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# Keeping the Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Conversations Going

By Mona Ramonetti and Victoria Pilato

## Abstract

This article focuses on the challenges and successes Stony Brook University Libraries' Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Committee encountered from its inception in 2017 to the present. The formation of this committee was in response to a new university-wide program. A pool of more than 80 library personnel made quick and thoughtful decisions to determine the composition of the Committee. In the months that followed, members learned to navigate the challenges of goal setting, collaborating with others outside the library, funding, event planning, and marketing. One of the primary goals of the Committee was to initiate and maintain conversations and collaborations around equity, inclusion, and diversity. Efforts included the celebration of Native American heritage and culture, women's history, hip-hop history, and others. Another goal was to produce a meaningful and relevant mission to serve as a guide for our fledgling committee. The committee's efforts were inclusive of the communities both outside and inside of the library's sphere. Efforts were made to increase awareness and sensitivity among our library personnel via lectures, self-reflection workshops, and discussions. Further, committee members' attendance and participation at conferences and webinars provided many opportunities to engage in discussions with others who have started similar committees at their libraries.

## Keywords

equity, inclusion, diversity, academic libraries, outreach

## Author Biographies

Mona Ramonetti is the Life Sciences Librarian at Stony Brook University. She is the liaison to the Life Sciences, Biomedical Engineering and the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences departments. Mona is also the chair of the Stony Brook Libraries' Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Committee and the Stony Brook University OER Campus lead. She earned her MSLIS from Queens College and a MSMNS from SUNY Maritime College. Victoria Pilato is the Digital Projects Librarian at Stony Brook University. She is the liaison to the Philosophy and Religious Studies departments and has research interests in Intellectual Property. Victoria is the chair of the Stony Brook University Libraries' Digital Initiatives

Working Group and also a member of its Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Committee. She earned her MSLIS from the Palmer School of the Library and Information Science.

## Introduction

The concept of equity for all is at the heart of librarianship, yet academic libraries struggle to adhere to this basic idea. This equity refers to both accessibility and representation. Some academic libraries have turned their attention toward this issue. Schonfeld and Sweeney (2017) state that “In recent years, many academic librarians and observers of academic libraries have worked toward understanding this issue and the shortcomings of efforts to diversify, focusing on staffing, library education and advocacy for diversity and social justice within the profession” (p.2). The response of some academic libraries has been the creation of diversity committees. The charge or mission of these committees is multidimensional. Their focus is not only to provide accessibility and representation for their communities but for their internal personnel as well. Duffus, Henry, Jones, and Krim (2016) emphasize the importance of such strategies: “recognizing that the most successful change begins from within, the Committee’s strategy for promoting diversity began with internal library staff development, and expanded over time to international representation of library faculty” (p.1). Further, there is an understanding that initiatives should be in alignment with their institution’s plan as it relates to equity, inclusion, and diversity.

The facilitation of these initiatives is largely contingent upon a commitment to engage in honest conversations and interactions among participants and vested entities. In order to gain understanding of the issues that affect many underrepresented groups, the exchange of ideas through verbal communication is at times very difficult but necessary. As Arao and Clemens (2013) submit, “we argue that authentic learning about social justice often requires the very qualities of risk, difficulty, and controversy that are defined as incompatible with safety” (p.139). Many of these conversations require courage by the active participants. Oftentimes, students from underrepresented groups who step up to take the reins when delving into race-related discussions in the academic arena experience frustration. They are faced with the challenge of trying to articulate issues that are unrecognizable to some members of the represented population. Warikoo’s article on racial inequality (2016) contends that “for their part, students of color can end up feeling beleaguered as they try and fail to convince their peers that America’s past requires stronger current efforts to counter racial injustices” (The Limits of Current Campus Justifications for Affirmative Action section, para. 4).

She explains further that “campus diversity brings little benefit when students are unable to engage each other in meaningful, thoughtful discussion about race. Without settings to promote robust but civil argument, discussion, and learning, students gain little understanding of each other’s lived experiences.” With the idea that Stony Brook University (SBU) needed meaningful dialogue on race, gender, socio-economic status, and many other diversity-related issues, SBU Libraries’ Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Committee (EIDC) undertook the challenge of creating opportunities for engagement and conversations.

### Diversity at Stony Brook University

SBU sits 56 miles east of New York City and is easily accessible via a 2-hour train ride on the Long Island Rail Road. According to SBU’s Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Effectiveness (IRPE) 2018-9 statistics, its student body population (undergraduate and graduate) is 25,007. Its faculty population is 2,700.

