Paying for the Right to Read

Institutions are developing innovative solutions to cope with the high cost of traditional academic publishing models.
Faculty Women of Color in the Academy
National Conference This April

THE FACULTY WOMEN OF COLOR IN THE ACADEMY (FWCA) conference is a unique educational and professional opportunity for INDIGENOUS and women of color in higher education to network, engage, and learn with colleagues from around the country. The 12th annual FWCA conference will be held April 11-14, 2024, at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, VA. Registration is open.

Katherine S. Cho, 2023 speaker

Roxane Gay, 2022 speaker

Tressie McMillan Cottom, 2023 speaker

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12
Black Studies Faculty
A recent grant expands opportunity for Black studies at the University of Rochester

16
Improving Child Welfare Outcomes
The University of North Dakota Department of Social Work is helping American Indian/Alaskan Native children.

14
Op Ed: SCOTUS Ban Consequences
The race-conscious admissions ban further reduces non-athletics college opportunities for Black men.

18
Marketing DEI
Communications experts share advice for marketing higher education DEI.

22
Expanding Access to Education
Pell Grant expansion leads to more equitable access to education for incarcerated students.

In Each Issue
In Brief 7
New Directions 9
Research Roundup 10
Closing Insight 58
Celebrating Black History Month
SPECIAL REPORTS

Community Colleges

30

Promoting Affordability and Access

Through several efforts, SUNY is increasing affordability and accessibility of its community colleges.

34

Exploring Transfer

Vassar College’s summer intensive program equips community college students to obtain four-year degrees.

28

Partnerships and Transfer Growth

Institutional partnerships play a key role in improving community college to four-year university transfer and completion rates.

32

Advancing STEM Professions

The Community College Outreach Program at Stanford University promotes diversity in STEM.

Academic Libraries

38

Celebrating Library Diversity Efforts

Highlighting 2024 LEAD Award winners’ programs, initiatives, and innovations.

48

Cover Story: Pay to Publish, Pay to Read

Traditional academic publishing models are being challenged to encourage more equitable access.

54

Documenting the Borderlands

A library-led project uses digital archiving to tell the stories of Indigenous and Hispanic communities near the U.S.-Mexico border.

56

Digitizing History

The HBCU Digital Library Trust is expanding access to African American history collections.
Assistant (Tenure-Track) Professors needed in the following areas:

- American Sign Language (ASL)
- Cybersecurity
- Digital Media Arts (DMA)
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- First Year Seminar
- Mathematics (2 vacancies)
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Job opportunties that feature an annual salary range of $77,250.30 to $108,344.14 along with excellent benefits, professional development, stipends (position specific), and an inclusive workplace.
Culturally Competent Nursing

Rooted in the interactions between people, nursing is as much an interpersonal experience as it is a health care career. In recognition of this, many nursing schools are implementing cultural and linguistic competency training into their curricula as a means to advance health equity and reduce health care disparities.

“Some people argue that care is very scientific [and that] nurses and health care providers make decisions around patient care based on data, irrespective of differences in identity, points of view, or perspectives,” said Rushika Patel, PhD, chief inclusion officer at the University of Michigan School of Nursing, in a recent interview with NursingColleges.com. “However, that’s flawed because human interaction is such an important part of the patient-provider interaction. Culturally and linguistically relevant communication has the potential to help us meet our goals around health equity.”

Effective health care delivery relies on an understanding of the patient as a whole person by considering factors such as housing arrangements, familial environments, cultural backgrounds, and language proficiency, among others. Specific implementation of culturally competent training varies among nursing programs and can include case studies, simulations, and specialized practical application activities. Common among all of these is the commitment to appreciating cultural diversity and recognizing and confronting stereotypes in a way that nurtures mutual respect and understanding.

Nurses are in a unique position to impact people, and authentic, compassionate navigation of the variety of visible and invisible differences in a community is a vital tool in the health care practitioner’s toolbox.

“It’s about practice and integrating what you learned into how you care for patients,” Patel said in the interview. “It’s also much more than your career because you can’t have this sensibility in one aspect of your life but none in the other aspects of your life. Ultimately, it is a profound commitment to humility, thinking with an open heart, listening to people, and not stereotyping,” she said.

Cultural and linguistic competency fosters active patient participation in health care decisions, increases the likelihood for follow-up, and ultimately results in better health outcomes. This practice serves not only patients but communities as a whole by providing safe environments for growth, combating compassion fatigue among providers, and supporting a higher quality of life for a greater number of individuals, particularly within historically underserved communities.

Report Highlights Importance of DEI Work at Princeton

Princeton University recently released its third annual Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) report, which underscores the university’s goals of increasing its accountability and advancing accessibility and DEI efforts within the campus community. The report covers various initiatives during the 2022-2023 academic year, including workshops that focus on Jewish identity, academic freedom, and the university’s new Transfer Scholars Initiative, which supports community college students in New Jersey. Additionally, updated demographic data and surveys on the disability status of students, faculty, and staff is included.

“Community expertise and participation will be vital as we identify new opportunities, sustain existing activities, and work collaboratively to move forward in this shared endeavor,” Shawn Maxam, Princeton’s associate provost for diversity and inclusion, said in the report.

UNCF Celebrates 80-Year Legacy

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the United Negro College Fund (UNCF), founded in April 1944. Supporting minority students’ pursuit of education, UNCF is the largest private scholarship provider in the nation with over 400 academic scholarships and fellowships. Since its inception, UNCF has provided financial support to more than 500,000 students and raised millions of dollars to fund their education. The organization is celebrating the milestone through community fundraising, most notably, the National “A Mind Is...” Gala in Washington, D.C. Commemorative events will recognize the founders of the organization and the donors and partnerships that support it. To learn more, visit uncf.org.
The University of Michigan (U-M) and New York University (NYU) are launching new institutes focused on the research and prevention of antisemitism.

The news comes amid years of increased incidents of antisemitism and a large spike in reports since the start of the Israel-Hamas war, as reported by ADL (formerly the Anti-Defamation League).

U-M is establishing the Raoul Wallenberg Institute, named for the Swedish humanitarian and businessman who saved thousands of Jewish people during the Holocaust while serving as Sweden’s special envoy in German-occupied Budapest. Wallenberg issued protective passports and sheltered Jews in 1944. He graduated from U-M with a degree in architecture in 1935. The institute will be housed in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, with collaboration extending throughout the university.

Plans for the project were revealed in early December at a Board of Regents meeting. The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is working on complementary efforts to enhance religious inclusion and interfaith engagement across campus.

NYU is establishing the NYU Center for the Study of Antisemitism with support from a seven-figure donation. The center is expected to open in the fall of 2024, with a focus on cross-disciplinary research on historical and modern forms of antisemitism and its links to anti-Zionism and other forms of hate, discrimination, and extremism.

The center will house programs and training to educate against antisemitism and other forms of prejudice. An inaugural faculty advisory panel has been selected.

“This gift comes at just the right time — at a moment that cries out for new study, new insights, and new solutions to combatting this age-old hatred,” said NYU President Linda Mills in a statement. “I look forward to applying the center’s findings on our campus and to sharing them with other colleges, universities, and communities.”

Eastern Michigan University Students Promote Voter Registration Ahead of Midterm Elections

With elections around the corner and a variety of proposed legislation that would directly affect colleges, concerned students and faculty are volunteering their time and talents to promote voter registration on their campus. Students, faculty, and staff with Engage EMU, Eastern Michigan University’s community engagement and partnership organization, are encouraging their peers to get out and vote with the help of the Collegiate Student Advisory Task Force and the Campus Vote Project. Michigan’s governor signed into law several bills at the end of 2023 to improve election efficiency, with conditions that moved the date of Michigan’s primary elections three weeks earlier than it had been previously scheduled. The change presented a stumbling block for many would-be voters at EMU, as the new date coincides with the university’s spring break. This prompted members of Engage EMU to share the new, accessible voting options and help increase participation among student voters. The project’s director is Jessica “Decky” Alexander, with help from Graduate Assistant Lamarr Mitchell and Communications and Projects Manager Maggie Whittemore.
ARKANSAS

Jerry W. Thomas, EdD, has been appointed chancellor of Southern Arkansas University Tech in Camden. Thomas previously served as vice president for academic affairs at National Park College in Hot Springs.

KENTUCKY

Paula Alexander-Delpech, PhD, has been named inaugural dean for inclusive excellence and success at Frontier Nursing University in Versailles. Alexander-Delpech was chief diversity and inclusion officer at the university.

LOUISIANA

Monique Guillory, PhD, has been appointed provost and chief academic and enrollment officer at Dillard University in New Orleans. Guillory previously served as chief of staff and senior vice president at the University of the District of Columbia.

NEW JERSEY

Danielle Lopez, MS, has been named inaugural director of diversity, equity, and inclusion for accessibility services at Hudson County Community College in Jersey City. Lopez was assistant director and academic counselor for the Center for Student Accessibility at City University of New York.

NEW YORK

Chance Glenn, PhD, has been appointed president of Buffalo State University. Glenn previously served as provost and vice president for academic affairs at the University of Houston-Victoria in Texas.

Shalei Simms, PhD, has been named dean of the School of Business at the State University of New York at Old Westbury in Long Island. Simms was acting dean of the school.

Jessica Smith, JD, has been appointed chief operating officer, and Akilah Rosado, EdD, as chief transformation officer at Relay Graduate School of Education. Smith previously served as chief people officer at the institution. Rosado was previously the chief diversity, equity, and inclusion officer.

Rosemarie Wesson, PhD, has been appointed associate vice chancellor and university vice provost for research at the City University of New York. Wesson previously served as associate provost for research at the City College of New York.

NORTH DAKOTA

David Wilson, PhD, has been named inaugural associate vice president for health research and chair of the Department of Indigenous Health at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks. Wilson was a senior policy adviser for the White House Council on Native American Affairs in Washington, D.C.

TENNESSEE

Rachel Davis Mersey, PhD, has been named inaugural associate vice president for health research and chair of the Department of Indigenous Health at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks. Wilson was a senior policy adviser for the White House Council on Native American Affairs in Washington, D.C.

Kareem Jordan, PhD, has been appointed dean of the College of Juvenile Justice at Prairie View A&M University. Jordan previously served as director of diversity and inclusion for the School of Public Affairs at American University in Washington, D.C.

Emma Savage-Davis, EdD, has been named dean of the College of Education, Leadership Studies, and Counseling at the University of Lynchburg in Virginia.

NEW YORK

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Roger A. Fairfax Jr., JD, has been named dean of the School of Law at Howard University. Fairfax was dean of the College of Law at American University.

Has your campus recently hired a new administrator? Insight Into Diversity wants to publish your news! Send your announcements to editor@insightintodiversity.com.
Alcohol Use and Intimate Partner Violence

A team of researchers at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University are developing a study to monitor heavy college drinkers in real time to prevent intimate partner violence. The study, supported by a $434,491 grant from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, involves 100 self-identified heavy drinkers with histories of intimate partner violence. They will be using pocket-sized devices to track drinking habits, alcohol levels, mood, and behavior. Participants will receive prompts on their phones five times daily to report Breathalyzer results and answer surveys. The objective data aims to identify blood-alcohol concentration levels associated with the highest risk of perpetrating violence, addressing the challenge of under-reported alcohol consumption among college students. The study also broadens the definition of intimate partner violence to include online and technology-based forms, including cyberstalking and bullying. Researchers hope that the results of the study will help in developing solutions to reduce alcohol-related domestic violence.

