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Designing the Diversity of Canadian Libraries: Excerpts from the CARL Inclusion Perspectives Webinar by Racialized Library Colleagues

Conception de la diversité des bibliothèques canadiennes : extraits du webinaire sur les perspectives d'inclusion de l'ABRC mettant en vedette des collègues de communautés racisées du secteur des bibliothèques

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Résumé de l'article

Cinq bibliothécaires universitaires de bibliothèques représentant l'Association des bibliothèques de recherche du Canada (ABRC) ont été invités à partager leurs expériences en tant que bibliothécaires racisés. En 2021, l'ABRC était hôte de la Série de webinaires sur les perspectives d'inclusion organisée par le Groupe de travail sur l'équité, la diversité et l'inclusion et le contenu de cet article offre les présentations de ces bibliothécaires qui ont été invités à parler des systèmes, des structures et des politiques nécessaires pour démanteler le racisme; des stratégies pratiques pour attirer et retenir des employés de la bibliothèque racisés; des enjeux liés à l'accréditation; et pour fournir des conseils que les dirigeants des bibliothèques canadiennes peuvent mettre en place immédiatement.

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Abstract / Résumé

Five academic librarians from libraries that represent the Canadian Academic Research Libraries (CARL) were invited to share their experiences as racialized librarians. In 2021, CARL hosted an Inclusion Perspectives Webinar Series, organized by CARL's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group (EDIWG), and the contents of this paper are presentations by these librarians who were invited to speak on systems, structures, and policies needed to dismantle racism; practical strategies to attract and retain racialized library employees; accreditation issues; and advice for what Canadian library leaders can start doing immediately.

Cinq bibliothécaires universitaires de bibliothèques représentant l'Association des bibliothèques de recherche du Canada (ABRC) ont été invités à partager leurs expériences en tant que bibliothécaires racisés. En 2021, l'ABRC était hôte de la Série de webinaires sur les perspectives d'inclusion organisée par le Groupe de travail sur l'équité, la diversité et l'inclusion et le contenu de cet article offre les présentations de ces bibliothécaires qui ont été invités à parler des systèmes, des structures et des politiques nécessaires pour démanteler le racisme; des stratégies pratiques pour attirer et retenir des employés de la bibliothèque racisés; des enjeux liés à l'accréditation; et pour fournir des conseils que les dirigeants des bibliothèques canadiennes peuvent mettre en place immédiatement.

Keywords / Mots-clés

equity, inclusion, diversity, EDI, professional development, unconscious bias

équité, inclusion, diversité, EDI, développement professionnel, préjugés inconscients

Introduction

The Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group (EDIWG) was established in July 2019, with Maha Kumaran as its first Visiting Program Officer, to work closely on shaping CARL's diversity-related activities and communications and to plan and deliver these activities by working with the Chair of the EDIWG and pan-Canadian library employees. The working group contributes to the development of CARL's program of bilingual initiatives to support the creation of diverse, equitable, and inclusive environments in CARL libraries. The group meets on a monthly basis and to date has delivered CARL definitions of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; created rules of engagement for the group; participated and provided feedback for the CARL Diversity and Inclusion Survey; and reviewed and advised on a number of other CARL projects or documents such as the CARL Code of Conduct and the Competencies for Librarians in Canadian Research Libraries (CARL, 2010).

As Canada is one of the most diverse countries in the world, it is natural that diversity initiatives are a major focus for organizations (Jain & Verma, 1996). Canadian academic libraries have acknowledged a problematic absence of racial diversity, by which they

mean the lack of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) (racialized) librarians in a field which is 89.6% white (Revitt et al., 2019). However, there have not been many strides made in the recruitment and retention of racialized academic librarians. CARL's EDIWG released the "Strategies and Practices for Hiring and Retaining Diverse Talent" document in December 2020, though it is too early to know about its impact on hiring or retention of minorities in Canadian libraries. For the first time, CARL is also conducting a national Diversity and Inclusion Survey among CARL libraries to gather baseline data on CARL libraries' personnel and their feedback on current Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives.

