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Peer Reviewed Article

Tackling Organizational Equity at Scale: An Academic Library Consortium Responds

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Abstract

This article focuses on the myriad ways the Orbis Cascade Alliance (the Alliance), a regional academic library consortium, has responded to the growing and longstanding need to address equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in library spaces and organizations. Specifically, the article highlights a range of initiatives and approaches to advance EDI that the Alliance believes are in the mutual best interest of Alliance staff, its leadership (Board of Directors and Council), collaborative workforce (Teams and Groups), and ultimately, Alliance member libraries and the users they support.

Keywords: equity, diversity, inclusion, EDI, consortia, consortium, Orbis Cascade Alliance

Introduction

With academic library operations, core functions, and services impacted at global scale due to the pandemic, racial inequities, and economic hardship, the Orbis Cascade Alliance (the Alliance) pivoted to meet the emerging needs of its member libraries and the communities they serve.

Prior to the upheaval of 2020, the Alliance affirmed that access and equity are central to its

[Vision, Mission, and Value Statements](#).¹ In June 2020, acts of racial violence, anti-Blackness, and institutional racism heightened conversation throughout the higher education community about the need for leadership and a commitment to action in our organizations. As was the case with most libraries and library organizations, the Alliance joined in “support and solidarity with the minoritized individuals and communities in our colleges and universities for whom recent incidents may have a particularly trau-



matic impact.”² In addition to reaffirming its vision, the statement, [Orbis Cascade Alliance Stands Against Racism](#), acknowledges that “Building on the Alliance’s strong history of collaborating for our communities’ benefit, [the Alliance has] the collective power and opportunity to be part of the necessary change that our times demand” and continues “We can, and will, do more together to combat racism and to advance equity, inclusion, and social justice in our profession and our practices.”³

During 2020, a continued commitment to collaboration for shared benefit, shared information, intentionality, and acting with integrity and respect resulted in the development of responsive organizational strategies that continued to move the needle on equity, diversity, inclusion (EDI), and access. These strategies also served to strengthen the operations, core functions, and services of the Alliance. Experience has demonstrated that stakeholder engagement in decision making is key to sustained organizational change and key to the Alliance remaining relevant to its members.

The article begins with an overview of the Alliance and description of its newly formed Equity Exploratory Committee (EEC), including highlights of foundational committee deliverables and challenges. More in-depth profiles of specific approaches and accompanying initiatives launched in the EEC’s inaugural year follow, including consideration of work to promote a shared understanding of key terms and core concepts, the committee’s environmental scan of library consortia, and work on developing EDI metrics. An overview of current Alliance EDI work outside of the EEC follows, including the work of the Unique & Local Content Team, efforts to change Library of Congress Subject Headings, efforts to repurpose the John F. Helmer Award, a refocus to EDI of the consortium’s 2021 Summer Meeting, and the establishment of a Code of Conduct Task Force. The various initiatives described in this article are part of

a larger and more intentional effort to model EDI in our work together.

Overview of the Orbis Cascade Alliance

The Orbis Cascade Alliance is a nonprofit academic library consortium of thirty-seven colleges and universities in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. The Alliance runs a shared library management system and discovery interface, manages collective purchasing, facilitates access to unique and local collections, and coordinates resource sharing for our members. Alliance members represent community colleges and public and private colleges and universities, with a total FTE of approximately 300,000.

As a member-driven consortium, the Alliance is governed by a Council of library leaders from each institution in concert with a Board of Directors elected from the Council. The Council and Board, working with the Alliance’s central staff, collectively identify programs and services of strategic importance to member libraries.

Central to the success of the Alliance is the team and group structure through which member library staff advance strategic initiatives and share expertise. With a shared integrated library management system as a foundation, the Alliance is active in promoting digital collections and committed to digital resource sharing and providing high quality professional development to the membership.