Effects of High Risk Pregnancy on Children with Disabilities

Northwestern University scientists, January 2024 recipients of a $5 million National Institutes for Health grant, are leading a two-year study to explore the impact of a high risk pregnant person’s environment, diet, stress, medications, and social well-being on both pregnancy and their resulting child’s health. As part of the national Environmental influences on Child Health Outcomes (ECHO) Program, the researchers aim to uncover bidirectional influences between mothers and children — from pregnancy through early childhood. Unlike other ECHO awardees, Northwestern researchers will specifically investigate a cohort of children born during the study who are subsequently diagnosed with disabilities, including those with physical and neurological conditions, a group who has historically been excluded from medical research.

Dispelling Myths of Regret Among Gender-Affirming Surgery Patients

The scientifically unfounded theory that many transgender and gender-diverse (TGD) individuals regret gender-affirming surgery (GAS) has been recently challenged by researchers at Johns Hopkins University. By examining the existing studies on post-GAS regret, the researchers found that fewer than 1% of TGD individuals who underwent GAS reported feelings of regret associated with their surgery. The researchers propose that further studies on GAS regret improve their analysis by using tools like GENDER-Q, waiting to evaluate regret until one year after surgery, and considering baseline factors like age and race, which can provide greater nuance.

Health Inequity a Greater Motivator for Social Action

A new American Association for the Advancement of Science study examines the impact of highlighting racial disparities in health, economics, and belonging on social media engagement and support for disparity-mitigating policies. Led by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania; University of California, Irvine; and University of Michigan, a series of four health-related studies found that racial health disparities prompt greater action support, social media engagement, and policy endorsement compared to economic or belonging-based disparities. The findings suggest that people view health inequity as violating sacred moral values, enhancing perceived injustice. Despite many of these inequities being intrinsically linked, an emphasis on health consequences is more likely to garner support, even for economic solutions. The study provides evidence of the potency of health-related disparity information, highlighting its potential to mobilize public support and guide efforts to address racial inequality.
Health Science and Medical Career Pathways

StEP-UP Program
StEP-UP provides exposure to a variety of health science careers to students who are members of historically disadvantaged and underrepresented groups in the health science professions. Over a total of six Saturdays during the academic year, students participate in age-appropriate interactive sessions at MCW.

DSHREP
The Diversity Summer Health-Related Research Education Program (DSHREP) works with Undergraduate students and teens in a supportive cohort that supplements their pre-medicine and biomedical studies. Students will work with MCW faculty and medical and graduate students.

ROADS Program
The Research Opportunity for Academic Development in Science (ROADS) is a program designed to provide high school students with a meaningful experience in a research laboratory setting and to stimulate their career interest in science, medicine and biomedical research.

AIM Program
The Apprenticeship in Medicine (AIM) program provides high school students from diverse backgrounds the opportunity to stimulate their interest in careers in medicine, biomedical research and allied health.

Visit our website
www.mcw.edu/education/pathway-programs

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Grant Fuels Black Studies Faculty Expansion at the University of Rochester

By Erik Cliburn

Since its launch in late 2022, the Department of Black Studies at the University of Rochester (UR) has worked to advance conversations surrounding Black and African culture and identity through an interdisciplinary, global lens. Thanks to a new $3 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation’s Higher Learning program, the department will further its goals by hiring new faculty members from several fields. The funding will support three new full-time, tenure-track faculty from two specific subfields within Black studies — geography, and sexuality and/or trans studies — along with an open position without a particular subfield. The goal of making the Department of Black Studies a global leader in African diaspora research and discussion aligns with UR’s 2030 strategic plan, which emphasizes the advancement of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts and an increase in interdisciplinary collaboration.

“I am so proud that the School of Arts & Sciences can lead on this critical priority with the expansion of a department that will inspire conversation, research, and ultimately action,” Nicole Sampson, the Robert L. and Mary L. Sproull Dean of the School of Arts & Sciences, said in a press release. “This new investment will allow us to build a consequential department, making [UR] a leader in working to understand the global African diaspora.”

This hiring effort comes only several months after the department brought in two new faculty members — Jordan Ealey, PhD, expert on Black feminism in performance art and theater, and Philip V. McHarris, PhD, expert on racial inequality, housing, and policing. Rochester’s Black studies program is designed to integrate various disciplines, including social sciences and humanities, to explore the historical, cultural, psychological, economic, and political aspects of people of African descent in the “Atlantic world,” which includes the United States, the Caribbean, and Latin America.

Before the department was established in the 2023-2024 academic year, Black studies faculty were housed within UR’s Frederick Douglass Institute for African and African American Studies. The creation of the Department of Black Studies allows the institute to focus solely on programming and community engagement events.

“We’re building a department that houses scholars who don’t conventionally fit within traditional disciplinary modes. Our scholars are working at the edges of the humanities and social sciences — often using literature and performance — to understand the phenomena within their fields.”

Jeffrey McCune Jr., PhD

The department offers a bachelor of arts degree and minor in Black studies and is a particular draw for those who wish to dual major in history, English, political science, comparative literature, and anthropology fields. Students are encouraged to engage in internships, attend the distinguished speaker series, and participate in a biweekly video and film series exploring Africa’s past and present. Course topics include the Harlem Renaissance, race and gender in popular film, incarceration in the U.S., and discrimination in economics, among many others.

By using the cluster-hiring method, the department seeks to further expand its interdisciplinary goals by bringing in faculty from numerous humanities and social science fields, such as anthropology, English, history, modern languages and cultures, music, religion, and classical studies. The goal is to have between 10 and 12 faculty members by the 2025-2026 academic year. In doing so, the department hopes to become a vital resource for advancing the lives and conditions of Black populations, both within the university community and beyond.
Having graduated 1,058 physicians since our inaugural class in 2017, we are committed to preparing our students for success. Our impressive first-time pass rate for the COMLEX-USA Level 1 exam in 2023-24 exceeds 96 percent, surpassing the national average*. Furthermore, the 99 percent residency placement rate for the class of 2023 highlights our dedication to launching successful medical careers.

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*According to the COMLEX-USA Examination Performance Data
Op Ed: SCOTUS Ruling Disproportionately Impacts Opportunities for Black Males

Ban on race-conscious admissions leaves Black males that are not student-athletes with reduced access to higher education.

By Christian Collins

For too long, American society has traditionally viewed Black men’s value and worth through the lens of our physical labor. Originating in chattel slavery and continuing through the Jim Crow era and into the present day, the benchmark for our collective societal participation has never been about who we are as individuals but about what we can provide to others in terms of economic value. A prominent lens into how deeply this perspective is ingrained into our governmental framework is college athletics. The rulings from the United States Supreme Court declaring race-conscious admissions policies unconstitutional are a warning that diversity, equity, and inclusion for Black males is only prioritized on playing fields and not in classrooms.

“Equal Play, Unequal Pay: Race-Conscious Admissions and the Systemic Exploitation of Black Male Athletes,” my report for the Center for Law and Social Policy, a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization advancing policy solutions for people with low incomes, highlights how college athletics exploit Black male athletes for profit instead of treating them as full students. Though athletics were often featured in the legal arguments involving race-conscious admissions, an underacknowledged aspect was how athletics are a significant enrollment mechanism for Black male students at selective universities.

Commonly marketed as a substantial opportunity offered by universities to diversify their campuses through providing scholarships, college athletics function as a problematic method of attempting to replicate the impact of race-conscious admissions due to the economic exploitation that athletes are subjected to. Given already existing racial and economic disparities, and with additional threats to financial aid and support services programs meant for underrepresented student groups, Black males face a shrinking number of options to access an affordable postsecondary education at selective institutions. Thus, the Supreme Court rulings will likely create a system where the willingness of Black male athletes to have their talents exploited is a requirement to be admitted to selective institutions and receive financial aid.

Not only do Black male athletes receive inadequate academic support, but, due to their overrepresentation in revenue-generating sports, they are disproportionately subjected to institutional surveillance and monitoring tactics, including tracking their personal social media usage, locations, and biometric data.

Classifying college athletes as amateurs theoretically establishes access to postsecondary education as the primary objective of college sports programs, but the label of amateurism has purposely been used by colleges to limit the compensation of athletes. Though the growth of college athletics as a business sector has expanded substantially in the past several decades, this practice has even older roots.

In 1929, the Carnegie Foundation released a 385-page report detailing how universities were using the commercialization of athletics to erect new campus buildings and pay professors off the backs of unpaid college athletes. The term “student-athletes” originated in the 1950s as part of a legal strategy from the NCAA to deny workers’ compensation benefits to a widow after her husband died playing college football. In the modern era, billions of dollars flow through college athletics departments from media broadcasts, ticket and merchandise purchases, and other revenue streams. Corporations experience similar financial windfalls through advertising opportunities, sponsorships, and deals with athletes marketing their products. The recent legalization of sports gambling allows almost every American adult to gain financially from college athletes. However, the athletes who bear the brunt of the labor that fuels college athletics see very little, if any, of the profits.

What makes these issues of particular concern for Black male athletes is not just their overrepresentation compared to other student groups but also their concentration within the two largest
college sports in terms of revenue: football and men’s basketball. Three hundred fifty-two schools make up the NCAA Division 1, the athletic division that includes the largest schools by in-person student population and revenue raised from athletics nationally. Just under 11% of all Black men enrolled in these schools received some form of athletic scholarship aid for the 2022-2023 academic year, making them the second-largest group to receive this aid. In the same academic year, 55% of Division 1 scholarship football players and 57 percent of Division 1 scholarship men’s basketball players identified as Black.

Due to the vast amounts of money raised primarily by Black male athletes who represent majorities in revenue-generating sports, these Black men in turn are underserved in their academic and social development while on campus. Men’s basketball had the lowest four-class graduation rate of any NCAA sport in 2022-2023 and is the only sport where less than half of participants graduated: only 48% of athletes graduated within six years of enrolling, and for Black males it was only 44%. Football was the third-lowest NCAA sport for graduation rates, with 62% of all players and 58% of Black players graduating within six years.

Not only do Black male athletes receive inadequate academic support, but, due to their overrepresentation in revenue-generating sports, they are disproportionately subjected to institutional surveillance and monitoring tactics, including tracking their personal social media usage, locations, and biometric data. Athletes at all levels of collegiate competition also face a lack of health care coverage and support to handle non-tuition costs of attendance.

In the wake of postsecondary institutions being compelled to adopt race-neutral admissions, Black men applying to colleges and universities face the disproportionate burden of adverse consequences. Despite not being subject to the Supreme Court rulings, several programs dedicated to increasing access for students from underrepresented populations have come under increased legal and administrative threat because of deliberate misinterpretation of the scope of the rulings.