In 2021, the authors of this article were invited to contribute to a CARL-hosted Inclusion Perspectives Webinar Series. As a follow-up to this series, this article seeks to explore some of the ways in which libraries are systemically designed to support and uphold white supremacist structures and practices, creating barriers for BIPOC and racialized librarians that their white counterparts may be unaware of. The authors then share some of the advice they provided to participants of the webinar series who are either early- to mid-career racialized librarians seeking to enter into leadership roles or who are current library leaders seeking to mentor racialized librarians for future leadership.

Unearthing and Dismantling the Culture of White Supremacy

As most academic library institutions have continued to instill traditionalism that perpetuates and maintains the status quo, not as much consideration has been paid to its own librarians who hold marginalized identities. Typically embedded within our systems are structures and policies: white dominant and supremacy culture characteristics (emphasis on the word *culture*). From an equity design point of view, "A designer is anyone who has agency to make a decision, however small, that will impact a group of people or the environment. Every decision we make has an impact on equity" (McCloskey, et al., 2020).

White supremacist culture is the idea that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to BIPOC and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions. White supremacy expresses itself interpersonally as well as structurally (through our governments, education systems, food systems, etc.). The reality of our society is that any system produces what it was designed to produce unless a stronger force intervenes. If oppression, inequalities, and inequities are created, they can be undone. As we strive for human equity, we have to be able to recognize inequity and have the ability to recognize ourselves as designers who have the power to disrupt it. Examples of such characteristics include fear, sense of urgency, perfectionism, quantity over quality, or binary thinking (Yee et al., 2018).

Tema Okun, a social activist for over thirty years who identifies as white, cisgender, able-bodied and upper class, first penned a seminal article on white supremacist culture in 2000 that has since helped define this term. She argues that institutions can acknowledge their racism by first tackling what is at the root of racism first and foremost. If we can start to shift that culture in our organizations, departments, and teams, then

the work of diversity can begin. As Okun (2000) argues, most of our institutions and professions have defined a “good professional” as someone who is perfectionistic and individualistic, who insists their way is the right way because they are the “expert,” who complies with and requires a certain kind of writing, and who defends against criticism, all of which are in fact characteristics of white supremacy. In order to dismantle this traditional way of thinking, libraries must acknowledge that we must move beyond just “being nice” and “respectable” and “collegial” because you can be all three and still be actively or passively racist (Brown et al., 2021).

Much of this aversive racism is not acknowledged because it is not easily documentable or even noticed by our white mainstream colleagues. Something as simple as an application process is inherently rooted in whiteness and has a detrimental effect on the types of applicants who apply, creating a self-selection process that further promotes whiteness in the profession (Hathcock, 2015). The academic job talk is similarly concerning, as the growing tendency to record and make available such talks transforms the interview process into a mediated performance (Galvan, 2015).

April Hathcock (2015) points out yet another form of expected performance for BIPOC applicants:

> As Espinal (2001) observes, “librarians of color have commented that they are more accepted if and when they look and act white" (p. 144). The inverse is also true: Those librarians not able to play successfully at whiteness will be continually excluded from the profession (Satifice, 2015). (“White” Diversity Initiatives, para. 5).

Speaking of her own experience, Hathcock (2015) too confirms that such role play in the workplace is necessary: “Knowing how to replicate whiteness has served me well” (“White” Diversity Initiatives, para. 7).

Librarianship can claim to recruit a diverse workforce, but without interrogating whiteness, the “only winning move” for marginalized and racialized librarians is not to play. The responsibility of fostering an inclusive workforce must fall to white librarians in power (“White” Diversity Initiatives, para. 7).

Pay Equity and Transparency

The most tangible action that organizations can take to undo the negative impacts of systemic racism in the workplace is to address pay equity; that is, fair compensation for librarians doing substantially similar work. Dr. Yanli Li’s (2021) article, "Racial Pay Gap: An Analysis of CARL Libraries,” which analyzed data from the CARL Libraries Practitioner Survey in 2014, offers concrete evidence of the lack of transparency around salaries of librarians. Equitable labour means reassessing pay gaps between marginalized staff and those who fit into white hegemonic standards, but one area that has been understudied has been pay equity in Canadian libraries.

