

Creating a Library Wide Culture and Environment to Support MLIS Students of Color: The Diversity Scholars Program at Oregon State University Libraries

In Brief

The work of social justice, equity, and inclusion is not a short-term investment by a limited number of people; instead, it should be a part of every library's and librarian's work. At the Oregon State University Libraries (OSUL), we felt that in order to create a program dedicated to employing MLIS students of color, it was essential to understand the systems and histories of oppression, as well as the culture of Whiteness, within our state, our university, our library, and ourselves. While the bulk of this article is dedicated to an in-depth explanation of the development and implementation of our Diversity Scholars Program (DSP) to support MLIS students of color, we first share information about our local context, specifically the ongoing equity, diversity, and inclusion work within our library, as well as the professional literature that addresses these issues. The purpose of our case study is to provide a roadmap of our program, with lessons learned, for other academic libraries to consider creating a program like ours at their institution. We cover why and how the OSUL created the DSP, how the program functions, as well as current assessment practices used by the DSP Committee to surface the already visible impacts of the program while we work towards the long-term goals of culture and systems change. Within the article we have integrated the perspectives of the Diversity Scholars and the OSUL University Librarian to create a more robust and thorough accounting of the work required to create and launch such a program.

By [Natalia Fernandez](#) and [Beth Filar Williams](#)

Introduction

Master of Library Science students, particularly those getting online degrees, need experiences in libraries to better prepare them for their post-MLIS careers. Offering a concurrent opportunity to gain experience working in a library setting while earning an online degree provides this needed experience to not only obtain a holistic understanding of libraries, but also to focus and discover areas of interest. Within the library and archives profession there are various programs and initiatives dedicated to supporting new generations of racially and ethnically diverse librarians and archivists, programs such as the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Kaleidoscope Program, the ARL/Society of American Archivists Mosaic Program, the American Library Association Spectrum Scholarship Program, and the University of Arizona Knowledge River Program. Each of these programs, and other programs like these, offer MLIS students of color scholarships or paid employment, mentoring, leadership and professional development opportunities, and career placement assistance. Additionally, the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Diversity Alliance is a group of institutions with post-MLIS

residency programs also dedicated to supporting librarians and archivists of color to succeed and thrive within the profession. These programs exist as part of various equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives within the library and archives profession on the national level, through both the [American Library Association](#) and the [Society of American Archivists](#), to address the Whiteness of the profession, both in demographics and culture (Strand, 2019). For these initiatives to fully develop and be impactful, institutions on the local level need to understand their culture and environment in order to consider implementation of a program that supports MLIS students of color.

On the local level, at the Oregon State University Libraries (OSUL), we have hosted numerous MLIS students over the years in paid positions, for credit internships, and practicums to offer a variety of work experiences, learning opportunities, and mentorship as they enter into the profession. In the mid-2010s, as part of the OSUL's [2012-2017 strategic plan](#) our institution recognized diversity as a core value with a goal to “Sustain an intentional and inclusive organization” and an action item to “increase the diversity of the OSU Libraries and Press workforce.” We recognized that our library had never proactively and systemically engaged in the recruitment, employment, and retention of MLIS students of color. However, we also recognized that this was not a box to be checked, and that we needed to think holistically about our libraries' environment and culture and how it would impact MLIS students of color working with us, especially considering that our own library is a reflection of a majority White profession ([ALA Diversity Counts](#)). We knew that we could not ignore the implicit and explicit systemic racism, the White supremacy narrative, and Whiteness as a culture that exists within our library and is a reflection of our profession and our society.

The work of social justice, equity, and inclusion is not a short-term investment by a limited number of people; instead, it *should* be a part of every library and librarian's work. Though “it is clear that the information professions are now in the midst of a conversation about Whiteness...not everyone is participating, and many remain unaware that the conversation is happening” (Espinal et al., p. 149). We each need to do our part. Hence, it was essential for the OSU Libraries, especially those of us involved in the process to create a program dedicated to employing MLIS students of color, to understand the systems and histories of oppression, as well as the culture of Whiteness, within our state, our university, our library, and ourselves. While the bulk of this article is dedicated to an in-depth explanation of the development and implementation of our Diversity Scholars Program to support MLIS students of color, we will first share information about our local context, specifically the ongoing equity, diversity, and inclusion work within our library, as well as the professional literature that addresses these issues.

Who We Are

Both the state of Oregon and Oregon State University have a dark history in their treatment of people of color as well as LGBTQIA communities. Past state and local laws excluded people of color from land ownership, prevented marriage between Whites and those of other races and ethnic backgrounds, and discouraged immigration and permanent settlement by non-Whites. (Millner and Thompson, 2019). However, in resistance to the societal and governmental racism endured, Indigenous peoples and people of color in Oregon formed community and

organizational networks to retain and share their cultural heritage. Within Oregon, there are community archives, such as the Portland Chinatown Museum and the Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest, as well as community led groups to research and share history, such as the Oregon Black Pioneers. There are a number of advocacy groups including, but by no means limited to, the Native American Youth and Family Center, the Urban League of Portland, and Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste. For us, it is essential to understand the history of our state, as well as the current community initiatives occurring in our state, because this is the environment in which our institution and our library exists. The history of and ongoing systemic injustices and White supremacy on the state level is deeply embedded and active on the local level. Within the state's context, OSU is a PWI (a Predominantly White Institution is an institution of higher learning in which people who identify as White account for 50% or greater of the student enrollment or the institution is understood as historically White) within a predominantly White state. In the [2019 academic year](#), students of color accounted for just over 26% of the population of just over 31,000 students. This number mirrors Oregon's [2019 population](#) estimate of 26% people of color living in the state. However, the faculty and staff from underrepresented groups is very low in comparison. As examples, of the tenure track, instructor, and research faculty, individuals from underrepresented groups range between 4.8-6.7% and of the professional faculty and classified staff, the range is only slightly higher at about 9%. ([Oregon State University Strategic Plan 4.0 Metrics 2018-2019](#)). The OSU Libraries on the main campus in Corvallis—with two branch libraries, one on the coast and one in central Oregon—employs about 90 faculty and staff, along with about 140 student employees. Our library matches the university's demographics in being a predominantly White identifying library staff, though we often have a majority of underrepresented groups in our student employees.