My research shows that the removal of race-conscious admissions policies and continuous underrepresentation of financial aid programs create barriers to educational opportunities for Black men, leaving athletic talent as one of the few avenues for admission. Champions of diversity, equity, and inclusion in postsecondary education must develop new strategies that support not just Black men but all groups of students whose educational potential is not seen as the priority in their acceptance to college.

Christian Collins is a policy analyst for education, labor, and worker justice at the Center for Law and Social Policy.
Community Outreach

Social Work Project Improves North Dakota’s Native Child Welfare Outcomes

By Nikki Brahm

A statewide program at the University of North Dakota (UND) Department of Social Work that reduces the disproportionate placement of American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) children away from their families has been awarded the necessary funding to further develop its work.

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) awarded UND a five-year federal grant totaling $2.5 million in October. This, their second grant from ACF, allows the department and its partners to continue building upon the North Dakota Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Implementation Partnership Grant. This funding helps advance ICWA, legislation enacted in 1978 to stop the unwarranted removal of AI/AN children from their families.

Due to decades of stalled progress in reducing welfare system inequities under ICWA, the U.S. government issued regulations and guidelines to better implement the law in 2016. That same year, UND’s first ACF grant, which ultimately received a two-year extension, was awarded.

Now ICWA is seen as the gold standard of child welfare practice because the law requires welfare workers to engage in active efforts to reunite families, says Carenlee Barkdull, PhD, principal investigator for the grant and UND social work professor. “We know that kids do so much better [statistically] if removal from the home can be prevented, and [when] the family receives intensive support and services to address problems and challenges. … And we certainly know that the more kids are connected to their communities and culture, the better outcomes for kids, families, and communities overall,” Barkdull says.

The first iteration of the grant focused on developing partnerships, new policies and procedures, and stakeholder training curricula. It also led to the creation of the ICWA Family Preservationists (IFP) Program, housed by the Native American Training Institute (NATI), says Harmony Bercier, project manager at UND and prevention services program developer with NATI. IFPs are authorized representatives of the North Dakota tribes who provide information and updates on Indian welfare cases, real-time coaching, meeting support, and education on ICWA to families.

Other training programs developed through this grant include education for tribally affiliated Qualified Expert Witnesses (QEWs), who can testify in cases on the social and cultural standards of the tribe, and who also sometimes serve on the IFP; cultural competency instruction for a variety of professionals including human services and child welfare workers, as well as legal advocates; and resources for foster parents.

“IT’s projects like ours that highlight the strengths of tribal knowledge and the history and all of the capacities and the wonderful things that we have to share,” Bercier says. “Working on those trust relationships on both sides [is needed] so that partners can come together to create something that’s truly transformative and awesome.”

Program leaders are developing new curricula as well as reviewing the long-term outcomes of the training. Additionally, they aim to expand resources, especially for tribal stakeholders, as well as study the IFP and QEW programs’ effectiveness and find areas for improvement. A long-term goal is to serve as a model for organizations developing similar programs in their own state.

Project Partners

- Native American Training Institute (NATI)
- North Dakota Supreme Court (Court Improvement Project)
- North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission
- Children and Family Services Section of the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services
- Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation
- Spirit Lake Nation
- Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
- Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians

At UND, the project has positively impacted the Department of Social Work, says Barkdull, including enhancing the academic environment for Native students by providing expanded accessibility, academic resources, and diversity, equity, and inclusion-related discussions and practices. UND is producing ICWA champions, some of whom have continued their involvement with the organization in their professional careers, Barkdull says.

“The ripple effects have been so transformative for our department and for how we view ourselves, for who we are, for how we teach and what we teach,” Barkdull says.
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Best Practices for Marketing Campus DEI

By Nikki Brahm
In the dynamic landscape of higher education, marketing and communicating DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) values calls for innovative and intentional approaches. By adopting a number of guidelines, institutions can better showcase their diversity goals, practices, programs, past successes, and future commitments.

Consumers care deeply about DEI, particularly as it is expressed through branding and marketing. For example, 59% of individuals say they are more loyal to brands that stand for DEI as evidenced through their marketing efforts, according to the report “The Difference Diversity Makes in Online Advertising” by Facebook Advertising.

This is especially significant when viewed next to the evolving demographics in higher education, where an increasing number of students of different races, ethnicities, nationalities, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities, socioeconomic statuses, abilities, and more are currently attending colleges and universities.

“Right now, we have the most diverse adult population in U.S. history,” says Shelley Willingham, chief revenue officer with The Diversity Movement, a business consulting agency. “If we’re not capable of reaching [and connecting with] that group, that’s putting companies and universities at a competitive disadvantage.”

Willingham, as well as Amma Marfo, content designer, consultant, and speaker, and Holly Mendelson, co-owner and co-publisher of Insight Into Diversity and marketing communications consultant, are experts in the DEI marketing space. Together, they offer strategies and tips for colleges and universities seeking ways to effectively market and communicate their DEI commitment.

Continually Weave DEI Throughout the Entire Brand-User Experience

Given its importance to current and prospective stakeholders, dedication to DEI can be showcased as a primary component of an institution’s brand and incorporated throughout a stakeholder’s entire user experience.

 “[Institutions] compete for students, employees, grant and donor money — you want to use everything in your arsenal as a competitive reason why your school should be chosen over another,” Mendelson says. “Besides academics and sports, a college’s diverse and inclusive climate can be a deciding factor.”

It’s critical to include any and all information pertaining to an institution’s DEI work and efforts as part of all school- and brand-related communications. This includes press statements, print and online media, awards and rankings, student and staff recruitment and retention materials, social media, website, institutional reports, and more. It’s imperative that an institution’s commitment be upfront, consistent, and visible across all platforms.

For example, on university websites, users shouldn’t have to search for DEI pages to find what they are looking for, as this may communicate it’s not of primary significance or worthy of showcasing, says Mendelson. When diversity and inclusion are highlighted from the first look — on the homepage — it makes a statement about that institution’s priorities.

There should be persistent dialogue about DEI topics across disciplines, departments, and offices, so that it is ingrained within the campus culture, Willingham says.

“Although a lot of this work is generated in the DEI office, it doesn’t exist there exclusively; it’s about the essence of DEI that is pervasive throughout your entire organization. That’s for all populations — people who work for you, prospective and current students, community members, donors, and alumni.”

Holly Mendelson
“Although a lot of this work is generated in DEI offices, it doesn’t exist there exclusively; it’s about the essence of DEI that is pervasive throughout your entire organization,” Mendelson says. “That’s for all constituents — current and prospective students and employees, surrounding community members, donors, campus recruiters, grantors, and alumni.”

Diversity Should Not Be a Legal Obligation, but Instead an Opportunity
Many colleges and universities think that stating their adherence to legal mandates is sufficient. How DEI efforts are accomplished, versus simply following the law, needs to be communicated in a completely different way. It needs to be ongoing, intentional, and incorporated into every message a campus sends to stakeholders.

Communications must touch on all the dynamic forms of diversity and not exclude any populations, Mendelson says.

Because many schools combine offices to oversee DEI along with Title IX and compliance, it’s possible for language to come across as overly legalistic or academic as a result. However, personalizing communications to ensure a hospitable tone, and marketing DEI separately from compliance, is a must.

“You need to be mindful of the words that you’re using, that they’re warm and welcoming and communicating what your campus climate and culture is like,” she says. “People want to know that they will be successful and can thrive at your institution — including compliance in that conversation will negate that feeling.”

Being proactive in showcasing your DEI efforts can make or break the decision for an employee to stay on your campus, or to join your campus as a new employee. For example, language in job listings must be inclusive and not just the status quo. Information on human resources web pages should include current employee demographics, describe professional development and mentoring opportunities, and list the diverse organizations and affinity groups open to employees.

As more and more states are removing DEI offices and programs, this is an opportunity for your campus to stand out, says Mendelson.

The same efforts should be made to encourage current and future students to be part of a diverse and welcoming campus environment. This can be as simple as ensuring that your student ambassadors are pointing out opportunities for diverse students as they take their campus tour. Make sure your website includes information about student demographics and names of the clubs and campus organizations for underrepresented students.

Inform Your Work with Diverse Teams
In addition to crafting informative messaging in collaboration with staff across university offices, such as an LGBTQ+ office, multicultural center, or international office, establishing designated teams for this is also a best practice, especially if these are staffed with diverse employees, Willingham says.

“If you don’t have that diverse [marketing] team, use your community to build informal groups that will help you connect the dots where [your team] may not have experience,” Willingham says. “When you have diverse groups of students, when you have diverse opinions from your faculty and your staff, you know you’re creating an atmosphere and an environment for people to thrive, for more creativity, for more innovation.”

Throughout the design process, efforts are often adapted based on data collection, says Marfo. Utilize your employee resource groups and different campus offices to get feedback on your messaging. Run ideas by a variety of campus constituents or use focus groups to gauge truthfulness, appropriateness, and inclusivity of messaging.

Getting input from a range of perspectives can help identify potential
issues and ensure that communications are conveying what was intended.

Ensure Authenticity
Another crucial best practice is to continually ensure authenticity, Willingham says.

“We want to make sure marketers are mindful of not creating an atmosphere or an illusion that there’s progress with a certain community if there really isn’t, because that can really hurt the communities that you say you protect and care about,” she says.

For example, although institutions may have commitments to DEI, their campus populations may not be representative of those goals. It’s okay to be transparent about this and clearly communicate the ongoing efforts to further progress.

Honesty is also essential in marketing imagery, which should be genuine and representative of the actual community.

Transparency around DEI efforts can attract students and staff, says Mendelson. It’s helpful to offer testimonials from different communities that are sincere and not scripted so that outsiders can get a sense of the environment from those who have been there.

“Hearing a person’s story directly can often bring a message to life in a way that a brochure or website can’t,” says Mendelson.

Be Mindful of all Audiences
The best practices of DEI work are constantly evolving, and leaders strive to find new ways of supporting their values, says Marfo. It’s important to remember the areas of marketing that aren’t typically top of mind, such as with alumni outreach, grantors, or donors.

If your campus has made great strides in DEI, make this an opportunity to stand out among your peers and your campus community. The payoff can be enormous.

― Shelley Willingham

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Pell Grant Expansion Extends Educational Opportunities to Thousands of Incarcerated Students

By Erik Cliburn

People in prison who participate in postsecondary education programs are 43%* less likely to return to prison and have employment rates 13%** higher upon release than their incarcerated peers.

* According to Vera Institute of Justice data
**According to RAND Corporation data
Prison education programs (PEPs) have long been proven to be an incredible benefit to the individuals enrolled and to society at large. These efforts provide opportunities for self-growth, reflection, and personal development that are often inaccessible to a population that is largely composed of marginalized people.

“People who participate in postsecondary education in prison describe the experience as transformative, pushing them to develop new identities, perspectives, and goals, to focus on self-reflection and improvement,” writes Niloufer Taber, an associate director for research at the Vera Institute of Justice — a national nonprofit that researches the criminal justice system and advocates against injustice within the system. “These courses also provide incarcerated students and formerly incarcerated alumni with knowledge, skills, and connections they can use to benefit their children and families, multiplying the impact of a single college degree.”

