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From the Field

Library Community Collective: Advocating for Social Justice
through Community Conversations

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Abstract

In the wake of the racial violence occurring in the United States in 2020, the UC San Diego (UCSD) Library created a collaborative, non-hierarchical, employee-led group that allowed for a new way of sharing and listening across the organization. The Library Community Collective (LCC) is a collaboration between the Library Community Building Committee and the Library Diversity and Inclusion Committee and has provided an ongoing platform for challenging discourse on topics such as white supremacy, allyship, anti-Asian violence, fat phobia and microaggressions. In hopes of providing a model and inspiration for other libraries to pursue similar initiatives, the authors will provide background on the LCC and its creation, methods, outcomes and challenges.

Keywords: social justice, anti-black violence, EDI, diversity, collaboration, white supremacy, Library Community Collective, UCSD

Introduction

In the wake of the horrific anti-black violence that came to a wider public awareness in the

summer of 2020, organizations across the country have grappled with how to acknowledge and provide space for employees to process and



grieve. Without meaningful employee involvement, reflection and action, these efforts often appear performative. Staff and librarians of the University of California San Diego (UCSD) Library wanted real dialogue and authentic change so created a non-hierarchical employee-led group that allowed for honest sharing and listening across the organization. The Library Community Collective (LCC) has provided an ongoing platform for challenging discourse focused on many topics, which will be explored in depth throughout this article. We will provide background on the LCC and its creation as well as its methods and outcomes in order to provide a model and inspiration for other libraries to pursue similar initiatives.

Background & Inspiration for the LCC

The LCC originated in May 2020 when two Black non-librarian staff members recognized that the Library was desperately lacking a space to discuss and process their mental anguish around the murder of George Floyd. Leatrice Goodson brought her concerns to colleague Philippe Robles-Fradet, who was Chair of the Library Community Building Committee (LCBC). Goodson expressed her frustration that Black staff in the Library were expected to carry on with their work while events like what transpired in Minnesota – and what the Washington Post¹ has been tracking since 2015 – continued to occur at alarming rates.

Robles-Fradet strongly agreed that a space was needed to ensure that non-Black staff in the Library were aware of the impact of such tragic events not only on Black staffs' work and focus but also on their lives and communities. The idea for this space became the LCC. LCC co-founder Leatrice Goodson recalled,

"I remember being angry, tearful and shaken. Watching riots and marches spring up all over the world. The palpable pain of knowing that an

entire world was rioting to affirm a race of people. A people who built this nation that often fosters hate towards them. It was too much to bear. Black Lives Matter became the shout heard round the world. But with work deadlines looming, I remember thinking I can't be the only person, and certainly not the only person of color, overwhelmed with emotions while trying to perform at work. So maybe the answer was a friendly, welcoming space in which mainly BIPOC centered voices could vent and express themselves. So, I decided to advocate for this space."

The LCC was created to provide support during a time of continuing anger and despair over the murders of Black people in America, but also to continue and create long-term dialogue. Although a diversity committee existed within the Library, there was an urgent need for a more radical space, an organic, collaborative place to process tragedy while providing community and a space for listening and learning. Not surprisingly, the core collective was made up of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) and/or Queer librarians and staff, who volunteered their time, energy, emotional capital and knowledge to facilitate, organize, market and prepare the ground for the meetings.

Past Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (EDI) Efforts

Prior to the formation of the Library Community Collective, employees of the UCSD Library had a long history of examining how equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) intersect with professional roles and the organization as a whole. A large research institution, the UCSD Library consists of 203 Staff and 58 Librarians. Librarians do not have faculty status, but are union represented. The Library employs a small number of BIPOC librarians and the percentage of BIPOC staff is slightly greater, which is similar to the University's faculty and staff² as a whole.



The UCSD Library is part of the statewide consortia UC system, which has a diversity-focused committee at each campus as part of the larger Librarians Association of the University of California (LAUC). The UCSD Library Diversity and Inclusion Committee³ has been active for many years. It is a volunteer committee with a current rotation of librarians and staff serving as chair and members. This committee historically holds events and programming as well as promotes speakers, book clubs, and displays as part of its charge. In 2013, the Committee participated in administering the ClimateQUAL: Organizational Climate and Diversity Assessment: a survey of “library staff perceptions concerning (a) their library’s commitment to the principles of diversity, (b) organizational policies and procedures, and (c) staff attitudes.”⁴ After analyzing the results, the committee released EDI-related recommendations two years later as a response to the findings. One of the important recommendations was to include staff in the membership of the committee. Until this change was made, staff could not participate on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, which was highly problematic for an inclusive library-wide committee.