Acknowledgement, recognition, equity and increasing transparency around salary disclosure, particularly around how merit and performance evaluation is conducted is critically important in equity and inclusion. Though in Western cultures pay is often a taboo subject, it needs to be addressed by the opportunity gap in which racialized librarians have not been given the same opportunities to advance and are therefore not only underrepresented in pay, but also opportunities that lead to higher-paying roles. Equitable labour means reassessing pay gaps between those who are non-racialized and those who are racialized, particularly those from historically marginalized backgrounds.

What's interesting in Li's (2021) study is that while the racial pay gap continues to be a problem in Canada, it's not necessarily the same in the US, where studies by researchers have shown the gap has gradually closed over the years and that there is no longer a statistically significant wage gap between racial minorities and non-minorities in Association of Research Libraries (ARL) libraries. As ARL libraries have made great strides in the last three decades toward decreasing the racial pay gap, what can Canadian academic libraries learn from their American counterparts? Does it also mean that there are more systemic issues not addressed in the Canadian context?

Diversity Is Not a Buzzword

Diversity as a term has been diluted over time within the library and information science (LIS) profession to the point that it has become almost a buzzword, used to signal an organization's virtuous commitment to the idea of diversity without real accountability. But diversity should not be for the benefit of just the mainstream majority, something to be commodified, where it is then measured, assessed, and used to justify existing racist structures and behaviours (Brown et al., 2021). White normativity in LIS extends to the ways in which we discuss and address diversity in the profession. Rather than being framed as a shared goal for the common good, diversity is approached as a problem that must be solved, with racialized librarians becoming the "objectified pawns" deployed to attack the problem (Hathcock, 2015). Academic institutions tend to default to neatly written cultural competencies documents, creating working groups and implementation teams to carry out so-called diversity training to tackle individual attitudes rather than addressing the structural problems that exist. The preference is to sidestep the recognition that race is a social construct and ignore the structural inequities that actually need attention.

Diversity task forces formed by top-down institutional structures often do not work and in fact shroud the real work of effective transformation. When libraries proclaim that all of their senior administrators are responsible for diversity, what they really mean is that no one is responsible for diversity. Instead, what happens is that these libraries develop and promote their diversity programs and propose organizational goals and recommendations to address diversity and inclusion in lieu of meaningful communication and time to understand the needs of their own diverse staff. Such hollow forms of token action are the reason social justice movements such as *Black Lives*

Matter emerged in the first place. As one of the founders pointed out, the system isn't broken—it was built this way.

Those who lead libraries have inherited a century of systemic racial inequities, perhaps without even knowing it. One way to begin combatting this is by critically examining the language of documentation and discussion. Transparency in institutional documentation is important, specifically naming 'racism' in diversity statements (Brown et al., 2021). Colleagues should also be able to openly use the words *antiracism* and *racism* in policies and conversations without masking them with safer, more palatable terms like *inclusion* and *diversity*.

The "add diversity and mix" approach is not what diversity should be about and is bound to fail in organizations. When librarians who are not white and middle class arrive, they are oftentimes alienated as "the diversity hire," denying their individual skills, talents, and expertise (Livingston, 2021). Librarians with visible minority status are assigned more work, and most often these librarians are asked or even appointed to diversity-related committees by default. This strands non-white and middle class librarians in a "murky place between gratitude and anger" as their visibility changes to suit the needs of the organization (Cho et al., 2021). If diversity is to be taken seriously and given a chance to succeed, then libraries cannot continue to have a "revolving door" of temporarily employed nonwhite bodies, hired to check off a box and meet internal audit, and discarded when no longer needed (Brown et al., 2021).

Other racialized librarians who carry out work in diversity without having it delegated to them often do it on their own time and at their own expense, owing to the stress of professional vulnerability when such activism is frowned upon in the workplace (Gorski, 2019). If organizations really care about diversity, then they need to credit and value the diversity work that racialized librarians do and that they personally are invested in (Inefuku, 2021). Supporting this work also means giving permission, encouragement, and time off to attend conferences and professional development opportunities. As race scholar Robert Livingston (2021) argues, "diversity is not the icing on the cake—it's the flour in the batter" (p. 241).