SBU is documented on some college information sites as being above average in reference to having a diverse campus; specifically, College Factual contends that “SUNY Stony Brook boasts excellent ethnic diversity” (College Factual). The SBU IRPE recently posted the following numbers referencing race/ethnicity on campus for 2018: 43.7% of the student body population (undergraduate and graduate) is Caucasian, 36.4% Asian, 11.5% Hispanic or Latino, 8.8% African American, 7.4% unknown, 1% Native American and 0.3% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. The gender statistics for the student body are 51.6% female and 48.4% male (Stony Brook University: IRPE).

In reference to the race and ethnicity of faculty, 66.5% are Caucasian, 14.8% are Asian, 6.9% are Nonresident alien, 4.6% are of unknown race and ethnicity, 3.7% are Hispanic or Latino, 2.9% are African American, 0.2% are of two or more race, 0.1% are Native American, and 0.0% are Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. The gender statistics for faculty (full-time and part-time) are 55.4% male and 44.6% female (Stony Brook University: IRPE).

As per the SBU 2017–18 Fact Book, 35% of its undergraduate commuter students and 21% of its graduate commuter students hail from the five boroughs of New York City (Stony Brook University). The University Libraries serve all of the aforementioned populations. Its close proximity to New York City provides a wealth of the exchange of knowledge for many. Thus, it is important for the library to be able to provide a welcoming environment that meets the needs of a significant portion of the student body that commutes from the city. In addition, the SBU librarians are also afforded opportunities to forge relationships with librarian colleagues from various NYC libraries.

## First Steps

The assembly of the EIDC began with the appointment of its first chair by the Dean of Libraries. The chair quickly selected members out of a pool of more than 80 library faculty and staff. The individuals selected expressed a strong interest and commitment to diversity-related issues on campus. It should be noted that the predominant race of the library's personnel is Caucasian. Naturally, this was reflected in the group's composition. Of the 12 members, 7 were Caucasian, 3 were biracial/multiracial (Native American, African American, Asian, and Caucasian), and 2 were Asian. The female-to-male proportion was 8:4. Of the group, 3 were immigrants, and some were members of the LGBTQ community. Additionally, the EIDC chair sought to ensure that both staff and faculty were represented equitably as best as possible, with 7 faculty and 5 staff. The newly formed committee's first tasks were to research other diversity-related initiatives on our campus and on other campuses to learn best practices, gain further insight, and call the first meeting.

The Committee's inaugural meeting included the Dean of Libraries and SBU's Chief Diversity Officer. The Committee's chair strove to establish an egalitarian environment. She prefaced the initial discussion with the idea that all members were on the same playing field and that hierarchy would not be adhered to among the group members. She added that this was necessary in order to facilitate an honest and welcoming environment. The group's discussion centered on the reasons for joining the Committee. Members felt the uneasiness of this task and were initially apprehensive and guarded with their responses. As the meeting progressed, they were more forthcoming with details as their courage grew with each response. The responses started with job-related issues, such as collection development, but quickly changed to personal experiences of racial bias, being a refugee, being an immigrant navigating the terrain of a new country, and LGBTQ\* challenges and biases. Some of these issues were very sensitive and private in nature that resulted in the shedding of tears and the administering of consoling words. At the meeting's conclusion, it was agreed upon by all that in order to make some inroads in our work, bi-monthly meetings would be appropriate. The meetings continue to have a good attendance rate with one to two members absent per meeting on average. Meetings are held at 9 am for the duration of an hour.

The EIDC then turned its attention to researching what other institutions have done in response to the formation of a diversity-related committee. This is a very useful step in guiding the goals and initiatives of the Committee. Edwards (2016) discusses early development: "A library-specific diversity plan will ideally: help guide library actions by creating a holistic framework with diversity as a foundation; serve as a codified statement of a library's commitment to diversity;

illustrate the actionable steps the library will take to work towards diversity; and help bring the library in line with professional standards” (p. 2). This helped our committee prioritize the next steps in the development of the Committee. Two early goals of the EIDC were to engage the SBU campus community and establish a website to communicate our statement and actions.

