CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT GUIDE

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PROJECT PURPOSE

This project was designed under the direction of iDiversity, a student organization at the University of Maryland, College of Information Studies (UMD iSchool). iDiversity was created to address library and information science students' invested interest and concern about the barriers to access created when issues of diversity, representation, accessibility, inclusion, and cultural competency are not successfully acknowledged throughout the information professions. iDiversity was formerly founded on February 3rd, 2011, and has since gained strong support from the UMD iSchool students, faculty, and alumni as well as support from the community and academics from other areas of study.

iDiversity operates in support of its mission:

> *iDiversity at the University of Maryland promotes awareness of diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility within the information professions. The iDiversity group strives to create and maintain a dialogue between iSchool students, alumni, and faculty, as well as information professionals outside the university, to ensure that issues of diversity are addressed in practice, research, and technology.[1]*

In support of this overarching purpose, this project aims to ensure that every class addresses diversity within its curriculum. Through this project, instructors receive guidance on how to incorporate more diversity within their curricula. By including diversity in every class, students will be aware of diversity issues that they can implement in their future careers. Every current and future workplace of a student would benefit because the graduate would be aware of diversity issues and how they relate to various real-world settings. Course instructors will benefit because they will have the resources they need to easily incorporate diversity into their curricula.

Now, iDiversity hopes to see this project sustained under new leadership. Similarly, we aim to see dedicated and sustainable initiatives to support student-driven curriculum development projects established within the University of Maryland community, as well at other Universities around the country and the globe.

If you have any questions about this project, how it has evolved, or just want to chat, always feel free to reach out to us at iDiversity.UMD@gmail.com.

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[1] iDiversity. (n.d.) *iDiversity*. Retrieved April 14, 2016, from http://idiversity.umd.edu/.

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DEFINING DIVERSITY

Context

"What is diversity?" is a question that gets asked a lot, and one that is difficult to answer given the incredible scope of who is covered in the term diversity, namely everyone. Millennial diversity can be well described less as a melting pot and more of a tossed salad, where individuals define themselves and their information needs from a large array of choices rather than from a limited, prescribed list.

UMD iSchool Definition

As a general principle, this project's emphasis and interpretation of diversity aligns with the iSchool's definition of diversity:

> *The iSchool at the University of Maryland prioritizes issues of diversity and inclusion in the iSchool community. Information and technology raise issues of diversity and inclusion among many communities; as such, the iSchool embraces a broad definition of diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, disability, age, socio-economic status, education, geography, language, literacy, sexual orientation, and national origin, among other factors.*[2]

Additional dimensions of diversity include color, creed, religious affiliation, sex, gender identity, gender expression, immigration status, physical disability, and mental disability. These lists are not intended to be exhaustive, but rather illustrative of the vast range of identities – and their intersections – that can be included when we talk about diversity.

Any project contributions that address diversity, inclusion, or accessibility and align with the course topic are generally considered to be beneficial to the project. Interpretations of diversity may also depend on the scope of the course under development, as was the case in "Seminar in International and Comparative Library and Information Science."

Diversifying Diversity

Additional strategies for embedding diversity into a course could include the following approaches:

- Diversifying the geographic region(s) addressed, both nationally and internationally.
- Diversifying authorship by perceived gender, race, and ethnicity.
- Diversifying the mediums and types of resources suggested, for example, by including a mix of journal articles, videos, audio podcasts, and websites.

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[2] College of Information Studies, The University of Maryland. (n.d.) *Diversity at the iSchool*. Retrieved April 14, 2016, from http://ischool.umd.edu/content/diversity-ischool.

IDIVERSITY CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT SUMMARY

Diversity, inclusion, and accessibility benefit us all. Yet there exist few systematic efforts to infuse diversity, inclusion, and accessibility throughout higher education programs. Too often, these subjects are relegated to a single week within a course, if they are addressed at all. To engage students in curricular improvement efforts, iDiversity, a student organization at the UMD iSchool, created the iDiversity Curriculum Development Project. This project promotes diversity, inclusion, and accessibility, while also improving student involvement and agency in the iSchool's curriculum development activities. Project contributors examine course syllabi, create discussion points, and compile suggested course materials to infuse diversity throughout each course's syllabi. This student-led project allows for changes ranging from a single course to a broad-based reevaluation of curriculum design process.

The overarching goal of this student-led curriculum development project is to incorporate diversity, inclusion, and accessibility into every course taught at the iSchool and better ensure students are equipped with the knowledge needed to further promote diversity, inclusion, and accessibility within the information professions. This project supports students interested in playing an active leadership role in improving their own education, while also developing their curriculum design and project management skills. It also helps offset some of the curricular development workload traditionally assigned to instructors. Using iDiversity's curriculum development project as a model, students in other institutions and disciplines can partner with instructors to reevaluate their curricula and make a conscious effort to bring diversity, inclusion, and accessibility to the forefront of their education.