Racial politics of Citation and Collaboration

Scholarship is political, and the choices of who is selected for collaboration on even the simplest of projects is oftentimes determined by ingroup bias and "who you know and who you like." Victor Ray is one scholar whose research indicates that publication and citation practices reproduce both institutional racism and sexism (Chakravartty et al., 2018). Just as citing tenured and established scholars in the field doesn't help with diversity but reproduces colonial practices, academic librarians are prone to do the same when they choose to cite LIS scholars and collaborate with their academic peers on research projects and publish those findings. Unfortunately, this perpetuates that performativity and reproduces the white, heteronormative, and cisgendered-centred culture. In fact, the author citation network generated might refer to citational segregation (a preference for citing authors who are members of the same group)

resulting from established patterns of racialized professional socialization (Mott & Cockayne, 2017).

How can we best dismantle these practices? Conscientious engagement means taking an active role in shaping the way we create working groups and project committees and begin shaping the scholarship and reproducing the discipline. Those who embody authoritative positions are unaware or unconcerned about these issues, but perhaps knowledge is the first step to dismantle the persistent ghettoization of research that includes traditional forms of publication and dissemination, including panels and discussions on conference program agendas (Chakravartty et al., 2018).

Systemic-Level Change

Change cannot be superficial but instead needs to be system-wide and part of a larger organizational action plan as much as possible. This could mean conducting an internal audit of library structures, systems, and policies to identify what needs to be changed in order to incorporate EDI values, and that may mean employing an external consultant that specializes in diversity to ensure an unbiased and objective outlook. In doing so, the organization must also ensure appropriate funding and resources are provided to enact change as well.

Library leaders should also critically examine their own hiring policies, especially those of limiting hiring to internal applicants. We know there is a lack of diversity in librarianship, which is supported by The Canadian Association of Professional Academic Librarians' (CAPAL) 2018 census which indicates that roughly 10% of academic librarians are racialized (Revitt et al., 2019). Knowing this, we should critically consider whether the practice of hiring internally is one that advances diversity or one that leads to a "stagnation of progress" on diversity. (University of Manitoba, 2020).

Cultural Awareness Training and Avoiding Tokenism

Academic libraries need to provide a toolbox to all staff to increase cultural awareness, perhaps even make it mandatory for those who sit on hiring committees. While we can have all the right policies, when it comes down to the actual interview or promotion process, it may be the perceptions of one or two people that usually determines the outcome. Thus, identifying unconscious biases while interviewing candidates is important, and it is especially valuable to have someone with a good understanding of cross-cultural issues to provide a different perspective. An effective cultural awareness program would be able to address these potential issues, but one key aim of such a program needs to be open recognition of the complex processes of diversifying a workforce. To carry out the work of diversity, librarians must be aware of its benefits but also be willing to work through its challenges and potential for conflict.

With that established, in order to address the root causes and the symptoms of bias, we need to also tackle one of the main systematic and structural forms of inequity: tokenism. We could have all the perfect policies and structures in place, but trying to

solve the diversity issue with “token hires” just to meet a quota is ultimately an unproductive effort (Chan, 2020). Undoubtedly it would even raise concerns, justified or not, over the qualification of those token hires. Not only does it not effect any long-term visible gains to staff diversity, but disguising tokenistic hiring as a sign of commitment to diversifying the profession actually has unintended consequences of burnout and attrition as those hires find themselves contending with a system that has still not meaningfully addressed its own white supremacy.

Hiring Committee Representation

Some have argued that hiring committees should have a specific person (who is from the majority in-group) appointed to challenge biased behaviours and comments and to ensure the candidate pool is diverse and push back when it is not. Not only do we need to disrupt the common hiring processes and cut out subjective criteria such as a “gut feeling” or the “right fit” for the organization’s culture, hiring committees should also adopt what is known as the Rooney Rule, which was first instituted by the National Football League (NFL). The Rooney Rule requires teams to interview ethnic-minority candidates for head coaching and senior football operation positions (NFL, n.d.). As hiring committees are political by nature, such policies can be effective against unwritten rules that tend to otherwise permeate hiring processes. Libraries should not only institute the Rooney Rule when hiring staff, but librarians should actively work to integrate the rule for every major grant and every major conference keynote and panel that they help organize.