Organized in 2015, the Library Community Building Committee (LCBC), was another outcome of the ClimateQUAL survey process. At its inception, the primary charge for LCBC was to focus on staff morale and, as the name suggests, to build a strong sense of community throughout the Library. LCBC created programming that included an annual staff picnic, the Employee Appreciation and Recognition Program, new employee welcome, happy hours, Halloween, and winter holiday celebrations as well as other morale-building events. Over time, the LCBC began shifting away from the event-heavy programming to bolster the substantive quality of its other endeavors, which would eventually lead to collaborating with Library Diversity and Inclusion Committee to create the LCC.

The Library Community Collective’s Formation

As mentioned above, the LCC is an extension of and collaboration between two existing committees: the LCBC and the Library Diversity and Inclusion Committee (LDIC). After the conversation between Goodson and Robles-Fradet, the Chairs of these two committees agreed to collaborate to create an inclusive place to acknowledge and hold space for grief and trauma related to anti-Black violence. The name “Community Collective” described the desire for the entire Library community to come together for collective learning and processing. Members of the two committees developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to help ensure conversations held during the Community Collective were respectful, honest, and open. This concept of using an MOU in this space was derived from Robles-Fradet’s experience as a trained facilitator for social justice workshops as well as from their spouse’s experience with creating similar spaces. The original core organizers of the LCC included Goodson, Robles-Fradet as well as Rachel Almodovar, Bredny Rodriguez, and Lia Friedman – and a few months later, Alanna Aiko Moore. The group maximized existing work relationships and committee connections to quickly design a format, create a structure and schedule the first event. The first LCC meeting was held within two weeks of George Floyd’s death. The assembly brought together more than 100 participants, including the University Librarian, Library administrators, and high-level managers. The focus of this first meeting was not only to establish and discuss the guidelines for the meeting, but also to give space specifically to Black staff to share their thoughts on George Floyd, police brutality, and anti-Black racism in a way that they had not been able to before. The experiences of Black staff were eye-opening for many of the non-Black staff attendees who had not comprehended the impact of racism and murder

that their Black colleagues grapple with on a daily basis.

Many had not directly heard the experiences and thoughts of Black staff surrounding police brutality and anti-Black racism, so having a group dedicated to uplifting the voices of underrepresented staff proved to be extremely valuable. This space gave underrepresented staff a direct outlet to process their thoughts and experiences in a setting that encouraged space for unheard, historically marginalized voices at UCSD Library.

Planning the Library Community Collective Meetings

Following the first LCC meeting, the core organizers debriefed the session. At this first meeting, the committee agreed that the session had been successful, well attended, and that attendees had been engaged. Many of the organizers expressed that in all their years of working at the Library, they had never shared their raw pain and broached the topic of racism with co-workers. The organizers agreed that if the LCC continued, it was critical to continue to create a space that would not victimize BIPOC staff if they chose to participate. In addition, the centering of BIPOC voices was vital as well as providing the necessary support to amplify those opinions.

To aid in future planning and to promote the LCC, the organizers created and disseminated a survey to everyone working in the library. Attendees could voice their suggestions on future discussion topics, as well as provide feedback on the LCC as a whole. The planners of the LCC used the feedback to design future LCC sessions and kept a running list of discussion topics.

Debriefing after LCC sessions continues to be an important practice for the core organizers. This time is used to discuss the session itself, as well as the deep impact of facilitating sessions on the organizers themselves. Holding space for self-

reflection and healing after talking about emotionally charged topics has become critically important for mental and emotional well-being.

Format of Meetings

The LCC meetings are conducted on Zoom and scheduled every two weeks during the lunch hour to provide staff the greatest flexibility to attend. Organizers volunteer to create content, facilitate a discussion topic or to provide support with chat questions and comments. At the beginning of each meeting, participants are encouraged to review the MOU and facilitators remind participants of the support provided by campus counseling programs and staff associations. Attendance began at over 100 participants for the inaugural session and now averages regularly at 15-25 participants.

