

A business librarian's experience with conducting a collections audit for diversity and inclusion

Nicollette Brant

Librarian for Business and Economics, University Library, California State University – Long Beach, nicollette.brant@csulb.edu

Background

In Fall 2021, the University Library at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB), a Hispanic-serving four-year university, was awarded a grant to investigate issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in our collection. The project is ongoing and myself, along with four other CSULB librarians with different liaison responsibilities, are currently trialing methodologies to establish a process of thorough examination of the collection that is sustainable over time. Although the scope of our project includes collecting for colleges and departments across campus, in the past few months, I have taken away lessons on how to apply equitable practices for building a diverse collection for CSULB's College of Business (COB).

Auditing library collections in an academic setting is uniquely challenging because of the vast quantity of material. Aside from that, each subject librarian has their own collection development style and perspective on selecting materials because the student and faculty needs and selection tools and resources vary across disciplines. For these reasons, alongside completing our grant project, I have been working on specific methods for approaching diversity through a business lens.

To help us achieve our goal, I enrolled in a Library Journal (LJ) course called How to Build Diverse Collections. Most of what I will discuss here is what this course taught me and how I have been employing lessons learned

Applying Strategies to Build a Diverse Business Collection

Deciding on Audit Type

I decided that the most immediate way to implement strategies for building a diverse business collection was through a selection audit. During an LJ presentation given by Besty Bird & Dontaná McPherson-Joseph (personal communication, March 8, 2022) I learned that a selection audit consists of examining incoming materials. As my colleagues and I discovered, doing a complete collection audit would take time and resources beyond our current capabilities. A selection audit has benefits for COB faculty and students because they are often interested in the most recently published materials.

Determining Audit Scope and Tracking Purchases

The next task was to decide what diversity categories to include in the audit and how to express these categories through tags. For my selection audit, I used the similar parameters my colleagues and I used for our grant project. However, as I continue to work on my selection audit for business I have made changes to the way I classify racial, gender, and sexual identity.

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Karen Jensen (2017) provides an example list of types of diversity to consider in, “Diversity Considerations in YA: Doing a Diversity Audit,” including (a) race/ethnicity, (b) refugees and new immigrants, (c) gender roles/gender bias, (d) GLBTQIA+, (e) family structures, (f) adoption and foster care, (g) homeless or without stable accommodation, (h) socioeconomic diversity, (i) disability, (j) neurological challenges, (k) mental health/illness, (l) children with allergies and food intolerances, (m) children with complex health concerns such as cancer, terminal illnesses and those undergoing treatment, (n) culture and religion, and (o) intersectionality.

Even though Jensen’s list is for YA collections, it was a good resource to determine our scope. Out of this list, we focused on race/ethnicity, gender, LGBTQIA+, disability, and intersectionality. After reviewing student demographic data and discussing how to measure the diversity of our collection with my grant collaborators, we came up with a list of diversity tags. I have adapted our original list to include: (a) disability, (b) LGBTQIA+ (c) multiracial, (d) Latinx/ Hispanic, (e) African American, (f) African, (g) Indigenous, (h) East Asian, (i) South Asian, (j) Southeast Asian, (k) West Asian/ North African, (l) White, (m) female, (n) male, and (o) non-binary.

I have followed the method for tracking diversity data points in a spreadsheet I learned from Betsy and Dontaná’s (personal communication, March 8, 2022) presentation, which is to create diversity tags. In their spreadsheet they also include tag parameters, indicating whether the tag is represented in the character/subject or author/illustrator. For business, I have not purchased a fiction book or an illustrated book, but I’m not excluding the character or illustrator tag parameters in case I do make one of these purchases in the future. Below is a sample of my spreadsheet:

A	B	G	H	I	J	K	R
Title	Author	Race/Ethnicity Tag	Gender Tag	Sexual Identity Tag	Disability Tag	Tag Location	
Black Fortunes : The Story of the First Six African Amer Wills, Shomari		DV-AA	DV-M	DV-NA	DV-NA	Author/Illustrator-Subject/Character	
Where you are is not who you are : a memoir	Burns, Ursula	DV-AA	DV-F	DV-NA	DV-NA	Author/Illustrator-Subject/Character	
It's about Damn Time	Hamilton, Arlan	DV-AA	DV-F	DV-LGBTQ	DV-NA	Author/Illustrator-Subject/Character	
Unapologetically Ambitious : Take Risks, Break Barriers Archambeau, Shellye		DV-AA	DV-F	DV-NA	DV-NA	Author/Illustrator	
How to talk to your boss about race : speaking up with Hutchinson, Y-Vonne, author.		DV-AA	DV-F	DV-NA	DV-NA	Author/Illustrator-Subject/Character	
Black Magic : What Black Leaders Learned From Traum Sanders, Chad		DV-AA	DV-M	DV-NA	DV-NA	Author/Illustrator-Subject/Character	
The Prepared Graduate : Find Your Dream Job, Live the Abdul, Kyyah		DV-AF	DV-F	DV-NA	DV-NA	Author/Illustrator	
Grow the Pie : How Great Companies Deliver Both Pur Edmans, Alex		DV-EA	DV-M	DV-NA	DV-NA	Author/Illustrator	
Jefa in Training : The Business Startup Toolkit for Entrej Stoyanov Ojeda, Ashley K.		DV-LATINX	DV-F	DV-NA	DV-NA	Author/Illustrator-Subject/Character	
Inclusion Revolution : The Essential Guide to Dismantli Daisy Auger-Domínguez		DV-LATINX	DV-F	DV-NA	DV-NA	Author/Illustrator-Subject/Character	
Leading global diversity, equity, and inclusion : a guide Anand, Rohini		DV-SA	DV-F	DV-NA	DV-NA	Author/Illustrator	
Handbook of Sustainable Development : Strategies for Sharma, Radha R.		DV-SA	DV-F	DV-NA	DV-NA	Author/Illustrator	
Finance for the People : Getting a Grip on Your Finance Leon, Paco de		DV-SEA	DV-F	DV-LGBTQ	DV-NA	Author/Illustrator	
Ethics in Finance : Case Studies from a Woman's Life oi Tan Bhala, Kara		DV-SEA	DV-F	DV-NA	DV-NA	Author/Illustrator-Subject/Character	
Antitrust : taking on monopoly power from the gilded Klobuchar, Amy		DV-WT	DV-F	DV-NA	DV-NA	Author/Illustrator	
The art of insubordination : how to dissent and defy ef Kashdan, Todd B.		DV-WT	DV-M	DV-NA	DV-NA	Author/Illustrator	
Making Numbers Count : The Art and Science of Comn Heath, Chip		DV-WT	DV-M	DV-NA	DV-NA	Author/Illustrator	
Making Numbers Count : The Art and Science of Comn Starr, Karla		DV-WT	DV-F	DV-NA	DV-NA	Author/Illustrator	
Wallet activism : how to use every dollar you spend, e; Hester, Tanja		DV-WT	DV-F	DV-NA	DV-DISAB	Author/Illustrator	

As displayed, my column sections include title, author, race/ethnicity tag, gender tag, sexual identity tag, disability tag, and tag location. The hidden column sections are ISBN, publication year, publisher, subject, classification, license, total cost, fund, order date sent, and notes. I create duplicate rows for titles with multiple authors. I use a tag for not applicable (DV-NA) for information that is undisclosed, I cannot find, or is not applicable.

A prevailing question in the LJ course was how to find information on an author’s identity. During the Q&A portion of their presentation, “Sharing Queer Stories: Stereotypes and Representation in Literature,” Carson Williams (personal communication, March 15, 2022)

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urged us not to make assumptions and only track information that is self-disclosed or public knowledge. This takes a lot of author research. I primarily use social media accounts (especially Twitter), interviews, Wikipedia, personal blogs, and organizational webpages to find self-disclosed or public information. If I cannot find how a person self-identifies then I use the DV-NA tag.

Finding Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Collection Tools and Resources for Business

Various LJ speakers mentioned book awards and booklists to select from for building a diverse collection, such as the Rainbow Booklist and the Booker Prizes. But, most of these lists and awards center literary work. I could not find any lists that focused specifically on the intersection of diversity and business books, but these resources have been helpful:

- [University of Florida Business Library Core Business Books Collection](#) (brought to my attention by Celia Ross's Business Reference 101 through ALA)
- [PROSE Awards](#)
- [Axiom Awards](#)
- [Financial Times Awards](#)
- [The Next Big Idea Magazine](#)

Currently, [Business Expert Express](#) has a section highlighting Black voices in business. The CSULB University Library has access to the Ex Libris product ProQuest Rialto, featuring curated lists on topics like women's history, Black history, and Indigenous studies. The platform has filters to search each list by LC classification or interdisciplinary studies, which I use to find books related to business. I recommend using Rialto's curated lists if available at your institution.

Moving Forward

In my three years as the business librarian at CSULB there has not been a large faculty or student demand for diverse books in business or books in general. Faculty and students are mostly seeking articles, data and statistics, and proprietary information. However, I still think it is important to build a business collection that represents diverse voices. Through this work, librarians can support the cultivation of conscious and ethical business leaders and promote the importance of supporting diverse voices and perspectives in curriculum.

I prioritize purchasing eBooks with unlimited user access with the goal of marketing diverse business materials as a cost-effective alternative to expensive textbooks. I plan on finding opportunities to partner with business faculty to advocate the implementation of books written by people from the BIPOC, disability, and LGBTQIA+ communities. Doing a selection audit for diversity and inclusion of the business collection prepares me with the knowledge I need to be an agent of change.

References

Jensen, K. (2017). *Diversity Considerations in YA: Doing a Diversity Audit*. Teen Librarian Toolbox. <https://teenlibrariantoolbox.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Diversity-Audit-Outline-2017-with-Sources.pdf>.