Both the OSU campus and the library have, and continue to be, engaged in actions to change the Whiteness culture. One of the actions Brook, Ellenwood & Lazzaro suggest libraries can take is to “provide library staff with ongoing opportunities to participate in trainings and other professional development activities that build knowledge of their own cultural backgrounds and assumptions, the racial and ethnic diversity of the campus community, and the history of oppression, power, and privilege experienced by various groups” (p. 276). In recent years, OSU has been engaging with and revealing its history through educational initiatives, such as a [building names evaluation and renaming](#) process that renamed buildings originally named after individuals who were White supremacists, as well as the university's [Social Justice Education Initiative](#) (SJEI) that includes [SJEI workshops](#) which examine of the existing systemic and institutionalized racism in Oregon and at OSU, and the workshops ask participants to understand “how did we get here, how do you locate yourself in this story, and why does social justice matter?” OSU also has a [Search Advocate Program](#) that trains individuals to participate in search committees to promote equity, validity, and diversity on OSU searches. “The goals for diversity and inclusion in librarianship *must* be expanded to include recruitment, retention, and promotion” (Espinal et al., p. 155) and hence why this Search Advocate program is critical to make changes holistically on our campus. In connection to the OSU Libraries, the Special Collections and Archives Research Center was deeply involved in buildings evaluation and renaming process, our library director strongly encourages all library staff and faculty to participate in the SJEI workshops as a part of their work, and though not required by the university, the OSU Libraries strives for all of its searches to have a search advocate and many

librarians are search advocates. The continual offerings of social justice trainings, invited library speakers such as [Dr. Safiya Umoja Noble](#), and the search advocate community of practice all help continual growth and learning as the majority in our library have participated. We often follow up with discussions at library meetings on how to apply what we learned, helping us to “work collectively to understand racial microaggressions and to mitigate their impact” (Brook, et al., p. 276). We have also hosted numerous book groups to discuss and grow as Espinal et al. states that we must educate our (White) selves through readings (p. 159). Titles discussed have included *Waking Up White* by Debby Irving and *White Fragility* by Robin D’Angelo. Both book clubs have allowed us to discuss and be self reflective on our own Whiteness and changes we could make in our institution and personal work. OSU also knows that it has a lot more work to do and recently launched a campaign – [We Have Work To Do](#) – pushing this messaging throughout campus, acknowledging there is not one solution or checkbox, but a need for constant reflective practice and concrete actions. Additionally, the OSU [Difference, Power, and Discrimination \(DPD\) Program](#) works with faculty across all fields and disciplines at OSU to develop inclusive curricula that address institutionalized systems of power, privilege, and inequity in the United States. Several OSU librarians have completed this program as well as work collaboratively with professors who teach DPD courses. Within the library, librarians on staff have been observant and intentional in making systematic changes within our library classification, working on adding local headings to change controversial and outdated and often racist subject headings. And, librarians have also been collaborating with community groups to host events such as [Wikipedia Editathon: Writing Pacific Northwest African American history into Wikipedia](#) – another way the library is attempting to make systematic changes to our inherent Whiteness in libraries.

While these initiatives show ways the OSU Libraries is growing and working towards combating its Whiteness, it is essential for the members of any group thinking of beginning a program to support MLIS students of color, to not only participate in these initiatives, but to be very self-reflective in their own identities and privilege. Before engaging in a process to research, develop, and implement our program, we had to make sure that we did the work to educate ourselves.

Beth: As a young child growing up in the Baltimore area, I recall my mom saying she was embarrassed to be White and how terrible it was to be Black in this county, reflecting on the injustices people of color face daily, taking me to marches or protesting. She was getting her degree while teaching in a Head Start program in Baltimore city schools, learning and being mentored there as one of only two White people in the school. I don’t remember ever **not** thinking about racism as a problem in America, but I was hopeful others were like me and my family, accepting people for who they are, not thinking about skin color, helping your community and those in need, and accepting that change was slowly happening. As I got older, I began to realize that racism was deeply embedded in ALL systems, including librarianship. I learned that it is unhelpful to be colorblind, ignoring the hidden systems of Whiteness and racism, and instead, action is needed to speak up, call people out, and continually grow myself. As a White cisgendered female tenured administrator and head of the Library Experience and Access Department at Oregon State University Libraries since 2015, I have more power and influence to actually make inroads to changes in our systems. In my over 20 years in libraries I have worked in various places and positions, but mentoring students, especially MLIS students, has been part of whatever job I had and is my passion. Based on many experiences throughout

my career, and especially during my time at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro with the diversity resident program, I was able to help create our Diversity Scholars Program and continue on as a committee to mentor the scholars, grow the program, and advocate for both.

Natalia: As a Latinx cisgender woman interested in pursuing a career in librarianship, specifically within special collections and archives, I was overjoyed to learn that in my home area of southern Arizona, the University of Arizona Knowledge River Program specialized in educating information professionals regarding the needs of Latinx and Native American communities. My experiences as an MLIS student in the Knowledge River Program, including the mentorship I received from both librarians of color and White allies, the paid job opportunities offered through the program, the professional development funds to attend conferences, and the overall experience of being in a cohort of supportive peers, all effectively prepared and empowered me to begin my post-MLIS career. My primary job as the curator of the Oregon Multicultural Archives and OSU Queer Archives, a position I have held since late 2010, is to collaborate with LGBTQIA and communities of color to empower them to preserve, share, and celebrate their stories. Within my position, I have supervised numerous graduate students on various archival projects. In 2015, I co-founded the Diversity Scholars Program Committee, and I am the supervisor of the Diversity Scholars. In order to create an environment in which MLIS graduate students can thrive, I use both the lessons learned from others within the profession via conference presentations and publications, as well as reflection upon my own experiences as a Knowledge River Scholar to inform the ways in which I shape the Diversity Scholars Program. Over the course of my life I have been both othered and experienced privilege, I have experienced microaggressions and have made mistakes myself. I actively engage in social justice trainings and conversations, as well as recognize that fully understanding my identities is a process and a life-long journey.

Due to our previous professional experiences and personal passions, a significant role for both of us is to ensure that the next generation of librarians includes more people of color who are well supported as they start their careers. As there will always be more MLIS students, we also see our role as ensuring that the Diversity Scholars Program is holistically integrated into our library so that even if we moved on to other positions in our careers, the program would remain.

Literature Review

There is a great deal of literature on programs similar to the DSP, as well as the need for the profession to recruit and support more librarians of color. While decades worth of literature exists, for the purposes of our review, we will focus on the publications that most inspired and helped shape our program, and we will specifically highlight a few key publications from within the last five years that we feel are must reads for those considering implementing a similar program.

In order to have a foundation of knowledge for ourselves and to effectively advocate for the need for the DSP, we read publications that addressed the profession's overwhelming Whiteness, not just in staffing demographics, but in the profession's culture of [Whiteness](#) and the various systems of oppression working in tandem that continue to perpetuate Whiteness. As April [Hathcock](#) aptly states, "It is no secret that librarianship has traditionally been and continues to be

a profession dominated by Whiteness.” (Hathcock, 2015) Additionally, to learn more and see statistics on this read any of the following: Galvan, 2015; Bourg, 2014; Beilin, 2017; Roy, et al., 2006; Boyd, et al., 2017; Pho & Masland, 2017; McElroy & Diaz, 2015; Chang, 2013. Whiteness permeates numerous aspects of our profession. Scholars such as Angela [Galvan](#) (2015) and April Hathcock (2015) bring to light the myriad ways Whiteness is embedded more implicitly within our profession through our recruitment and job application processes, and they offer excellent methods to interrogate and interrupt Whiteness within those processes. Jennifer [Vinopal](#) (2016) builds upon their work by offering various methods for the profession to go “from awareness to action” as her article title notes. She advocates for libraries, specifically library leaders, to take on action items such as, but not limited to, creating opportunities for meaningful conversations about equity, diversity, and inclusion; include diversity initiatives in strategic plans and ensure time and support for staff to accomplish them; and proactively recruit job candidates and then follow through with mentoring and professional development opportunities. All of these scholars reference how the race and ethnicity demographics of the profession do not match many of the communities we serve and the profession’s continued failure to address institutional cultures that maintain this dynamic. In response to the ongoing imbalance in our professional culture, Boyd, et al. (2017) states, “Deliberate and strategic action must be taken to recruit, mentor, and retain new librarians from diverse backgrounds to further increase these numbers in the profession.” (p. 474)

