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LEANING ON OUR LABOR

Whiteness and Hierarchies of Power in LIS Work

Jennifer Brown, Nicholae Cline (Coharie), and Marisa Méndez-Brady

FRAMING LIBRARY DIVERSITY WORK USING CRITICAL RACE THEORY

It's no myth that labor inequity in academia disproportionately affects marginalized faculty, students, and staff. Critical race theory (CRT), and the scholars who undertake this research, continually affirm this phenomenon as fact. But where these inequalities are most keenly felt is in institutional efforts around diversity, equity, and inclusion—often referred to as “diversity work.” Here, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) scholars are disproportionately leaned on for emotional and physical labor; this typically translates into us having to chair diversity and inclusion committees, informally teach privileged peers about “cultural competence,” navigate white fragility, and more (Chou and Pho 2018).

We (the authors of this chapter) posit that such labor inequities don't simply begin at the individual level—they are first embedded in the collective documents that shape an organization's public persona and define its institutional legacy. To that end, this chapter will analyze examples of written materials that frame what institutional diversity efforts typically look like, while employing CRT frameworks to demonstrate how these ephemera commodify institutional diversity efforts and devalue the labor of BIPOC scholars. Then, we'll utilize CRT's theme of valuing the voices and counternarratives of communities of color to share our lived experiences around inequitable labor expectations relating to our own diversity, equity, and inclusion work.

In the spirit of Delgado and Stefancic's seminal work (2001), which introduced critical CRT questions into the fabric of each chapter, we'll also explore the following queries to deepen our engagement with this topic:

- How do critical scholars define “diversity work” and whiteness, and how do these two concepts interplay with one another throughout the academy?
- How do institutions commoditize diversity? Further, when considering inequitable distributions of labor around “diversity work,” how do institutions communicate its value?
- How do our lived labor experiences around “diversity work” intersect with career advancement and performance/tenure review? What have those labor inequities cost us?

But it's not enough to simply critique current systems of labor inequity. After all, CRT aims to “not only understand our social situation, but transform it for the better” (Delgado and Stefancic 2001, 3). Therefore, we'll draw inspiration from the work of visionary fiction writers (Imarisha 2015) and allow ourselves to do something marginalized scholars are rarely afforded the opportunity to do: radically imagine scenarios wherein our labor, energy, and spirits aren't weighed down by White Supremacist, imperial work structures. The following question will be our guide:

- Given our positionalities and lived experiences, what might just, equitable labor around diversity work in libraries look like in practice?

WHITENESS AND DIVERSITY WORK

Before diving into our document analyses we must first till the soil on which our analysis rests. Whiteness and “diversity work” aren't new concepts, but there are many manifestations of these terms throughout the literature. For reference, we are particularly interested in “whiteness” as defined by LIS scholar April Hathcock, who asserts:

Whiteness refers not only to racial and ethnic categorizations but a complete system of exclusion based on hegemony. [It] refer[s] not only to the socio-cultural differential of power and privilege that results from categories of race and ethnicity; it also stands as a marker for the privilege and power that acts to reinforce itself through hegemonic cultural practice that excludes all who are different. (Hathcock 2015)

“Whiteness,” then, is more than skin color or cultural origin—it's systematic. It's a set of practices and norms that define societies by exclusion, and in particular, by what whiteness strives *not* to be. CRT scholars who engage in whiteness studies have

also reflected that it's based on a kind of "social distance from blackness and a cultural practice that constructs race-based hierarchies" (Rogers and Mosley 2006). This is particularly important to consider in our analysis within the library context, given the legacy of White Supremacy in US libraries (cf. Mississippi Civil Rights Project, n.d.).