Primarily, discussions have focused on anti-Black racism, but quickly expanded to include other topics such as gender, sexuality, microaggressions, anti-Asian violence, white privilege, Juneteenth, internalized racism, and allyship. The organizers balance a combination of prescribed topics of discussions with open discussion forums where attendees can bring forward any issue they wish to explore. Some sessions were more structured, dedicated to a more pointed discussion or involved a training aspect with multiple breakout rooms, to encourage participants to engage more openly in a small group setting. The scheduling of topics remains flexible in order to be timely and informed by real world events.

Many of the organizers understood the importance of facilitation; therefore, it was emphasized in each meeting. The LCC facilitators recognized that in situations like this one, participants may want to vent, veer off topic or connect the subject to challenges they are experiencing that may not align with the discussion. Each organizer kept this in mind during the session. Some coordinators developed skills by reading

or attending training on anti-oppressive facilitation skills.

Buy-in from Library Administration and Participation from Administration and Program Directors

Since staff members rather than the library administration created LCC, organizers have more freedom to make decisions and explore opportunities without the constraints of management or administrator involvement. Attendees of our events have expressed that they feel comfortable discussing difficult topics, because they feel less pressure than other “official” programmatic and professional activities. Library administrators, including the University Librarian (UL) and Employee Services (HR) have been supportive since the inception of the Community Collective meetings. Regular participation in the LCC was encouraged and modeled by the UL.

Despite the support, library administration did initially express concern about the tone and content of the meetings, the ability of the organizers to manage discussions in a productive and professional manner, and the emotional and psychological burden on both organizers and attendees. These concerns did not pause, prevent or delay the function of the LCC, as anonymous feedback from the survey showed the value of the sessions. The results of the survey were shared with library administration in order to alleviate any uncertainty with the LCC. Moreover, the facilitators reiterated with administration that firm expectations and boundaries would be set and maintained during the meetings.

Impact of the Library Community Collective

Although attendance has declined since our first meeting, we continue to have consistent interest and participation. Our co-workers often express how much they appreciate the LCC. Furthermore, the survey illustrates the value of LCC. (Fig. 2) includes evaluation questions to measure

the impact of the LCC. Thus far, 38 participants have returned the survey.

Responses to the survey question asking LCC participants what they have learned included

- how individual colleagues have been affected by systemic racism, microaggressions, bias and how we can help as a more understanding, empathetic and supportive community within the library and university as a whole;
- an anti-racist understanding and the effort happening at intellectual and personal levels;
- the wide variation in the community at the intellectual level, such as critical race theory and its vocabulary;
- how to sit with the discomfort or intimidation of learning, especially from a place of privilege;
- how to engage even when concerned that you'll misstep; and
- suggestions for resources for learning.

A high-level manager who has attended almost every session stated:

It has felt scary to be vulnerable, and inspiring to be vulnerable together in community with co-workers. I've felt deeply grateful to the Community Collective for opening the opportunity to connect and see each other as whole people, and grateful to BIPOC and other folks in minoritized groups who were so brave and generous in sharing their experiences. And it's made me feel hopeful about what we can accomplish when we open lines of communication across cultural differences and organizational hierarchies.

Survey responses highlight how building awareness about the culture of racism, and the history of oppression serves to educate individuals who may be unaware of the significance of racial in-



justice on their colleagues. It also clearly illustrates how much more there is to learn across the library. The very tip of the institutional iceberg that is built on systems of white supremacy is being viewed when statements such as “individual colleagues have been affected by systemic racism” or sitting “with discomfort or intimidation of learning” are being shared. Racism is perpetuated unknowingly in our profession due to implicit bias, a culture of silence, and avoidance. These statements also show the powerful impact that an hour of listening to others speak (and perhaps speaking themselves) can have on white colleagues and the institution as a whole. Conversations like the ones facilitated by members of the LCC that honestly look at the culture of the institution and the experiences of historically marginalized BIPOC workers can begin to dismantle biased systems and create a more anti-racist as well as a socially-conscious organization that supports everyone.