There are various publications detailing the “how tos” of designing residency programs and positions dedicated to recruiting, supporting, and retaining people of color as part of diversity initiatives to change the demographics of the profession (Boyd, Blue, & Im; McElroy & Diaz; Brewer; Chang; Pho & Masland; Dewey & Keally; Cogell & Gruwell and many more), so we highlight only a few key pieces. While Beilin notes that even with the many diversity initiatives of the past and present “the demographics of librarianship have hardly shifted over the last generation,” he follows that statement by saying, “though their absence would presumably make things much worse.” (p. 78) However, it’s not just about doing it, it’s about doing it right, so that when we recruit and hire individuals for positions to specifically support people of color, we want to ensure their work environments are such that they can thrive and choose to remain within the profession. If you are going to read one book, the 2019 book *Developing a Residency Program (Practical Guides for Librarians)* is a go-to guide for practical advice on how to develop and manage a library residency program. The book covers the processes to successfully develop, build support for and structure a program; recruitment, hiring, and onboarding; and program assessment as well as ideas for post program support for individuals who continue on in their library careers (Rutledge, Colbert, Chiu, and Alston, 2019).

Additionally, there are two must-read research studies that analyze the experiences of diversity residents using both qualitative and quantitative methods to determine overarching recommendations when developing programs like the DSP. In the first piece “Evaluation of Academic Library Residency Programs in the United States for Librarians of Color,” the authors, Boyd, Blue, and Im, implemented two nationwide surveys, one for residents and the other for coordinators, to determine what aspects of their positions and programs were most helpful. The survey respondents included individuals who were currently residents as well as those who had participated in a residency program in decades past and were able to reflect how their experiences shaped their careers. Based on the data gathered and analyzed, the authors state that

the need for institutional buy-in, a structured and formal mentoring program, the use of cohorts to transfer knowledge, and the need to facilitate socialization for residents, especially to create a sense of belonging and value, are all essential program components. The authors state that it is “[t]hese components [that] benefit the residents in priming them for a career in academic libraries and all of the impending challenges librarians of color face.” (Boyd, et al. 2017, p. 497) The second must-read publication is Jason Alston’s 2017 “Causes Of Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction For Diversity Resident Librarians—A Mixed Methods Study Using Herzberg’s Motivation-Hygiene Theory.” Alston’s dissertation is a deep dive into what works and what doesn’t for a residency program that is post-MLIS. Alston poses eleven research questions about the quality of experience of the residency with the purpose of the study and results being so current or future residency programs can be improved. His results were similar to the previous study, stressing the need for buy-in from the institution by ensuring a knowledge of who the residents are, as well as what the program is and why it was established; appropriate guidance, support, and mentorship from coordinators, supervisors, and administrators; opportunities for individuals to perform meaningful, challenging, and innovative work that enables them to grow professionally, especially in preparation for future positions; and the need for assessment of the position and program. Even though the DSP is not a post-MLIS program, the results of both of these studies are still very much applicable to our program.

A recurring theme in the literature is the need to create a professional culture and environment for people of color to thrive through mentorship and strong professional networks of support (Hankins & Juarez, 2015; Boyd, et al., 2017; Vinopal, 2016; Pho & Masland, 2014; McElroy & Diaz, 2015; Dewey & Kelly, 2008; Black & Leysen, 2020; Brewer, 1997). Mentoring can help with the “culture shock” (Cogell & Gruwell, 2001) and “otherness” (Boyd, et al., p. 475) MLIS students of color often feel and it helps them build bridges and connections (Dewey & Kelly, 2008). The chapters in the book *Where are all the Librarians of Color? The Experiences of People of Color in Academia* (2015) provide an amazing compilation of the shared experiences of academic librarians of color, but there are two chapters in particular, chapters 2 and 3, that address this need. In both chapters the authors stress the need for mentorship and continued support from professional networks so the profession can retain librarians of color who grow and succeed throughout their careers. Since the DSP focuses on MLIS students of color, we were especially moved by the words of Lorienne Roy (2015) in the book’s preface when she states, “...little attention is given to the experiences of librarians of color as they transition from student to information professional” (vii) and notes that “[m]entorships are often offered as the best answer for facilitating a smooth adjustment into the workplace and further advancement within the field” (p. viii). While Roy shares that “[t]here is no single route to changing the characteristics of the workforce” (p. vii), a program like the OSUL Diversity Scholars Program is one of many routes that academic libraries can pursue as part of their various initiatives to change our professional culture of Whiteness so it is more diverse and inclusive.

Overview of the Diversity Scholars Program (DSP)

After much research and conversation, the Oregon State University Libraries (OSUL) decided to create a program to support a cohort of MLIS students of color who were enrolled in an online degree program. The reasons for making this decision were context-dependent and informed through conversations within the larger academic librarian community, consulting the literature,

and determining what was fiscally feasible. After nearly three years of research, committee meetings, and planning, the OSUL Diversity Scholars Program started with its first scholar in January 2018, hosted its second scholar beginning in October of that same year, and is currently hosting its third scholar who began in October 2019.

Established in 2015 and implemented in 2018, the Diversity Scholars Program provides its Diversity Scholars with experiences in the librarianship areas of their choosing, along with opportunities for professional development, scholarship, and service within an academic library setting. The DSP at our academic library aims to contribute to creating a more diverse and inclusive Library Sciences field by providing MLIS students of color career opportunities in academic and research libraries and archives. The DSP committee works to provide extensive support and mentorship for scholars who are pursuing their Master of Library and Information Science degree online while additionally providing paid, hands-on experience within the profession to broaden their professional opportunities after completion of their graduate degree. The Diversity Scholars are expected to engage in the primary assignment duties of an academic librarian. Scholars are given the opportunity to experience the full scope of an academic library, working in all of our departments – from technological and public services to archives and meeting with administrators – to then be able to determine their area(s) of focus.

Our scholars have engaged in a variety of experiences. They have worked with students in the library's undergraduate research and writing studio, taught library information sessions and workshops, tabled at events such as student welcoming and OER faculty initiatives, worked the reference desk and online chat, compiled and analyzed library data, and participated in library-wide as well as relevant departmental and project meetings. As a part of developing their scholarship, the scholars have attended and presented at local Oregon conferences, national ones like ALA, and even an international conference. They have also served on a variety of library committees such as the library awards committee, search committees, and the library employee association. We make sure the scholars know that their MLIS studies come first and they are strongly encouraged to use their work experiences for class projects. The flexibility in their schedules allows for support when and how they need it. As a conclusion to their position appointments, we mentor the scholars through the job search process. Additionally, each scholar experiences the annual review process, which includes self-reflection and goal setting, and they are asked to assess their experience of the program itself.

