



Collections Diversity Report October 2024

With Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) top of mind and a priority for both the University of Lethbridge and the UofL Library, the Collections Work Team and librarians at the Library wanted to assess our own collection diversity. Exhaustive collection diversity audits can be time-consuming, provide only a snapshot-in-time view, and are more suited to public libraries in certain respects. However, we determined there were a few things we could do to ensure we continue to diversify our collection in a way that highlights traditionally underrepresented voices.

We received a report from our main book vendor, GOBI, indicating the titles that had been on their Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Spotlight List for the past three years, and those that we'd purchased. Once the items were filtered to include only titles related to Canada, the overall list was reduced to 349 titles. Of those, we had neither purchased nor licensed 234 (~2/3). This list was distributed among liaison librarians to consider for acquisition; in addition, the list of publishers who published most of these titles was circulated to librarians to inform collection development going forward. Further, we opened our Demand-Driven Acquisition (DDA) profile to include some interdisciplinary subjects that will capture the DEI titles spotlighted by GOBI. This, in addition to retroactively adding the titles in the list that we don't already own that are available in the DDA, should increase our DDA pool with DEI content. Those titles not available on the JSTOR platform (on which our existing DDA is set), will now be sent to liaison librarians as 'slips' in their weekly GOBI emails for consideration.

Next, Romany Craig and Nicole Eva reviewed the University of Toronto's Central Libraries [Collections Diversity Plan](#) (thank you to Naz Torabi for sharing) to determine other ways through which we might increase the EDI content in our collection. Points from their plan that resonated with and seemed most relevant to us are noted below, with comments on what we are already doing, and ways in which we can consider improving.

Actions Completed

1. Specifically in response to the Canadian Federation of Library Associations [Truth & Reconciliation Report and Recommendations](#), we have implemented their recommendations 5 & 6 by Decolonizing Access and Classification by updating our cataloguing practices to more respectful terminology and Decolonizing Space by displaying Indigenous artwork, translating signage into the Blackfoot language, and creating an Our Stories space which holds Indigenous materials, including the full report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
2. We have developed a [Harmful Language Statement](#), which is linked from our discovery layer and provides a feedback model for potentially offensive material.

3. We have added a commitment to increasing EDI content in the collections to the Collection Guidelines.
4. We have opened up our GOBI and DDA profiles to include more DEI materials, as described above.

Ongoing In Action

1. Encourage deliberate vendor choices – as noted above, we have recently added interdisciplinary DEI titles to our DDA pool and have circulated the recent DEI titles and publishers of those titles to librarians to consider for their subject areas' acquisitions. We will also ensure we continue to acquire materials from local publishers such as the Southern Alberta Art Gallery and the Lethbridge Historical Society.
2. Redirect funding from major publishers towards projects that will ensure the acquisition, preservation, and discovery of endangered and marginalized content – the UofL Library has a long history of working on local digitization projects and will continue to do so. We also participate in Shared Print initiatives through COPPUL SPAN and NORD/NORTH.
3. Invest in Open Access initiatives – we have supported the DOAJ in past years, as well as signing on to and promoting transformative agreements. We recently committed to providing the SciFree journal search tool to our researchers to help ascertain which journals they may be able to publish in with lower or no APC charges. We actively promote Open Access alternatives on a regular basis across campus, including the ability to publish the Green OA version of their article in our institutional research repository, OPUS, which is maintained and supported by the Library.
4. Support non-extractive collection initiatives – many librarians and staff at the Library have taken OCAP Training from the First Nations Information Governance Centre to ensure we understand our responsibilities when dealing with Indigenous data. Since 2008, the Library has hosted the Blackfoot-owned Blackfoot Digital Library. We also organize a yearly Living Library, where students from non-Canadian cultures can share and highlight their homelands.
5. Ensure staff have the expertise to ensure they are acquiring and making available resources that highlight lesser-heard voices and treat them respectfully and responsibly – in addition to the OCAP training noted above, one of our main cataloguers participates in the National Indigenous Knowledge Language Alliance Respectful Terminology Project and regularly ensures our subject headings are kept up-to-date with the most recent language updates. Two technicians retroactively updated our catalogue's subject headings to ensure that only respectful language was used. Librarians and staff regularly participate in professional development activities to ensure they are kept up-to-date on developments in this area, and information sharing on these topics is routine among us. We must continue to consider the connectivity of all our patrons, remembering that some may not have ready access to electronic resources. We also encourage subject liaisons to look outside our traditional vendors to explore alternative publishers and book-buying avenues to expand beyond the norm, despite the ease of sticking with the routine paths.
6. Examine vendor profiles to screen for inclusiveness and appropriateness, and review ILL requests – GOBI profiles have been updated according to the above DEI interdisciplinary subjects, and ILL request lists are circulated yearly.