LCC and the Cost of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Work on BIPOC

The majority of the core organizers of the LCC are BIPOC and/or Queer – the inverse of the demographics of the library profession, which is majority white. Ithaka S+R’s report, *Inclusion, Diversity and Equity: Members of the Association of Research Libraries*,⁵ surveyed library staff at four-year colleges and universities found that over 75 percent of library employees (librarians and staff) at Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Institutions are white. American Library Association’s (ALA) Diversity Counts found that 88 percent of librarians and 72 percent of library assistants were white.⁶

While each member of the organizing group is passionate about the work and are willing participants, it is also clear that the core group is much more diverse than the library as a whole. It is common in professions that are predominantly white that BIPOC do the heavy lifting of engaging the workforce in addressing issues of

race, gender, size, ability, sexual orientation and other topics. Unfortunately, members of historically marginalized groups often bear the primary responsibility for creating a more diverse and inclusive work environment. What does it mean when EDI work is done on a volunteer basis by the few BIPOC members of an organization who may not hold positional or titular power?

As mentioned earlier, core members of the LCC organizing group are volunteers – non-managerial staff and librarians who freely give their time and energy because they care about the mission. The work is time-consuming and often involves hours of pre-planning, the creation of presentations, and the facilitating of the sessions. This work is done while juggling expected job duties and without additional compensation.

What many in the library profession do not realize is that in addition to being time-consuming, engaging in equity, diversity and inclusion work can cause emotional distress. The organizers are facilitating workplace discussions with colleagues about racism and homophobia while simultaneously being targets of bigotry at the UCSD Library and in the larger society. Several core organizers mentioned the difficulty to mentally prepare to discuss personal issues with a mostly white audience, to bear witness to white fragility and experience microaggressions in LCC sessions. Organizers do the hard work of educating the library about systemic oppression and are often exhausted after sharing real life experiences and pain. LCC has exposed much of the constant stress that BIPOC suffer in the workplace, due in large part to white supremacist institutions and the outside world. More efforts need to be made to reassure traditionally marginalized librarians and library staff that their lives are taken seriously within the organization, to retain overworked and underappreciated BIPOC staff through workload optimization.



tion and better compensation; and to allow better flexibility in scheduling and usage of paid time off, which BIPOC often deem necessary for mental health. All of the above are issues which BIPOC staff often feel psychologically unsafe discussing with management due to fears of retaliation, unfair judgement, or job loss.

However, the organizers and authors are passionate about creating a space where the BIPOC and other historically marginalized voices can express themselves without fear of reprisal or pushback is strong. Alanna states

I believe in standing in solidarity with Black, Indigenous, POC, LGBTQIA+, immigrant, differently abled and other marginalized communities as all our struggles are connected. Although Anti-Racism and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion work is difficult and can be draining, I cannot imagine *not* engaging in efforts to create change in our institutions and the profession and to move social justice forward.

Rachel “engages in this work to improve employee engagement and retention, to make the work environment more welcoming and inclusive, to support communication skills, and to build trust.” Lia strongly feels that “it is important to create a brave space, to have hard conversations that are not being had elsewhere, and to center issues that are important for all collaborators in order to create meaningful change, and challenge the systems we work within.” Leatrice “wants to create a work culture that merges emotional health & representation, making this an integral and seamless part of a healthy work environment. An environment in which historically marginalized BIPOC colleagues have the opportunity to freely express themselves in an encouraging & affirming communal setting.”

Next Steps

The LCC has been in place for over a year. The organizers are engaged in productive and honest conversations and acknowledging the injustices that are currently present both in the Library and the larger society. However, it has been demonstrated repeatedly that discussion without meaningful action has little meaning and that words must be backed up by action. Primarily, the incredible work has been done so far by a core group of BIPOC and queer organizers. How can the core organizers encourage white attendees to become more involved and take on this labor? Is there a way to make this work reciprocal, and less of a “gifting” of BIPOC experiences and pain to white colleagues in the room? For the upcoming year, LCC organizers hope to evaluate structure, topics, facilitation methods and impact using surveys and attendance, including reaching out to attendees and identifying potential facilitators for future discussions. Organizers also want to improve communication skills between attendees around challenging and potentially divisive topics and continue to amplify BIPOC voices and perspectives.