We have strived to be mindful of Isabel Espinal's statement that, in our case, the Diversity Scholars, "should not have to choose between technological focus [or any area of interest to them] and a diversity focus: both are future oriented and work well together. Open access projects are a good example, as are digital/data curation roles and media/digital literacy efforts." (p. 158). While encouraged, like all faculty and staff in our library, to participate in equity, diversity, and inclusivity projects, trainings, and initiatives, it is always the scholars' specific interests that determine which projects they choose. There are cases in which their interests and this work overlap. For example, one scholar interested in the work of archivists asked to participate in the Wikipedia edit-a-thons, and the other scholars interested in teaching and engagement were excited for the opportunity to participate in the university's Mi Familia Day for the Latinx community. If the opportunities align with the scholars' interests and project capacity, we support it, otherwise, they do not participate and are not asked to participate. It is essential for

this to be communicated and emphasized by the supervisor. Natalia, as their supervisor, shares her own personal experiences with the scholars to express that because of her job, she is often invited to participate in numerous initiatives, and though she appreciates being asked, she will sometimes choose to decline involvement – and that’s okay. However, it is important to recognize the vulnerable position an MLIS student employee may be in, feeling like an invitation is a directive or wanting to get as much experience as possible, even when it is overwhelming. Therefore, consistent and regular conversations are key to talk with scholars about their interests, especially as they change or focus over time, and it is imperative for the scholars to know that their supervisor is their advocate and can say “no” on their behalf if that is helpful.

A part of our program that is still in development, in part because it is still relatively new, is creating a robust cohort, one in which the scholars have opportunities to work together and act as peer mentors. In our particular experience so far, with only two scholars hired at one time, due to non-overlapping schedules and differing areas of professional interest, an active cohort has not yet come to fruition. Additionally, in a recent remodel of the library, we decided – with input from the scholars – that instead of creating a shared workspace for the scholars to work together, they should receive individual cubicle spaces as do our other library faculty and staff. While we want the scholars to have flexibility in their schedules and agency in their own professional development, based on their feedback, we are considering ways to create a more formal structure, such as set regular group meetings and shared readings for discussion, in which collaborations and relationships can develop. Notably, we do know that each new scholar contacted the previous scholar to chat with them about the program prior to applying.

The purpose of our case study is to provide a roadmap of our program, with lessons learned, for other academic libraries to consider creating a program like ours at their institution. Our case study describes the research, program development, implementation, and future plans for the DSP. We will cover why and how the OSUL created the DSP, how the program functions, as well as current assessment practices used by the DSP Committee to surface the already visible impacts of the program while we work towards the long-term goals of culture and systems change. Within the article we have integrated the perspectives of the Diversity Scholars and the OSUL University Librarian to create a more robust and thorough accounting of the work required to create and launch such a program.-

Charge & Research, 2015

It is important to note that our program stemmed from the top down, as getting administration buy-in is one critical piece and we had an advocate in our leadership. In February 2020, we met with our library director, Faye Chadwell, Donald and Delpha Campbell University Librarian, and asked her to reflect upon her reasons for championing a program like the DSP five years ago. Reflecting on the start of her own career in her first position as reference librarian in the late 1980s managing a MLIS graduate fellowship for underrepresented groups at the University of South Carolina, she noted that the issues are still existing today. Over the years, Chadwell continued to see the positive impacts of the USC Fellows Program, and other programs like it. When she became library director of the OSU Libraries in 2011, she finally had the power to implement a program to support students of color within the library profession, and she sought to do so. In the spring of 2015, our University Librarian charged a team of three librarians with

investigating the options that the library had to create a diversity resident librarian position. We sought to create a position to promote diversity within the profession, reflect the changing demographics among our students, and to increase opportunities for diverse candidates to explore academic librarianship. Beth, a newly hired department head at OSUL, had come from an institution with an established diversity resident program and had worked with three different residents while there. Her experience and connections at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro helped get the team going with researching the concept.

The team began with an environmental scan of diversity residency programs within academic libraries. Luckily, through the gracious sharing of the [ACRL Residency Interest Group](#) who had already compiled a spreadsheet of academic library residencies, the team quickly got started. Using the spreadsheet, we each dove into a section to research more information we needed from the list of schools and programs, both looking online as well as contacting librarians at those institutions directly. We noticed most residencies are post-MLIS with a few exceptions, such as the University of Arizona Knowledge River Program that focuses on current MLIS students. We also discovered two interesting initiatives we could glean from: NUFP and Kaleidoscope. The nationwide student affairs program NUFP ([NASPA's Undergraduate Fellows Program](#)) states “by mentoring students from traditionally underrepresented and historically disenfranchised populations, this semi-structured program diversifies and broadens the pipeline of our profession.” Established in 2000 as the ARL Initiative to Recruit a Diverse Workforce, renamed [ARL Kaleidoscope](#) in 2019, its goal is “diversifying the library profession by providing generous funding for MLIS education and a suite of related benefits, including mentoring, leadership and professional development, and career placement assistance.” The short term IMLS funded project ALA ran in 2010-2013 called [Discovering Librarianship](#) selected early career [librarians as field recruiters](#), to recruit ethnically diverse high school and college students to careers in libraries. We realized, recruitment must begin with underrepresented groups into an LIS program (McElroy & Diaz, 2015, p. 645; Pho & Masland, 2014, p. 272). This research and these programs helped guide us in our research to think beyond a post-MLIS position.

From our research, we realized that talking to current and former residents themselves about their experiences was crucial. Having personal connections with former residents from UNCG, Beth reached out and set a few virtual conversations. The team also reached out to residents, as well as some residency coordinators. These conversations offered a variety of perspectives on barriers potential programs might face, and also helped illuminate ways the residents and institutions benefitted from the programs. Many residency programs, alliances, and interest groups were examined to inform the team about the typical structure and components of such programs. We also read blog posts, book chapters, and articles written by former diversity residents to provide insight into the varied experiences of individuals who have participated in programs like these.