"Diversity work" serves as shorthand, typically referring to the stuff (physical or otherwise) that makes up an institution's attempt to address systemic inequalities around race, gender, ability, class, sexuality, religion, and other identities represented (or not represented) by their staff. Brown and Leung further discuss it as "librarianship [having] its own set of top-down, hierarchically organized documents that frame acceptable ways for diversity work to be thought of, articulated, and performed across institutions" (2018, 326). In this way, diversity work can be thought of as a set of hierarchically defined values that institutions perform to achieve some kind of socially acceptable rightness. It's seen as the thing institutions do; the ways in which they perform wokeness for the benefit of public-facing websites, media, and more—*instead* of acknowledging the complexity of interconnected -isms in their institution and working to dismantle these through action and robust accountability.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) helps us make sense of the connections between systemic oppressions, "whiteness" as a set of professional and social norms, and diversity work. The CRT theorists who posed frameworks for understanding the *how* and *why* behind racialized inequality are at the core of our comparisons of institutional documentation versus lived experiences.

DOCUMENTARY APPROACHES: WHAT AND WHO ARE WE EXAMINING?

For the purposes of this chapter, the institutional documents that we've chosen to analyze represent the "stuff" of diversity initiatives in an academic library context. We found these documents by conducting web searches for paperwork that's typically cited by library leadership and diversity committees as evidence that they are "doing" diversity work, included in new employee packets, and devised during large-scale strategic planning efforts. The overarching framework guiding our selection process centered on the question, can the circulation of these documents in and of themselves be considered "diversity work"? We were able to answer in the affirmative for the following document types: diversity statements (value statements), diversity action plans (typically associated with a timeline), and diversity initiatives (broad approaches intended to diversify institutional demographics).

Ahmed's seminal work around performativity and diversity documents helps to illustrate our documentary approaches. She argues that the emphasis on documents over action allows institutions to perform being "good" at diversity. Thus, "diversity and equality become 'things' that can be measured" (2007, 596). That performance can then be measured against those documented standards, suggesting that the institutions "doing well" at diversity are simply the ones most skilled in creating auditable structures. In Ahmed's words, "[Diversity documents'] very existence is taken as evidence that the institutional world documented by the document (racism, inequality, injustice) has been overcome" (597). In turning to documents, we can unpack latent connections between diversity work and labor inequity. Further, "worshipping the written word" is a well-studied marker of White Supremacist workplace culture, positioning the diversity documents themselves as more legitimate than the actual lived experiences of the BIPOC in predominantly white institutions (PWI) (Jones and Okun 2001).

Since we're also concerned with *who* is disproportionately leaned on to author and act on these documents (i.e., serve as representatives for "diversity work"), our documentary analysis includes examining job ads that contain the word *diversity* in the position title itself. We chose to juxtapose diversity positions typical for early career librarians of color and for more senior positions, limiting our analysis to "diversity resident" roles and "diversity officer" positions. The Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) Diversity Residency Alliance defines a residency as a post-MLIS/MLS degree work experience designed for entry-level librarians, and purports that residencies increase the pipeline of "underrepresented racial and ethnic groups" into the profession (American Library Association 2017). Diversity officer positions are more varied and nuanced, but are typically situated in administrative roles (Williams and Wade-Golden 2008).

DIVERSITY AS COMMODITY IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Once diversity initiatives are given a value based on documents rather than actions, the groundwork has been laid for labor inequities. This is because when whiteness is the de facto standard against which the success of diversity work is measured, racialized social hierarchies are inevitably reproduced, demoting everyone outside those boundaries to the metaphorical bottom of labor systems.

Building on Ladson-Billings and Tate's groundbreaking work introducing CRT to education (1995), Iverson has written at length about how diversity policies reproduce whiteness by centering dominant discourses while simultaneously failing to

name whiteness as a barrier to inclusion (2007). This creates a kind of measurable standard of whiteness, positioning white people as the primary beneficiaries of diversity initiatives that purportedly support marginalized staff. Iverson's earlier discourse analysis supports this claim, as they found that institutions they studied utilized "diversity as a resource for an enriched and engaged academic environment" (2005, 53). When diversity is treated as a resource, institutional conversations focus on how a more diverse population might improve the quality of the institutional experience, and as a result, institutions can measure their success based on quantifiable metrics rather than critical self-reflection. So, wherever white people dominate the demographics, diversity initiatives offer them a multicultural experience rather than avenues toward institutional change. They're absolved from having to examine their role in institutional racism, because the standard for excellence was devised using Western Eurocentric ways of thinking, learning, and being and is rooted in (white) Western history. What's more, the institution at-large ignores whiteness because of its obsession with "race-neutral bureaucratic structures" (Ray 2019, 26). Ignoring whiteness paves the way for diversity to become a commodity. Diversity becomes commoditized when it becomes measured, assessed, and used to justify racist structures and behaviors. Diversity work literally becomes valuable to the white institutions so they can avoid things like lawsuits and public outcries.