The Committee was charged to write a mission statement. The group, with the Dean of Libraries’ feedback, sought to state something that supported the University’s strategic plan and would also resonate and align with SBU’s diversity plan and the University Libraries’ strategic plan. This of course was challenging. There were divergent ideas of what some members perceived to be the Committee’s primary focus. Some members saw the Committee as policy making, while others saw it as a way to support and edify from within and ultimately beyond the library walls. The latter prevailed. While the Committee could make recommendations, it was not in our purview to make or establish policies. We proceeded to write mission statements as a group knowing these statements could and would change. After many iterations, the following was the final mission:

- Build, preserve, and provide access to rich and diverse collections
- Recommend policies and projects that embed diversity and inclusion into the Libraries’ services and work environments
- Envision events that build cultural awareness and provide the tools needed to strengthen work relationships and build a supportive SBU community
- Increase awareness and sensitivity among library staff
- Develop responsive library spaces for diverse user communities

The Committee then uploaded the mission statement to the SBU Libraries’ newly created EIDC webpage.

Our next set of goals focused on self-reflection, collaborative opportunities with other groups on campus, and bringing our own events and activities to the campus and surrounding communities. Two early questions continue to permeate our efforts: Are we prepared to engage in meaningful dialog about diversity-related issues? Are we brave enough to undertake the task? The EIDC quickly got to work by attending events and workshops that helped with our own self-reflection, and collaborating with others to support our own events and activities.

## Activities

Outreach efforts by libraries are very important in establishing a strong presence on campus. These efforts should be multipronged. They should extend to all of the constituents of the campus and some outside of the walls of the institution. In the case of the EIDC members, outreach is the driving force in implementing and

promoting events that are designed to highlight, question or challenge existing structures that could benefit from some reform with regard to equity, inclusion and diversity. Members forge relationships with other departments and with student groups willing to articulate concerns that would eventually evolve into discussions spurring some change in the right direction, resulting in fruitful collaborations and the assembly of a variety of campus members at the table offering a multitude of perspectives and experiences. As Brown, Ferretti, Leung, and Mendez-Brady (2018) offer, “equality and diversity do not equal social justice or the dismantling of systems of oppression present in our society, just as equity, inclusion, and social justice do not happen through statements. They happen through action” (p. 17). The events that the EIDC puts forth are heavily focused on themes that affect many underrepresented groups on and off campus. The EIDC members are mindful that a large number of these students face challenges in addition to the ones that all students contend with Switzer (2008) explains:

Traditional and nontraditional students have the same requirements for graduation and attend the same class. However, nontraditional students have added barriers that cannot be ignored. It is important that we recognize that diversity is more than race and ethnicity. If we are serious about our commitment to improve the educational outcomes for all our students, academic libraries must remain resolute in our determination to implement diversity initiatives (p. 299).

That is not to say that the EIDC’s programming excludes issues that affect all. Inclusion is inclusive of all. In early 2018, the EIDC sponsored a lecture by SBU’s Vice Provost, Charlie Robbins. His presentation for ConnectED, *The Missing Men at Graduation*, discussed a program to research the negative effects of toxic masculinity and work to combat this situation with the male students at SBU (Robbins, 2017). The perception of inclusion regardless of sex, race, and gender was the overarching takeaway from this lecture.

The event that essentially put the EIDC on the map exemplifies the Committee’s strong outreach efforts. The first and largest to date is *The History of Hip-Hop* event. Through a collaboration with the library’s advancement officer, the music department, and the Africana Studies department, renowned hip-hop artist Parrish Smith led a panel discussion on hip-hop history and culture. This event helped to change the perception of the library. The library was now perceived by many as “honest,” “real,” “genuine,” and more than a place to study. Another noteworthy collaborative event was a lecture by the world-renowned Native American conductor Timothy Long. He led a discussion on the missing indigenous women of North America. Long had just wrapped up conducting the score to the opera *Missing* in Canada. This event married history, music, women’s issues, and social justice issues

along with the history and culture of Natives in North America. It was heavily attended by various top-level administrators on SBU's campus among others. Again, the EIDC's strong outreach efforts were pivotal for those that attended. Our outreach efforts led to collaborations with other departments on campus along with seats on various committees and boards.

One notable invitation was the opportunity for an EIDC member to mentor a student in the Student African American Sisterhood (SAAS) National Organization. The mentorship program helps provide SAAS members with support and guidance in academic and non-academic matters. Involvement in this program led to some SAAS members attending various academically beneficial library related events and workshops that they would have otherwise overlooked, including a presentation skills workshop, an event commemorating SBU's Africana Studies department's 50th anniversary, and others. Students were forthcoming regarding the impact of such events and workshops on their academic and professional performances. One student noted her improvement in her public speaking abilities, while another was able to secure a student worker position assisting the chair of the Africana Studies department.