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RECRUITMENT

Student Contributors
- Emphasize to potential contributors that this project can be tailored to work with a variety of schedules and time constraints. Contributors can work on a single week's suggestions in as little as an hour. Contributors are also welcome to take on more weeks or contribute to more syllabi if they have more time. The work can all be done remotely, so it does not require that contributors be able to meet on-campus.
- Other student organizations may be interested in contributing. Reach out to them and ask if they would be interested on working on a particular syllabus.

Faculty Partners
- Ask your faculty program coordinator to forward an email to faculty for additional syllabi to work on. At UMD's iSchool, Dr. Paul Jaeger (MLS program coordinator and iDiversity faculty advisor), could help with this task.
- Ask faculty for their specific needs so contributions can be tailored to meet their expectations. Focus on the specific examples and contributions that they would like you to. For example, accessibility may be emphasized more heavily than diversity at the instructor's request. Ask them for core journals or resources to use in compiling suggestions.
- Targeted outreach to instructors (including adjuncts) could be useful. For example, it might be worth reaching out to spring instructors at the start of the fall semester to see if they're interested in having their syllabi reviewed.
- If interest is low or non-existent, try "volun-telling" instructors. For example, review a syllabus and compile just a few sources and talking points. Then, you can send your iDiversity suggestions to the instructor and offer to fully review their syllabus if they're interested.
- If faculty do not respond to your outreach efforts, try compiling suggestions for a few upcoming courses and send them directly to the faculty instructors. This will serve as a demonstration of the benefits of this project, and help make an incremental impact across the curriculum.

External Partners
- Market this project and upcoming syllabi to work on via social media. This will encourage students in other programs who are interested in contributing to join this project.
- Try establishing partnerships with other academic units and campus units. For example, at UMD, the Teaching & Learning Transformation Center and Office of Diversity and Inclusion have both expressed interest in this project. These types of partners may be good candidates to engage in this project.

DEVELOPING A COURSE

Project Lead Guidelines

- iDiversity's Google Drive account is a good platform for coordinating work. This also ensures future leads can access past materials.
- Ask project members which weekly topics they are most interested in working on. The iDiversity Google Drive's "poll" function works well. Once a sufficient number of responses have been received, assign members to an equitable number of weeks, taking their preferred weekly topics into account when making assignments.
- Add the full syllabus to the iDiversity Google Drive. Then, create a new Google Doc with the syllabus's weekly topics and member assignments. This will make it easier to assess where members should add their contributions.
- Set a deadline for member contributions, taking the needs of the instructor and project contributors into account.
- Once your project members have completed their contributions, compile them to return to the instructor. Ensure contributions are consistently formatted, revise any spelling and grammar mistakes, and complete any weeks that were not completed by your project members.
- Share your contributions online through your student organization website or a unique project website. UMD iDiversity's project website (https://idivcd.wordpress.com/) hosts past revised syllabi. Sharing completed work helps promote the project's visibility, demonstrates to potential faculty partners and student contributors the value of this project, and can be used by others outside of the course to supplement their own teaching and learning.

Project Member Guidelines

- Each member will be assigned an equitable number of weekly topics based on their preferences.
- Most course syllabi will include a course description and course objectives/outcomes.
  - The course description broadly defines what the course is about.
  - The course objectives section specifically defines what knowledge, skills, and competencies students are expected to learn as they progress through the course.

  To achieve curricular coherence, try to align your suggested talking points and recommended resources with the following elements:
  - Weekly theme
  - Course description
  - Course objectives/outcomes
  - Needs of the instructor
- *Each week's worth of contributions should take approximately 1 hour of time.* This includes creating 1-3 discussion points and locating 1-2 relevant resources. Resources can encompass traditional scholarship, like journal articles and conference papers, as well as popular scholarship, like videos (e.g. VSauce, a YouTube channel), websites, news articles, and archived twitter chats.