ACRL not only participates in the commoditization of diversity but also explicitly names their diversity document as an assessable standard that can be ascribed a value. The "Diversity Standards: Cultural Competency for Academic Libraries" is designed to present academic librarians with a framework for both interacting with patrons from diverse backgrounds and recruiting diverse librarians (American Library Association 2012). Published by the Racial and Ethnic Diversity Committee, this document does the very thing Iverson critiques: it positions white people as the primary beneficiary of diversity. In fact, the document explicitly states, "Everyone can benefit from diversity." Due to the overwhelming whiteness across library spaces, in our context, "everyone" is generally white people. If a majority white population benefits from diversity, then diverse individuals become a trafficable good that can add value to a primarily white institution or organization. Later in this chapter we will explore the role of diversity residencies, but it's worth noting here that using a revolving door of temporarily employed nonwhite bodies (i.e., diversity residents) as a mechanism for diversifying explicitly treats diverse individuals as a (replaceable) trafficable good. In this light, it is unsurprising that diversity documents proliferate while the profession stays stubbornly white.

We looked at ten diversity documents from academic libraries in large and midsized public and private doctoral-granting universities, ranging from lengthy strategic plans to outreach-friendly bullet points on institutional websites. Evidence of commoditization was apparent throughout our documentary analysis. Take one example of a diversity statement that states that the institution “benefits from broad perspectives and depths of insight derived from working collaboratively with [diverse] individuals” (Columbia University Libraries, n.d.). Because we *know* that the labor around diversity work typically falls to BIPOC staff, this language suggests a kind of transaction between “diverse” individuals and staff members from dominant identity groups, wherein the latter receive enrichment and insight. But what BIPOC and other marginalized communities receive from this collaboration (besides more emotionally draining labor) is unclear.

It’s especially telling that mentions of race and racism were completely absent from these documents. The absence of race points to the basic tenet of CRT that racism is such a normal, ordinary occurrence that even people writing diversity documents think it doesn’t even need to be made explicit (i.e., “color blindness”). And racism cannot truly be addressed unless its ordinariness is disavowed and race is explicitly named (Delgado and Stefancic 2001, 8). In one diversity statement, the authors put forth a plan where they sought simply “respect and appreciation for all” (University of North Carolina Libraries, n.d.). Even the most comprehensive plans stubbornly refused to name whiteness (though we did sometimes notice race or ethnicity mentioned—but in reference to library users exclusively). Refusing to name whiteness disadvantages everyone outside of the white hegemonic heteronormative ableist paradigm, but does the most damage to those who have been racialized, because these power structures are rooted in categories of race and ethnicity. So, how does the commodification of diversity, and refusal to name whiteness, affect the labor around diversity work?

Aguirre gives us a clear framework for understanding what he calls “the diversity rationale in academia” through the CRT tenet of interest convergence (2010). *Interest convergence* is a term introduced to the CRT literature by Derrick Bell. It refers to the theory that racial justice work is tolerated only when it benefits the majority group (Delgado and Stefancic 2001, 177). Through an interest convergence lens, diversity initiatives are established to restore the social order that has been disrupted when nonwhites are introduced into a racially homogenous environment. Making the explicit connection between interest convergence and diversity work, Aguirre further notes that the language of diversity (instead of whiteness) allows white academics to

capitalize on diversity work, in some cases even positioning *themselves* as the experts on diversity (2010, 769). To provide the “diversity value,” minority librarians have no choice but to participate in their own commoditization—to participate in this exchange of our bodies, narratives, and voices in order to survive organizational cultures rooted in whiteness.