After our six months of research, and as part of our initial charge, the team wrote a short report for the University Librarian and Library Administration Management and Planning group to share their findings and offer recommendations about what might work best for our library. Although we offered two options—a post MLIS Diversity Resident Program and a concurrent MLIS student Diversity Resident Program—we recommended the latter based upon feedback from current and former resident scholars, along with the makeup of already existing

opportunities within librarianship. The recommendation would work to both encourage OSU undergraduates to consider an MLIS degree as well as find and support local MLIS students of color, not post-graduates, to apply. Because Oregon has no in-state library masters programs, we could offer a praxis opportunity for those locally getting an online master's degree, and focus recruitment on our local community, especially within our own undergraduate library student employees. As Roy said in the summary of Spectrum Scholars experience, "The single most predictive indicator for choosing to enter a LIS program was prior experience working in a library." (Roy, et al., 2006) Additionally, because the literature states, "Solo library residents can find their residencies to be overwhelming and isolating experiences, especially in the case of diversity library residents" (Boyd, et al., 2017, p. 478) and other scholars mention the need for cohorts rather than solo experiences as well (Alston; Hankins & Juarez; Perez & Gruwell; Dewey & Keally), we strongly recommended that the program be cohort based; and, if not more than one person could be hired at time, the hires' appointments would at least overlap to offer opportunities for peer mentorship and collaboration. Our library administration agreed, and a call went out to recruit volunteers for the next phase of the DSP creation process. By November 2015, a DSP Committee had been formed; it consisted of two members from the original team that wrote the report, as well as three new members, including Natalia.

As part of our recent interview with the university librarian we asked her the following two questions: What advice would you offer administrators who are unsure about starting a program like the DSP? What advice to librarians would you offer so they can advocate a program like the DSP to their administrators? Based on our conversation, as well as our own experiences in the research phase, below are some lessons learned:

- Determine the library's priorities regarding Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) work:
 - A commitment to EDI initiatives cannot be a box that is checked off or a one-off program or workshop; the work needs to be integrated into all departments with a systematic and cultural shift.
 - With EDI initiatives as a priority, then the entire library administration and staff need to dedicate resources and time to concrete action items to move those initiatives forward. Administrators can charge and support a group to conduct research and offer options for what would work best in their institutional context to support MLIS students of color.
 - If there is pushback from some within the library that ask why the entire library is spending so much time and energy on a few people who are not permanent, there needs to be administrative support and an overall library culture that understands and advocates for these positions because they are for the greater good of the institution and the profession.
- Do your research:
 - Seek out literature specifically written by scholars of color; and, beyond reading the literature, try reaching out to people who have been in residencies for advice. Attend webinars or panels of residents/scholars and talk with library program coordinators. Review the [ACRL Diversity Standards](#) for cultural competencies for academic libraries.
 - Ask yourselves: What is happening in your campus community? What resources, partners, funding already exist?

- Consider all possible options and potentially a phased approach if funding or buy-in is not completely there yet. Don't be afraid to pilot it or experiment.
- Seek administrative support as well as advocates within your library staff:
 - Whether you are library staff or an administrator, informally chat with colleagues about your research to gauge their interest and capacity, as well as plant the seeds for them to support future scholars. It is not a glorified internship; a scholar is to be treated as a colleague. Getting advocates and buy-in from all departments is critical since not only are administrations involved in the decision making but library staff will be working with the scholars.
 - Determine what motivates your administrator – is it data? Is it values? What does it mean for the library, campus, community? Administrators tend to be competitive; one approach can be to frame the creation of a program at your institution as the opportunity for them to be the “first” or a “model” for other institutions.
 - Ask your administrator to talk to other library administrators about their approaches, what worked and what did not, for creating and funding these positions.

Development, November 2015 – December 2017

During the research phase, we were especially inspired by April Hathcock's 2015 article “White Librarianship in Blackface: Diversity Initiatives in LIS” in which she explains how diversity programs, especially the application process, are coded to promote Whiteness, and the need to mentor early career librarians in both navigating and dismantling Whiteness within the profession. The full cycle of our program was critically important: our recruitment and application process to encourage people of color to pursue a career in librarianship, the program experience itself to include a strong mentorship competent, support in the job search for program participants, and continued support in the post-MLIS experience. With this insight, the DSP committee officially launched in November 2015, with weekly meetings beginning in January 2016. The committee's task was to pick up where the previous group's work left off and develop a plan to make the proposal for a program a reality. The main “to dos” included brainstorming the program logistics, creating a position description, and planning recruitment strategies. Committee members reviewed the previous group's report, read key pieces of literature on residency programs, and reviewed a variety of existing residency program position descriptions. We also spoke with our university's Office of Equity and Inclusion and Human Resources department about the creation of this type of position, especially for someone who would have been enrolled in an out of state graduate program while employed for OSU. We created a space on our library's wiki to document the committee's work. Beyond the administrative aspects of the program, we also used time in meetings to allow for discussion, growth, understanding and sometimes emotional releases as we supported each other to unpack the systematic Whiteness found embedded in so much we do.

Together, we brainstormed the ways in which we could best frame and implement our program to address the issues Hathcock addresses, both in the short- and long-term vision of the program. We asked ourselves “What would success look like for this program, in both the short- and in the long-term?” We knew that 10-15 years from now, we would still want the program to exist, for

the program participants to be connected, and for the program to be so embedded in our library that it would outlive us in our positions.

In order to more fully develop our program ideas, the committee decided to develop a one-time paid 10-week undergraduate student internship during the summer of 2016. The internship experience served as a pilot for our proposed program and based on the questions raised and discussions we had, the DSP committee further developed the program structure and developed recruitment ideas. Some initial insights included:

- We learned that it would be ideal to have more than one scholar at a time. However, we knew that we would have to balance this desire with our budget and attempt at least some overlap in the position time periods.
- We determined that if we wanted to hire MLIS students, we could realistically only hire them to work 20 hours per week so they could also attend school full time if they chose to do so.
- Additionally, knowing that graduate students often want to take an internship, catch up on classes, or vacation in the summer, we did not want to have them locked into a 12-month position so we considered a shorter time frame with the ability to come back for a second year.

We settled on a position that would be a 9-month appointment, but only 30 weeks of work during that time period, that could be renewed for a second 9-month appointment for a total program length of 18 months, with the option for an extension. This year and a half could potentially have a 3-month break in between if scholars chose to do a summer internship elsewhere or potentially do a special project internship in our library. We aimed for flexible schedules for the varying needs of our scholars—and spoke with our University Librarian to also be able to add an extra 3 months if needed to assist scholars until graduation. In addition to their salary and full health care benefits, they receive \$2500 in professional development funds to attend conferences or other relevant activities.

The DSP Committee also had a lengthy discussion about offering benefits with a half-time position. Our University Librarian gave us a set amount of funds for the positions using soft money that could be spent at her discretion. We had to consider that since benefits through the university would mean 33% of the salary, the take home pay we could offer the scholars would be lower than a position without full benefits. It was disappointing to lower the salary but offering benefits seemed the socially just thing to do; and the fact that our scholars would be taking online degree programs not within our state, they generally would not be offered health care benefits from their schools. The scholars are part time; if they were full time, they would make less than an entry level position within the OSUL. We hoped with added benefits of our program, it would outweigh the lower salary even though the cost of living in Corvallis, Oregon is fairly high. We also hoped once the program was running, we could get more permanent funds and offer a higher salary.

To develop the Diversity Scholar position description, we used the template for library faculty positions. The DS position description is formatted as it is for our tenure-track librarians; the scholars would have a “primary assignment” but also service and scholarship components,

divided at 75%, 10%, and 15% respectively. The expectation was for them to attend library-wide and relevant departmental meetings, serve on library committees and searches, attend and present at conferences, and participate in other relevant professional development activities. We would offer the scholars adequate funds toward these professional development activities such as traveling to conferences or workshops. As Diversity Scholars, they would each have their own cubicle space and be treated as colleagues.