Meaningful Change Needs to Start Early

Our nation’s LIS graduate programs offer untapped potential for recruiting and promoting diversity among their student populace. While LIS schools often recruit at career fairs, which staff are showing up at career fairs? Do these staff represent diversity? Potential students not reflected in the culture of the library are unlikely to see librarianship as a career possibility (Hathcock, 2015). Outreach to undergraduate programs is most often where LIS schools go, but perhaps a better pipeline and a higher bar to achieve for LIS schools is reaching out to inner city local high schools to build partnerships, connect with the community, and show students that the college is interested in creating a diverse student body (Williams & van Arnhem, 2015).

Much research exists that undergraduate students who work in our academic libraries often go on to library school (Taylor et al., 2010). However, there is scarce evidence that libraries purposely target undergraduates of colour or from racialized backgrounds who may be open to considering a career in librarianship (Johnson, 2016). This could be equally or perhaps even more effective than Diversity Resident programs, which have had a fraught history in libraries.

Support of Race Research and Professional Networks

Once hired, racialized librarians face hurdles and challenges that require more than just perseverance and thick skin; they need moral support that only racialized librarians who have faced similar experiences can offer. As such, racialized organizations are oftentimes the only such places for them to turn to. While there are strong organizations such as the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA), REFORMA: The National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking, the Asian Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA), and the Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA), through which librarians of colour can build community and support, there is only one national organization for BIPOC librarians in Canada. The fledgling Visible Minority Librarians Network of Canada (ViMLoC) formed in 2011, but due to the dissolution of its sponsor, the Canadian Library Association (CLA), the members of ViMLoC decided to continue on their own without funding or support (Kumaran, 2013). In its short existence, its members have maintained a mentorship program, a national diversity survey of librarians, and public programs.

Informal communities also develop not only at national conferences, but also at conferences convened specifically for racialized and minority librarians such as the National Diversity in Libraries Conference (NDLC), the Pushing the Margins Symposium, and the recurring Joint Council of Librarians of Color Conference. However, attendance at conferences requires resources and institutional support. Without a supportive and well-resourced institution, where can librarians find their peers and strive for a sense of belonging in the field, particularly for those geographically isolated (Brown et al., 2021).

The barriers are high, as not all institutions actively encourage support or funding to attend and travel to these conferences. Paradoxically, diversity conferences are frowned upon by managers and not taken seriously as academic conferences. Advocates who authentically support diversity need to dismantle barriers that prevent racialized academic librarians, often from marginalized groups and less well-resourced, from participating in professional development and service opportunities, which in turn can negatively impact their ability to gain promotion or tenure (Comanda et al., 2021).

The Logic of the ALA Accreditation in a Canadian Context

Considering that Canadian institutions are independent entities with very different structures and cultures from our counterparts in the US, it is time to reconsider why Canadian academic libraries still need to adhere to American Library Association (ALA) accreditation of its degree holders, especially for foreign/immigrant librarians who have worked in their home countries and can bring their life experiences and diverse insights to our organizations. In this day and age, it is unnecessary that Canadian libraries still require accreditation from the US, particularly since librarians are not a regulated profession such as doctors and lawyers. We can better use our time and abilities to mentor and guide new immigrant librarians and bring them up to speed so that they can

start working in our profession rather than defaulting to our normative tendencies to credentialing. Our profession inadvertently restricts and erects barriers to keep out those non-ALA degree holders from entering the profession that would do well to benefit from their language and cultural skills as well as their ideas and perspectives.

Accreditation Mechanisms

For many years now, the common practice has been for foreign-trained librarians to apply to Master of Library and Information Studies (MLIS) programs in Canada to complete an additional MLIS degree to re-enter librarianship. Yet, the costs of an ALA-accredited degree is only becoming more expensive, resulting in undue hardship and even discouraging those from applying to MLIS programs. David James Hudson (2021) points out that the MLIS degree is "perceived to be a uniquely exclusionary barrier to diversifying the profession" (para. 2).

Organizations should thus be questioning the value of ALA accreditation: why is this still the norm? Further, a number of academic library job postings necessitate an ALA-accredited or equivalent degree, but what is the exact mechanism to determine equivalency? Deeper conversations between international library associations and organizations in North America also need to be had about the specific competencies and equivalencies that candidates can be assessed for in lieu of a degree from an ALA-accredited institution. This is a great opportunity for our Canadian counterparts (CARL, CAPAL, Canadian Federation of Library Associations [CFLA]) to work with library organizations so that we can be better equipped to review and audit the course transcripts and CVs of librarians coming from other countries and address the bias of accreditation.