If BIPOC reject institutional pathways for diversity work, we may be viewed as “liabilities to organizational culture” (Aguirre 2010, 770). With interest convergence in mind, white academic librarians and administrators will respond only to diversity documents that don’t threaten their dominance. Thus, it’s unsurprising that such policies buy into the narrative of diversity as white-centered pluralism—so much so that one university’s diversity statement defined diversity work as “fostering an environment of inclusion, equity, non-discrimination, and pluralism” (University of North Carolina Libraries, n.d.). Diversity work can mask discriminatory practices and even become discriminatory itself, especially considering the absence of CRT strategies in the diversity documents we examined, such as creating counterspaces for BIPOC and fostering community building (Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso 2000). Considering the enforcement of whiteness in diversity work in higher education, Aguirre notes, “The challenge for academia is how to mask those [interest-convergent] practices so that their purpose is not readily apparent” (2010, 769).

We can further dissect how interest convergence works to create labor inequities around diversity by looking at who is doing the work—namely, diversity resident and diversity officer positions, which are held largely by BIPOC librarians. In fact, one of the diversity statements we looked at laid out an entire diversity plan centered on one labor contract: the diversity resident position their library nascently developed (University of Notre Dame, Hesburgh Libraries, n.d.). The same is true for diversity officer positions, which are often tasked with tackling unachievable goals using minimal resources, which also makes for a convenient scapegoat if these goals are not achieved. The mere existence of these positions allows universities to claim they are assessing and measuring how well they’re performing diversity work, and to pat themselves on the back for the “good” they’re doing, as opposed to challenging the institutional *structures* established to commoditize the labor output of these individuals. Both types of positions give PWIs the ability to check the proverbial box without having to make meaningful shifts in power. This is yet another example of interest convergence, as these positions reinforce the fact that BIPOC are permitted the space to address their concerns only when their interests converge with white interests (Bell 1980; Alemán and Alemán 2010).

INEQUITABLE LABOR DISTRIBUTIONS: ON OFFICERS, COMMITTEES, AND RESIDENTS

The apportionment of labor in any organization is always political, and this is especially true around diversity work. Libraries routinely rely on the skills, expertise, and experience of BIPOC in order to further institutional diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) goals. This not only plays out at the level of practice and expectation, but can also be evinced in the language used to promote those goals in the responsibilities that structure diversity-related position descriptions. Victor Ray, who joins CRT with organizational theory to address this phenomenon, aptly notes, “Once racial structures are in place, a racial ideology—or racism—arises to justify the unequal distribution of resources along racial lines” (2019, 32). This is critical to the unequal distribution of labor throughout academia and points toward the ways in which diversity work, inequitable labor practices, and the commodification of racialized labor are imbricated and mutually reinforcing. In looking at job advertisements and position descriptions, we hope to create space for dialogue around how institutions value and understand diversity work as a job responsibility and to shed light on how diversity is indexed and measured.

Few diversity officer positions exist in the library field today, even as chief diversity officer positions have proliferated in the administrative body of universities and governments. Few libraries have (or are willing to invest) the money needed to create such dedicated internal positions, and so this work and the oversight of DEI in libraries is often given to diversity committees (typically comprised of faculty members and other academic staff) and nonpermanent academic positions (such as diversity residencies). In looking at three of the few diversity officer positions that do exist (at two academic libraries and one public library), however, we noticed several things: they are routinely hired to administer strategic plans, they typically are required to coordinate training and outreach activities (University of Michigan Library, n.d.-b), and they are expected to collaborate and cross interdepartmental boundaries without necessarily having dedicated resources for doing so (such as permanent teams or assistants). Additionally, many diversity workers in both types of positions have other areas of responsibility and oversight as part of their portfolio.

The labor that constitutes DEI work, whether equitably distributed or holistically supported at the institutional level, is coherent and surprisingly (if accidentally) standardized across institutions, though there are local variations on certain themes. The primary responsibility of most library diversity officers and diversity committees

is the actualization, assessment, and maintenance of internal diversity strategic plans (while also facilitating cultural competency programming and performing a variety of outreach), and their work is primarily guided by the goals and vision outlined in the plans they administer and oversee (Williams and Wade-Golden 2008). Many institutions have maintained long-standing diversity groups of one kind or another, historically focused on multicultural objectives and programming and discussion, and these groups eventually saw their responsibilities include the drafting or management of strategic plans relevant to DEI. Others created diversity councils and committees as part of their putative commitment to diversity. Frequently, the existence of such committees (as well as that of officer positions or residencies) is the extent of investment required of an institution, with the creation of a strategic plan as an end in itself.