The next portion of our program development, which was the most time consuming, was working with the university human resources team to determine what classification our scholars would be. Over the course of the spring and summer of 2017, we researched classification options and spoke with various HR folks to ensure the classification we selected included health care coverage options, were paid via a stipend to offer scheduling flexibility, had a streamlined hiring and reappointment process, and could include additional money for professional development activities via the library.

We created an internal report with our new information and began sharing our idea of the program with library administration and other colleagues, to grow an understanding of the goals for the program, and to seek advice and ideas to strengthen the program. The goal was to have the majority of the departments in the library represented by members of the committee, who serve as advocates for the program, as well as mentors and personal contacts for the scholars. The committee would assist in recruiting potential scholars and send weekly updates to the library's administrative group to keep them excited and updated about the program. We began attending library-wide administrative meetings and library management team meetings during the late fall. We especially sought the support of department heads to ensure communication to their departments and hear any concerns. With a finalized budget, we received approval from the University Librarian in fall 2017 to move forward with the recruitment and hiring process for our first scholar.

We developed an application process that focused on relationship building with potential applicants and presented as few barriers as possible. Rather than a competitive process, we wanted to cultivate mutual interest. We developed a pre-application requirement to have an in-person or video call meeting with a member of the Diversity Scholars Program Committee to share information about the program, answer any questions the potential applicant may have, offer our assistance with applications for MLIS programs, and importantly, give the potential applicant an opportunity to get to know us. The application process requires a resume and cover letter with reference contact information, but no letters of recommendation since obtaining letters can be prohibitive for potential applicants and the committee preferred to have the opportunity to speak directly with references. References can be professors, employers, and/or community mentors, broadly defined.

All libraries conduct their budgeting differently; in our case we did not have a set budget for the program (other than the salary and professional development). Because we devoted the time and energy to speaking with department heads one-on-one, presenting at faculty and staff gatherings, and updating the library management team to share information about the DSP before the program began, a significant amount of buy-in existed to support the program. Therefore, when we made particular asks to use existing departmental budgets that aligned with what we needed,

departments were willing and eager to be supportive. Our Emerging Technologies and Services department bought the scholars' laptops and other equipment; our Teaching and Engagement Department provided office supplies and cubicle space; our Library Administration covered the costs of printing promotional brochures; and our Library Experience and Access Department covered nametags and business cards. Budgeting in this way adds to the buy-in for all departments—now the DSP is integrated into all departments.

Promotion and recruitment were the next steps, and for us, that meant local. We started simply and inexpensively, using word-of-mouth marketing to recruit through the library staff, library student employees, campus partners who work with students of color, and reaching out to OSU library alums, such as former student workers. We reached out to the Emporia State University MLIS hybrid program in Portland to ask if there were any students coming into the program who would be a good match for the DSP and lived within a commutable to Corvallis area. Using an easily editable LibGuide from Springshare as our [DSP website](#), along with our current internal wiki space for the communication and documentation of the committee, we began our recruitment and promotion. We also began creating a brochure in-house with student designers. Because we do not have the funds to assist with relocation costs, the committee felt it would be a disservice to ask someone to move to Corvallis with no promise of assistance with moving costs. At least for the start of the DSP, we purposely refrained from advertising the program too broadly, and instead focused on geographically local promotion and recruitment. Therefore, our recruits have been students who are already living in the Corvallis commuter area. We wanted to start small, develop effective strategies and models for the first few years, with the plan to expand our recruitment as the program grows, and more broadly promote the program through various networks such as the Oregon Library Association and the REFORMA Oregon chapter. Another challenge to recruitment is that because there is no in-state MLIS program in Oregon, the students we are recruiting into the profession pay out-of-state tuition costs. Therefore, it is essential for us as a committee to not only let students know of scholarship opportunities, but to actively help them in the application process—which we have done with some success. So far, the first two Diversity Scholars have been selected as ALA Spectrum Scholars, and the third scholar has received several scholarships.

Lessons Learned

- Be prepared to have conversations with HR. The HR process on campus takes a long time—plan for it, including talking to multiple people in HR, doing your own research around campus for position types, and being creative! Though the role of HR will vary at different institutions, this is as much a critical piece as other phases, as for a truly socially just position you must make sure you get the right category in your institution's structure; and also stick to your values and push back when you need to and can.
- Connect with in-state library school masters programs for a potential collaborative partnership and help advertise your program when people are applying to their program; also learn how they recruit. If your state does not have an in-state library school master's program, connect with online programs; determine if any of their students are local to your geographic region or if they can pass the word to their students directly.
- Consider your existing campus partnerships, especially those who work with undergraduate students of color, who can serve as advocates and recruiters for your

program. Your current and former library student employees are perfect for these conversations too.

- Benefits and professional development funding matters. Be consistent with the EDI values of the program so it does not seem like an exploitation; for us that meant not creating a part-time position with no benefits and no professional development funds. Even if your administration is on board with the position, you might still have to push for these specifics.

Implementation, January 2018 – present

As we shifted into the implementation phase of the program in January 2018, we recruited our first scholar via word of mouth – she was a local, former OSU student, and she was already accepted into an online library master’s degree program. We heard about our first scholar, Marisol Moreno Ortiz, through a contact in the university’s Educational Opportunities Program. We reached out to invite her to meet up and talk about this new program we were growing. Knowing it was a program we were just developing and might need iterations, we were looking for our first scholar to take the plunge with us. Having existing relationships and trust already established from Marisol’s use of the library as an OSU alum made it an easy transition for us all. She knew and loved our libraries and was excited for the opportunity to work with us as she learned and grew through her online program.

An essential part of the program implementation was to identify the point person for the program. It made sense for Natalia, as the committee co-chair who was already tenured, to serve in the role. In preparation for the role, she attended manager and supervisor trainings offered by the university and had numerous conversations with colleagues who are supervisors to learn from them as well. As a tenure track faculty member, she participated in the library’s formal mentoring program as a mentee, and after being tenured, served as a mentor. She received a pay raise for supervisory work, and now helps facilitate the day to day details of the program like working with HR, facilitating committee meetings, and supervising the scholars. As program coordinator she also leads the way with the mentorship, meeting weekly with the scholar and helping guide them, pulling in the committee as needed. This mentorship takes time, with a lot of informal conversations to help the scholar navigate the system of a large library. Since the overall goal of the program is to allow flexibility for the scholar while they get to sample the library as a whole, seeing all parts and pieces to help determine areas they are more interested in learning more about, developing departmental buy-in has been key to the success of this program. The program coordinator is also the key communicator and advocate. Natalia keeps the library’s administration, including department heads, updated regularly on the program, and meets both formally and informally with them to ensure the projects and activities of the scholars in other departments are going well. She sometimes meets directly with the University Librarian, which sometimes includes an “ask” for special funding or other changes.