Data supports the positive impact of PEPs, revealing a 43% lower likelihood of recidivism and a 13% higher employment rate for participants, according to the Vera Institute and the RAND Corporation — a nonprofit policy think tank that conducts research on numerous public sectors, including education. Beyond individual benefits, however, high-quality PEPs contribute to safer correctional facilities, increased public safety, and taxpayer savings, writes Taber.

Thanks to statutory changes through the FAFSA Simplification Act and approval from the U.S. Department of Education (ED), those enrolled in approved PEPs are eligible for Federal Pell Grants, significantly expanding access to the funding. This policy took effect in July 2023, but it is now beginning to bear fruit with the creation of dozens of new corrections education programs led by colleges and universities. These efforts build on the success of the ED’s Second Chance Pell (SCP) Experiment, which launched in 2015 and involved nearly 200 higher educational institutions that facilitated PEPs for incarcerated students.

From 2016 to 2022, more than 40,000 incarcerated students enrolled in higher education programs approved through SCP, according to the Vera Institute. Now, with the expansion of eligible grantees to nearly 770,000, the number has the potential to grow exponentially.

Greater Pell Grant eligibility marks a significant step in addressing racial and economic disparities by providing more opportunities to populations who are disproportionately impacted by incarceration. However, despite SCP’s success, racial and gender inequities persist in enrollment.

White men were overrepresented by 7%, while Hispanic or Latino and Black men were underrepresented by 16% and 8%, respectively. Among correctional facilities for women, White women made up 65% of SCP enrollees, despite accounting for only 47% of the prison population. Though Black women had more representation than Black men, with an overrepresentation of 1%, Hispanic and Latina women were underrepresented similarly to their male counterparts, at 13%.

Despite the existing inequities, prison education experts agree that the Pell expansion policy has the opportunity to build better futures for thousands of people through various existing and developing degree, certification, and credential programs.

“Access to higher education in prison illuminates some of the darkest corners of our society, revealing an untapped reservoir of intellectual potential,” says Ved Price, executive director of the Brookings Institution. Now, with the walls of the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility and the adjacent Taconic Correctional Facility. Through its Bedford Hills College Program (BHCP) and Taconic College Program (TCP), MMC provides incarcerated women with the opportunity to pursue associate degrees in social sciences and a bachelor’s degree in sociology or politics and human rights. MMC has been the sole degree-granting institution for BHCP for more than two decades, awarding over 248 degrees since its inception in 1997. The TCP, established in partnership with Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison, offers an uninterrupted pathway to a bachelor’s degree for women transferred from maximum-security to medium-security prisons.

These programs integrate incarcerated students into the broader MMC community, meaning they follow the same curriculum and requirements as the main campus. The BRIDGE (Building Relationships for Inclusion, Diversity, Globalism, and Equity) model used by MMC emphasizes mutual learning and dialogue between incarcerated and main campus students, which further improves the chances of the successful re-entry of incarcerated individuals into society. MMC’s commitment extends beyond traditional courses, with the Crossing Borders academic conference, the Stand Up Speak Out film festival, and other events that foster collaboration, creativity, and scholarly achievement across campuses.
Each year, dozens of inmates at Mule Creek State Prison in California earn degrees through the facility’s partnerships with education institutions. (Photo courtesy of California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation)

the Alliance for Higher Education in Prison. “It transcends the steel bars and concrete walls, proving that the pursuit of knowledge is an invincible spirit representing freedom that no physical confinement can curtail. The investment in prison education is also an act of resistance that refutes the notion that any individual is beyond the emancipatory power of knowledge.”

Fortunately, the influx of funding from the Pell expansion has triggered a wave of new efforts and initiatives with the goal of promoting PEP growth and improving diversity, equity, and inclusion within new and existing programs. Experts believe that further development of PEPs will inevitably reduce racial disparities within the corrections system and in society at large.

“Postsecondary education can facilitate upward social mobility to racially marginalized groups,” writes Taber. “People of color are a disproportionate majority of the prison population, making the availability of postsecondary programs in prison an important avenue to future opportunity.”

To this end, the National College Attainment Network (NCAN) created the Ascendium Fellowship Program in fall 2023 and recently announced its first cohort of eight geographically diverse fellows. The two-year initiative tasks the cohort — which consists of two higher education institutions and six nonprofit organizations or state-run programs — with reducing system barriers in higher education for students of color, low-income students, and first-generation students by expanding PEP offerings within individual prisons and overarching state corrections departments. Currently, only about 35% of state prisons offer some form of college programming, according to NCAN.

Each cohort member has established initiatives that support the growth of correctional education initiatives, with a particular focus on diverse populations. The educational institutions involved are California State University, Los Angeles (Cal State LA), and the Wichita State University Campus of Applied Sciences and Technology (WSU Tech), a community college in Kansas.

Cal State LA had been a part of the SCP Experiment since its inception, through the creation of a bachelor’s degree program for incarcerated students and Project Rebound, which provides academic, financial, personal, and professional support to formerly incarcerated people who are working to earn a four-year degree.

WSU Tech focuses its efforts primarily on employment opportunities by providing jobs to individuals on work release and probation or parole, engaging with employers on their behalf, and offering a pathway to earn a GED while working toward a technical certification.

The fellows will collaborate monthly, contributing to a comprehensive guidebook to aid college access and success programs in supporting this growing population. The ultimate goal is to establish a national network of these programs with specialized knowledge and expertise to guide incarcerated individuals in attaining postsecondary degrees and valuable credentials.
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New Tool Offers Guidance for Equity at Community Colleges

A new data-driven toolkit is providing a framework for community college leaders to create more equitable institutions and advance positive student outcomes.

The “Equity Toolkit: A Research-Based Guide to Operationalizing Equity” was released in 2023 by Achieving the Dream (ATD), a nonprofit that works with over 300 community colleges to ensure all students, particularly those who are racially and economically marginalized, can access learning that propels them toward rewarding careers.

ATD advises that all levels of faculty, staff, and administration, across departments and programs, should utilize the toolkit to incorporate equity outlooks and actions that affect institutional policy, finances, and programs. The resource includes surveys and self-assessments to help leadership teams evaluate their current position and recognize areas for improvement.

The work of developing community agreements that propel equitable outcomes can be addressed through eight key equity principals, the ATD study finds.

Initially, it’s important for college leadership to individually develop an equity mindset and understand that achieving educational equity is an ongoing process. Institutional operations can be successfully evaluated and inequitable practices can be collaboratively replaced if the stakeholders involved have first addressed their own biases and built cultural competency.

Leadership can use the equity toolkit to help them actively engage in creating community initiatives that address educational and workforce barriers. To champion this effort, they must first openly acknowledge, discuss, and confront the pervasive issues of racism and inequality within the systems affecting community colleges.

>> To read the full report, visit achievingthedream.org.

Key Equity Principals

1. Develop an equity mindset.
2. Interrogate institutional practices, structures, and policies and replace those that are inequitable.
3. Integrate holistic supports throughout the student experience.
4. Embrace cultural competence and culturally responsive pedagogy.
5. Leverage existing and new data to support a culture of inquiry and evidence.
6. Drive positive change through perseverance and power sharing.
7. Engage with the local community to develop partnerships that lead to economic vitality.
8. Acknowledge the pervasiveness of racism and discrimination in the country.

Washington Lawmakers Propose Tuition-Free Community College

Legislators in the Washington State House of Representative recently proposed two bills, HB 2374 and HB 2309, which aim to make community college more accessible and affordable to in-state students. If passed, HB 2374 — known as the Washington Promise Program — would provide up to 90 credits free at community or technical colleges to high school graduates or GED earners with family incomes less than 200% of the state’s median family income. It would go into effect in the 2026-2027 academic year, and would also implement support services for students including financial coaching, mentorship programs, and child care resources.

The Washington 13 Free Guarantee, or HB 2309, would provide students with up to 45 free credits at community or technical colleges to students regardless of their family income.

Virginia Colleges Easing the Transfer Process for Students

Effectively transferring credits from community colleges to four-year institutions has been a complex process that often proves challenging for students. Public colleges in Virginia have recently discarded their transfer framework of partnerships between individual schools in favor of a more unified set of state standards. Now, the 15 Virginia public universities can guarantee acceptance to transfer students from one of the state’s 23 community colleges, based on clearer articulation agreements. Data from this streamlined pathway will be tracked by the state and used to adjust the program as needed for optimum success.
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ONLY AT CHARLOTTE
Nearly 80% of community college students report that they intend to finish their academic careers by completing a bachelor’s degree program at a four-year institution. So why are the majority not meeting their goal? A recent report from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) sheds light on this troubling trend and proposes solutions to fix the “broken transfer system in higher education.”

According to a recent report released by the department, between 2014 and 2022, only five states — New Jersey, New York, Illinois, Maryland, and Virginia — have a bachelor’s degree completion rate of 15% or more for those who start at community colleges. Within that time frame, 16 states had completion rates of less than 10% for transfer students. The lowest ranking state, South Dakota, was at only 3.8%.

One of the main reasons for the disparity between intended and actual completion, according to the department, is a high number of nontransferable credits between two- and four-year institutions. Community college students lose an estimated 22% of credits, on average, when transferring to four-year public colleges and universities, according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

“Our current higher education system stacks the deck against community college students who aspire to earn four-year degrees — denying acceptance of their credits, forcing them to retake courses, and ultimately making their educational journeys longer and costlier than they need to be,” U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona said in a November press release.

Additionally, the ED urges the creation of statewide frameworks, such as common course numbering and transfer associate degrees, which can contribute to a more supportive environment for transfer students and create better educational opportunities for diverse student populations.

This approach has taken hold in Louisiana, which ranked 46th among all states in bachelor’s degree completion overall, at only 7.9%. In December 2023, the Louisiana Board of Regents implemented new transfer pathways to streamline the process for students at two-year colleges to earn four-year degrees. The plan allows those at in-state community colleges to transfer 60 hours of coursework to any public university in Louisiana offering a related bachelor’s program. The initiative aims to reduce costs and time to degree completion, providing assurance that credits from community colleges will transfer seamlessly to public universities. So far, 24 subject-specific transfer pathways have been approved, and there are plans to extend the initiative to other subjects. The changes will take effect in the fall 2024 semester.
Guided by its two overarching principles of Student Success and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), Hudson County Community College is nationally recognized for DEI best practices.

HCCC has transformed its institutional framework, programs, and services by galvanizing community engagement.
SUNY Initiatives Drive Access and Affordability for Underserved Students

By Erik Cliburn

Unlocking the doors of opportunity,
The State University of New York (SUNY) system is driving educational access initiatives and affordability programs using a combination of state and federal funds. The collection of 64 campuses, including 30 community colleges, is breaking down barriers to ensure that economically disadvantaged and historically marginalized students in New York have opportunities to attain social mobility through education. These efforts are especially pivotal for SUNY’s community college enrollees, 43% of whom are Pell Grant recipients, according to the system’s enrollment data.

