **Action Item:** Identify and prioritize materials of underrepresented groups for new digital collections.
 - 1.4.2. **Action Item:** Partner with community groups to generate shared digital community archives.
 - 1.4.3. **Action Item:** Develop our collections specifically of local indigenous groups.
- 1.5. **Goal: Actively seek to conduct business with vendors and suppliers who meet our ethical standards and who reflect our values.**
 - 1.5.1. **Action:** Prioritize purchasing books from independent and local bookstores.
 - 1.5.2. **Action:** Prioritize purchasing library supplies from independent, small, local vendors.
 - 1.5.3. **Action:** Prioritize working with vendors that have fair and transparent user privacy practice and continue to advocate for user privacy in our product licenses.

2. **Statement:** The Lafayette College Libraries support accessible access to resources and information in our physical and virtual environments, and advocate for accessibility across campus.

2.1. Goal: Support accessibility in e-resources¹, the libraries' website, digital collections², and digital document delivery³.

2.1.1. Action: Research best practices for accessibility assessment.

2.1.2. Action: Develop standards of accessibility for e-resources, etc.

2.1.3. Action: Create and make public a service plan to deliver flexible access to e-resources, etc. that fail to meet standards.

2.1.4. Action: Develop and implement an ongoing plan for regularly auditing the accessibility of our e-resources etc.

2.2. Goal: Assess and make visible levels of accessibility for e-resources.

2.2.1. Action: Establish an internal approach to dealing with e-resources purchases/subscriptions that don't meet accessibility standards.

2.2.2. Action: Review e-resources to ensure that they meet web accessibility standards.

2.2.3. Action: Ensure that information about accessibility of e-resources is publicly displayed.

2.3. Goal: Clearly define a realm of responsibility and channel of communication for accessibility support within the library.

2.3.1. Action: Establish an Accessibility Working Group to create policies/further address accessibility, or assign formal responsibility of duties supporting accessibility of library materials to specific library staff, integrating this work into the job description of the position(s).

¹ E-resources refers to resources that are provided by a third party and subscribed to or purchased by the library.

² Digital collections refers to digital content created in partnership with the libraries as unique research collections, including but not limited to text documents, images, video, or audio.

³ Digital document delivery refers to digital conversion of print materials, either from our print collection or interlibrary loan.

2.4. Goal: Strengthen the libraries' partnership with the Academic Hub, the Accessibility Working Group, CITLS, and other relevant campus service providers on work relating to accessibility.

2.4.1. Action: Ensure that there is at least one library staff member that consistently communicates with campus partners on work relating to accessibility.

2.5. Goal: Implement accessibility best practices in the creation of library materials.

2.5.1. Action: Provide a library-wide training(s) on accessibility best practices, including creating well structured documents, writing alt text for images, generating transcripts for audio, adding captions to video, and developing descriptive captioning for video content.

2.5.2. Action: Apply accessibility best practices to all materials created within the library and delivered to others in the course of our activities (reports, course handouts, training materials, promotional materials, etc).

2.6. Goal: Create library services & policies that are as user friendly and accessible as possible.

2.6.1. Action: Evaluate access services policies & procedures and remove any unnecessary barriers to access.

3. Statement: The Lafayette College Libraries' physical spaces are accessible and welcoming to all.

3.1. Goal: Create and maintain accessible physical library spaces.

3.1.1. Action: Engage an expert to conduct a physical access audit of all spaces in Skillman and Kirby, giving special attention to entrance ramp to Skillman, compact shelving on Skillman lower level, obstructions near DVD shelving on Skillman lower level, and Skillman restrooms.

3.1.2. Action: Ensure that all new furniture purchases meet ADA requirements.

- 3.1.3. **Action:** Designate restrooms in Skillman as gender neutral restrooms.⁴
- 3.1.4. **Action:** Explore alternatives to plastic cases for securing DVDs since cases make titles difficult to read.
- 3.1.5. **Action:** Add wheelchair accessible catalog look-up stations on Skillman upper and lower levels or replace current stations, which are not wheelchair accessible.
- 3.1.6. **Action:** Add trash receptacles in all restroom stalls (regardless of gender designation) and talk with Facilities Operations about providing free tampon/pad dispensers in all restrooms (regardless of gender designation).
- 3.1.7. **Action:** Conduct a wayfinding audit and enhance wayfinding aids as necessary.
- 3.1.8. **Action:** Add descriptive iconographic signage in Skillman pointing to the elevator, stairs, and restrooms⁵.
- 3.1.9. **Action:** Review disaster plans with users with disabilities in mind.
- 3.1.10. **Action:** Develop an easy process by which those who can't reach physical materials can summon help.