Equity Exploratory Committee (EEC)

Introduction and Overview

The [Alliance's vision statement](#) is “The Orbis Cascade Alliance, an exemplary academic library consortium, is a vital partner in advancing transformative learning and research and creating equity in higher education.”⁴ As part of its commitment to building and sustaining this vision, the Alliance created an exploratory committee in November 2019 that was charged to



foster a shared understanding among Council, Alliance staff, and member institutions of the national conversation about equity in higher education, and to promote clarity about the opportunities for the Alliance in that conversation. The working assumption of this charge is that equity in higher education is framed within broader work in equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The Equity Exploratory Committee's many-faceted purpose is expressed in its charge:

- Promote a shared understanding among Council, Alliance staff, and our collaborative workforce of key terms, concepts and goals related to the Alliance vision for equity in higher education;
- Identify ways in which the Alliance currently partners, and in the future can deepen partnerships, to advance equity in higher education;
- Identify resources, tasks, venues, mechanisms, etc. to more fully realize the Alliance vision statement related to equity;
- Maintain awareness of relevant trends and developments related to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in higher education, and recommend Alliance alignment with emerging practices as appropriate; and
- Recommend actions to the Board and Council that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The EEC's work in its first year, fiscal year 2020-2021, affirms that academic library consortia can be courageous spaces, and that sustainable equity, diversity, inclusion, and antiracism work hinges on intentionality and collaboration.

While we are constantly learning, the committee believes that its work is happening for the right reasons and that its ongoing work will position the Alliance to advance equity, diversity, inclusion, and antiracism in its culture, climate, and structures.

Foundational Deliverables

Notable deliverables from the EEC include developing and sharing a list of core equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) terms and concepts; conducting an environmental scan to see how other library consortia, including academic library consortia, are supporting equity, diversity, and inclusion in their work; identifying recognized metrics relevant to tracking consortial efforts to address EDI; identifying Alliance EDI work already in progress; and building the infrastructure to support and sustain the committee's ongoing work. The EEC's work on core EDI terms and concepts, the environmental scan, and EDI metrics is discussed in detail below. Committee members identified Alliance work already in progress that supports the vision statement and its emphasis on equity in higher education, including how Alliance programs, practices, and policies support library users across the consortium and how the Alliance is building a holistic environment that nurtures and reflects the diversity of our staff and the communities they serve. Infrastructure building for the EEC included finalizing the charge, filling the FY21 committee roster, holding monthly Zoom meetings, preparing minutes to document the work of the committee, creating a work plan to frame the committee's inaugural year, and establishing sub-groups to work on specific elements of the EEC's charge.

EEC Initiative Profile: Key Terms and Core Concepts

Terms such as equity, diversity, equality, and inclusion are often used interchangeably. The ambiguity around these terms can lead to a gap in people's understanding of and sense of responsibility over who is responsible for moving equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives forward.⁵ The language used to define such concepts and initiatives has evolved over time and most likely will continue to do so. For this reason, one of the stated purposes of the EEC is to promote a shared understanding of such terms and concepts among Council, Alliance staff, and Alliance member institutions. While there are

many terms that fall under the EDI umbrella, the EEC chose to build a foundation with an initial working list of four “starter” definitions. In choosing this starter list, the EEC seeks to build a common language in understanding equity, diversity, and inclusion; create pathways for accountability; and promote open and honest conversation within the Alliance. The four starter key terms and core concepts are:

- *Equity*: “Equity is not the same as formal equality. Formal equality implies sameness. Equity, on the other hand, assumes difference and takes difference into account to ensure a fair process and, ultimately, a fair (or equitable) outcome. Equity recognizes that some groups were (and are) disadvantaged in accessing educational and employment opportunities and are, therefore, underrepresented or marginalized in many organizations and institutions. The effects of that exclusion often linger systemically within organizational policies, practices, and procedures. Equity, therefore, means increasing diversity by ameliorating conditions of disadvantaged groups.” (Adapted from [National Association of Social Workers](#))⁶ Adopted by ALA Council in 2017 per the [recommendation](#) of the ALA Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.⁷
- *Diversity*: “Diversity can be defined as the sum of the ways that people are both alike and different. Visible diversity is generally those attributes or characteristics that are external. However, diversity goes beyond the external to internal characteristics that we choose to define as ‘invisible’ diversity. Invisible diversity includes those characteristics and attributes that are not readily seen. When we recognize, value, and embrace diversity, we are recognizing, valuing, and embracing the uniqueness of each individual.” (Adapted from [National Education Association](#))⁸ Adopted by ALA Council in 2017 per the