Through the U.S. Department of Education (ED), four SUNY campuses — three of which are community colleges — received more than $9 million in grants to develop or expand existing programs that promote student success and improve access to education.

SUNY Westchester Community College (WCC), designated as SUNY’s first Hispanic-Serving Institution, received a Title V Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program grant of $2.9 million. The funding will primarily boost enrollment in WCC’s Viking ROADS program, which provides students with academic advising, access to gap financial aid, a $500 annual textbook voucher, a monthly $50 transportation voucher, and opportunities for certain scholarships.

The program offers personalized support to help students attain an associate degree in three years or less. ED grant funding will also be used to create culturally responsive professional development sessions for faculty and numerous student workshops aimed at improving retention, transfer, and graduation rates of Hispanic and low-income learners at WCC.

“The grant builds on a significant body of evidence-based, high impact work already underway on our campus and allows us to significantly expand our Viking ROADS program that has nearly tripled graduation rates for students in the program,” WCC President Belinda Miles said in a press release. “The grant also enables us to implement a new retention and completion initiative, as well as provide significant opportunities in professional development for faculty in addressing the needs of our diverse student body.”

Collectively, Fulton-Montgomery Community College, SUNY Erie Community College, and SUNY Oswego secured approximately $6.3 million in ED’s Title III Strengthening Institutions Program grants.

Efforts include the implementation of peer-to-peer tutoring and financial literacy programs and the expansion of institutional research capacity and data collection capabilities.

In addition, New York lawmakers approved state funding for several initiatives in 2023 that make education at SUNY schools more attainable.

Included in this was a $1.72 million expansion of services at 12 high-demand child care centers at SUNY community colleges. Throughout the 2022-2023 academic year, child care centers at SUNY campuses, open to students, faculty, staff, and some community members, served more than 4,500 children and 795 student-parents. These centers are crucial given that one in five community college students — over half of whom are people of color — have dependent children, according to ED’s National Postsecondary Student Aid Study.

Modeling the success of Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) at City University of New York schools, which led to a significant rise in associate degree completion, the state authorized its expansion to the SUNY system alongside the Accelerate, Complete, and Engage (ACE) program to boost baccalaureate attainment.

Beginning in spring 2024, 13 community colleges and 12 state-operated campuses in the SUNY system are participating in ASAP and ACE, respectively, serving more than 3,750 students.

Undergraduate First-Time Enrollment Increases from Fall 2022 to Fall 2023

From fall 2022 to 2023, SUNY community colleges saw an average increase in first-time undergraduate enrollment of 3.9%. Among the 30 community colleges in the system, 23 recorded enrollment growth in that time frame, with SUNY Sullivan and Onondaga Community College seeing increases of 20% or more.

Source: SUNY Enrollment Data
SUNY Westchester Community College is one of SUNY’s most diverse campuses, having been distinguished as both a Minority-Serving and Hispanic-Serving Institution. SUNY WCC can set students on a path to personal success, preparing them for where they want to go, whether continuing their studies at a four-year institution or entering the job market with the skills for a high-demand career.

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Student-Led Stanford Program Propels Community College Students into STEM

By Nikki Brahm

Bridging the gap between community colleges and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) professions, Stanford University’s student-run Community College Outreach Program (CCOP) is launching research internships and summer boot camps for aspiring students.

Two Stanford developmental biology graduate students, who had both previously attended community college, recognized the need to advance traditionally underrepresented students into STEM fields, says Megan Agajanian, CCOP president and postdoctoral scholar. In 2020, with the support of Anne Villeneuve, Department of Developmental Biology chair, they developed CCOP.

Stanford student leaders recruit participants from community colleges of varying demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds for the program, including first-generation and low-income students. This work is essential, because although the STEM workforce gradually diversified between 2011 and 2021, underserved populations remain inadequately represented in these fields today, according to the 2023 National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics study “Diversity and STEM: Women, Minorities, and People with Disabilities.”

One aspect of the program, CCOP Transfer Preparation & Professional Development Bootcamp, is a six-week virtual summer program that provides participants with mentorship support from Stanford graduate and postdoctoral scholars. The program aims to broaden students’ professional skills so they can successfully transfer to a four-year institution and succeed in STEM fields. To date, over 50 students have participated in the boot camp.

In addition to the boot camp, another facet of the program is the CCOP Opportunities in Research Engagement (CORE), a 10-week paid internship program that takes place three times per year — in the fall, spring, and summer. Students are treated as valued colleagues and receive over $22 per hour to conduct research with an experienced laboratory mentor. They also meet with a secondary academic and professional development mentor weekly, and are invited to participate in department events that help them feel integrated into the Stanford community.

“Not only do students benefit from the program, but mentors report unexpected outcomes as well, says Megan Agajanian, Community College Outreach Program president. Mentors are required to participate in DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) training on Stanford platforms to learn how to foster an inclusive research environment.

“Not only do students benefit from the program, but mentors report unexpected outcomes as well, says Megan Agajanian, Community College Outreach Program president. Mentors are required to participate in DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) training on Stanford platforms to learn how to foster an inclusive research environment.

“At the end of the session, [mentors] are more inclined and more willing to be active in creating diverse, equitable, and inclusive spaces,” says Agajanian.

Today, CCOP is still entirely run by a team of Stanford students passionate about the work.

“We all remember what it was like to just start out in the lab,” Agajanian says. “[Our central mission is] to provide first-time research experiences so students can get a foot in the door. We want to start somebody’s CV. … It’s so hard to get started in science research with no background, and so we want to provide that background for students to get started.”

>> Learn more at ccop.stanford.edu.
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The Exploring Transfer program at Vassar College is a summer intensive that immerses currently enrolled community college students in an academically rigorous environment, providing vital support and encouragement so they can ultimately continue their education at a competitive four-year institution.

First-generation students and those from underrepresented groups and disadvantaged backgrounds are given priority in the application process for the five-week summer program at Vassar, a private liberal arts institution in New York state.

Cohorts include 25 to 30 participants per summer who live in the dorms, have access to a campus meal plan, and participate in two courses co-taught by a community college faculty member paired with a Vassar instructor. The courses have a liberal arts and interdisciplinary approach and include a social justice component.

Scholarships are awarded to cover tuition and room and board. Wraparound services focused on mental health and academic support are also offered.

Exploring Transfer was first started by faculty, administrators, and community members nearly 40 years ago, in 1985, through a partnership with LaGuardia Community College. Since then, the program has grown to include over 15 partners and more than 1,000 students. Recently, a partnership with Diné College, a tribal college based in Arizona, was renewed.

“This isn’t a transfer program to Vassar, it’s a program for students to [have] their horizons expanded so that they don’t under-match when they are thinking about transferring to a four-year school,” says Wendy Maragh Taylor, associate dean of the College for Student Growth and Engagement. “It’s making sure that they know that the world is wider than they might have had experience with.”

Eighty percent of community college students intend to earn a bachelor’s degree, but only approximately 14% actually earn one, according to the Community College Research Center at Columbia University.

Exploring Transfer is tackling this challenge...
disparity, as 70% of program survey participants reported achieving their bachelor’s degree and 15% said they are actively pursuing one, says Charlotte Gullick, interim director of the program. This data was collected with a grant from the ECMC Foundation, which is also helping leaders work with other institutions to launch Exploring Transfer programs of their own.

“This is absolutely a social justice issue,” says Maragh Taylor. “This is about equity. This is about how do we attend to some of the most vulnerable students in higher education? And how do we, as four-year institutions, and particularly some of the selective institutions like Vassar, … make sure that our communities see that this is a place that could be open to them?”

Many students report that the program addressed their feelings of imposter syndrome and built their confidence, and therefore it opened their eyes to further academic experiences they wouldn’t have previously considered, such as studying abroad, says Taylor.

Exploring Transfer students have gone on to attend a wide range of four-year institutions, including Cornell University, Amherst College, New York University, and Smith College.

“The four-year institutions learn from these experiences, and it’s an opportunity for them to see the strengths of community college students,” says Gullick. “So, this isn’t a ‘saviorship’ kind of thing, it’s ‘We want to partner with you and the strengths that you bring as a student with a lot of identities.’”

…”

>> Learn more at offices.vassar.edu/exploring-transfer.
Supporting Prison Libraries

Cold Mountain Review (CMR), the long-running eco- and social-justice journal at Appalachian State University (App State), recently marked the fifth anniversary of its Reaching Inside Project, a donor-funded initiative that distributes archived copies of the literary journal to incarcerated individuals in correctional facilities nationwide.

Mark Powell, professor of creative writing at App State and an editor of CMR, started the program in response to a growing trend of facilities limiting or eliminating private book donations. Nonprofits and individuals who had traditionally donated reading materials to prison libraries found their contributions rejected or returned, with policies now favoring books from publishers, bookstores, or approved online sources.

The Reaching Inside Project aims to contribute to effective education programming as a deterrent to recidivism, as highlighted in a study by Ben Stickle and Steven Sprick Schuster titled “Are Schools in Prison Worth It? The Effects and Economic Returns of Prison Education,” published in the American Journal of Criminal Justice. Powell, who spent three years teaching at the Lawtey Correctional Institution in Florida, shares this perspective.

“Education can change everything about an incarcerated person’s trajectory. It makes sense for institutions of higher education to take up the slack when prison libraries make donation difficult for individuals. We have this wealth of resources, and many colleges have in-house presses and publications that could viably contribute their books to inmates,” Powell says.

Through the Reaching Inside Project, donors cover shipping costs, allowing CMR to assemble 20 copies of archived journal issues. These packages are then sent directly to correctional facilities whose policies permit books sent from publishers.

Powell emphasizes the significance of the project, stating, “During my time at Lawtey, I heard consistently from inmates that the most important thing for them was feeling that they haven’t been completely forgotten by the outside world. So alongside the benefits of providing them with expanded access to reading materials, just them knowing that someone outside is taking the time to think of them and send them something is really significant.”

>> Interested donors can reach out to the editors at coldmountain@appstate.edu for more information.

Banned Book Access

As part of Banned Books Week in fall 2023, the University of Chicago (UChicago) Library launched a banned book collection that expands access to titles that have been censored by various schools or libraries throughout the country. The effort was in response to a surge in book banning attempts, particularly regarding literature about or written by the LGBTQIA+ community or people of color. From 2022 to 2023, the American Library Association reported a 20% increase in censorship attempts at libraries.

UChicago will build out the collection and allow free public access to physical copies. Additionally, the university library is collaborating with the Digital Public Library of America to improve access to banned ebooks for Illinois residents who cannot make it to the library in person.

From left: University of Chicago Librarian and Dean of the University Library Torsten Reimer, Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker, UChicago President Paul Alivisatos, and Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton at the banned books event at Regenstein Library in October 2023. (Photo of courtesy of Tarji Stewart, UChicago Library)
Mount Holyoke College is honored to receive an Insight Into Diversity magazine 2024 Library Excellence in Access and Diversity Award.