On Accreditation and Curriculum

The question of recruitment is not limited to our workplaces but actually starts at the beginning of the educational journey, in LIS programs and curricula. The MLIS curricula and pedagogies traditional in many LIS schools are still reflective of previous dominant social order in a bygone era and are not reflective of current world views. It is no secret that LIS schools do not offer a curriculum that reflects experiences of students from racialized and historically marginalized backgrounds, often preferring single-solution answers to complex scenarios rather than critically examining the worth of extant practices (Brown, et al., 2021).

Current application requirements for many LIS and scholarship programs assume that applicants are situated in positions of white, middle-class, cisgender normativity that privilege those with financial and educational advantages that many foreign applicants do not have. In fact, the long list of requirements in a complex application of detailed paperwork for matriculation processes is a barrier that has historically been erected by elite private institutions of higher education to maintain the traditional hierarchies of race and status, and this is replicated in the ALA accreditation process. Rather than paving a more equitable path for applicants from underrepresented groups, such lengthy

applications are inherently designed such that many individuals from diverse backgrounds are not equipped to complete them. As Hathcock (2015) points out, such application processes are “created particularly to recruit for whiteness and require the ability to play at whiteness in order to succeed” (“White Diversity Initiatives, para. 3).

We argue that there are multiple ways to supplement the application. Despite the negative implications of a standard test, it may not be a bad idea to apply to this situation; or, if that is too challenging to implement, a research essay of a chosen topic might also receive higher weight in LIS application in addition to grades-based admission. Moreover, we could start building a shared database to include library schools not yet included in the ALA-accredited MLIS degree programs, which would provide helpful information for hiring committees determining the “equivalent" MLIS/LIS degrees. In addition, there is also a need to create “accelerated MLIS programs” that can target and support foreign MLIS degree holders who want to be fast tracked in completing an MLIS degree. For instance, in Chinese LIS programs, there is a lot of focus on technology training, computer/web programming, human computer interaction, but much less in information literacy, critical thinking, and research methodology, and this is precisely the role that MLIS programs can play.

Advice from the Panelists: Strategies for Racialized Librarians who Aspire to be Leaders

Being Vocal and Intentional

As much as the road is paved by opportunities, racialized librarians must also be strategic and intentional in their approach to leadership. One author of this paper has been vocal about their interest in wanting to take on leadership roles with their management. Rather than just one single instance, such vocal negotiation and priming was intentional and over a number of years with a number of different heads and Associate University Librarians (AULs) during their tenure. This author specifically met to discuss their strengths, experience, and any upcoming opportunities they could consider applying for. To reinforce their interest, the author also included wanting to take on leadership opportunities as a goal in their annual performance reviews. They also ensured they could back up this desire by enrolling and completing courses and workshops in leadership training offered internally through their institution’s Learning and Organization Development office as well as externally through professional associations such as the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL). The author ensured their leadership skills and training could be put into practice by volunteering and serving in committee leadership roles both in professional associations and within their organization, all of which primed them for taking on greater responsibility.

So, new BIPOC librarians who are interested in taking on a leadership role should consider sharing this interest with direct supervisors and, if possible, the AUL/Associate Dean or University Librarian/Dean. Such librarians must be prepared to advocate for themselves by talking about their interests and ideas and should not be dissuaded if

they find that it takes some time to be given the right opportunity. Three pieces of advice are to 1) strengthen leadership skills now with professional development and training, 2) apply for service roles to chair or lead a library committee or working group or take on a leadership role in a professional association such as CAPAL, and 3) schedule designated time (meetings) to discuss leadership interests with the manager or other library administrators, if feasible.