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- Focus on developing the most meaningful discussion points and including the most relevant resources, instead of aiming for the maximum number of contributions. Double-check your contributions with the full syllabus and the contributions of your team to ensure you aren't duplicating suggestions.
- Creating discussion points:
    1. Broad statements or questions that would generate a good class discussion are ideal.
    2. Make sure they align with the weekly topics and address a dimension of diversity, inclusion, or accessibility.
    3. Aim for discussion points that could have multiple answers, instead of a yes/no or one right answer. Example:
    How can library development and book donation projects better address structural social inequality, such as economic opportunity and information access?
- To find resources:
    1. Strive to use open access resources. Journal subscriptions can change from year-to-year and institution-to-institution. Using open access materials will improve content accessibility. If you are searching for journal articles that are not open access, check to ensure they're available through your campus library system.
    2. Skim the abstracts or summaries of resources that align with your weekly topic and addresses at least one dimension of diversity, inclusion, or accessibility. You are not expected to read entire articles or watch entire videos that you decide to include, just the abstracts or summaries! Students complete enough work for their own classes and do not need spend hours locating and evaluating potential resources for this project. ☺
    3. Record the citation of an appropriate resource in APA format. Example:
    Meyers, J. K. (2012). *Outreach to vulnerable youth in Africa through partnerships for innovative programming: The Lubuto Library Project*. Paper presented at the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) World Library and Information Congress 2012, Helsinki, Finland, August 11-17, 2012. Retrieved from http://conference.ifla.org/past-wlic/2012/160-meyers-en.pdf.
    4. Write a 1-2 sentence synthesis of the resource. Example:
    Meyers, President of The Lubuto Library Project, details her organization's collaborative partnerships with Zambian federal and professional organizations, including the Ministry of Education, the University of Zambia, and the Zambia Library Association, to delivery library services to Zambian communities.
- Add all of your contributions directly into the Google doc, instead of emailing them to the project team.
- Try your best to respect the contribution deadline set by your project leader. If you will have trouble meeting the deadline, let your project leader as soon as possible so they can find another member to help.
- Always log into your personal/professional google account when adding contributions. Anonymous contributions can be confusing to others working on the syllabus.

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- If you find a resource that might be suitable for a week you are not assigned to, be sure to leave a note attributing your contribution to you. This will ensure others aren't confused by new contributions.
- The project co-leads are here to help you! Please let them know if:
  - You need assistance or have questions.
  - You were not assigned to a week but would still like to contribute.
  - You have recommendations to improve the guidelines or project.

ADDITIONAL PROJECT IDEAS

Students

- Focus on CORE and REQUIRED courses, to ensure all students, regardless of specialization, are exposed to diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. Reach out to instructors teaching these courses to ensure these courses address diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.
- Consider creating an inventory of diversity articles & journals. This can be useful to the iDiversity Curriculum Development Project and other LIS students, faculty, and practitioners. An inventory might be a good way to collaborate with students beyond the UMD iSchool.
- This project could be reframed as an independent study or capstone project. For example, a student could:
  - Conduct a diversity audit of their degree program's curricula,
  - Revise the syllabi of their former courses,
  - Partner with faculty to develop and potentially co-teach a course.

Faculty

- Faculty can embed this project into their own courses as a mini-assignment.
- As a formative curricular development tool, students can serve as weekly discussion leaders and develop talking points to guide class discussions. Students can also be encouraged to share resources that compliment their week's topic. This can encourage current students to deeply learn about diversity, inclusion, and accessibility and contribute to co-creating their own learning environment.
- As a summative curricular development tool, this project can be designed as an in-class exercise for the last week of class. This can encourage current students to reflect on their learning throughout the semester and contribute to course improvements for future students.

RESOURCES

iDiversity at the UMD iSchool
- Website: http://idiversity.umd.edu/
- Twitter: https://twitter.com/iDiversityUMD
- Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/iDiversityatUMD

iDiversity curriculum development project at the UMD iSchool
- Project overview: http://idiversity.umd.edu/projects/umd-ischool-curriculum-development-project/
- Project website: https://idivcd.wordpress.com/

Presentations related to the curriculum development project

Inge, L. T., & Lieutenant, E. (2016). *Student engagement in curricular innovation: Scaling iDiversity's curriculum development project across campus*. Presentation at the Innovations in Teaching and Learning Conference. DOI: dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.2753.1126

Jardine, F. M., & Purcell, J. (2015). *Equity and inclusion in LIS through iDiversity*. Presentation at the Midwinter Meeting of the American Library Association. Retrieved from http://www.eventscribe.com/2015/ALA-Midwinter/presentationinfo.asp?presenter=90356&sess=&pres=81586&sessID=57051.

Jardine, F. M., & Zerhusen, E. K. (2014). *iDiversity: Marching forward*. Presentation at the Symposium on Diversity in LIS Education. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUa-l0MDdnc.

Lieutenant, E., & Inge, L. T. (2016). *Student leaders, student-teachers: Embedding diversity into LIS education through iDiversity's curriculum development project*. Presentation at the DERAIL Forum on Diversity, Equity, Race, Accessibility, and Identity in LIS Education. Retrieved from https://youtu.be/HMtwxgF-K04?list=PLfL9EJxja-h4k1P62VPMeSihOX75jlWDF. DOI: dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.3641.7682.

Publications related to the curriculum development project

Jardine, F. M., (2015). The role of students in diversity and inclusion in library and information studies. In Gorham, U., Greene Taylor, N. G., & Jaeger, P. T. (Eds.), *Advances in librarianship: Perspectives on libraries as institutions of human rights and social justice*. Bingley, England: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Jardine, F. M., & Zerhusen, E. K. (2015). Charting the course of equity and inclusion in LIS through iDiversity. *The Library Quarterly, 85*(2), 185-192. DOI: dx.doi.org/10.1086/680156.