[recommendation](#) of the ALA Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.⁹

- *Inclusion*: “Inclusion means an environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully; are valued for their distinctive skills, experiences, and perspectives; have equal access to resources and opportunities; and can contribute fully to the organization’s success.” (Adapted from [Society for Human Resources Management](#),¹⁰ [Hewlett Packard](#),¹¹ and [Ferris State University](#))¹². Adopted by ALA Council in 2017 per the [recommendation](#) of the ALA Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.¹³
- *Anti-racism*: “Active process of identifying and challenging racism, by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices, and attitudes, to redistribute power in an equitable manner.”¹⁴ Anti-racism is “the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviors and impacts.”¹⁵ The EEC included anti-racism in this starter list as it has become clear that working within the concepts of equity, diversity, and inclusion is not sufficient to move us towards dismantling institutionalized racism and implicit bias. The term anti-racism implies concerted attention and assertive action to create truly equitable, diverse, and inclusive environments.

The EEC recognizes that this starter list of core concepts is neither exhaustive nor static. Instead, it is viewed as a work in progress, with the intention of monitoring glossaries and other sources of information to continue its development. Feedback from the Alliance Board, Council, and Alliance member libraries and their staff is critical to this effort, as is the transparent documentation of this work and continued learning.

Ultimately, the goal is not simply to have a shared language around EDI, but to use that to implement initiatives and measure impact. The shared language serves as the foundation for shared responsibility in contributing to the Alliance's vision of creating equity in higher education.

After agreeing upon the starter terms and definitions, the EEC introduced them to the Alliance Board in February 2020. This discussion generated multiple questions related to the challenge of developing cohesion around language within the Alliance. To that end, the EEC implemented a multi-pronged rollout plan, which included Alliance listservs, open calls, and presentations at Alliance events.

The EEC began the rollout plan with an Alliance open call platform. One of the Alliance's collaborative working groups, the Unique & Local Content Team, made equity work an explicit part of its charge for fiscal year 2020-2021, and holds monthly open calls for Alliance members around a variety of subjects specific to unique materials. In April 2021, EEC members participated in an open call in order to introduce the key terms and concepts to Alliance members. These open calls are strictly optional, and people attend depending on their interests and availability. This particular open call was not well-attended, and few attendees had questions or comments. A number of factors may have contributed to this, including an uptick in online events during that time period, which may have resulted in "Zoom fatigue," as well as the tendency for "how to do it" open calls to be better attended than "what it is" open calls. The key terms and concepts may have been regarded as the latter, with the impression that the information would be disseminated elsewhere. In addition, the open call announcement provided very little context, so members may have been unclear about the purpose of the open call and why the Alliance was rolling out these key terms. This experience illustrates the challenges

involved in engaging people around concepts that may appear clear and self-evident on the surface. The EEC members who participated in the open call may have been too close to the situation and made assumptions about the wider Alliance membership's understanding. The EEC will use this as a learning experience and revamp future rollout approaches to provide greater context and rationale ahead of time. In addition, depending upon the EEC's decision-making around the next rollout strategy, use of a pre- and post-survey may be useful in determining impact and directing future plans of action.

EEC Initiative Profile: Environmental Scan

In fall 2020, the EEC conducted an environmental scan of library consortia in the United States and Canada to learn how other consortia are supporting equity, diversity, and inclusion in their work. The environmental scan survey was designed through a collaborative effort of the EEC's Environmental Scan Sub-Group, using survey questions that were developed with the intention of exploring the work that library consortia are currently doing in the areas of equity, diversity, and inclusion, with special attention to how that work is being carried out. The survey utilized open-ended questions to allow respondents to provide specific details and information in terms that best fit their specific context. In addition to information on consortial support for equity, diversity, and inclusion, the sub-group intentionally sought information about anti-racist work being conducted, as well as information on how consortia support their member libraries in their own related initiatives.

