

Urban Library Journal

Volume 22

Issue 2 *Selected Proceedings from the 2016 LACUNY*

*Institute Race Matters: Libraries, Racism, and
Antiracism*

Article 2

7-2016

Inequalities in Publishing

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Recommended Citation

Roh, C. (2016). Inequalities in Publishing. *Urban Library Journal*, 22 (2). Retrieved from <http://academicworks.cuny.edu/ulj/vol22/iss2/2>

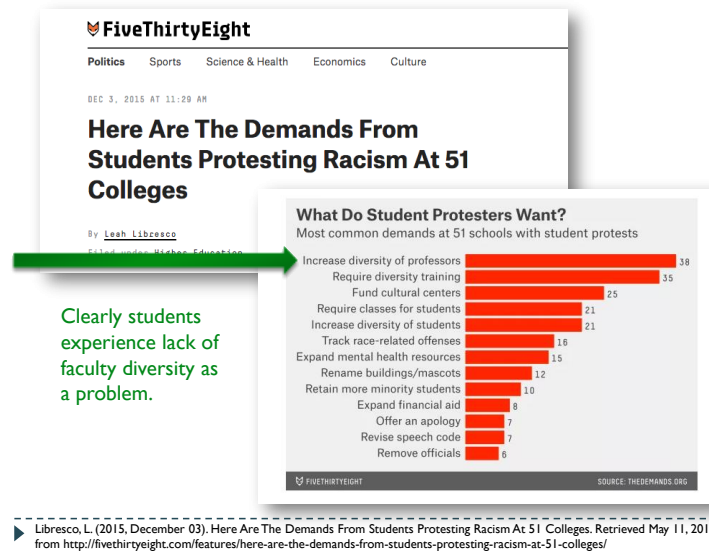
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Inequalities in Publishing

About the Author

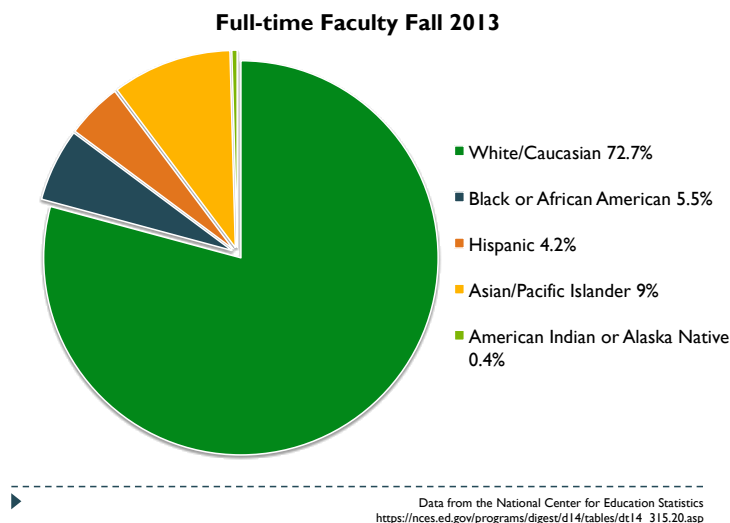
Charlotte Roh, Scholarly Communications Librarian, University of San Francisco
Editable presentation available CC-BY: <https://works.bepress.com/charlotteroh/26/>

Introduction



Last year, there were a lot of newsworthy events about bias and diversity, and for those of us in higher education, one narrative was student protests across the country.

When FiveThirty-Eight so helpfully put together the data, there were 51 schools, but the last time I checked, there were 79 institutions that put forth a list of formal demands, and the number one demand was more diverse faculty and staff. You can see all the demands at TheDemands.org.



If you look at the numbers, you can see why the students would want more diversity in their faculty.

Ben Myers from the Chronicle of Higher Education just put together an interactive graphic called “Where are the minority professors?” if you’re wondering where your institution is more specifically.

At the time, and most recently, I was at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, which is a predominantly white institution, in the heart of the gorgeous Pioneer Valley. That’s the 26-story library on the lower right. It’s gorgeous and eagles nest on the roof every spring. There’s an eagle cam that we all enjoy.

Brown Bag on Publishing (with pizza)



View from the 19th floor of the 26^{-story} V.E.B. Du Bois Library, taken by me.