At Mount Holyoke, a women’s college that is gender diverse, we combine big ideas with meaningful actions to shape a bold and inclusive future and are proud to have our Library, Information, and Technology Services recognized for its commitment to access and diversity, demonstrated through practices such as:

- An archival collection strategy that prioritizes the diversity of Mount Holyoke’s history and strives to fill gaps in that history.
- Accessibility standards for publishers as well as a commitment to monitoring and improving the accessibility of spaces, collections and services.
- Working with primary book vendors to encourage inclusion of more small press titles.
- Longer borrowing periods and the elimination of overdue fines for short-term loans.
- Procuring, developing and maintaining academic and administrative technology systems that are effective and accessible to all users.
- Partnering with the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to implement the College’s chosen name and pronoun policies across major campus technology systems.

Learn more at lits.mtholyoke.edu.
Academic Libraries Leading the Way in Accessibility

As higher education institutions provide more than just legally required accessibility and disability services, they could find guidance from their own academic libraries, who are often at the forefront of this field. From digital resources and sensory spaces to personalized assistance, many academic libraries prioritize creating an environment where all members of the academic community can thrive, ensuring equal access to information.

The LEAD Award

The inaugural Insight Into Diversity Library Excellence in Access and Diversity (LEAD) Award recognizes academic libraries who are advancing programs and initiatives that support DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) in areas such as research, accessibility, community outreach, technology, exhibitions, and collections.

Read about the 2024 LEAD Award winners on the following page
The 2024 Insight Into Diversity Library Excellence in Access and Diversity Award Recipients

A.T. Still University
American University (Washington, DC)
Bennington College
Binghamton University
Brandeis University
Cabrillo College
California State University, San Marcos
Carnegie Mellon University
Case Western Reserve University
Chapman University
College of Marin
Colorado State University
Delta State University
Drexel University
Emory University
Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis
Lasell University
Lehigh University
Macomb Community College
Maryville University
Marywood University
Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
Miami University
Mississippi State University
Moraine Valley Community College
Mount Holyoke College
New York University
Northern Illinois University
Purdue University
Quinnipiac University
Saint Joseph’s University
San Diego Mesa College
Simmons University
The Ohio State University
The University of Alabama
The University of Louisiana at Lafayette
The University of Louisville Libraries, Louisville, Kentucky
The University of Maryland, College Park
The University of North Carolina at Charlotte
The University of the South
Towson University
UNC Greensboro
University at Albany, State University of New York
University of California, Irvine
University of Colorado Colorado Springs
University of Dayton
University of Kentucky
University of Nebraska at Omaha
University of Oregon
University of Pittsburgh
University of Portland
Virginia Tech
West Virginia University
Westminster University
William Paterson University of New Jersey
New York University (NYU) Libraries, a recipient of the 2024 Insight Into Diversity Library Excellence in Access and Diversity (LEAD) Award, has a wide range of programs and resources available to campus community members with disabilities. This includes a variety of digital accessibility services, which allow those with visual, hearing, or other sensory impairments to gain access to alternative forms of textbooks and other reading materials that meet the needs of that individual. As a member of the HathiTrust Digital Library, a wide-scale repository of digital books and research that includes more than 200 research and academic libraries, NYU Libraries provides access to digital versions of copyrighted materials to students with visual or physical disabilities that inhibit print reading, such as blindness, dyslexia, arthritis, or Parkinson’s disease.

NYU Libraries is also home to three adaptive computing labs equipped with specialized hardware and software to serve the needs of individuals with various sensory disabilities. The labs include tools like Kurzweil 1000, which reads printed materials aloud; a closed-circuit television feed that enlarges printed text; JAWS (Job Access with Speech), a screen-reading software; ZoomText for screen magnification; and Dragon NaturallySpeaking, a speech-to-text tool.

Sensory Spaces at NYU’s Bobst Library feature adjustable lighting, sound-dampening tiles, and privacy panels, among other resources, to accommodate students with a range of sensory sensitivities. The university also facilitates the retrieval of books and materials through locker delivery services, providing accessibility for users with mobility impairments.

Similar to NYU Libraries, the Pennsylvania State University (Penn State) University Libraries — also a member of the HathiTrust Digital Library — recently launched three sensory rooms at its Berks, Brandywine, and University Park campuses as part of its goal of supporting student wellness and belonging through the LibWell initiative.

The sensory rooms are designed, primarily, to provide a safe, inviting space for neurodivergent students who may struggle in traditional study spaces. The rooms are equipped with features such as noise-reducing chairs, specialized lighting, yoga mats, and weighted lap blankets to help reduce stress and anxiety. These sensory-sensitive elements are particularly helpful for students with autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, dyslexia, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

“There is a strong need for therapeutic spaces at colleges that can help students block out harmful sensory distractions and relieve the huge burden of anxiety many students bear,” says Brett Spencer, reference and instruction librarian for Penn State Berks’ Thun Library. “We want to make sensory-safe places that can help students maximize their wellness and learning.”

By providing inclusive access to resources that champion diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as building collections reflective of a wide range of viewpoints and perspectives, the Binghamton University Library Office of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) ensures their employees and patrons are able to, as their mission states, “safely present their authentic selves.” What began in 2020 as a coalition of library professionals who came together in response to the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and others, with the goal of dismantling oppression within the institution, has been channeled into the Office of IDEA’s passionate pursuit of accountability, collaboration, and transparency.
OUT OF MANY, ONE EMORY

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Additionally, the LibWell group is piloting sensory kits — backpacks containing therapeutic supplies similar to those in-room — that are available for checkout. This initiative enables students to experience the advantages of sensory rooms at home. Future goals include developing additional sensory spaces and kits, collaboration on food resources for students facing food insecurity, coordinated programming emphasizing mental and physical health, and expanding accessibility initiatives to more campuses.

Another 2024 LEAD Award winner, California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) University Library, is dedicated to fostering an inclusive learning environment by providing robust services for users with disabilities, such as adaptive equipment and labs.

In addition to implementing adaptive technology, the CSUSM University Library further personalizes accessibility by providing a library liaison specifically for people with disabilities. Serving as a contact person through in-person appointments, online chat, email, or telephone, liaisons encourage students with disabilities to utilize the library, help them develop information literacy skills, and offer research assistance.

“We collaborate with our diverse campus community to ensure user-centered learning experiences, welcoming environments, and accessible information resources in order to facilitate scholarly inquiry and prepare students to be critical thinkers who are engaged members of their local, regional, and global communities,” the University Library mission states.

The liaisons also work with library staff to prioritize awareness about individuals with disabilities, provide feedback on disability-related services and policies, and establish cross-departmental relationships and collaboration between the University Library and Disability Support Services.

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Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) is home to the IUPUI University Library Center for Digital Scholarship, whose mission is to “remove barriers to global participation in a knowledge commons and build a more diverse, equitable, and sustainable system of scholarly communication.” Their initiatives are rooted in the University Library Open Values Statement, which emphasizes a commitment to open knowledge and the belief that access to and creation of resources should be available to people of every educational level, geographical location, organizational affiliation, socioeconomic status, and racial or ethnic identity. Accordingly, the IUPUI community is supported in generating open resources, and efforts are made to ensure equitable access to these resources, not only for Indiana residents but for the world.

In 2020, Purdue was appointed as the inaugural dean for organizational development, inclusion and diversity for the Purdue Libraries and School of Information Studies in 2020, his newly created position was a first among Big Ten university libraries. An innovative and exemplary step toward advancing the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion, Purdue remains one of only three Big Ten universities currently elevating a similar position. In the years since Puente took on the role, Purdue says, “our emphasis on DEI-related recruitment, hiring, retention, professional development and training, campus and community partnerships, and collections-building have expanded, and will continue to do so.”

San Diego Mesa College, California

When students in Black Studies began requesting class visits and research partnerships, San Diego Mesa College Library responded by developing an embedded equity and engagement librarian, an initiative designed to support underserved and disproportionately impacted student groups. The embedded equity and engagement librarian introduces students to library resources and develops their information literacy skills early in their academic careers, and is currently serving over 350 Black Studies students through research sessions and class visits. Additionally, the initiative led to the creation of a Black Studies Guide that has been accessed more than 2,550 times in the last year alone, more than any other library guide.

A statewide panel discusses strategies for promoting family literacy in Indiana at the 2023 inaugural Libraries & Literacy Symposium, hosted by IUPUI University Library.
Located in Washington DC, AU Library is proud to engage our community in the work of increasing diversity, fighting hate, and making libraries inclusive, accessible places for all to create knowledge.

The University of Alabama Libraries

Proud recipient of the inaugural Insight Into Diversity magazine 2024 Library Excellence in Access and Diversity (LEAD) Award

Libraries.ua.edu
In recognition of the challenges facing students from underrepresented groups who seek an advanced degree in library science, Simmons University Library Fellowship Program was developed. This program offers a fellowship in library science, which includes tuition coverage and a full-time library staff position with salary and benefits, to qualified, newly enrolled graduate students pursuing a master of science in library information services at Simmons. Designed to be an immersive academic and professional experience that “emphasizes learning through doing,” eligible candidates include those who are first-generation students, come from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, or have attended a Minority-Serving Institution.

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One of the many ways the University of North Carolina at Charlotte J. Murrey Atkins Library exemplifies a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is through the use of their Atkins Library Diversity Fund. Earmarked to support not only the exhibit costs and speaker fees associated with providing diverse programming, the fund also ensures access to training programs and enhancing collections, initiatives that are strategically “aimed at advancing awareness and positive action on DEIA [diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility] topics for the library, campus, and local communities.”

To advance their ongoing mission to provide resources and “an environment that encourages scholarship, creativity and intellectual freedom, while supporting the diverse needs of all users,” the University of Colorado Colorado Springs Kraemer Family Library created an endowed Storytelling Professor position, currently held by assistant professor of Native American and Indigenous studies, ‘Ilaheva Tua’one, PhD. The position, which rotates every three years, provides an interdisciplinary opportunity for community engagement and celebration of a diverse range of storytelling histories and experiences.
A Lehigh for Everyone

Diversity, inclusion, equity, and access are core values that Lehigh’s Library & Technology Services (LTS) staff care deeply about. These values become more impactful when they are seamlessly integrated in the resources, support, events, spaces, and workshops that they offer. LTS is committed to upholding these values and making a Lehigh education more accessible and welcoming for all. Congratulations to LTS on being recognized with an inaugural Library Excellence in Access and Diversity (LEAD) award.
LIBRARY EXCELLENCE IN ACCESS AND DIVERSITY (LEAD) AWARD DATA

OF THE 55 LIBRARY EXCELLENCE IN ACCESS AND DIVERSITY (LEAD) AWARD WINNERS:

**DEI ASSESSMENT**
- Conduct staff and student surveys on offerings: 96%
- Report sufficient financial resources for DEI projects: 94%
- Have their own DEI plan separate from the institution: 65%

**DIVERSE COLLECTIONS/EVENTS**
- Ensure diverse speakers and topics and exhibit and publicize new DEI collections: 100%
- Partner with local communities to develop exhibits and lectures: 92%
- Reserve a seating area for wheelchair access at events: 78%

**STAFF DIVERSITY**
- Strive to ensure their staff represent the populations they serve: 100%
- Offer professional development opportunities to staff: 100%
- Include a statement about the library's commitment to DEI in all job announcements: 89%
- Place job announcements in DEI publications/job boards: 94%

**ACCESS TO INFORMATION**
- Have staff readily available to help anyone needing assistance: 96%
- Have established a working group or designated a staff role to create and monitor accessibility policies: 83%
- Publicly display information for accessing e-resources: 100%
- Have accessible restrooms: 94%
At IUI University Library

we are dedicated to recognizing and addressing bias and structural inequalities, working towards equity of access to information for all individuals, and valuing the diversity of human experience. This dedication is purposefully embedded in our organizational culture, daily operations, structures, teaching methods, hiring and retention practices, collection development, and daily operations.
Advocating for Access

The Movement to Reduce Cost Barriers to Research

By Katy Abrams
A treasure trove of published research is locked behind publisher paywalls and out of reach for many underresourced and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs). Additional research remains entirely inaccessible, as researchers are hindered by traditional academic publishing models that require exorbitant fees for publication.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion advocates across higher education, from faculty and researchers to librarians and archivists, alongside independent organizations and the federal government, are drafting policy changes, signing increasingly equitable licensing agreements, and addressing the exorbitant costs of publishing in an effort to break down knowledge barriers and achieve greater access.