The program is set up on a rotation for the first quarter through about six departments (instruction, public services, emerging technologies, acquisitions and cataloging, special collections and archives, and administration). As we are on a 10-week quarter system, we divide the first term for the scholars so that the first week or two the scholar starts their onboarding, and then they rotate through a department for either one or two weeks. The goal of these weeks is to

soak in what each department does, how individual staff or units play a role, to observe and shadow, and to reflect and ask questions. As they get to know the departments and the staff, they inherently learn about projects, processes, tasks and activities of interest to them. Then, throughout the rest of their appointment, the scholars have the autonomy to determine which projects, and in which departments, they would like to pursue. A scholar is not tied to one department or project for the rest of their time at OSU, so while the initial rotation period may seem relatively short, they have adequate time to dive deep into various areas over their time at OSU Libraries. Until their official email and calendar is set up, we use a Google Doc to create a schedule for the department heads to choose a week, and the staff to invite the scholar to meetings, appointments, visits, shadowing, Q&A, observing, or events. We use the DSP committee to help advocate in our individual departments with support from the library leadership team. Getting all department heads on board is critical. The scheduling begins before the scholar starts so we have many learning opportunities set up in advance. Scholars typically meet one-on-one with staff and faculty within a department to learn more about what they do, as well as attend unit and departmental meetings.

After this first term of rotation, the scholars begin picking projects or areas they want to immerse more heavily into for future terms. The DSP supervisor chats with the scholar about their project preferences, as well as colleagues and department heads to determine capacity, and then facilitates conversations to ensure a mutually beneficial experience. For example, if the scholar wants instruction and outreach experience, we have conversations with the Teaching and Engagement department about opportunities that could match each scholar's interest. Because the scholar is on a 9-month appointment with the option for a reappointment, we discuss the timing of opportunities not only for projects, but for service and professional development as well.

While the program is structured to treat the scholars as colleagues of our academic librarians, the reality is they are not being paid at that level, so while we want them to have the same experiences as academic librarians, it is essential for us to not use them to cover the duties of someone at a much higher pay scale. We try to find the balance to this by making sure that the activities and projects the scholars take on are of their choosing and help them in building the resume they want that will benefit them in their future career. We discuss what types of positions they would like to have, look at job postings to determine what qualifications are required and preferred, and set out to develop opportunities to create relevant experiences for them. Additionally, one of the main priorities of the DSP committee is to be their advocate while also empowering them to advocate for themselves. We have conversations with them about the politics of not only the inner workings of our library, but of the profession as a whole.

Something that occurred with our first Diversity Scholar that we have begun to replicate, and intend to continue to do with future scholars, is to assist with the job search process. Our first scholar graduated in the month of May and her appointment with the DSP was set to end in the month of June. Together, we determined that the best use of her time during her last 10 weeks in the program was to search for and apply for jobs. Essentially, her job became to find a job. We discussed what types of jobs she desired, sent her postings, reviewed her resume and cover letters, prepped her for phone and on-campus interviews, and debriefed interview experiences. As their supervisor, Natalia wrote letters of recommendation and served as a

reference. She is currently employed at a community college library. Our second scholar's appointment ended several months prior to her graduation, but the same process applied. Even after moving out of state, the DSP has kept in communication to support her job search process as she completes her MLIS program later this year. The current Diversity Scholar will graduate in 2021. While there is the possibility of our scholars' positions turning into permanent positions, the DSP Committee has discussed how this could be accomplished in a more proactive matter. To date, we have had to balance the OSUL positions available at the time of the Diversity Scholars' appointment end date and the interest of a Diversity Scholar in those positions.

Assessing the DSP and Measuring its Success

There are many ways to measure success. When we spoke with our University Librarian about her view of success, she expressed that since our program is so new, we need time to truly assess its value and its effect on the multi-generations within our library setting; we need to ask ourselves if our library culture is shifting and growing along with the scholars. Additionally, she posed questions such as: Is success just a good experience in the program? Is it a high number of interviews for a job? Is it about quick job placement? Is it whether or not they find employment in an area of their choosing? Is it long-term retention in the profession? What about how the program impacts each individual scholar: how do they measure success for themselves? Moreover, how does the program, specifically the scholars' projects and accomplishments, add value to the library? Is it all of these elements combined? Because the systematic Whiteness of our profession has been ongoing for so long, the difficulty in assessing the impact on the field of librarianship literally will just take time (Alston, 2017, p. 212)

In order to document the many measures of success of our program we are continuously working on developing and implementing meaningful assessment. As of now, we ask the scholars to maintain reflective journals and write self-evaluations of their work, and as their supervisor, Natalia seeks input from their peers. We survey the scholars' project supervisors and department heads who observed or worked with the scholar while in their units, both about the program and about the scholar. The scholars also give a presentation at the end of their appointment to the entire library staff about their experiences in the program. We use all the feedback gathered to evolve and improve the program experience for our next scholars.

The DSP Scholars and Their Perspectives on the Program

Our first Diversity Scholar completed her 18-month appointment in the program in June of 2019, our second scholar wrapped up her appointment in March of 2019, and our third scholar started in October of 2019. At least 2 scholars overlap each other in their appointments. All three of the Diversity Scholars – Marisol Moreno Ortiz, Bridgette Flamenco (née Garcia), and Valeria Dávila Gronros – are Latinx women in their mid-to-late 20s, and two of the three scholars were library student employees and OSU undergrads. A section of the DSP website titled [“Meet the OSUL Diversity Scholars”](#) includes short biographies of each scholar. The first two scholars chose to focus on teaching and engagement, as well as public services activities, and our third scholar has an interest in archives, specifically audio/visual materials.

In mid-March of 2020, we conducted a focus group with the three scholars to assess the DSP, from their collective perspective. It was the first time all three were together to provide feedback about the DSP. While our third scholar was only six months into her appointment, the first scholar had already finished up the program and graduated and the second was ending her time with us in two weeks to relocate and wrap up her online degree. Even though we had already asked them to reflect on the DSP as part of their individual self-reflections, we wanted an opportunity for the three of them to connect and have ideas flow between them while we listened first and then conversed together about their experiences. We explained that their collective responses would be used as part of this article. We asked them to share their thoughts on the positive aspects of the program, what could be improved, and what “success” looks like for the DSP. We took notes and compiled their collective responses.

It is essential for us to acknowledge that there was a power differential between us and the scholars that more than likely hindered their responses, especially any negative feedback they may have had but did not feel comfortable sharing. Because of our roles, we are in a position to act as references and write letters of recommendation for them. While it may have worked better to have someone else conduct the focus group, the scholars would still know that what they expressed would be shared with us and due to their unique experiences within the DSP, their responses could still have been identifiable. While we wanted to include their perspectives as a part of this article and the focus group was the method we used, moving forward we will work on different approaches to gathering feedback. Additionally, this is why it is so important for anyone who coordinates a program like the DSP or would like to start a program, to read the previous literature as well as qualitative and quantitative studies on a larger sample of scholars that does not identify them. By reading other perspectives outside of your institutions, you can gain a better understanding of the issues that may be impacting the people within programs like the DSP that for many reasons, may not be able to fully share their experiences and thoughts with their colleagues and supervisors.