Because of my background in publishing, I held workshops in publishing and office hours for the Graduate School. So at the time of all these student protests, I thought, How can I make a difference and do my part to address this lack of representation?

I was already working with the Graduate School, and so I reached out to the Graduate Students of Color Association to do an event on publishing, with the idea that the graduate students of today are the faculty of tomorrow.

This was harder than I thought it was going to be. I actually knew the president of the GSCA personally. I told her, the library would provide the venue and the speaker (me), the Graduate School would provide the pizza, all they had to do was give us a date and help us promote it. She said, I don't know, we have a full schedule. And I said, Look, this is important. You can't get tenure without publishing.

Oh, she said. Maybe you should say that.

Graduate Student Publishing Brown Bag: Etiquette and Politics the DVD Commentary Version, for Librarians and Educators

The following is the actual presentation that I gave during that brown bag, with some commentary for this audience.

I realized, both from my conversation with the president of the grad student association and other graduate students, that I had to start at the very beginning, the bottom baseline.

Why do you need to know about publishing?

Publication is the central requirement for tenure and promotion.

This very basic requirement was actually news to most of the room.

How do I get published?

Just be awesome? Work hard and be fierce?

I want to add here that, keep in mind that I was talking to graduate students – these are people who are good at being students, where their hard work is rewarded to the point that they have decided to keep going to school. They're used to succeeding.

That always works.



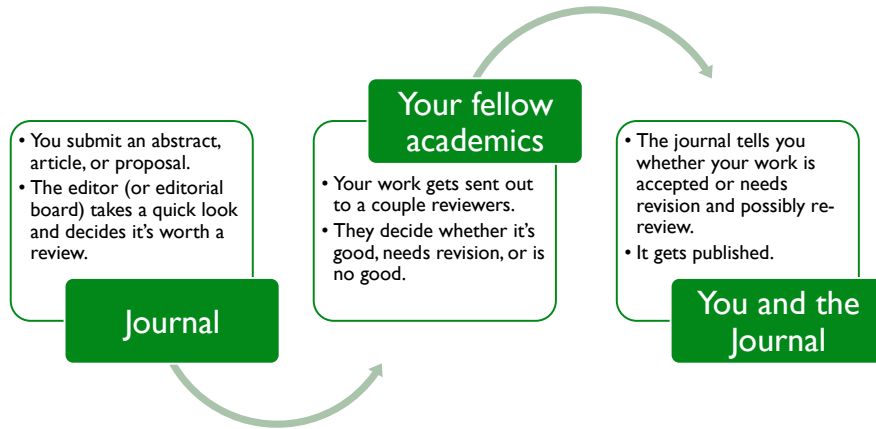
This slide, by the way, did not play well in Massachusetts. They did not know who Jeremy Lin is, so hopefully here in New York it plays better.

Submission, Review, Publication

Then I went over the basics of submitting to a publication. How to know where to submit, which means knowing tenure requirements

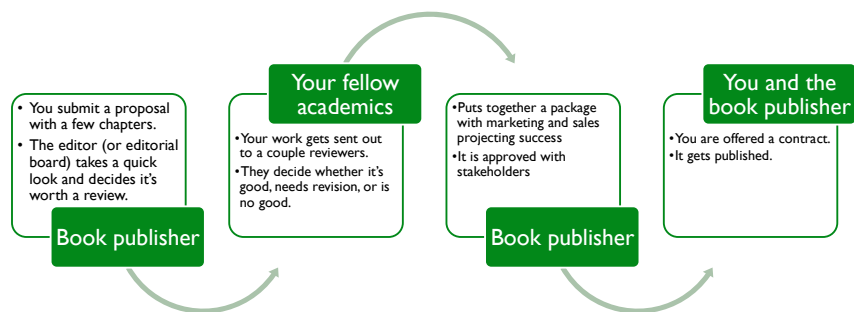
For those of you involved in information literacy, this really isn't very different from analyzing a source to see if it's legitimate. Sadly, I've sat down with more than one brand new PhD who doesn't know the important journals in their field. It's mind boggling, and I usually suggest, as kindly as possible, "Why don't you start with the publications you cite in your thesis?"

What happens when I submit?



This is a really helpful diagram, and it shows the process of publishing for journals. And this is something that graduate students have had described to them before, but like many things, it's easier to understand in a visual representation.

What happens when I submit?