The EEC received twenty-five complete survey responses from library consortia, a response rate of 27 percent. The respondents to the survey were primarily academic library consortia (52 percent), and the size and staffing levels of each consortium varied widely across respondents. The survey asked about the size and composition of each consortium (consortia type, number

of staff, number of member libraries). While the information was useful for providing a sense of scope, no discernable patterns were found in the work being done related to the type or size of responding consortia.

A promising takeaway from the survey data is that all consortia who responded reported that they are currently supporting equity, diversity, and inclusion in at least one area of their organization. However, the survey responses also indicate a broad spectrum in the type and complexity of work being done. From consortia who have added non-discrimination statements to their hiring materials to those launching full-scale audits of their complete consortial collections, the ways that survey respondents are engaging with and committing to EDI work varied greatly across organizations. Notably, many respondents indicated that they were just beginning to evaluate the best ways to support EDI as a consortium, with the hopes of hearing about the work of others (partially through the survey results) to learn about useful ideas for how best to move forward. While a few respondents indicated that EDI work was not the responsibility of the consortium but rather of their individual member libraries, it was encouraging to see the ways that many consortia are actively choosing to provide leadership and guidance for EDI in ways that complement and support the efforts of their member libraries.

The EEC has suggested that the survey data affirm not only that the Alliance's efforts are moving in the right direction, but also that the Alliance is in good company. Operationalizing EDI is not an overnight solution—it is a slow burning one with long-term and holistic impacts that seeks to remedy long-standing systemic barriers in, and adjacent to, member-facing organizations. The Alliance has begun to think seriously about EDI initiatives, mindful that there are many different lenses through which to view EDI, such as gender, racial/ethnic, sexual orientation, educational background, immigration

status, and able-bodiedness, to name just a few. All are important and warrant reflection and awareness that this is a constantly iterating space of work, where we all must continue to learn and grow. Events in 2020 underscored that it was time, or past time, for library consortia to embark on their own journey to incorporate EDI more intentionally in their priorities.

The survey data from the environmental scan also demonstrate that EDI is now a more integral part of library consortia than it has been in the past. Library consortia have made, or are making, a great deal of progress in this area. The values of equity, diversity, and inclusion have been, or are being, embedded in major structures and processes. The data also demonstrate that significant change is occurring at fundamental levels, with the potential for cascading effects. Going forward, the EEC is interested in following up with library consortia to see what cascading effects, if any, have followed the changes that were reported.

When the environmental scan was conceived, EDI was the primary focus. Going forward, the EEC is interested in conducting a more focused scan and exploration of anti-racist work in library consortia, to understand more about if, and *how*, library consortia are working to actively oppose racism.

The environmental scan survey results included responses from many consortia that were eager to hear about and learn from one another's work. Increased collaboration and information sharing among consortia around applying EDI in our unique organizational contexts may be a fruitful path forward. Mechanisms for sharing successful processes, projects, and ongoing commitments (and their inherent successes and failures) would help address the questions that our initial survey attempted to answer.

EEC Initiative Profile: EDI Metrics

The EEC was charged with identifying recognized metrics relevant to tracking consortial efforts to address inequity, diversity, and inclusion, and sharing these with Alliance staff, leadership, and Council. A sub-group of the EEC was tasked with this deceptively simple assignment, but this seemingly straightforward assignment proved to be anything but simple! The group quickly found that EDI metrics is an emerging field, spanning multiple disciplines and sectors. Equally quickly, sub-group members discovered how much they, and the field in general, don't know about the "what, when, where, why, and how" of EDI metrics. While equity, diversity, and inclusion work is complicated, contextual, and deeply personal, accurately measuring the work can be challenging. The ability to approach this work with an analytical lens and deeply-understood, associated metrics is crucial both in understanding where an organization is on its journey and where it wants to go.