For the focus group discussion, we asked three questions: What were some of your positive experiences about the program? What do you wish would have been different about the DSP and should be changed? What do you consider “success” for the DSP? Below are their collective responses:

What were some of your positive experiences about the program?

One scholar expressed her appreciation that the program is structured so that each department is willing and ready to support the scholars and the program: she recognized the buy-in from all of the departments and how willing people were to work with her and train her. She also appreciated the opportunity to meet with our University Librarian, to be able to talk with her to receive career advice from someone in a high-level administrative position. Two of the scholars agreed that the autonomy and scheduling flexibility offered by the program enabling them to choose and develop their own projects, and for colleagues to offer them projects, was a positive for them. To expand on this idea, one scholar noted how helpful it was to be able to connect her DSP work to her MLIS courses and vice versa; both experiences were enriched. An unexpected positive was how they appreciated access to OSUL resources, interlibrary loan for example, that they were not able to obtain from the libraries connected to their online MLIS programs. All of

the scholars noted how invaluable the professional development opportunities were to them, especially the opportunity to travel to regional and national conferences, and in one case, an international conference. They indicated that they would not have had the resources to attend conferences without the funds provided by the DSP. They expressed how much they learned in terms of navigating professional conferences, networking, and experiencing new cities.

What do you wish would have been different about the DSP and should be changed?

All three scholars noted that the monthly stipend is low but did state that a paid position helped them cover the costs of their graduate programs. Additionally, all three scholars had recommendations for improving the structure of the program including: a recommendation that the program be extended, perhaps to a 21-month appointment or even a full two years to coincide with the time it takes to complete their MLIS degree; the request to be paired with an official mentor within a department of their choosing to receive more dedicated support in their areas of interest; the idea to create a visual timeline of a scholar's appointment with expectations, goals, and outcomes, broken down showing the program as a whole.

It was pleasing to hear that some of the recommendations offered were already in place. For example, our first scholar noted that her first ten weeks were very overwhelming—something she expressed during her time in the program. For our next two scholars we took great care to ensure their onboarding period was much more manageable. Our most recent scholar requested that we offer them more opportunities to not only attend conferences, but to present at them. Our first two scholars indicated that the program does encourage this, but more so in the second year and that this was beneficial since by their second year, they had more experience and confidence.

Before moving on to the final question, Natalia stated that she and Beth always envisioned the DSP being a cohort program, but that the focus group was the first time all three scholars were together. She stated that now that there are three DSP scholars who have completed or are currently in the program, and as the program continues to expand, we can create more of a cohort environment. She asked how they would like to see that accomplished. They offered a number of great suggestions including: developing more structured meeting opportunities, especially as part of the onboarding process; offering opportunities to connect with past scholars, via conference calls if in-person gatherings is not an option; and creating a mentorship program within the DSP itself so that each scholar mentors the scholar hired after them.

What do you consider “success” for the DSP?

Perhaps not surprisingly, all three scholars described success in relation to their employment: this includes mentorship for navigating the job search process, securing employment in their areas of interest, and long-term retention in the profession. One of the scholars expressed a part of the program's success is how, through experience, the program gives the scholars an understanding of an academic work environment. Additionally, she noted that the scholars enter the profession with an extensive network of individuals they can call upon when needed. And lastly, and perhaps most touching to us, one of the scholars shared that the program helped her build her professional library identity and helped her see herself as a librarian.

Plans for the Future

Even in just a few years, more opportunities exist than when we started, for us as program coordinators and for our scholars to build community. The ARL Diversity Alliance is in full swing and as members of that group, we are slowly learning the benefits (e.g. our scholars are now part of a Slack channel just for current residents), and we have seen the Residency Interest Group of ACRL grow. The opportunity to connect with other resident coordinators was a big plus in August 2019, when Natalia attended the first ever [Library Diversity and Residency Studies \(LDRS\) Conference](#) in Greensboro, North Carolina. The conference focused on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in libraries, including but not restricted to Library Diversity Residency programs. The conference was hosted by UNC Greensboro in collaboration with the ACRL Diversity Alliance and the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL). The LDRS brought together individuals from academic and public libraries, LIS programs, and other interested groups. Natalia gave a presentation on the DSP as part of the panel “Best Practices in Establishing Library Diversity Residency Programs.” In the spring of 2020, the group that organized the conference published the first issue of the new journal [The Library Diversity and Residency Studies Journal](#) which will no doubt become an excellent resource now and in the years to come.

Our plan is to continue to support and mentor our past and current Diversity Scholars, and we look forward to seeing what comes next for them and are excited to begin recruitment for our fourth scholar. As more people participate in the program, we hope to build a strong network among our Diversity Scholars. Notably, we—the two of us and the three Diversity Scholars—were accepted to write a chapter about the OSUL DSP for the upcoming book *Learning in Action: Designing Successful Graduate Student Work Experiences in Academic Libraries*. Additionally, we are in conversation with our University Librarian to secure permanent funding for the positions and raise the salary. We plan to work on ways to re-envision and expand the assessment of the program’s impact both for the library and for the scholars themselves. We also need to continue to practice as well as expand strategic and proactive recruitment; we have plans this year to connect with various groups on campus to speak directly with undergraduate students about the possibility of working in libraries, archives, and other cultural heritage institutions as a potential career path. In order to ensure the program’s sustainability, we will not take our existing buy-in from colleagues for granted and will continue to advocate for the program. A long-term vision is to grow our program as a model that can be replicated in other academic libraries in Oregon and the PNW, perhaps through the Orbis Cascade Alliance, to form a much larger cohort. Through poster presentations by our scholars and committee members at Oregon and Pacific Northwest library conferences we are slowly increasing awareness.

Conclusion

As Angela Galvan powerfully states, “While recruiting initiatives and fellowships are reasonable starting points, they become meaningless gestures for institutions which screen on performing Whiteness. These actions are further undermined by framing diversity as a problem to be solved rather than engaging in reflective work to dismantle institutional bias” (Galvan, 2017). On its own, the DSP cannot solve the larger problem of a culture of Whiteness in the field—but it’s

a contribution as part of our library and university's various equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives that tie into the broader profession's work. If your library is considering a program like this, you must look at the cultural environment of your institution and consider where your institution is with changing this culture of Whiteness. The environment has to be such that equity, diversity, and inclusion work is encouraged and celebrated – and continuous. It is vital to remember that social justice, equity, and inclusion should be everyone's work. It is not a one-time endeavor, a box to be checked, but a process of continual growth and reflection of the library and its campus community. As the DSP committee flows from inception to new iterations, with new scholars and new committee members, we reflect on what we did and why, rethinking, learning and growing as individuals and a committee, and hopefully an institution as well. The questioning along with enthusiasm of new members and new scholars helps us grow a better program and also make shifts while checking our own perceptions. And most importantly to our DSP, is that our scholars are getting the experiences they desire, in an environment where they can be themselves, and a culture that supports them.

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