Our analysis of strategic plan documents, position descriptions, and job ads for diversity officers and library residents (as well as diversity committee charges) suggests a stubborn resistance to recognizing the necessity of dismantling oppression (viz. whiteness) as part of DEI work. These documents further support the commodification of diversity in higher education in general and libraries in particular, focusing on DEI work's benefit to the institution itself. The University of Michigan (UM) Library Diversity Alliance Resident Librarian program description makes this process of racial commodification (of diversity itself, as well as of resident librarians) clear: as one of their key program objectives, they include "Enhance UM's reputation as an institution that supports, trains and mentors diverse librarians" (University of Michigan Library, n.d.-a)

Library residency programs are contested terrain in the landscape of institutional progressivism, and the librarians who move through these programs are burdened not only by the responsibilities that characterize their work and roles, but also by the beliefs and projections that structure their existence in the organization (Dankowski 2018). Even if they are not given responsibilities that are explicitly relevant to DEI, by their very nature these positions are meant to perform and complete/further diversity objectives. In other words, many residents will do diversity work as an official part of their area of responsibility, and many more will find themselves expected to fulfill those obligations in addition to a full workload (Galvan 2015). Nearly all of them, however, will provide labor for and benefit to their institutions (in terms of reputation, identity, sometimes even funding) that is not fully valued, compensated, or acknowledged. As we reviewed position descriptions and job ads, it was consistently unclear how these roles were, or would be, resourced to complete complicated work that necessarily requires support and collective engagement. The problem of

residencies with respect to labor is also a function of their relative precarity (and brevity, given most residencies last between one and three years) compared to permanent positions (Hathcock 2019).

Whether or not diversity work is written into their positions, it is frequently an expectation of library residents that they will provide the bulk of support for diversity initiatives, and this responsibility is difficult to resist or challenge, as a result of white fragility and institutional racism. If they are to progress in the field, or even just find another job, they need positive reviews and recommendations or a narrative that is amenable and intelligible to other institutions—and ideally, both. By creating residency positions and programs, whether directly in support of diversity objectives or as an act that itself is meant to fulfill diversity-related commitments, institutions are able to offset and offload a complicated array of responsibilities and expectations onto racially marginalized librarians, which enables other, nonmarginalized librarians to not have to do or engage with this work. Further, though these initiatives and programs nominally benefit everyone, in a profession in which whiteness clearly predominates, the voices that create and structure these programs are mostly (often, only) white; library diversity residents are frequently, even if inadvertently, put into a position in which they and their labor are commoditized for and evaluated by whiteness as a result. As a result of the ways in which their efforts are directed toward and structured by white objectives, and because their positions are temporary, marginalized people in library diversity residencies may never see the benefits of the time, energy, and labor they invest in this work or in supporting institutional goals they so rarely have a voice in creating.

LIVED LABOR EXPERIENCES

For us, this chapter wouldn't be complete without utilizing CRT to tell our counterstories, to centrally position the ways in which our labor has been exploited and devalued. For "experiential knowledge that directly names race and racism...create[s] counterstories to the dominant ideology," promoting a kind of "collective empowerment and knowledge reconstruction" (Sleeter 2012, 492). First, we acknowledge our positionalities. We write this from myriad perspectives—Blackness, queerness, Latinidad, femme, indigeneity, nonbinary; from a perspective of living with chronic pain, chronic illness, and mental illness. We each also work, and have previously worked, in dramatically different academic library and campus environments, with a variety of professional expectations, and more. The ways in which we experience labor inequity, as it relates to diversity work and beyond, vary just as widely as our identities do.