3.2. **Goal: Create and maintain welcoming physical library spaces**

- 3.2.1. **Action:** Conduct a series of student focus groups to determine if there are aspects of the Libraries' spaces that make certain students feel excluded and take actions based upon the findings.
- 3.2.2. **Action:** Work with the Director of Galleries to display art in Kirby Library that is more inclusive and diverse.
- 3.2.3. **Action:** Make the web suggestion form more prominent and advertise it as a place where users can submit signed or unsigned suggestions for improving the accessibility or the atmosphere of the physical libraries.

⁴ A simple way to redesignate restrooms to be gender inclusive is to focus solely on updating the signage to illustrate the type of equipment available in the restroom (toilets, urinals, infant change stations) and specify that they are non-gender. There's no need to renovate the spaces. Users can decide on rooms to use based on desired equipment.

⁵ See footnote 4

4. Statement: The Lafayette College Libraries offer programming and exhibitions that embrace diversity and inclusion.

4.1. **Goal: Ensure diversity of speakers and topics.**

- 4.1.1. **Action:** Create opportunities for students/student groups to curate exhibits and coordinate programming in our spaces (i.e. put out a call via Student Government for groups to submit proposals).
- 4.1.2. **Action:** Encourage academic departments and programs to use Skillman exhibition spaces to feature student work/projects that embrace DEI.
- 4.1.3. **Action:** Exhibit and publicize new collections that promote DEI.
- 4.1.4. **Action:** Invite speakers to lecture on new collections that promote DEI.
- 4.1.5. **Action:** Partner with the community to develop exhibits/lectures on local history, culture, ethnic/immigrant populations, local indigenous people.

4.2. **Goal: Provide equitable accessibility to programming and events.**

- 4.2.1. **Action:** Offer live programming to remote audiences synchronously in order to reach a wider audience (staff, alumni, local community members).
- 4.2.2. **Action:** Offer recorded programming and develop a catalog of recorded lecture content with captions. [*will require permission of off-campus presenter(s)]
- 4.2.3. **Action:** Include closed captioning for all online public events.
- 4.2.4. **Action:** Use ASL interpreters when possible.
- 4.2.5. **Action:** Ensure programs are held in rooms with microphones and ensure microphones are turned on and used.
- 4.2.6. **Action:** Reserve seating in the first row as “accessible” for attendees with hearing, vision, or mobility issues.

5. **Statement:** The Lafayette College Libraries engage in equitable, inclusive, and proactive practices in recruiting, hiring, retaining, and advancing library staff.

5.1. **Goal: Develop DEI focused recruiting and hiring policies.**

5.1.1. **Action:** Modify current recruitment practices to include disseminating job announcements so that they reach a more diverse pool of candidates, assessing barriers to the position that might create undue hardship on the candidates, ensuring that all job announcements include a statement about the Libraries' commitment to DEI, requiring that candidates include a diversity statement when applying for a position, crafting interview questions that specifically address a candidate's commitment to DEI, and utilizing rubrics to more fairly evaluate candidates.

5.1.2. **Action:** Include explicit salary range in job postings⁶.

5.1.3. **Action:** Develop a common onboarding process for all library staff (including students) to communicate workplace practices and culture, especially as it relates to DEI.

5.1.4. **Action:** Add a section to the self evaluation where professional staff can discuss their contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

5.2. **Goal: Support retention and promotion of staff from underrepresented groups.**

5.2.1. **Action:** Advocate for a pay scale structure that is reflective of experience and contribution, that provides opportunities for salary growth and negotiation, and that is untethered from managerial promotion.

5.2.2. **Action:** Advocate for greater flexibility and autonomy around in-person/remote work practices.

5.2.3. **Action:** Support professional growth through funding of professional development whenever possible.

5.3. **Goal: Support student workers.**

5.3.1. **Action:** Commit to increasing the wages of library student workers progressively with an aim for current living wages.

⁶ <https://showthesalary.com/why-show-the-salary/>

- 5.3.2. **Action:** Where appropriate, support professional development opportunities within the realm of the student worker's job responsibilities.

6. **Statement:** The Lafayette College Libraries ensure an inclusive and equitable environment for all library staff.

6.1. **Goal:** Train staff in diversity initiatives, cultural competency, and implicit bias.

- 6.1.1. **Action:** Determine appropriate staff training opportunities to take place during the workday for all library employees.

- 6.1.2. **Action:** Organize library-wide Safe Zone training for all library employees.

6.2. **Goal:** Encourage library staff to pursue opportunities for DEI education.