The Open Knowledge Foundation, an organization of global experts dedicated to advancing the availability of information for universal use and participation, explains, “Knowledge is open if anyone is free to access, use, modify, and share it — subject, at most, to measures that preserve provenance and openness.”

In academic institutions, this is most commonly referred to as “open access,” which focuses on the ability to freely utilize published research from academic and peer-reviewed journals. But this idea is also reflected in the concepts of open source, originally applied to software code and computer programs; open data, which refers to the data and information generated in the world beyond academic confines; and open science, a practice that makes publicly available the resulting data, lab notes, and research processes of scientific advancements.

Strong White House Support for Open Science

Broad public awareness of inequitable knowledge access is not a recent development. In 2013, under the Obama administration, the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) released the “Memorandum on Increasing Access to the Results of Federally Funded Research,” a document that provided policy guidance to increase public access to the “direct results of federally funded scientific research” and required federal agencies with research budgets over $100 million annually to prepare coordinated policies that would meet that goal.

In 2022, the Biden administration commended the agencies impacted by that memorandum, all of whom had made progressive plans and policies to support greater access, and then took additional steps by expanding the original guidance regarding data sharing plans and addressing the issue of publication embargos. Shortly after, OSTP declared 2023 the year of open science, a targeted effort to advance open science policy, drive more equitable outcomes, and provide increased access to the results of federally funded research.

Chris Marcum, assistant director for open science and data policy at OSTP at the time the year of open science was announced, celebrates the many noteworthy accomplishments that resulted. In his essay “2023: A Year of Open Science in Review,” Marcum reflects on milestones in public, private, academic, and federal sectors, including NASA’s free online release of their Open Science 101 curriculum, and the Open Pediatric Brain Tumor Atlas established by the Children’s Brain Tumor Network and the Pacific Pediatric Neuro-Oncology Consortium, among others.

Additionally, Marcum noted that the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) called for legislative development of an Open Disaster Data Initiative during the year of open science. This effort toward open access to the collection, validation, and sharing of scientific data and research on disaster resilience, vulnerability, and loss is particularly important for disadvantaged communities who, according to the FAS policy brief, “often lack access to critical lifesaving data.”

A broad range of colleges and universities, and the libraries that serve them, took advantage of the momentum created by the year of open science. Marcum noted that alongside the private and federal agency-centered progress in the pursuit of greater transparency, “Many university libraries participated in the year of open science with an incredible array of activities throughout the year.”

Libraries’ Innovative Advocacy for Open Knowledge

Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) Libraries, a recipient of the 2024 Insight Into Diversity Library Excellence in Access and Diversity (LEAD) Award, has long valued a
commitment to open knowledge. In 2018, CMU Libraries founded the Open Science & Data Collaborations program, whose team provides services and infrastructure for open research. In 2023, CMU Libraries held numerous events throughout the year that included “learning opportunities, chances for fostering connections and relationships within our campus community, and lively conversation on the future of open science,” said Melanie Gainey, Open Science program director.

At one event, industry moderators and life science research panelists led a virtual roundtable, “In Conversation: The Evolving Landscape of Data Sharing,” where they discussed data sharing challenges and opportunities, and explored how government policy changes can influence research communities. In partnership with DNAnexus, a cloud computing and bioinformatics company, CMU Libraries also hosted a uniquely collaborative hackathon where teams worked together to solve a dedicated portion of large biomedical models, the results of which were shared publicly after the event.

The University of California San Francisco (UCSF) Library director of data science and open scholarship, Ariel Deardorff, shared highlights of the library’s participation in the year of open science, including co-hosting the Bay Area Open Science Group. For Bay Area researchers and educators who strive to implement open science into their scholarly pursuits and academic curricula, this growing community’s gatherings and speakers offer significant support. The group created a training tool, available online as an open curriculum module, that helps researchers and other stakeholders begin a dialogue about open science team agreements and advocate for the creation of outreach plans using those agreements.

“Knowledge is open if anyone is free to access, use, modify, and share it — subject, at most, to measures that preserve provenance and openness.”

Open Knowledge Foundation
Of particular importance to UCSF Library is the issue of equity in academic publishing. Anneliese Taylor, head of scholarly communication at the library, co-hosted “Publishing for Equity: A Panel Discussion on Anti-Oppressive Publishing,” a webinar that included UCSF faculty members alongside publications expert Charlotte Roh. The webinar offered perspectives on common issues in academic publishing, such as inclusive language and providing equitable credit, and spoke about ways to challenge the perpetuation of stereotypes.

Taylor was also integral to the launch of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Scholarly Communication, a resource created collaboratively by a University of California-wide team that provides community support as faculty and researchers seek to improve the equity of their scholarly communication and create an environment that supports diverse perspectives.

With a shared interest in the equity of academic publishing, Florida State University Libraries established the Open Scholars Project (OSP) community of practice, a collaborative network for researchers and practitioners with an interest in open access publishing, open science, and FAIR data. The group meets monthly, and includes faculty, graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and practitioners. The primary objective of OSP is to foster connections among individuals across various disciplines and create a nurturing environment for mutual learning, candid discussions, and the application of open principles to research practices.

First convened in 2021, OSP hosted their inaugural Open Scholars Project Symposium in 2023, with in-person and online participant-driven speaker sessions. The symposium focused on open science, including open access publishing, open data, and more.

There is a growing movement across platforms, agencies, and institutions to address the challenges created by traditional academic publishing models, both from the perspective of those who seek access to published research and those who wish to publish their own.

Solving the Publishing Problem
The traditional academic publishing model has a history that spans several centuries, beginning with the establishment of the first scientific journals in the 17th century. As scholarly research and academic institutions expanded, print journals became the primary method of publishing research, and out of that growth came the rise of the subscription-based model, where libraries and universities bore the cost for institutional access to those journals.

The advent of the digital revolution saw academic
publishing transition from primarily print to digital formats, but even then the traditional model prevailed and faced criticism for its high subscription costs and restricted access. These barriers particularly affect underresourced institutions and MSIs, whose budget constraints force them to make choices about which subscriptions to purchase, and individuals without an institutional affiliation, who find themselves blocked by paywalls. This unequal access has led to the open access movement and the development of alternative publishing models.

The open access movement continues to gain momentum as scholars, libraries, and institutions advocate for freely accessible research. And organizations like the NorthEast Research Library (NERL) Consortium, a unified collective of higher education institutions, actively work to strengthen open access and equitable publication models.

With a stated mission of “building and supporting alliances between higher education and the information industry, NERL serves as an advocate for the collective power and influence of academic libraries and their parent institutions.” By negotiating agreements for the licensing and purchase of online products and services, NERL’s core membership of 30 research-intensive institutions and more than 110 affiliate member institutions benefit from favorable terms.

One member institution, Syracuse University Libraries (Syracuse), is participating in a groundbreaking open access pilot program with Elsevier, a leading global publisher of scientific data and research, that “has been quietly operating very successfully for a couple of years now,” says Scott Warren, senior associate dean for research excellence at Syracuse. “It’s an unusual agreement in that it opened up years of retroactive content that was not previously available to us.” The terms of this agreement, which most of the members signed on for, was negotiated by NERL.

Warren says that while those kinds of programs are certainly beneficial for students and faculty, Syracuse is also developing read and publish

Terms such as "open data," "open science," and "open source" encompass the surrounding materials that are vital to researchers' work.

Open science: The open science movement strives for the inclusivity of scientific research, data, and dissemination across the entire societal spectrum, fostering collaboration and public accessibility. Its fundamental principle is rooted in sociology, emphasizing that scientific knowledge is a collective creation. In practice, open science encompasses a wide range of aspects such as open access to publications, research data, source code, collaborative efforts, peer review, educational resources, and other related components.

Open source: Initially associated with freely available and modifiable software code, the concept of open source now extends to broader values. Open source projects embrace principles such as open exchange, collaborative participation, transparency, and community-oriented development. It has evolved beyond software to include various initiatives celebrating openness, rapid prototyping, and meritocracy.

Open data: Open data refers to data that is freely usable, reusable, and redistributable by anyone, with minimal restrictions on attribution and sharing. This ensures that data is accessible to a wide range of users, fostering innovation and collaboration. Governments, organizations, and communities often release datasets as open data to enable citizens, researchers, and businesses to leverage the information for various purposes, contributing to data-driven decision-making and societal advancements.
agreements that allow authors at the university to publish their scholarly contributions as open access. This would offer a single annual-payment model that controls costs for the institution, streamlines the publication process, provides authors with no-fee publication options, and allows their work to be available for anyone to use. Syracuse has signed agreements with 10 publishers, most recently the Association for Computing Machinery.

“These [read and publish] agreements all have slightly different terms, and some of them will cap how many they are willing to publish in a year. But when individual authors are paying $2,000 to $3,000, sometimes as much as $12,000 to publish [an article] as open access, the end result of the agreement is a benefit to both the author and the institution,” Warren explains.

Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), also a recipient of Insight's 2024 LEAD Award, established the IUPUI Open Access Fund in 2013 in an effort to support the scholarship of graduate students and faculty who want their work published in open access journals. The fund covers the cost of reasonable publication charges and has seen the open access publication of articles by IUPUI scholars more than double since its inception.

The fund works in tandem with IUPUI’s Open Access Policy, adopted in 2014, which set as standard practice that the published scholarship of university authors is made freely available through ScholarWorks, the library’s institutional online repository. Through these commitments to access, IUPUI seeks to address the inequity of traditional publishing models.

University libraries are increasing pressure on major academic publishers to create sustainable models for publication of and access to scholarly research. Through consortiums like NERL, or by creating institutional solutions to the ongoing issue, institutions are pushing back against the traditional models and finding innovative and successful alternatives.
Serving as the heart of knowledge and scholarship in higher education, academic libraries are uniquely positioned to advance and support digital and data-driven storytelling and archival efforts, especially as they relate to marginalized communities. This concept is exemplified by the University of Arizona Libraries’ (UAL) work through the Digital Borderlands Project, a grant project funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation that began in 2020 and utilizes digital technologies to improve understanding of Hispanic and Indigenous populations living near the U.S.-Mexico border.