For one of us, inequitable labor began while they worked at a large, private research university, where diversity and equity work was publicly embraced by higher administrative staff but never propagated downward to counter structural microaggressions occurring at the departmental level. Because this author constantly navigated misogyny (a particular type of misogyny directed at Black women and Black femmes), they had a strong interest in engaging in diversity work at the library and campus levels. But this translated into that work becoming hypervisible and seen as a valuable commodity capable of being monetized through websites and other public-facing material meant to entice donors. In fact, anyone who publicly engaged in diversity work was then tapped for participation on associated initiatives. It was no wonder that this author spent the bulk of their time working with other BIPOC library staff on behalf of the institution, while white peers and colleagues did no more than perform the correct responses (or often the correct silences) in departmental meetings, rarely contributing to the labor around diversity work. Since they moved on, commodified diversity initiatives have continued to define this author's professional experiences.

For another, the labor inequities around diversity have played out through both formal and informal structures. In one instance, they were placed on an institutional diversity committee almost immediately after starting a new position, without ever being formally asked. The assumption was that due to the dearth of diverse faculty, there was no question about whether this extra labor was voluntary, despite being well above and beyond an already full workload. Intersectional oppression in the diversity committee itself became apparent in a committee meeting where we reviewed an institution-wide inclusive pedagogy training program. This online training explicitly mentioned gender, sexuality, and disabilities, but nowhere did it mention race or ethnicity. In fact, the text read as though race wasn't a barrier that needed to be considered. But rather than rethink the training program approaches when this was brought up, the chair of the committee tasked a subcommittee with coming up with additional frameworks that addressed race and ethnicity. Whom did they ask? A team of Black women and women of color.

Beyond these formal structures for diversity work, the informal diversity work expectations often take the form of recruitment and mentoring. And there is rarely any choice in the matter; we must do this to prove our value to the institutions and administrators that see us as a commodity. For one of the authors, this value manifests in the form of serving on search committee after search committee as the token representative of their race. In another expression, informal expectations around relationship building with marginalized and nondominant campus communities often results in a labor tax that is not recognized in promotional and tenure documents.

ERADICATING INEQUITY: WHAT MIGHT “JUST” LABOR PRACTICES LOOK LIKE?

Doing the work to radically and responsibly dismantle inequality is hard. In many cases, it's also emotionally and mentally draining. But doing the work can also be liberating. It can free and inspire; it can connect marginalized folks dispersed across the institution, for the betterment of all. In the spirit of CRT theorists and speculative writers, who allow themselves to postulate futures and imagine directions, in this section we explore what systemic change might look like. We embody the practice of adrienne maree brown's *Emergent Strategy*, and the radical, awe-inspiring work of visionary writers such as Octavia Butler, where imagining just futures provides an arable beginning. Here, we allow ourselves to dream.

For us in this moment, equitable labor practices look like:

- **Shifting the labor of managing dominant fragilities away from marginalized folks.** In the same way that white fragility is draining, other fragilities are just as bad. When you fuck up, misgender someone, lead with cultural biases and assumptions, or perform any kind of micro- or macroaggression, and someone calls you out and you start to lash out at them, work on that fragility away from the person(s) you've harmed. Do the self-work, then come back to collective efforts later.
- **Compensating staff well, and increasing transparency around salary.** In librarianship, everything functions around an ethos of service linked to vocational awe (Ettarh 2017), but the prestige of our institutions, or the (unrealistic) expectation that our efforts might actually shift institutional climates, **will not feed us.** Equitable labor means reassessing the pay gaps between marginalized staff and those who fit into white hegemonic standards (while also acknowledging the credentialed divide that often relegates BIPOC to library assistant roles with lesser pay), bumping the salaries of existing staff accordingly, and being transparent about salary at every step in our careers—*especially* when expecting us to lead the lion's share of your diversity efforts. In particular, post salaries in your job ads (especially if those roles are resident positions or require a heavy amount diversity and equity work).
- Having **fearless library leadership without platitudes.** We're talking about executive administrators—library deans and directors, associate university librarians, and university librarians—whose ethos involves passionately and fearlessly defending its staff, conducting thorough reviews around organizationally and departmentally intensive projects to see who's had to carry efforts alone, and advocating at executive campus-wide levels for better pay and treatment of its

staff. Yes, higher education is a business; that means the buck may stop with an institution's trustees, or its donor base, but there is no reason for any leader to tell a staff member to expect poor compensation and overburdening because that's how it's always been. Do better.