This diagram is for book publishers. And what I'm trying to establish here is that this process takes time and academic credibility. As an editor, I had to invest time into a proposal, decide whether to send it out for review, and ask people to review, and that's more time back and forth, then I had to have marketing and editorial approve it before I offered a contract. I'm trying to show that all this effort means that the publisher is invested in the success of this proposal, and therefore

As authors, you hold power.

Know your rights as an author.

- ▶ **What is copyright?**
- ▶ **What is licensing?**
- ▶ **What are your expectations of the publisher?**
- ▶ **What are your obligations to your institution?**
- ▶ **What do you plan to do with this work in the future?**

Publishing, Politics, and Etiquette

Of course, they don't feel like they have power still. They don't know what this means in practice. So I go through some basic ideas that should consider, in order to feel empowered, because honestly, the publication isn't just a check mark, it's their intellectual property, their intellectual capital. As scholars, their publication is their work, and they should know their rights. You wouldn't buy a car or a house without looking at the terms, you shouldn't sign a publishing contract without looking at the terms, because in this case it's your intellectual property.

I'm nervous about it.

- ▶ **What are they looking for? Is my idea good enough?**
 - ▶ **New and hot:** Look up your topic and make sure it's new information.
 - ▶ **Important to the field:** Check with your advisor to see if it's important and adds to your field of study.
 - ▶ **Mass appeal:** Ask the editor or editorial board if they have time to look over your proposal before formal submission.

- ▶ **Is my writing good enough?**
 - ▶ **Take advantage of the Writing Center and OPD workshops!**
 - ▶ **Ask your friends to review – nobody can edit themselves.**
 - ▶ **Read the submission guidelines and their other publications.**



At this point they're still likely to be nervous so I go through some tips – by the way, these slides are all CC-BY on my institutional repository, so please feel free to use them.

How to be better: Networking for publication

- ❑ Conferences: Publishers and editors
- ❑ Co-authors: Partner but be clear on credit
- ❑ Contacts of your mentors: If they believe in your work, have them recommend you for publication.
- ❑ Customize your proposal: It's like a cover letter.
- ❑ Ask questions if you don't understand something.
- ❑ Volunteer for publications: Review, intern, copyedit, design, take notes during meetings

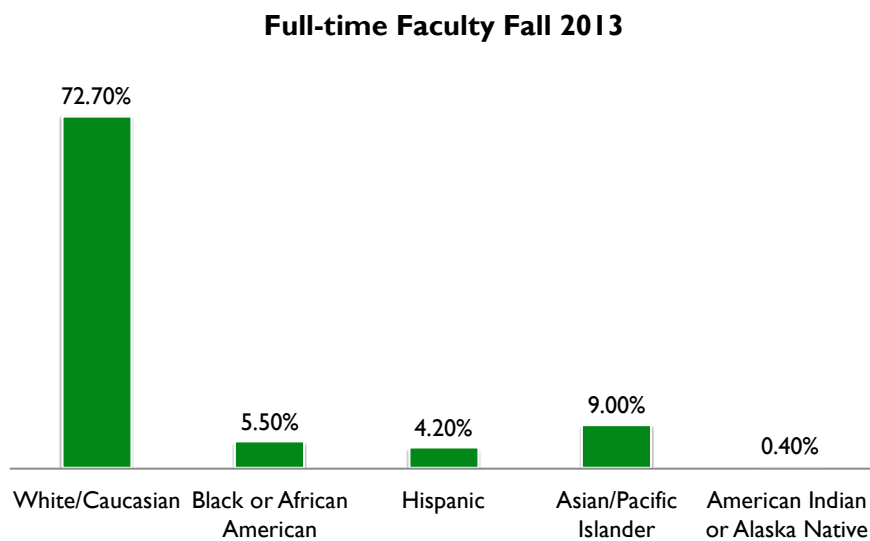


I also address some of the etiquette – for example, as an editor, I've gone to conferences to look for authors, and often, it's a small conference and I will set up that booth and stand there. And inevitably, on the last day, I get grad students and new faculty coming by and saying, Do you have any free books? Do you have any free books?

That is the wrong question. They should be asking, What are you publishing? What are your interests? What is trendy? This is what I'm working on, is it a good fit for your list?

Then I take questions and ease anxieties, and this all takes about 30 minutes. And that's when I say to the graduate students, Do you want to see my secret slides? Do you want to see why I care so much that you know all of this?