The goal of many events is to create activities that spur open communication between those that attend. The library is an ideal place to discuss and share ideas and experiences in an open atmosphere. Academia is still present but its formality is stripped away to a degree that allows for honest conversation. It transforms into a venue that gives both faculty and students an opportunity to share their experiences with each other. A *What is Black Love?* panel discussion held in early 2019 serves as an example. Students organized a discussion with faculty and students on their perceptions of Black Love. Initially, panelists and audience members spoke freely of their trials and tribulations on the subject at hand. Eventually, conversations of more poignant experiences were shared along with the frustration of being a member of an underrepresented group. The honesty was raw, real, and courageous.

The EIDC members are mindful that self-observation and frank conversations within the SBU Libraries on equity, inclusion, and diversity are necessary as well. Consequently, some efforts are directed to cultivating inclusive and tolerant attitudes and dispositions among library faculty and staff. Duffus et al. (2016) shared their committee work in reference to such: "The Committee identified two staff development objectives to strengthen these values within the library: 1) cultivate an inclusive environment by opening dialog among employees, and 2) develop skills and cross-cultural competencies that can be incorporated into daily workflows" (p. 25). In order to provide training and self-reflection opportunities for all of the library community on campus, the EIDC hosts lectures and workshops to

educate ourselves in issues related to intersectionality, LGBTQ\* issues, and implicit bias among other topics. The first workshop for committee members was to participate in a 6-hour implicit bias workshop, R.E.D.I. (Responding to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Project, which is part of the Plan for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion plan on campus (this workshop and seminar ended in 2018). After completing this workshop, the EIDC held a shortened version for the University Libraries' staff and faculty. Another example of self-reflection work by the committee members was bringing the Stony Brook Safe Space workshop to the library. The Safe Space mission is to make SBU "...a more inclusive place for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning (LGBTQ) people by fostering a supportive learning and working environment" (LGBTQ\* Services). The program training for the SBU community to be a Safe Space member, providing a safe place for those in need. These two workshops also provided the opportunity to work with groups on campus doing similar work to the EIDC. Self-reflection and discussion also happened on a more personal level within the Committee, discussed in more detail in the next section of this paper. Naturally, there are challenges when it comes to executing and implementing these ideas. The obstacles run the gamut from financing and scheduling to availability of venues.

## Challenges

Fiscal challenges are prevalent in many libraries. SBU Libraries are no exception. Upon its inception, the EIDC had the added hurdle of working without any fiscal backing from the University Libraries' administration nor the ability to generate funds. Outreach efforts extended not only to collaboration with others outside of the library, but also to obtaining funding for events when needed. EIDC members have learned to ask for assistance from the SBU community, specifically the Office of the Chief Diversity Officer.

The common perception of libraries is that they are places for studying and acquiring materials for research. The EIDC's task is to expand that notion, meaning that scholarly initiatives can take the form of an informal lecture or discussion outside the walls of a classroom. Further, the participants are from all walks of life and differing scholastic disciplines but still conversant on a wide variety of topics. In the first events put forth by the EIDC, many came to observe but few actively participated in the discussion. However, as time progressed, the participants seemed less guarded in sharing their thoughts and experiences. Events by their very nature allow people to meet others outside of their sphere, pushing participants out of their comfort zones. Speaking out is rarely comfortable. The recent 2019 student-led event in the library on the discussion of Black Love exemplifies the progress made by the EIDC. The experiences shared at the event resonated with many of the African American students. Some looked and were

nervous; nevertheless, they conversed with those in attendance. Discussion touched upon topics such as familial love, fear, courage, fetishes, self-love, and slavery. Many broke out of the mostly hygienic academic jargon and spoke honestly. At times, it was uneasy but the conversations continued. This event helped to bring attention to some of the difficult experiences some members of the African American student body are frequently faced with on SBU's campus. Experiences touched upon included frustration around stereotyping, fetishizing, and profiling, among others. The outcome of this event was to bring much-needed awareness of African American students' realities to the greater SBU populace's consciousness.