- 6.2.1. **Action:** Curate a library of DEI materials for staff and encourage them to use some portion of their work time exploring these.

- 6.2.2. **Action:** Encourage all staff to participate in library and campus events related to DEI.

6.3. **Goal:** Acknowledge diversity across our staff

- 6.3.1. **Action:** Seek staff input on what constitutes an inclusive, equitable workplace.

- 6.3.2. **Action:** Create a cultural celebration calendar that recognizes different traditions and observances; make sure all employees have input on planning social events/parties.

- 6.3.3. **Action:** Accommodate staff needs for privacy due to family, spiritual, or other factors.

7. **Statement:** The Lafayette College Libraries ensure accessibility and inclusivity of outreach efforts.

7.1. **Goal:** Implement accessibility best practices in the creation of promotional materials.

7.1.1. **Action:** Apply [Action 2.5.2](#) to promotional materials.

7.2. **Goal: Ensure that library services, initiatives, and opportunities are equitably accessible to the community.**

7.2.1. **Action:** Identify student organizations to whom we want to enhance our outreach efforts.

7.2.2. **Action:** Actively recruit students from traditionally underrepresented groups to be members of the Library Ambassadors.

7.2.3. **Action:** Identify and reach out to faculty who do not have a current working relationship with the library.

7.2.4. **Action:** Hold periodic faculty, staff, and student focus groups (and/or surveys) to ensure library services are meeting their needs.

7.2.5. **Action:** Increase Open Educational Resources (OER) outreach to faculty with enhanced messaging focused on accessibility and inclusivity.

7.2.6. **Action:** Increase OER outreach to students with an aim toward addressing their affordability needs and concerns

7.2.7. **Action:** Increase outreach from Special Collections and College Archives by re-evaluating the presence at first year orientations, offering presentations to student groups and clubs on campus, and building relationships with Lehigh Valley community partners to create diverse, inclusive collections.

8. **Statement: The Lafayette College Libraries integrate DEI into the instruction program.**

8.1. **Goal: Explore different pedagogies for library instruction.**

8.1.1. **Action:** Teaching librarians will participate in at least one pedagogy program focused on DEI per year.

8.2. **Goal: Improve diversity of digital collections published by Digital Scholarship Services to improve their teaching value.**

8.2.1. **Action:** Create opportunities for students, including DSS student workers, to lead on digital collection building.

- 8.2.2. **Action:** Create opportunities for community partners to lead on digital collection building.
- 8.2.3. **Action:** Prioritize faculty-led collection building efforts that are consistent with the values of DEI.
- 8.3. **Goal: Ensure all students have an optimal learning environment in all library classes.**
 - 8.3.1. **Action:** Develop a process for learning about students with disabilities/differences that might affect their learning before each session.
 - 8.3.2. **Action:** Apply accessibility best practices to all instructional materials (e.g. handouts, course guides, slides).
- 8.4. **Goal: Incorporate inclusive teaching methods into classes.**
 - 8.4.1. **Action:** Prior to each class, consult with faculty about including diverse voices, materials, and research tools in research assignments.
 - 8.4.2. **Action:** When selecting sample searches and materials for instruction, be intentional about including diverse voices.

9. **Statement: The Lafayette College Libraries will institutionalize and assess diversity, equity, and inclusion.**

- 9.1. **Goal: Institutionalize diversity, equity, and inclusion within the Lafayette Libraries.**
 - 9.1.1. **Action:** Incorporate the DEI plan into the Library Program Plan.
 - 9.1.2. **Action:** Secure annual funding in support of diversity initiatives.
- 9.2. **Goal: Assess the status of DEI initiatives in the Libraries.**
 - 9.2.1. **Action:** Conduct an annual staff-wide survey to inform professional development, training offerings and needs, and understanding of DEI related policies.
 - 9.2.2. **Action:** Conduct library-specific surveys to improve services and programs.

- 9.2.3. Action:** Review this diversity plan every three years to determine its progress with the understanding that individual departments should be actively working towards implementing these actions within the three year period.

Future Work

The Lafayette College Libraries commit to reviewing and assessing our progress in implementing this plan. Annual reviews will take place every June, and a full audit will be done at the end of this plan cycle in 2024. We commit to reporting our assessments to our staff and community.

The assessment will be used as part of the foundation for developing the next iteration of the Libraries' DEI Plan by identifying actions that were not completed and that need ongoing work. Future iterations of this plan will build on the actions taken during this cycle, endeavour to address ideas we were not able to fold into this plan, and expand our goals and supporting actions responsively to the needs and concerns of our staff and community.

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