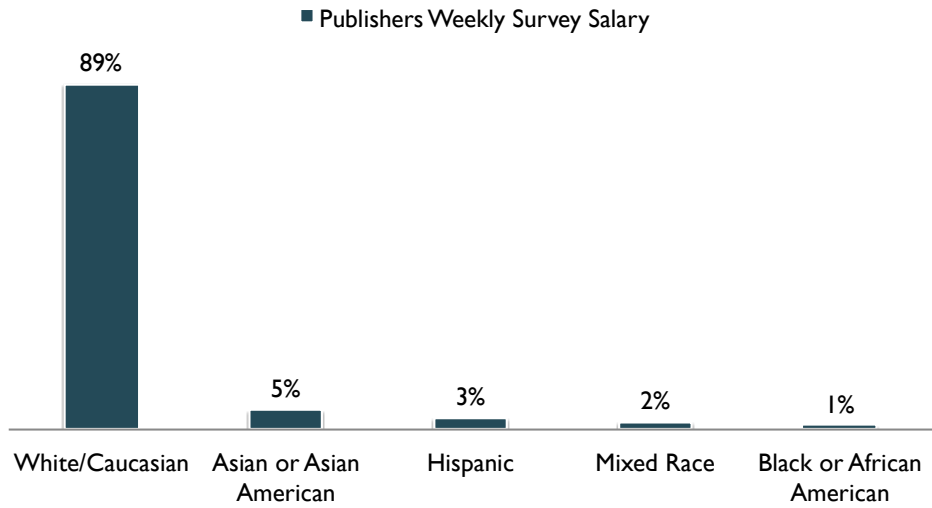
The (Not So) Secret Slides



▶ Data from the National Center for Education Statistics https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14_315.20.asp

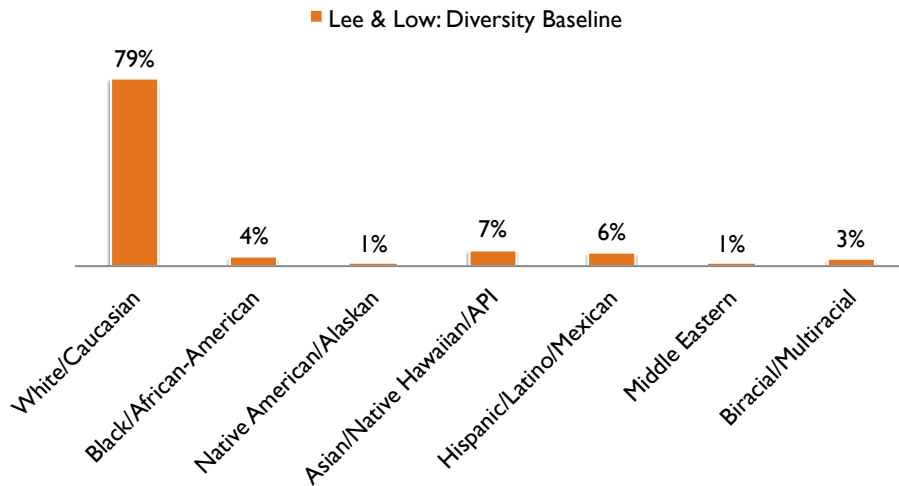
Now some of them have seen this statistics about faculty diversity before, they know that it's tough out there. But what they haven't seen is this data about the publishing industry.

