

Queering Catalogs:

Bringing a Critical Eye to Collection Development

Prepared by: *Nicholas Norton, Research Resources and Inclusivity Initiatives Law Librarian Cornell Law School*

GOALS: Amplify scholarship produced by historically excluded peoples (including black, brown, indigenous, queer, differently abled, neurodivergent, and other historically oppressed groups) as part of our typical work flow.

FRAMEWORK:

- 1) Evaluate your current collection;
- 2) Elevate materials you locate and procure as part of this process;
- 3) Advocate / Collaborate with others to bring them into this work.

Rinse and repeat!

Evaluate:

- Do a diversity audit;
 - Make a list of topics and see where the gaps are in your collection;
 - Look for relevant book awards;
 - Discuss past collection development in this area with your colleagues.
- What are the results? How often should you repeat this step?
- Make a wish list for future purchases.

Elevate:

- Curate the books, articles, and other materials you located in your diversity audit that you already possess;
- Can these materials be put together into a libguide? How will you promote this guide?
- Can you send email updates to patrons as this collection expands?

Collaborate:

- Bring in interested colleagues, faculty, students, and community members;
- What are the gaps they notice in your collection? What are the mechanisms for them to have input?
- Have regular meetings with the stakeholders in your community. Start reading groups.

Evaluate:

- What does your collection policy look like? Does it spell out formal mechanisms for amplifying historically excluded people's scholarship?
- Make regular updates to your collection policy part of your work flow.

Elevate:

- Are there opportunities to do book talks with student or faculty groups?
- Consider incorporating an overview of your collection work on a graphic on social media;
- Consider promoting this work as a part of orientations for students and new staff.

Advocate:

- How can DEI work be incorporated into your university's existing committee work?
- How are other units across your library system approaching this work? Who are your allies?
- Consult your allies and brainstorm what the ideal reality is for your collection. What stakeholders need to be persuaded to make progress?
- Consider strategies to push for progress at various levels of your institution.

Evaluate:

- How have past advocacy efforts gone in your community?
- What does your collections budget look like? Are there funding restrictions or other roadblocks to diversifying the collection?
- What staffing and other resources are available for this work?

Elevate:

- Consider promoting open access materials so that patrons can access the content affordably.
- As you build your collection, keep track through official or informal means so that you can point to development in this area to your peers and higher ups. Make these metrics salient.

Collaborate:

- Go to conferences related to work building diversity into library work.
- Go to conferences put on by historically excluded people (outside of LIS) to stay plugged in and build new bridges

Be Kind to Yourself:

- Know that structural systems of exclusion are and will continue to be with us;
- Fighting against these systems takes a constant practice / praxis;
- Lay the ground work for future victories (and celebrate small victories);
- As you do this work, pay attention to your well being and take care of yourself.