Future plans will address challenges that have surfaced, such as the heavy reliance on the volunteer labor of BIPOC staff which leads to isolation and burnout, and the homogenization of topics which can take focus away from Black issues and anti-racist efforts. Organizers also hope to address barriers to engagement such as power dynamics and in group/out group barriers and hope to provide psychological support sensitive to BIPOC needs that allow participants to step back to focus on mental safety and health. External and internal affinity groups that support these activities and provide alternate space where the participants feel safe to express themselves will be explored, as well as training for all staff on emotional intelligence and communication training to support conversations outside of the Community Collective.

Conclusion

Established committees and highly engaged staff working in an environment that supports experimentation allowed the LCC to emerge and flourish. As a result of the work done by LDIC and LCBC, staff demonstrated a level of psychological bravery to take a personal, introspective approach to these topics rather than a purely intellectual approach.

Library administration granted LDIC and LCBC the latitude to experiment with a new type of activity in spite of the risks and high-level support and participation remained consistent throughout the meetings. Participants were brave enough to speak their truth in the presence of their peers and in front of supervisors and management. While visible leadership support can help encourage participation, each organization will need to consider the power dynamics so as to encourage and not become a barrier to full engagement.

When starting a program like the LCC, consider the risk of harm to BIPOC staff who may choose to participate in this type of activity. Provide support, safety, and psychological resources as needed. Allow and expect participants to step back from these activities and look for external resources to continue the work without placing the burden solely on BIPOC staff or librarians. For UCSD, the original intent was to create a space where BIPOC and other historically mar-

ginalized voices are heard and listened to without fear of reprisal, pushback, punishment, or the flood of white tears. Goals and potential outcomes may be different for other institutions, but facilitation skills, patience, flexibility, time, and buy-in are key. These efforts have addressed “the unspoken barriers in the workplace that often prevent BIPOC from being truly uninhibited and ‘safe.’” Organizer Leatrice states in closing, “I am proud of the openness, and candor that some of our Library colleagues have shown. The LCC has proven to be a viable outlet for all who attend. We all have performance related expectations, this is something daily required of us in a workplace setting. However, if we are not building emotionally healthy, culturally diverse, and real time anti-racist efforts into the workplace framework, true change will continue to elude us. That is a price far too heavy to bear. If we are carving out entire swaths of corporate structure to appear more “inclusive” and “diverse,” we should not only serve this mandate in word, but also in deed. Having difficult and uncomfortable conversations lay the groundwork for real and substantive change.”

¹ "Fatal Force: Police Shootings Database." The Washington Post. January 22, 2020. Accessed June 25, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/>.

² Accountability. Accessed June 25, 2021. <https://diversity.ucsd.edu/accountability/index.html#Dashboards>.

³ Diversity and Inclusion. Accessed June 25, 2021. <https://library.ucsd.edu/about/diversity-and-inclusion/index.html>.

⁴ ClimateQUAL®. Accessed June 25, 2021. www.climatequal.org/home.

⁵ Schonfeld, Roger C. "Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity: Members of the Association of Research

Libraries." Ithaka S R. October 08, 2018. Accessed June 26, 2021.

<https://www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/diversity/diversitycounts/divcounts>.

⁶ <https://sr.ithaka.org/publications/inclusion-diversity-and-equity-ar1/>. Admin. "Diversity Counts." About ALA. July 09, 2019. Accessed June 26, 2021.



Appendix A Memorandum of Understanding

The following is a list of guidelines and agreements to be respected by those who wish to participate in the Community Collective.

1. **Give space for those whose voices need to be elevated**
 - a. de-center yourself from the conversation if your experience is not the focus
2. **Do not talk over or interrupt others**
 - a. wait for others to finish their thoughts, raise your hand if you need to
3. **Step up, step back**
 - a. encourage people to speak who usually don't, remember to step back if you've talked a lot
4. **Take responsibility for your words and actions**
 - a. use "I" statements, do not generalize or use euphemisms, understand the impact of your words over intentions
5. **Practice empathy, patience, vulnerability, and reflection**
 - a. understand that there are different levels of learning and understanding, while acknowledging others' experiences as valid
6. **Do not demand extra emotional or intellectual labor**
 - a. seek out your own topical resources, be respectful of others' time and energy
7. **Respect each other's privacy**
 - a. stories told and feelings expressed in this space should not be shared outside of this space
8. **Expect to be held accountable to these guidelines both in and outside of this space**
 - a. we ask that these guidelines be respected at all times; if guidelines are not respected, it will be addressed