The EEC is gaining ground on understanding the "what, when, where, why, and how" of metrics. Members appreciate that transcending commitments and making visible progress on equity, diversity, and inclusion goes beyond setting measurable and achievable goals. It involves asking "what does successful EDI look like for the Alliance?" It involves measuring what matters – "what are the right measures to track?" and "how can we be sure we are tracking meaningful metrics?" And it involves drafting goals and metrics (qualitative, quantitative) that are aligned with Alliance vision, mission, and strategic themes, and the Alliance's approach to equity, diversity, and inclusion. EEC members recognize that EDI metrics will help the Alliance set program goals, measure the impact of initiatives, and identify where it may be failing. Members also recognize that key performance indicators (KPIs) also serve to provide data that can enable a constructive approach to equity, diversity, and inclusion opportunities

and challenges at an organizational scale. The development of metrics is a necessary first action before the EEC can design action plans for Alliance teams and working groups. Action plans will strive to measure progress on integrating EDI into existing collaborative programs and projects.

Ongoing Efforts to Operationalize EDI in the Alliance

Embedding equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism throughout a library consortium requires a variety of strategies that put EDI and anti-racism at the center of the organization's work. In addition to the work being done by the EEC in fulfillment of its charge, there are other EDI initiatives currently underway within the Alliance. This section offers a brief overview of several initiatives that intersect with, but are external to, the formal work of the EEC. These include examples of Alliance team and group engagement with EDI/anti-racist work; the Alliance intervention to replace racist subject headings in the member libraries' discovery interfaces; realignment of one of the Alliance's signature professional development award programs with EDI/anti-racist work; reframing of the 2021 Alliance Summer Meeting to focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion in the Alliance; and progress towards the development of an Alliance Code of Conduct.

Alliance Team Engagement with EDI/Anti-Racist Work

The [Unique & Local Content \(ULC\) Team](#) "provides broad oversight and leadership for the development, stewardship, and dissemination of unique and local content."¹⁶ The team examines unique content needs and recommends consortium-wide practices for publishing, storing, discovering, and preserving resources in our special collections, archives, and digital repositories. Multiple standing groups fall under the

ULC Team's purview in order to carry out this work.

For fiscal year 2021, the ULC Team Chair asked that each group build EDI/anti-racist work into their group charges. ULC had already prioritized this during fiscal year 2020, including holding multiple open calls on racial equity and justice in special collections and archives, and decided to make it a formal part of the work going forward. Alliance members expressed keen interest in this, as well as a desire for clear guidance from the Alliance on how to tackle issues of equity and bias in collections.

With the start of fiscal year 2021, the ULC Team spent time learning about and discussing ways of centering equity and anti-racist work. Each ULC standing group was then asked to put in writing how their charge and desired outcomes support equity. These reports were reviewed by the ULC Team, with an opportunity for clarification and further refining of goals. Twice during the fiscal year, the standing groups were asked to report to the ULC Team on progress and barriers to progress with ULC Team members brainstorming about ways to tackle those barriers. Final deliverables were presented to the ULC Team as well as announced to the Alliance at large via listservs.

Discovery Interface Improvement through LC Subject Headings Change

Efforts by the Library of Congress to change the Library of Congress Subject Heading "Illegal aliens" and related subject headings with the recommended alternative term "Undocumented immigrants" have been stalled since 2016 due to intervention by the U.S. House of Representatives. The Orbis Cascade Alliance Council unanimously voted to establish a central mechanism for replacing these subject headings in Alliance libraries' discovery interfaces, with alternative terminology proposed by the American Library

Association and Association for Library Collections and Technical Service's Subject Analysis Committee Working Group.¹⁷ Changes were implemented in fall 2020, following the work of the California State University libraries consortium¹⁸ and Villanova University.¹⁹

John F. Helmer Awards

The John F. Helmer professional development award program was created in 2017 to promote collaboration and learning across the Orbis Cascade Alliance. For the 2021 award year, the Alliance Board prioritized projects that focused on and supported anti-racist work or otherwise promoted equity, diversity, and inclusion within the Alliance community.