Mainstream Publishing Demographics 2015

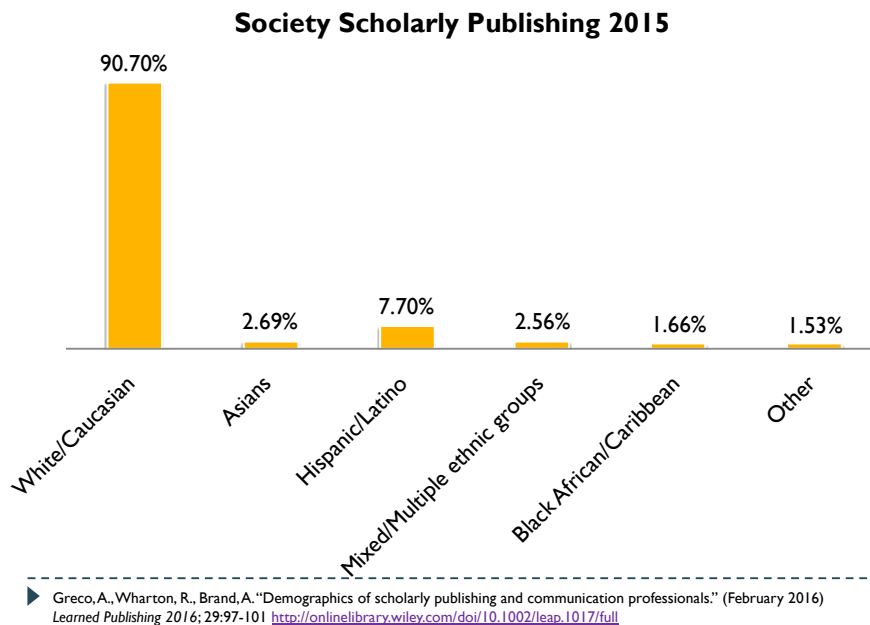


Milliot, J. "The PW Publishing Industry Salary Survey 2015: A Younger Workforce, Still Predominantly White" *Publishers Weekly* <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/publisher-news/article/68405-publishing-industry-salary-survey-2015-a-younger-workforce-still-p-redominantly-white.html>

Mainstream Publishing Demographics 2015



► Low, J. "Where is the Diversity in Publishing? The 2015 Diversity Baseline Survey Results." (January 2016) <http://blog.leeandlow.com/2016/01/26/where-is-the-diversity-in-publishing-the-2015-diversity-baseline-survey-results/>



This last set of data is mostly society and commercial publishers. I'm actually working with the author to do a follow-up that includes university presses and library publishers.

Then I ask, why does this matter?

It always matters, because let's face it, blind peer review is not really all that blind, and the reviewer and the author are not the only ones looking at the manuscript.

"The dearth of minority employees directly affects the types of books that are published, industry members agreed, and for this issue to be addressed, there needs to be more advocates for books involving people of color throughout the business, including in management, editorial, and marketing executives in publishing houses, as well as among booksellers and librarians."

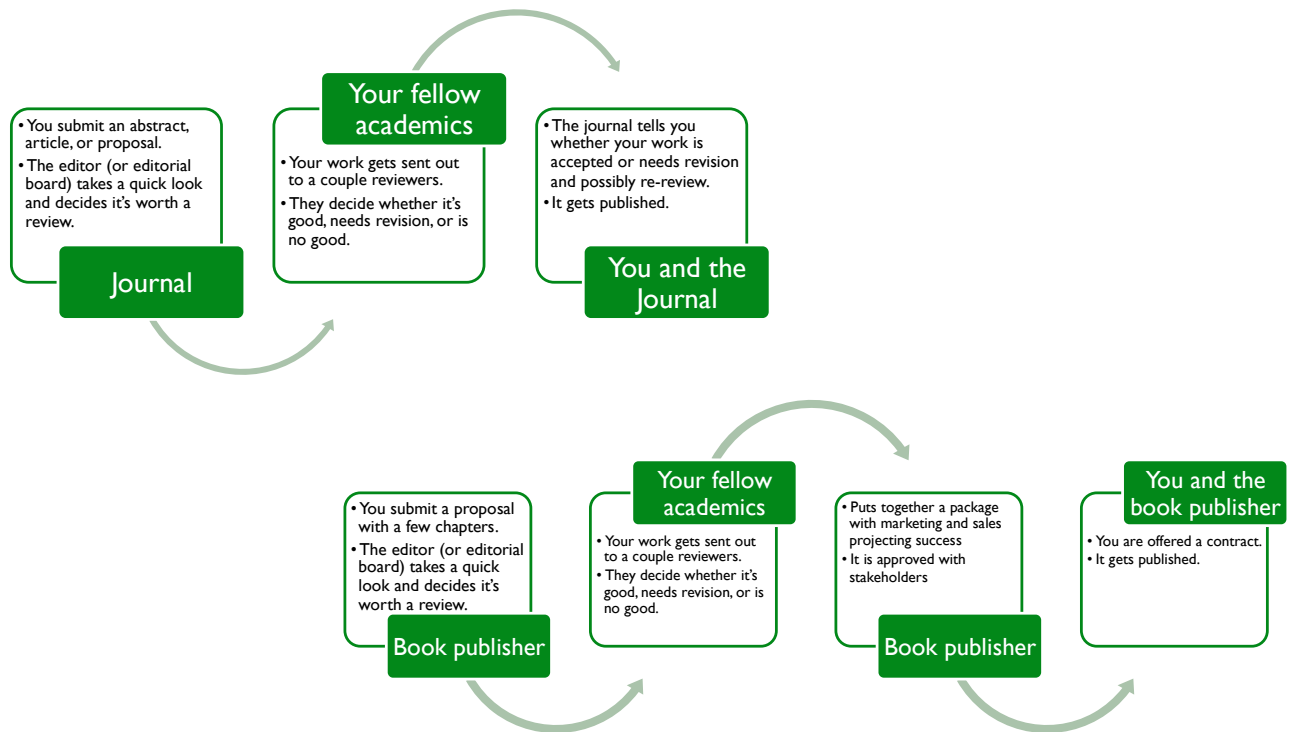
- Milliot, J. "Publishing's Holding Pattern: 2014 Salary Survey" (2014). *Publisher's Weekly*. <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/publisher-news/article/64083-publishing-s-holding-pattern-2013-salary-survey.html>