What this meeting is not:

- This is not a panel or presentation
 - those most affected by the topic at hand will lead the conversation; others are asked to listen and learn quietly and provide thoughtful support when appropriate
- This is not a space to ask basic or foundational questions about the topic
 - e.g. "what is racism?" or "what is police brutality?"
- This is not a space for people not directly affected by the current situation to express remorse, regret, or sorrow
 - do not take up time or space with apologies or virtue signaling; please take time outside of this meeting to address those issues
- This is not a space for debating or arguing
 - please no playing "devil's advocate," no political baiting
- This is not an HR session
 - if you are feeling the need to file a grievance or to ask policy-related questions, please contact BES

The role of the moderator:

- Review the MoU and ensure that it is upheld at each meeting
- Ensure that all voices that need to be heard are highlighted
- Keep focus on the predetermined topic
- The moderator has the discretion to redirect the conversation based on the MoU

Appendix B

Survey Questions:

1. What topics would you like to discuss in future sessions? (multiple choice, choose more than one)
2. How often should the Library Community Collective meet? (multiple choice, one choice)
3. What have you learned from the sessions? (open ended answer)
4. What are ways we can improve the Community Collective? Please review the MOU for more information.

<https://ucsdlibrary.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/LCBC/pages/62793341/Library+Community+Collective> (open ended answer)

N=48

Survey Responses:

1. What topics would you like to discuss in future sessions? (multiple choice, choose more than one)

Coping and Thriving at Work	60%
Internalized Racism and imposter syndrome	54%
Bias and Microaggressions	52%
Allies and Accomplices	48%
Race and Class	40%
Tokenism	38%
What else are we missing?	2%
Land Acknowledgment, who's land are we truly on? And the history of colonial violence against Indigenous people	2%
more on white privilege and white supremacy, especially in libraries	2%
White supremacy in academia (HWCU) and on our own campus and library	2%
Classes and resources that provide tips on how to fight when one is discriminated	2%
I have not been able to attend at all, so this may have been a topic, but address issues at work and especially with the public. Not the issues that need to involve security or HR, but microaggressions and bias when you want/need to step up, but also feel the tension with work impact and customer service or someone of power, seniority, etc.	2%



Applying anti-racism and dismantling racism in your daily practices. I like what (name redacted) said today about her leadership in ARLIS, I'm doing programming and consults but always am concerned I'm not doing well	2%
I would like to learn more about health issues in BIPOC communities, the food deserts we hear about the related health issues people in low income communities have.	2%
Deep dives into topics that surface under coping/thriving@work. What are our expectations and needs @work?	2%
How universities can help with cultural education programs (talks, exhibits, etc.) and give voice to underrepresented groups.	2%
BIPOC centered discussion: White privilege (deep dive); Intersectionality	2%
How to create practices/policies that support or objectives. The action part of these conversations.	2%

2. How often should the Library Community Collective meet? (multiple choice, one choice)

Once a week	5%
Once every two weeks	45%
Once a month	33%
Once a quarter	11%
Other - Monthly at a Minimum - maybe every other week during this time of heightened awareness / tension	2%
At least once a month - twice a month is better	2%
this is the right amount	2%

3. What have you learned from the sessions? (open ended answer)

- I really enjoy hearing from others and seeing what experiences my peers have had.
- How coworkers have been affected by discrimination
- Many of us are concerned about inclusivity in our community
- I've heard my colleagues share some very personal things. I've learned about the whitewashing of the Stonewall riots in recent film/media. I've learned about virtue signaling and a few other terms that I had never heard of before.
- I've learned how urgent it is for us to have profound structural and interpersonal change after listening to my coworkers plainly and emotionally describe their experiences and feelings around race and gender in the workplace.
- I haven't attended yet
- Great first session, sorry I was unable to make the second one.
- I really appreciated learning about my co-workers' personal experiences. These topics are not often broached and discussed in this depth in workplace environments and I truly appreciate the chance to hear my colleagues speak.
- It's been great to see such high attendance and to see folks appear to be more interested in engaging in topics of EDI.