Two projects were selected for the current funding cycle. "OCR for All" will aid Alliance members that need help incorporating OCR into all their workflows. At the heart of the *OCR for All* proposal is the effort to assure accessibility to print materials with the delivery of scanned documents and images into editable text for the entire Alliance community. A "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Library User Experience Speaker Series" will bring guest speakers whose work supports anti-racist and LGBTQ+ inclusivity or have advanced diversity through their research and practice. The series will be open to all Alliance members. The speakers will deliver talks through online webinars, which makes it possible for the widest Alliance audience to attend.

Summer Meeting 2021: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the Alliance

The Alliance has historically hosted an in-person biennial Summer Meeting, which offers an opportunity for staff and faculty from all thirty-seven member libraries to gather, share, and learn about the work of the consortium's various teams and working groups from the preceding years. For the [2021 Summer Meeting](#), the Alliance Board of Directors charged its event program committee with creating a virtual event

aligned with the theme of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the Alliance.

The meeting's virtual format, made necessary by the ongoing pandemic, and theme, brought about by the Alliance's focus on operationalizing EDI, was a timely opportunity and a unique departure from the typical programming of the Summer Meeting. The 2021 meeting broadened the program in scope to think and reflect not only on the work of various consortium teams and groups, but also to explore the work of individual libraries and the organization. The programming for the summer was designed to invite attendees to think about the ways in which EDI intersects with their individual work and specializations, their institutions, and the work of the Alliance. Notably, the virtual meeting format gave the Alliance the ability to invite several external speakers and new perspectives and eliminated some barriers that individuals may have experienced in attending the traditional in-person meeting. The 2021 meeting was transformed from something that previously appealed to, and was accessible by, a limited number of library staff in the areas more traditionally considered "consortial areas" (resource sharing, etc.), to an event that addressed the larger scope of EDI and anti-racist work across the Alliance's individual member libraries and shared organization.

Inviting a variety of speakers and new perspectives from outside of the Alliance was intended to provide an opportunity for members to collectively explore and reflect on areas for growth at the individual, institutional, and organizational levels, and to encourage attendees to think critically about the gaps in our work and organizations. The "big picture" approach that some of the external speakers offered allowed members to look at EDI in relation to policies, programs, and organizational structures and provided a unique opportunity for attendees to engage with EDI in the context of Alliance work, and to think creatively about how to approach

those gaps and this ongoing work collectively. As with any group, there was significant variation in the levels of understanding and engagement by both individual staff and member libraries. Learning from some of the leading voices on EDI in librarianship helped the Alliance work toward a shared understanding of the role and necessity of EDI in its collective work and moved the needle toward a shared understanding across the consortium of some of the core EDI issues in the library and information science or information studies fields.

The Alliance's 2021 Summer Meeting was an opportunity for Council, Alliance staff, and its collaborative workforce from member institutions to come together and think, strategize, and act in each of our given contexts, as well within our collective role as a consortium. The approach of both broadening the scope of the summer meeting and defining the theme of EDI reflects the larger prioritization by the Alliance and the EEC to think creatively and critically about the changing role of the consortium, and the ways in which EDI can and should be centered in library work at all levels.

Code of Conduct

To be effective in its work, and to support its commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, the Alliance must do its best to work toward fostering an organization in which all community members are free from discrimination, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm when they engage in Alliance spaces, communities, and activities. To support this goal, and to establish and maintain a productive and collaborative environment for all within its community, the Alliance Board stated its intent to set clear expectations that describe and guide the way that the Alliance community (Board, Council, Alliance staff, and its collaborative workforce from member institutions) and external partners or guests work together within its consortial environment. In this regard, the Board recognizes



the purpose of a code of conduct with respect to equity, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace. In brief, a code of conduct sets organizational or institutional norms for behavior. In turn, these norms are the foundation for upholding the organization's values of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

To accomplish this, the Board established the Alliance Code of Conduct Task Force with the charge of developing a Code of Conduct – as well as accompanying procedures and reporting mechanisms to ensure accountability – to govern behavior and address instances of harassment or other harm within the consortium. It is expected that the Code of Conduct will cover behavior in all Alliance-sponsored groups, activities, and communication channels. As such, the development of the Code of Conduct and related procedures will require broad-based input from, and communication with, the entire Alliance community.