"It is clear that when scholarly publishing fails to reflect the diversity of authors, readers, and research questions, it presents real problems for 1) the authors who are not being published and therefore do not achieve tenure and promotion, and 2) the researchers who do not have access to the full range of possible scholarship. Homogeneity at the top means editors and publishers too often produce homogenous literature. While blind peer review is a valuable tool, "even if a publication is

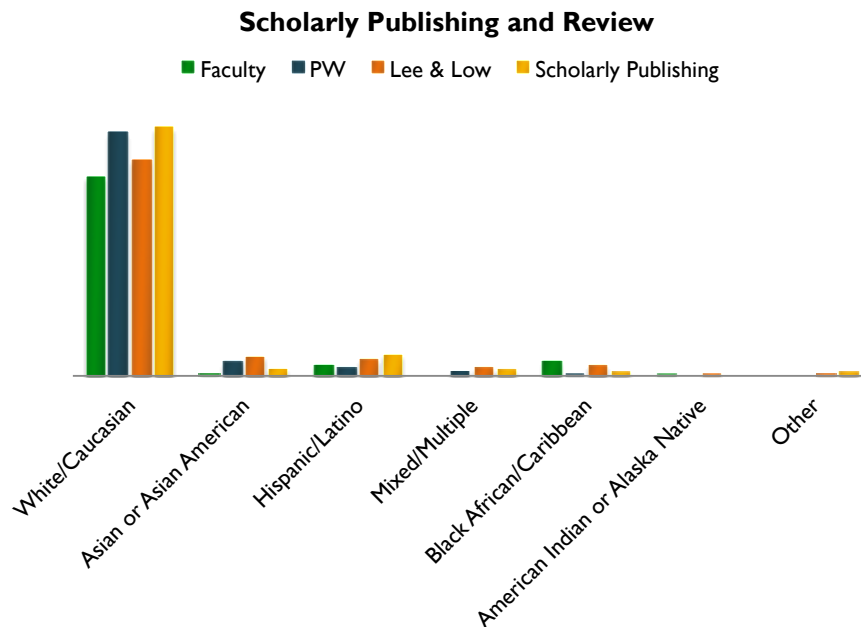
making every effort to metaphorically audition orchestra members behind an opaque screen, it is not helpful if the editors and publishers who are handling the paperwork, assigning reviewers, determining schedules, recruiting editorial boards, and ultimately making policy and article level decisions are not in fact representative or even cognizant of injustices they perpetuate as biased people in a biased system.”

- Charlotte Roh, Emily Drabinski, Harrison Inefuku, “Scholarly Communication as a Tool for Social Justice and Diversity,” panel at the Association of College and Research Libraries Annual Meeting (2015).

Who holds the power in these dynamics?



Do you remember these two diagrams? Editors, reviewers, and publishers?