- I need to take steps to educate myself more about racism.
- I haven't been able to attend but plan to.
- More personalized view of the discrimination, challenges and emotions that POC face. While I knew that our society still needs vast improvements, having people that I personally know relate their experiences really drives home the issues.
- The Library is not a neutral or elevated space - people experience racism and sexism and prejudice on a daily basis. We must continue to work on building (self) awareness to create a more open and genuinely tolerant workplace.
- To be rid of my unconscious/implicit bias, I must constantly re-learn and listen to those with lived experiences.
- I am happy to see the openness and willingness from Library staff to learn more about these important issues.
- I love hearing from people, their experiences, and learning from those.
- Greater appreciation (and it was already high) of my courageous and caring colleagues who share from their hearts and want to take action to change our culture.
- There are a core group of people who are interested in social justice. I am especially impressed by my White colleagues who are willing to learn and listen, willing to use their privilege for a good cause, and strike to be the light in darkness.
- That most of us need to support each other in meaningful, more active ways.
- Many insights into how my colleagues experience the workplace and the world, insight into ways words and actions fall differently depending on history and subject position, some insight into allyship. Mostly being part of a community that cares enough to have difficult conversations and share with one another on a consistent, ongoing basis is invaluable and speaks to a workplace that is making a sincere commitment to anti-racism work and fostering inclusion.
- While there seems to be a wide range of starting points and perspectives, colleagues care about each other and our community. This is palpable in the sessions.
- I've gotten to know my colleagues better and gained insight into the challenges they face and the tremendous strength and creativity they bring to work every day. Also, I've continued to grapple with how my own implicit biases and assumptions and reflexive behaviors can impact others. And at times I've been made uncomfortable by the ways that the hierarchies in our workspace continue to play out in this space.
- Interesting
- I've learned about the exhausting weight that my BIPOC colleagues carry - I'd like to learn more about how to be an ally
- A lot of white colleagues do care about racism, but they may not realize that they unconsciously contribute to the oppression.
- More awareness, resources, how to be a better ally
- Hearing other people's perspectives on various issues and how it affects them personally. And we need to somehow remember Gayatri's passing when we reach the one-year anniversary in a few weeks.
- About my co-workers and the shared resources. That this is a great place to work because of you all

- In having these discussions, I am learning a lot about various ideas, the importance of acknowledging the land we are on, the Kumeyaay, Indigenous People's Day, tokenism and allies etc. The two-week span gives me time to think and process the information. In one meeting, someone mentioned how it felt to walk in a neighborhood and when they see a yard sign that acknowledges Black Lives Matter, LGBT... they know that the people who live there support them. The individual stories help me to feel that we are all in this together and connect to my coworkers. Thank you for supporting me while I continue to learn and grow within our library family.
- Antiracist understanding and effort happening at intellectual and personal levels.
- Wide variation in the community at the intellectual level, such as critical race theory and its vocabulary.
- Great suggestions about resources for learning
- Tools for being an active participant in combatting racism. I've learned a lot about the impact that racism has had on my colleagues. It also serves as a regular, concrete reminder of how white privilege is toxic and needs constant examination/challenging.
- Better sense of community at work.
- How individual colleagues have been affected by systemic racism, microaggressions, bias and how we can help as a more understanding, empathetic and supportive community within the library and university as a whole.
- I haven't been able to attend many, but I have learned that I have so much to learn still and that there is no end point for the journey. Learning is constant.
- Pay attention...listen.
- How to sit with the discomfort or intimidation of learning, especially from a place of privilege - and how to engage even when concerned that you'll misstep.
- I've learned that I work with a very thoughtful group of people. I've also learned that everyone really does live in their own universe, and we have to work hard to build bridges from one heart to another.
- History of Pride: Stonewall riots; antiracism as lifelong work for each individual; examining personal implicit bias; vulnerability, empathy, and compassion needs constant practice.
- Lots
- I have not been able to attend sessions
- A lot of people care about these topics.
- Haven't been able to attend/participate yet.
- It's really interesting to hear my colleagues' perspectives. I don't think I have learned anything tangible I can put into practice, but I also haven't attended very many of the sessions.
- I have not attended any sessions yet.
- They add to feelings of division and inequity among all races, forgetting to focus on human race and solidarity
- I haven't taken away a specific lesson or idea, per se, but getting to know the participants and to learn their pasts and their hopes in this area has been really great
- Understanding colleagues' experiences
- It's been most useful identifying with other colleagues and feeling community.