Belief in Personal Leadership

Those who have only had one management course in library school may not feel very confident, but they have often led in other ways such as committee work, volunteer work, and student advocacy. Here are some ideas for you to consider if you are interested in a leadership role:

- **Job shadow**: approach someone at your place of work and ask if you can job shadow for a few hours
- **Follow the social media accounts of library leaders:** many leaders are on Twitter or LinkedIn, so you can get a sense of the flavour of their management and leadership style. They also tend to drop some awesome nuggets of wisdom - bookmark these!
- **Attend conference sessions related to management and leadership**: the Conference on Academic Library Management (CALM) is especially relevant, and it's free to attend.
- **Lead from the margins:** leadership can happen apart from a leadership title, so look for ways you can start positioning yourself as a leader in your current role.
- **Read about library leadership programs**: if these spark something in you, keep them in the back of your mind so when you're ready to apply, you'll be set to articulate the benefits and advocate for funding to attend.
- **Deepen your self-awareness:** there are many tools to help you do this (Myers-Briggs, FIRO-B, Leadership Circle). What are the skills and strengths that you can bring to a leadership role?

Advice from the Panelists: Strategies for Library Leaders who want to Mentor Mid-Career, Racialized Librarians Towards Leadership Positions

Finding Leaders Within the Profession

Mentorship of racialized librarians can be somewhat different and must be seen more intentionally than mentorship of white librarians. Mainstream library leaders should question why they want to do this: because it's the "right thing to do" as an obligation in their position for advancement, or because it *feels* morally right? More importantly,

library leaders need to ensure that they actually have the time and energy to do this mentorship work, as it requires more time for sensitive conversations and self-reflection.

Library leaders need to recognize that mid-career librarians have much experience and knowledge to share, especially if they are sharing their experiences as marginalized people. For some racialized librarians, this is their second or third career, and much experience accompanies their skillset beyond just their identities. Of course, we ask that library leaders be vulnerable in their own sharing (within their own boundaries of course): what were some of your struggles and moments of self-doubt; what about the "aha" moments? Library leaders have great insight into leadership programs or opportunities that racialized librarians may not be aware of.

Action-Oriented and Intentional Communication

Though it may seem like a logical thing to do, library leaders need to first talk to racialized librarians to gauge their interests and ambitions. If taking on a leadership position is a goal, then they should look for avenues to encourage racialized librarians' growth in this area. It's also important to be open to the challenges racialized librarians might face that differ from non-racialized librarians, such as being part of an inclusive environment that welcome their experiences and cultural beliefs. Look for ways to provide support!

Such mentoring should be action-oriented and intentional, and thus leadership mentors should consider opportunities that are both inward facing (within the library) and outward facing (external to the library but inclusive of the library profession) when considering mentoring mid-career racialized librarians. The next section will elaborate on one of these opportunities.

Professional Development Opportunities Leaders Could Consider

Leaders have an obligation to send notices of professional development (PD) opportunities or provide access to paid leadership development courses, such as those offered by DeEtta Jones & Associates and from the ACRL. They can recommend and endorse the ARL's Leadership and Career Development Program. The authors of this paper acknowledge that the introduction of the CARL Visiting Program Officer for EDI is an excellent first step. More opportunities should be created in CARL to advance and maintain EDI initiatives. There are also professional associations like ViMLoC that CARL may want to partner with to identify gaps and opportunities to advance more mid-career racialized leaders. Perhaps it is time that leaders work with CARL to introduce a Canadianized version of a Leadership and Career Development Program.

Another avenue is looking internally and identifying growth opportunities. In our own experiences, the authors found it helpful to be given strategic opportunities such as leading a library working group through a major reorganization of the library. In one instance, this prepared one of the authors well for understanding the complexities of their current portfolio. So even if there are no present leadership roles open, there may

be committees or working groups requiring a new Chair. And if there are leadership roles coming up, then there are opportunities for development of a racialized librarian which then offer the chance to make the opportunity intentional. This, in our opinion, is a powerful way to ensure succession planning and sustainability of leadership from racialized librarians.

Managers As Role Models

Managers could start with something small such as prohibiting expressions like “culture fit” or “gut feeling” in evaluating job candidates or employees because those terms indicate unconscious bias is at play. Managers, given their authority within the organization, are empowered to make things right, interrupt bias, and serve as role models. Calling out bias can make people in the majority in-group feel uncomfortable and can be politically risky, but it also encourages open and authentic conversations on diversity. This can be done privately, or tactfully in public. Although research has shown that it may feel uncomfortable for individuals to speak out against racial slurs or microaggressions in professional group settings, managers need to disrupt this culture of silence and actively disrupt the status quo with questions like “Can you repeat what you just said?” Such powerful allyship would enable people at the scene to reevaluate what was said and also allows the person who might have been hurt or offended to push back respectfully and effectively. Managers can bravely change a workplace by not settling with comfort of status quo and instead reach out to the racialized.