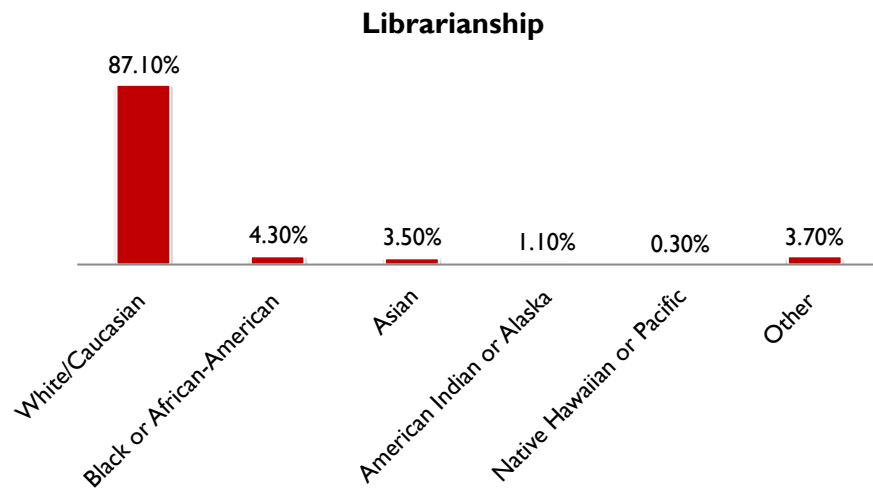


These are your faculty, which are your reviewers and your editors, your publishers.

I tell the graduate students, I don't want you to just think of yourselves as authors. I want you to think of yourselves as reviewers, editorial board members, interns, and active participants in this process, because each of these holds power.

This is not to say that publishers and faculty are evil. We are all complicit in the system, including us as librarians. When publishers say, Oh there's no market for these books. They're right! We're the market, and this is us.

Gatekeepers Exist in Every Industry



From the ALA Diversity Counts Study <http://www.ala.org/offices/diversity/diversitycounts/divcounts>

What Can We as Librarians Do?

So what can we do? We can educate, because let me tell you, everything I showed you is not too basic for our students and faculty.

- ▶ Practical solutions for overcoming barriers and lack of knowledge.
 - ▶ Why publishing is important for academic careers.
 - ▶ How the process of publishing works.
 - ▶ How they can get published.
 - ▶ What are the barriers?
 - ▶ What are the aspirational goals?
- ▶ Work to change the status quo.
 - ▶ Challenge the makeup of editorial boards, reviewers, and authors
 - ▶ Ask publications, What's your diversity policy?
 - ▶ Support publications that provide a voice.

I was discussing this with Emily Drabinski, who is a CUNY librarian and was very sorry she couldn't make it today. Emily asked me, "You're not being too patronizing? Don't they know this?" And I told her, No, at an author contract negotiation workshop I had one brand new tenure track faculty member tell me that she opened her mail box, saw her contract, burst into tears, then signed it while standing there at her mailbox. They Do. Not. Know.

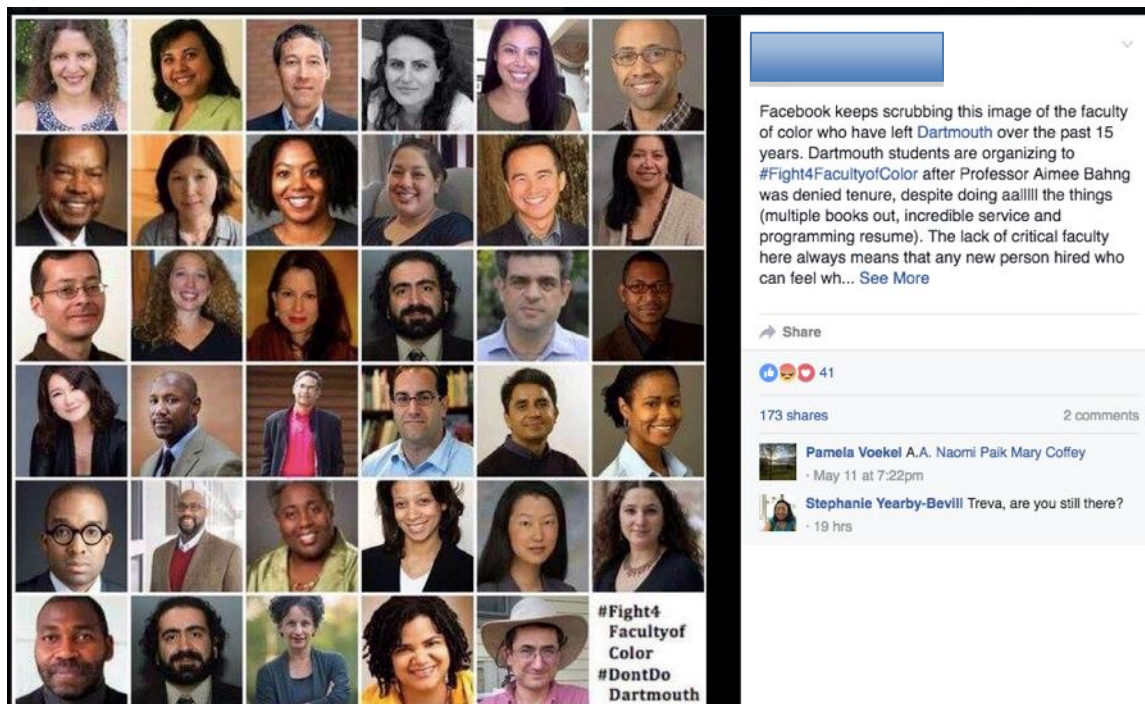
Of Course, This Doesn't Solve All Problems.