Rooted in data-intensive research and digital storytelling, the project offers diverse perspectives on culture, migration, housing equity, community, and disability experiences in the border region. The archival methods used vary widely and include oral history recordings, immersive experiences in augmented reality, documentary films, interactive web maps, and written accounts, among others.

“As an interdisciplinary hub for the campus community, libraries provide a suite of digital services that have often been treated as discrete offerings but can also be brought together into a comprehensive support network under this storytelling,” writes Shan Sutton, UAL dean and principal investigator of the grant project.

In addition to telling the stories of these underserved communities through firsthand accounts, the project emphasizes the need to involve Hispanic and Indigenous faculty, students, and staff researchers throughout the collection and archival processes. This concept comprises the goal of the Digital Borderlands in the Classroom project, the initiative’s second phase, which recently secured a $1.2 million grant from the Mellon Foundation. The funding launches a four-year initiative and faculty fellowship program, led by UAL, that will champion undergraduate student research in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

This innovative initiative empowers UA faculty members through a fellowship program that includes a one-week summer institute orchestrated by UAL. The program incorporates workshops, hands-on instruction, and exposure to digital and archival scholarship methods, led by library experts and instructors. Faculty members will use these resources to create assignments and learning modules for students, focusing on diverse characteristics of communities living in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

“In addition to its inherent cross-disciplinary nature, the study of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands has the opportunity to make significant contributions to diversifying representation in the digital humanities,” Sutton writes. “Communities along the U.S.-Mexico borderlands have long been culturally diverse, with a complex history of colonial and political contestation, where sovereign nations have long been the storied rather than the storytellers of their own existence in academic studies and spaces.”

Beginning this year and extending through 2026, a competitive application process will be used to select an annual
Completed Through UAL’s Digital Borderlands Project

DETAINED: Voices from the Migrant Incarceration System
A collaborative effort between the University of Arizona and the Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project, DETAINED collects and archives stories of asylum seekers and undocumented migrants incarcerated by immigration authorities in Arizona.

DISCAPAZ: Disability Experiences in the Borderlands
DISCAPAZ centers the voices and narratives of people with disabilities along the U.S.-Mexico border through multimedia storytelling. The project offers a deeper understanding of community challenges, needs, and strengths.

Discovering Community in the Borderlands: Augmented Reality Exploration
Users are guided through an augmented reality exploration of Tucson, offering insights into the diverse communities of Southern Arizona.

Mapping Racist Covenants: Unveiling Housing Injustice
This interactive web-based map highlights the significance of housing equity and addresses the largely unexplored issue of racist housing policies, shedding light on racist covenant conditions and restrictions in Tucson.

A cohort of faculty members to participate in the summer institute. Those selected will receive a $9,000 award, training, and ongoing consultation throughout the academic year.

One key objective of the project is to facilitate student research on the borderlands by integrating library services into the classroom through faculty collaboration. The initiative provides students with opportunities to learn not just about the borderlands as a place but also from each other and their own experiences. Through UAL’s Special Collections, the initiative also extends archival research that introduces them to unique resources from the U.S.-Mexico borderlands collections.

“It’s important to provide affirming experiences by fostering student engagement with historical documents that reflect contributions from the students’ own communities or by engaging them in interrogating other materials through their own knowledge or experience,” Verónica Reyes-Escudero, the Katheryne B. Willock Head of UAL’s Special Collections and co-principal investigator, said in a press release.

The project will culminate in the creation of a “Digital Borderlands Anthology,” which will showcase archival and historical materials gathered by UA students, faculty, and staff through the classroom program. The anthology will be freely accessible to the public and other institutions interested in implementing similar initiatives. To that end, UAL will host a symposium in 2027 that will bring together borderlands scholars and instructors throughout the U.S. to share ideas and discuss methods to advance digital scholarship and archival processes.

Top: Men in Chihuahua, Mexico, with donkeys, date unknown. Middle: Photograph of a Yaqui girl gardening in Mexico, 1938-1949. The caption on the back of the photograph reads “Rural education in Mexico includes gardening.” Bottom: Children of the Mexican Folklore Club reenacting Las Posadas procession, 1959. (Photos courtesy of Special Collections at the University of Arizona Libraries)
HBCU Digital Library Trust Preserving African American History

By Nikki Brahm

The HBCU (Historically Black College and University) Digital Library Trust initiative is digitizing and expanding access to African American history collections located at HBCU libraries and archives around the country.

The project, a collaboration between the HBCU Library Alliance, a consortium of HBCU libraries; Harvard Library; and the Atlanta University Center Robert W. Woodruff Library (AUC Woodruff Library), was announced in March 2023 and will take place over four years, with $6 million in funding provided by the Presidential Initiative on Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery.

In 2022, then Harvard President Larry Bacow released the “Report of the Presidential Committee on Harvard and the Legacy of Slavery,” which revealed the university’s history of enslaved individuals on campus, funding from donors engaged in the slave trade, and leadership that obstructed racial equality.

Several recommendations on how the institution could take responsibility for its past and pursue meaningful repair inspired the HBCU Digital Library Trust, says Andrea Jackson Gavin, director of the trust and former director of engagement and scholarship at the AUC Woodruff Library.

The primary goal of the project is increasing the processing and digitization of HBCU collections and expanding the HBCU Library Alliance’s “Celebrating the Collections of Historically Black Colleges and Universities,” a digital compilation of primary resources from HBCUs available to the global public online. Included are photographs, correspondence, manuscripts, memorabilia, and more, from the early 1800s through present day.

This work is especially important with the increase of imminent threats to the preservation of African American history, including legislation to ban books, reduce educational funding, and dismantle teaching, Jackson Gavin says.

“This project seeks to support all HBCUs, including those in states where Black history education is
at risk,” she says. “We believe that the American historical narrative is incomplete without the inclusion of many of the people who have made this country what it is today.”

The trust is also essential because HBCUs are historically operating with fewer resources. For example, HBCUs receive 178 times less funding than Ivy League institutions and around two-thirds of what foundations gave to “similarly situated institutions,” according to the 2023 study “Philanthropy and HBCUs: Foundation Funding to Historically Black Colleges and Universities.”

“A major component of this initiative is providing comprehensive digitization services for HBCUs that may not currently have the equipment or staffing to do so at their home institutions,” says Jackson Gavin. “The [AUC Woodruff] Library has served as the host and platform administrator for the HBCU Library Alliance digital collection since its inception. With capable staff, they will serve as a hub where HBCUs can send physical materials for digitization.”

The project will allow the digital collection platform to include all HBCUs. Additionally, while it holds historical materials specifically documenting the founding and earliest years of these schools, Jackson Gavin anticipates offerings on subjects like civil rights, student activism, women’s rights, and community and global engagement to grow over the next several years.

HBCU libraries are also encouraged to expand special collections at their schools that may have garnered strong interest but have not traditionally been as easily accessible to the public, such as records about prominent alumni, administrators and faculty, the arts and culture, and activism, says Jackson Gavin.

Recently, over 100 HBCU library administrators and staff from more than 50 institutions attended the HBCU Digital Library Trust Copyright First Responders Cohort I, a virtual program developed to refresh skills and build a community of experts on copyright for libraries and archives. In the future, the project will include undergraduate and graduate student internships.

This and other professional development opportunities aim to advance a network of professionals devoted to the preservation and accessibility of HBCU resources.

“For many students of color, the awareness that their ancestors’ history and culture is being preserved is important for self-empowerment,” Jackson Gavin says. “Having the ability to access manuscripts, photographs, memorabilia, and audio and video recordings documenting the history of Black people in America and the diaspora will lead current students, forthcoming generations, and all types of researchers to develop new scholarship on those who have — too often — been underdocumented and underrepresented in the historical record.”

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Kendall Barksdale, AUC Woodruff Library digitization technician, scans archives for online display. (Photo courtesy of the Atlanta University Center Woodruff Library)

Visit the HBCU Library Alliance library: hbcudigitallibrary.auctr.edu.
Greater Support is Needed for HBCU Endowments

“As we continue to pursue our mission, the question of endowment management and growth has become central to our approach to institutional engagement and improvement. For decades, HBCUs (historically Black colleges and universities) have had to do more with less, operating without supports and resources that were readily made available to their counterparts. While HBCUs have persisted in serving as sources of educational innovation and inspiration, their consistent underfunding has left too many without the resources needed to pursue their true potential to uplift students and communities.”

Michael L. Lomax, PhD, president and CEO of the UNCF (United Negro College Fund), regarding the needs for endowment funding for HBCUs throughout the country. To address this chronic issue, the UNCF recently launched its $1 billion capital campaign, a pooled endowment fund to support member HBCUs through private donations and fundraising efforts. In January, the organization received a $100 million grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. in support of the campaign, and partnered with PGIM, the global assessment management business of Prudential Financial Inc., to release a report regarding the endowment funding needs of HBCUs.
Bucknell helped Kit Jackson ’24 earn a full scholarship to fund his education.

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CHARLES T. BAUER SCHOLARS
Need-based scholarships for highly qualified students from the Baltimore area

LANGONE/LANGONE-WALLING SCHOLARS
Annual scholarships awarded based on integrity, loyalty and steadfast determination or overcoming adversity
For recent University of Kentucky graduate Devin Thompson, the college experience began long before his freshman year.

As a middle schooler in 2014, Thompson attended one of UK’s STEM Experiences Camps for children. The summer program aims to expose students to a variety of positive learning experiences and career options in the STEM fields by bringing them to a college campus.

Thompson says it was this camp which triggered a deep passion for science within him. “It was really engaging, that’s what I really liked about it,” Thompson said. “STEM camp played a pivotal role in me learning that I can actually change something for the better, in a way that was fun too.”

By the time Thompson was in high school, he decided to take part in another UK summer project through the Area Health Education Center (AHEC) summer enrichment program. Through this experience, Thompson was once again able to “experience college before college” and learn about the variety of careers in health professions.

This further refined Thompson’s passion for science into a drive to pursue an education and career in medicine. “I got to shadow a bunch of different doctors, surgeons and pharmacists, and connect with them,” he said. “I got to see doctors interact with patients, and see the patients really enjoy having a positive change in their life.”

When it was time to go to college, Thompson already knew UK was the place he wanted to be. He decided to major in biology and continued to take advantage of high-impact experiences UK offered to undergraduates, including a cardiovascular research program where he worked directly with doctors and patients.

Now, as a college grad, Thompson is equipped and ready to take the next big step — medical school — and credits his early educational experiences for setting him on this path. “At the time I just wanted to learn about what was going on in the natural world, and then, all of a sudden, a dream sort of developed,” Thompson said. “It’s also fulfilling because there’s something about setting a goal for yourself and actually achieving it. That’s something that I’ve been waiting for since I was just a little kid.”