- Having **expansive views on leadership that include critical perspectives**. Often we have found ourselves overburdened not just by executive administrators but also by the inequitable labor practices of white peers who lead committees, task forces, or departmental projects. Because these forms of leadership aren't formally recognized in strict academic library hierarchies and organizational charts, it is all too easy for labor inequities to be swept under the rug. As a profession, we must reckon with how power is distributed outside of formal leadership positions, which starts with **everyone** recognizing the ways in which they lead in library workplaces. Further, library leadership should hold all staff accountable for their actions. Otherwise, nothing changes.
- **Majority groups volunteering on collective diversity efforts, in ways both large and small**. If you are white, or otherwise privileged, be the one to take notes and distribute them after meetings; be the one to send out information regarding upcoming diversity training(s), so that when your colleagues want to complain, it's not directed at the BIPOC organizers who've likely been roped into organizing it.
- Having **values-based professional review systems** that credit the labor of this work, making space for it by giving folks dedicated time during the workday to take on such projects. For example, one author wrote the majority of this chapter using research days, which allowed them to write from home and compose thoughts in an environment that was conducive to doing the work and didn't add extra stress. Libraries, at large, should consider adopting such policies, or explore adjacent benefits, given that the "research days" terminology may exclude those working in public, school, or special libraries. Other examples include more highly valuing diversity work in tenure review processes or, frankly, any performance review process; meaningfully incorporating diversity work into job descriptions; and considering review processes that allow staff to review their management for competency in this and other areas of work.
- Having **equal standards for engagement in diversity work across the board**. It's the work of everyone, including deans and department heads. And it's not work that should exist "in addition to" one's full workload.
- Having **transparency in institutional documentation**. Specifically name "racism" in your diversity statements. In job ads, frame your institution's current

challenges and areas for growth alongside the general blurb that details the size of your collections and other celebratory tidbits. How radical would it be to read, “We’ve recently begun a series of internal conversations around tone policing in meetings and committees here,” next to “We’re proud of the size and depth of our library collection”? Let folks know what they’re really getting into when considering your institution as a place of work.

- **Learning to value the complexity of diversity work, and giving properly resourced opportunities for leading it to those willing and capable of taking it on.** It’s not only done in contained, controlled environments and committees; it’s part of the daily fabric of interacting and existing in academia and society. Therefore, what the “work” looks like is going to vary on any given day, and thus burn-out happens that much faster. Resourcing to dismantle burnout altogether should be the goal. Diversity workers need to be given proper staff, authority, and space to work through the nuances of the interactions that lead to discrimination and racism within the white hegemonic systems that comprise our academic library institutions.
- **Reflecting critically on how Westernized, capitalist labor practices disproportionately affect staff of color.** When institutions fail to support students of color, it’s minoritized staff and faculty who are expected to mentor, guide, and emotionally support these students. Consider that these same staff take that (and other) work home with them, often leading to heavy bouts of emotional labor and being overworked to the point of sickness. Equitable, just labor practices mean moving beyond current framings and critiques and applying CRT to better understand how race intersects with the system’s ableist, sexist, and White Supremacist underpinnings. And then, be prepared to adjust schedules accordingly; understand that without flextime and boundaries between work and life, we cannot exist as our full and healthy selves because hegemonic whiteness deeply affects our physical and emotional wellness.

If all that wasn’t enough, consider looking at the speculated futures that a group of library workers brainstormed at “Moving Beyond Race 101: Speculative Futuring for Equity” (Brown et al. 2019), a panel/workshop presented at the 2019 ACRL Conference. We invite our readers to engage with the question, what do equitable labor practices look like for you? Collectively, we hope to ideate a future in which we liberate ourselves from top-down institutional diversity schemas—which both limit how BIPOC library workers engage with diversity and exploit our labor—so we can truly work toward racial justice.

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