- It was really helpful to hear from everyone's experiences, learn about resources, and feel the camaraderie

4. What are ways we can improve the Community Collective? Please review the MOU for more information.

<https://ucsdlibrary.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/LCBC/pages/62793341/Library+Community+Collective> (open ended answer)

- Discuss ways in which we might make Library-wide changes as a topic.
- I honestly feel you are doing a great job, and that the Community Collective is really special and worth continuing. One topic we might consider is the fact that we are a land grant institution, and how that inherently is problematic.
- I recently read How To Be An Antiracist - I'm not sure that pivoting this group to be a 'book club' but it could be that using a short or selected reading ahead of a session to prompt thinking could help advance the goal stated in the MOU of "...and to develop action items for the changes we want to see not only as a community of Library staff, but as members of the wider UC San Diego campus community"
- None at this time.
- It's excellent and I just would say "More of what you're doing!" I almost selected once a week above but I'm sensitive to the work of facilitators. Have you considered 90 minutes? The ones I've attended seemed like folks got warmed up and could've gone another 30 mins. Besides just "more..." perhaps some sessions could have pre-reading and discuss the reading? Loved the video clip today (7/20), but pre-reading could push us into a situation of emotional labor/education that would be at cross purpose with the MOU. Just a thought.
- Hold a few sessions (within Community Collective meetings or outside) just for minority librarians and staff so it is safe for them to talk about discrimination happened to them, seek guidance and support from each other. It is great to have sessions for everybody, and those should continue, but minority librarians and staff may not feel psychologically safe enough to speak out.
- Again, hierarchical divides in our own workplace can hamper the work and discussions happening here. There might be a need at times for breakout groups to allow more listening and create safer spaces for some to speak more freely. I was impressed with the way the staff association in the Starla Lewis sessions created a dedicated BIPOC space and session as the first in the series of 3. Overall so moved by the respect and openness here. Am so grateful that the library is supporting this space and offering the chance for sustained work.
- It's hard to facilitate these meetings - especially to help participants abide by the MOU guidelines about when to speak "de-center yourself from the conversation if your experience is not the focus" (some people talk ALOT and that can be distracting/annoying) I have a Quaker cousin who shared with me once that the Quaker community leaders sometimes have to speak with someone privately if they seem to be taking up way too much time in meeting. Standard cues like "let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken" might help.

- The MOU seems to touch on all things that makes for a respectful space for all who share. In the beginning of most if not all sessions it is noted that this is a "brave space" and that may be something you want to add.
- More attendance. Encourage PDs/LLC to spread the word about the positive impact for programs (learning, recognizing how our programmatic work relates to ED&I advancement, potential to generate practical ideas for advancing ED&I ...) and individuals (build community, be heard, learn from others)
- Possibly have a few special sessions with a speaker? Ask the Vice Chancellor from Equity, Diversity and Inclusion to join for a discussion? Or a representative from other groups to occasionally broaden the discussion?
- Comment not really to improve, but to say how grateful I am for the group and impressed I have been at the conversations. I am glad to know that it will continue as I have not been able to attend as much as I'd like.
- I am in awe of the moderators and organizers work put into the Community Collective, but worry how this work can be emotionally and mentally exhausting for them. I wonder how or what part of the labor can be distributed amongst regular attendees who are willing and able to help. (2) I believe validation goes a long way for every speaker, especially those that share personal and triggering experiences. Moderators are wonderful at this, but I think this can be shared work. One idea is to have 2+ attendees designated at the start of every session as 'validators', to send speakers and moderators a message of validation in private or public. This can be a great way for attendees who feel more comfortable listening than speaking to engage in a different way. Alternatively, it can also be a great way for regular speakers to practice listening as validators. (3) Thank you for this space.
- I think the biggest thing for me is that I don't want to talk to anyone at lunchtime on a Monday about anything, and especially over Zoom. If we're serious about addressing these issues, we will do it on work time, not lunch time, and make it an official part of the Library's advisory/organizational/meeting structure.
- Encourage everyone at the session to speak out; do not monopolize the conversations and time allotted.
- By not having it anymore!
- I'd like to see it be more action-based.