7. Continue work evaluating and changing subject headings, and change the display of problematic or offensive subject headings.
8. Provide space and access to technology for communities of colour, people with disabilities and other under-engaged communities – we encourage walk-in traffic for the Lethbridge campus and have ensured that some of our computers are available to community members (with no log-in) and are physically accessible. We regularly do outreach to the International Centre and the international students on both campuses to ensure they feel supported by the library.
9. Make visible intangible resources offered by the Library – when making displays, we endeavor to include e-resources alongside the physical materials by creating ‘fake’ covers or additional reading lists.
10. Organize exhibitions that engage community members in conversations around EDI – the Living Library event held during International Education Week is often publicized by the local media, and we will consider ways to invite other groups in the city to hold events in the library, such as hosting art, performances, or speakers in the library.
11. We note the Canadian Federation of Library Associations [Truth & Reconciliation Report and Recommendations](#) Red Team’s recommendations on Decolonization which recommend actively seeking out the work of Indigenous creators for materials to include in our collection, and continuing to deselect library materials that are historically inaccurate and repatriate materials that are culturally inappropriate for the library to hold.
12. Make EDI in collections an ongoing discussion in the Library – we will add Diversity Plan as a standing agenda item on the Collections Work Team agenda, and ensure that progress (such as this initial plan) is communicated to the Library Advisory and Planning Committee, the University Librarian, and the Provost.

Next Steps

1. Ensure discoverability of small publisher collections and diverse titles – we will encourage the Community Engagement Team in the Library to develop displays with an eye to highlighting these collections, including creating a DDA title list for bookmarks featuring EDI content.
2. Review select program syllabi to see how library collections and content align with teaching and research interests – while this is done now in an ad-hoc way, ideally a long-term goal would be to do a systematic review of syllabi from each academic department on campus, as permitted.
3. Develop EDI criteria to review, negotiate, and approve e-resources – we may develop a rubric to assist us with this review; disciplinaryity is also a criterion. To begin, we will add a check box to our New Database Request and New Serials Request forms to indicate whether the requested resource includes diverse content.
4. Seek input from the University on the EDI content in our Library collections – this feedback can be sought informally by liaison librarians, but we will also request the inclusion of a question on this topic for a regularly-held university-wide EDI survey. We can also request feedback on an ad-hoc basis via social media, suggestion boxes, white boards, etc.
5. When hiring new staff in the library, ensure that they have either lived experience or training in cultural competencies – we will share common resources with new staff but also keep in mind EDI priorities when hiring (in accordance with the terms of our collective agreements).

6. Provide training opportunities for staff to learn about endangered or lesser-taught languages – we have implemented Blackfoot signage throughout the library, but will also consider a training session for staff on Blackfoot language. This training is also in line with the aforementioned CFLA TRC Recommendations.
7. Continue to try to recruit and train Indigenous librarians, whether through co-op opportunities, experiential learning, or recruitment activities. This is also in line with the CLFA TRC Recommendations.
8. Make it a priority to raise funds from donors to strengthen or establish collections by diverse populations – will keep in mind as donors approach.
9. Commit library funds to acquire diverse collections – when parameters allow, we will direct endowment funds towards EDI purchases. (In addition to our regular collections funds, where appropriate).
10. Proactively investigate materials in our collections which may not be handled appropriately – future possible project.
11. Share knowledge with other groups on campus around specialized knowledge and how best to keep and acquire it – we will develop / continue relationships with groups on campus such as LPRG, Campus Collective, and QSpace and find ways to collaborate, such as providing reading lists to materials held in their specialized library spaces and taking requests for library acquisitions.

Future Plans: we commit to reviewing this plan every three years to ensure we are working towards these goals and adding new ones as they arise.

Next review: September 2027.