Not everyone is tenure track, as we all know sadly. Which is partly why the numbers for full time faculty are the way they are.

“More distressingly, contingent academic labor is gendered and raced. Bousquet notes that “the typical faculty member has become a female nontenurable part-timer earning a few thousand dollars a year without health benefits.” Women still make up the majority of contingent faculty. According to Vitae’s new JobTracker, 61 percent of available tenure-track jobs in 2013-14 went to men. Bousquet points out that nontenurable faculty and nonteaching staff are more likely to “identify themselves as belonging to an ethnic or racial minority than tenure stream faculty.”

- Baker, K. (2016, February 23). Academic Waste. Retrieved May 11, 2016, from <https://chroniclevitae.com/news/1301-academic-waste>

And even if you are tenure track, and you're smart, and you work hard, you're not necessarily going to succeed. Who here is familiar with what's going on at Dartmouth? Yeah, it's messy. And I'm sure each and every time someone doesn't get tenure it's messy. But what's not messy, what's very clear, is that the percentages of faculty representation do not change, but the people change. For one reason or another, these people leave the academy. It's a revolving door.



So we need more education. We absolutely need it, not just for faculty of color, but for everyone because this impacts the kind of scholarship we all produce and

consume as allies in the struggle against systemic injustice. It's also nice that the new ACRL Framework for information literacy calls out the need to educate on the context and power in the scholarly communication lifecycle.

Challenge the Makeup of Editorial Boards, Reviewers, and Authors

Finally, we librarians who, clearly from the caliber of presenters here, are ourselves involved in scholarship and practice, and speaking from my perspective as someone involved in scholarly communication and library publishing, should be interrogating these power structures personally. Here are some examples of people and journals that are doing so.

“[D]iversity of participation is important to our platform ... we will actively monitor and release reports on demographics across our platform (particularly with respect to editors), taking measures, where necessary, to remove barriers to participation and to ensure breadth of representation.”

- Martin Paul Eve, co-director of the Open Library of the Humanities

In 2014, *Code4Lib Journal* reviewed its publications and found

- ▶ Women were less than 40% of the authors published
- ▶ Out of the 29 people who had been on the Editorial Committee, only eight were women.

In 2016, after a call for new editorial board members, the current *Code4Lib Journal* editorial board has four women and eight men.

“The work and well-being of JONL's Editorial Board is strengthened profoundly by the diversity of our network and our differences in background, culture, experience, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, and much more. We actively seek and welcome applications from people of color, women, the LGBTQIA community, and persons with disabilities, as well as applications from researchers and practitioners from across the spectrum of disciplines and methods.”

- Commitment to Diversity in the Editorial Board, [*Adapted from the Harvard Library Innovation Lab*](#) From the Journal of New Librarianship <http://newlibs.org/edboard.html>

Education and action for all of us is important because these biases are true of course not just for academia, as my fellow panelists have shown. The same numbers exist for journalism, television, film, and many other kinds of media that influence how we see the world.

We all know people who publish, we are people who publish, and we can align ourselves explicitly with diversity representation in order to not just be members of the system but to create social change from both within and without.