The Task Force began its work in July 2021; the Board's goal is to begin implementation of the new Alliance Code of Conduct in January 2022. The Code of Conduct and related processes and systems demonstrate the Board's commitment to both supporting Alliance community members who are negatively impacted by the words or actions of others within the community and holding one another accountable for behaviors that cause harm to members of the community.

Conclusion

Tackling the fundamental problems of organizing at scale is a tall order. Tackling the fundamental problems of organizing *and* delivering at scale is an even taller order. Consider for a moment the challenge of organizing and delivering *organizational equity* at scale. Specifically, consider the reality and reach of the Orbis Cascade Alliance – a consortium of thirty-seven colleges and universities serving academic libraries in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. The pandemic, racial inequities, and economic hardship that defined 2020 provided the Alliance with an urgent challenge – the challenge to tackle organizational equity at scale in response to the emerging needs of its member libraries and the communities they serve. In 2020 the Alliance transformed these challenges into opportunities. The Alliance's success at morphing these challenges into opportunities is demonstrated by the development of responsive organizational strategies described in this article; strategies designed to move the needle on equity, diversity, inclusion (EDI), and access. Concerning EDI, the Alliance recognized the importance and benefits of scaling. Looking ahead to the next academic year, the Alliance's 2020 EDI successes and learnings position it to continue to advance equity and access for Alliance staff, its leadership, collaborative workforce, and Alliance member libraries and the users they support.

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² Orbis Cascade Alliance, "Orbis Cascade Alliance Stands Against Racism," https://drive.google.com/file/d/1thapy-RZDYEMmzBC824WgGw6q3_pnCKAu/view.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Orbis Cascade Alliance, "About the Alliance."

⁵ Dustin Fife, Mary Naylor Stephens, Asia Lyons, and Melissa Huang, "Leader Responsibility for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Justice in Academic Libraries: An Exploratory Study," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 47, no.4 (April

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¹² Ferris State University, "Diversity and Inclusion Definitions," <https://www.ferris.edu/administration/president/DiversityOffice/Definitions.htm>.

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¹⁴ Center for the Study of Social Policy, "Key Equity Terms & Concepts: A Glossary for Shared Understanding," September, 2019, <https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Key-Equity-Terms-and-Concepts-vol1.pdf>.

¹⁵ National Education Association, "Racial Justice in Education Resource Guide," <https://neadjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Racial-Justice-in-Education.pdf>.

¹⁶ Orbis Cascade Alliance, "Unique & Local Content," <https://www.orbiscascade.org/programs/ulc/>.

¹⁷ SAC Working Group on Alternatives to LCSH "Illegal Aliens," Report of the SAC Working Group on Alternatives to LCSH "Illegal Aliens," https://alair.ala.org/bitstream/handle/11213/14582/SAC20-AC_report_SAC-Working-Group-on-Alternatives-to-LCSH-Illegal-aliens.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

¹⁸ CSU Libraries, "California State University Libraries to Change the Display of the Subject Heading 'Illegal Aliens' in Joint Public Catalog," <https://libraries.calstate.edu/csu-libraries-change-subject-heading-illegal-aliens/>.

¹⁹ Deborah Bishov and Shawn Proctor, "Falvey Staff Members Work Together to 'Change the Subject' on the Term 'Illegal Aliens,'" <https://blog.library.villanova.edu/2020/01/13/falvey-staff-members-work-together-to-change-the-subject-on-the-term-illegal-aliens/>.