Shifting Mindsets and Valuing Different Leadership Styles

For many years now, Western culture has been treating personality traits as innate: either one has leadership qualities, or they do not. In this Western-centric outlook of a loud, extroverted, and engaging natural-born leader, not much attention or care is usually made to support the development of leadership skills. That there is no one way to be a leader and one does not need to fit any mode to become one runs counter to the traditional model of leadership adopted in white-predominant institutions (Cain, 2013). Of course, this is unconscious bias formed through centuries of the white colonial institution, and we see that libraries have built their notion of “managerial material” based on it.

Recognizing different leadership styles is fundamental if the profession is to truly value diversity among its next generation of managers. For instance, Asian cultures, especially East Asian cultures, value humility and conformity over assertiveness (Lu et al, 2020). Yet, while non-assertiveness can be seen as consistency and steadiness in East Asian cultures, it could be interpreted in White western mainstream leadership culture as lacking confidence and motivation. Even collaboration can have a very different meaning between East and West. For the longest time we have been treating softer personality qualities as not inherent among leaders. Thus, if one does not fit these neatly checked boxes, it means they need to conform to this mode to fit in as a leader, and in order to become one, they need to change themselves, and oftentimes, the identity of the racialized. Thus, we argue that there is more than one way to be a

leader and leaders of various styles could all be successful in building an inclusive culture.

Begin Conversations About the Development of a Leadership Program

Because there are so few opportunities for mid-career racialized Canadian librarians in general to develop their leadership skills in a structured and supportive environment, there is a need for a program that is led by racialized librarians where we get the opportunity to learn from them. We also recognize that we need to think beyond academic library walls to include public libraries, government libraries, and other knowledge centres. Do we know if those racialized librarians are well supported in their leadership endeavours? We believe that development of the next generation of Canadian library leaders needs to start at a grassroots level that is inclusive of librarians from all sectors.

Recognize that Being Vulnerable is Being Strong

One of the central things we learned is that, in times of great strain, a crucial leadership attribute is vulnerability. In *Dare to Lead*, Brené Brown (2018) argues that leaning into vulnerability can feel risky if our identity (race, gender, sexuality and so forth) that shapes our leadership has been marginalized and not deemed worthy for “serious, respectable and qualified leaders” (15). Vulnerability looks different for different leaders, but as Brown puts it, “Vulnerability is about showing up and being seen” (Brown, 2018, 15).

Deep Reflection on an Individual Level as well as with your Leadership Team

Library leaders need to ask themselves: what can I do with my own power and privilege? It is a time to examine one’s own leadership style. The authors of this paper ask: is this an opportune time to reflect and change in our post-pandemic reset? We know that many things have changed during the pandemic when crisis management was at the forefront. Does your style of leadership still honour who you are? Is it still of service to your Library employees? As the pandemic has shown us, leadership during this difficult time has meant being more authentic and true, no matter how difficult the context. A healthy and functional library entering our new post-pandemic reality relies on leaders to make tough calls and hard choices as well as to demonstrate compassion (Crowley & Roberts, 2021). This begins with leaders who are genuinely open to and embrace diversity. Library staff need to be comfortable with speaking out on racism, exclusion, and microaggressions without punitive measures, and resources need to be available to educate staff and to support racialized librarians.

Conclusion

CARL is investigating many initiatives, such as leadership programs for mid-career librarians and accreditation requirements for Canadian library employment. As mentioned above, most recently, CARL was engaged in launching a Diversity and

Inclusion study in October 2021 (CARL, 2022). Data gathered and analyzed from this survey and its future iterations will help CARL libraries better understand the lived experiences of the workforce and aid in creating local and national level inclusion action plans and practices. Future initiatives for CARL include continuing the Inclusion Perspective webinar series focused on topics relating to diversity. We hope that all of these initiatives by CARL and individual libraries can result in result in further conversations and engagement to produce transformative spaces and practices that include racialized minorities and other minorities in all aspects of the profession.

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