The EIDC works towards an egalitarian environment, which is challenging given the hierarchy that exists among library personnel (1. administration 2. faculty 3. staff). The hierarchical structure sometimes influences the ability of some untenured librarians to be forthcoming with discussions on controversial topics for fear of compromising their chances of acquiring tenure. It has taken some time for committee members to speak honestly about contentious issues, if they speak at all. The committee members strive to maintain an atmosphere that eliminates the idea that in order for one party to be right, the other has to be wrong. As expected, this exploratory and personal work is taxing and sometimes hard to navigate depending on the topic at hand. Some members feel ill equipped to discuss these topics. It is important to remember that those who are vocal are not necessarily the authorities; it may only be an indication that they are more vocal. Discussions in the meetings are typically inspired by group readings and watching webinars/videos. Committee members first recommended readings verbally and then amassed them into an editable document. The resulting list in itself became a challenge of sorts. Finding the time to read everything proved hard for all. Eventually, the list served more as a tool for suggested readings, whereby, some were selected for discussion at meetings. One such reading came from Scholarly Kitchen, *Guest Post: Childfree, Childless, and Childcare – They All Attract Bias in the Workplace*, by Tasha Mellins-Cohen. Videos were usually sent to the Committee via email from the chair one week prior to the scheduled meeting. These videos were sometimes recommended by others doing similar work on or off campus. In other instances, discussions at the meetings warranted further exploration; thus, members would share additional related videos. The majority of these videos were from YouTube. They include videos such as: *Civil Rights | James Baldwin Interview | Mavis on Four* and *What exactly is Intersectionality? A conversation with Stephanie "Najma" Johnson*. The committee members are cognizant that the discussions are necessary. This work is important, but still we may have only been touching the surface with our discussion. The idea of leading by example is the overarching theme to overcoming some of the trepidation and discomfort of discussing controversial and socially challenging issues.

## Next Steps

Reflecting on the EIDC's activities, the authors are aware of the importance of collaborative efforts with the campus community, specifically with the students. The events driven by students tend to elicit the most honest engagement from participants. An example of this was the Black Love event, which was driven by students of the UNITI Culture Center, a multicultural center promoting diversity and inclusion within the SBU community. Student-driven events foster more dialog, especially among students who are most affected by diversity-related issues on campus. With that in mind, the Committee plans on having student representation on the EIDC in the near future.

It should be noted that the racial demographics of the SBU Libraries mimic most libraries in the United States; very few African Americans hold positions. This of course poses a problem on many levels. In their article about diversity in academic libraries, Bonnet and McAlexander (2012) discuss the importance of having diverse representatives in a group like the EIDC to connect better with students: "Programs that increase the representation and visibility of demographically diverse staff could lead to increased contact of patrons with librarians of different social identities, and could serve to erode demographically-based stereotypes of librarians" (p. 284). The EIDC would like to better promote to the campus and local communities the importance of listening to experiences and stories from individuals outside of their own groups in order to gain a respect and an appreciation of other.

The EIDC is now turning its attention towards the libraries' holdings as they relate to the development of a collection that supports all of its constituents. The group plans to closely examine its collection by conducting an honest self-report of the present collections. Additionally, while this is a research library, the value of access to general interest or lifestyle resources should not be undervalued. It is important to differentiate between materials that create a more inclusive and diverse collection and those that focus only on the international community. Vega García (2000) discusses this difference:

...blurring of the (at times shifting) boundaries between U.S. racial and ethnic studies materials and international area studies materials is a common occurrence in the literature, and one that complicates research on U.S. diversity issues. Similarly, self-reporting on the strengths of library collections may lack objectivity and fail to yield useful and more detailed information. (p. 312)

It is up to the librarians acquiring materials to understand this and look deeper into scholarship not readily available through traditional subscription packages. As Morales, Knowles, and Bourg (2014) suggest:

The collection development decisions made by academic libraries and librarians have profound impacts on who and what is represented in the scholarly and cultural record. The decision made about whose archives to collect and preserve and what books and journals to buy are inevitably biased, based as they are on some combination of the judgements and interests of individual librarians and on those same librarians' sense of the tastes and needs of patrons. While it is tempting to assume that patron-driven collection development practices would result in collections that reflect the diversity of the communities served, such an approach ignores the systemic biases that affect access to the resources necessary for a scholar to publish her work and to have that work marketed and recognized as authoritative. (p. 445–6)

As at many libraries currently, budget constraints continue to affect collection building at SBU. However, that should not deter libraries from questioning whether they are indeed meeting the needs of their constituents. Vega García (2000) states:

The viewpoint that racial and ethnic materials are relevant only to their respective populations is an outdated and erroneous approach to collection development, especially for ARLs that must help prepare students for their entry into the real world. In these days of shrinking and frozen periodical budgets, librarians must weigh the cost of subscribing to important racial and ethnic research and leisure periodicals, or run the risk of marginalizing and excluding these perspectives entirely from their collections. (p. 319)

To address this issue, the EIDC has started a dialog with SBU Libraries' collections selectors. Additionally, the EIDC is proposing the development and curation of more oral history projects. Welburn (2010) discusses the value of having access to primary resources and "obscured scholarship" in his research. He suggests that such collections: "broadened the perspective on the American Experience but also encouraged the use of oral histories and other non-textual materials in capturing the experiences of communities in the United States and other parts of the world" (p. 358). Oral histories are currently being captured in four departments on the SBU campus: Asian and Asian American Studies, The Program for Writing and Rhetoric, Hispanic Languages and Literature, and the Geospatial Center. The EIDC is currently proposing a StoryCorps type of oral history project with students who participate in the Study Abroad program on campus. In addition, an EIDC

member is exploring the possibility of an oral history project with the Veterans Home on campus.

Finally, the EIDC would like to make some inroads with the SBU disability population. Members held discussions early on about physical spaces and policies for the Libraries concerning persons with disabilities, specifically, password-protected spaces and accessibility to additional floors in the reading rooms. Positive outcomes include working towards getting the Libraries' website up to ADA compliance, including the digital collections, which remain the most inaccessible at this time. While we routinely attended various workshops sponsored by SBU's Student Access Support Center, we have still to forge an ongoing working relationship with this department.

## Conclusion

The library's position on college and university campuses is as a place where all are welcome, and actions should reflect that. Switzer contends that:

There is good reason for academic librarians to identify and consider the unique needs of nontraditional students to ensure that academic libraries are a welcoming place for all students. Designing diversity initiatives with multicultural and nontraditional students in mind is key to bridging the various academic and research needs of today's students-this includes aggressively hiring more minority librarians, staff, and student workers in an effort to foster a workforce that is representative of our quickly diversifying university community. It is through such initiatives that we hope to improve the educational outcome for students by presenting the library as a vital part of the college experience. (p. 281)

The EIDC's outreach efforts have contributed to the Committee's many successes. Through collaboration and learning from other departments and students on campus, the Committee is able to forge many advantageous relationships with various groups. The opportunity to listen and respond accordingly to our community's interest has been the backbone of our success. The work, thus far, has helped to reignite an interest in SBU Libraries. Students view the SBU Libraries in a new light as a central place on campus, a place where they can share experiences and views in addition to academic endeavors. Other positive results of the outreach efforts include invitations to participate in other projects and committees on campus.

The Committee has also received positive feedback from colleagues outside of SBU at presentations given at related conferences and forums. Two such instances were at LACUNY (Library Association of the City University of New York) Institute 2018

and at the 2018 SUNYLA (State University of New York Librarians Association) Conference. At both presentations, the EIDC was praised for successful outreach efforts with other departments on the SBU campus, specifically with regard to the building of relationships and bringing awareness to the library. In addition, many welcomed the discussion of the various challenges faced. The committee members continue to solicit suggestions and insight in improving our work and the mission statement that frames it all, notably statements discussing recruitment and mentorship.

Although the EIDC has been successful with outreach, its members' ability to undertake the arduous task of self-reflection with regard to one's own biases is ongoing. The task of opening up one's awareness of bias, implicit bias, and hearing from others who are unlike themselves about their experiences with bias and hate is a very difficult undertaking. Even with the uneasiness of this task, the experience in itself is a learning opportunity for all. The work is not for naught. It is easy to feel some level of frustration and at times hopelessness when traversing the equity, inclusion, and diversity terrain, however, the need to gain some traction in this difficult field remains at the forefront.

Additionally, everyone needs to be at the table when having these discussions. At the end of the day, these issues affect most people. Typically, the demographics of social justice groups is comprised primarily of members from underrepresented groups. In order for progress to be made, it is necessary for more involvement from the members of the represented group.

Overall, the formation of the EIDC has proven to be an important addition the libraries and the entire SBU community. The EIDC members continue to step out from behind their desks to serve their community in ways that are relevant and timely while simultaneously acknowledging our shortcomings, challenges, and mistakes along the way. Through collaboration with many, the Committee has been fortunate to be part of the larger SBU community in their efforts to educate and inform on issues that foster a more welcoming and inclusive community.

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