UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
LIBRARIES

UTL Central Libraries Collections Diversity Plan

To be reviewed – January 2025

This document is intended to serve as an actionable plan for collections services to meet the University of Toronto Libraries' (UTL) commitment to creating a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment that supports learning, teaching, research and work. In accordance with UTL's Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Statement, the libraries pledge to increase staff diversity, to provide opportunities for staff and resources to develop cultural competencies and awareness of systemic biases, to build and improve relationships with Indigenous communities, to incorporate the principles of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act in our work and services, and to work with the University's Equity Offices in removing barriers to support our community members in fulfilling their academic, research, and employment goals.

It is our hope the following actions will help us meet those dedications:

1. Challenge: The majority of central libraries' budget for collections is allocated to Big Deal contracts and large-scale approval-plan vendors. This results in limited discretionary funds to broaden and diversify content and contributes to an overall knowledge divide.

Opportunities:

   a) Encourage deliberate vendor choices (Black, Indigenous, LGBTQ+ publishers, private presses, self-publishers, and local, in-country, regional suppliers), and strongly encourage selectors to develop purchasing relationships with booksellers, publishers, and other stakeholders (i.e., flexible supply chains) who represent or support diverse communities.
   b) Work with Financial Services during the RFI process to have equity, diversity and inclusion criteria, including TRC obligations, help inform procurement practices and supplier diversity, and to facilitate careful and considerate policies that

recognize the business practices and economic situations of different countries and regions.

c) Redirect funding, together with Keep@Downsview partners, from the purchasing and licensing of mainstream commercial academic content to the collaborative acquisition, preservation, digitization, discovery and open-access dissemination of endangered content and marginalized voices.

d) Invest in and support innovative, community-driven Open-Access initiatives that promote diverse research approaches, subjects, languages, etc., and content that transcends disciplinary, geographic, national, and institutional boundaries; as well as sponsor projects that ethically archive born-digital content.

e) Support non-extractive collection initiatives, such as Storytellers-in-Residence, data sovereignty.

f) Commit to and maintain the expert staffing necessary to carry out collection development and the processing required to ensure that BIPOC and ethnically-, racially- religiously-, and culturally-diverse collections are appropriately accessible; make certain that vendor-supplied material meets qualitative and equitable expectations and do not limit selections of material to technical or shelf-ready administrative expectations. We will carefully consider access constraints and contextualization through metadata where appropriate, for example to respect protocols to access traditional knowledge, or to contextualize material that is controversial.

2. **Challenge:** Current models of assessing and acquiring materials that rely on vendor pre-selection, including approval plans for print books and Big Deals for serials are pre-disposed to undermine the discoverability and value of small publisher collections and may negatively affect the diversity of collections.

Opportunities:

a) Collections Committee members, with support from Scholarly Communications and Copyright office (SCCO), and Collections Coordinators, will carry out a review every 3-5 years of select University teaching departments and programs, course reading lists and syllabi processed by the SCCO, University student groups, and will assess Library-wide surveys, to see how library collections and content align with research, teaching, and community interests.

b) Re-examine DSO profiles to screen for inclusiveness and appropriateness of language of selection criteria; and review patron requests and ILL requests to identify items that are being missed by the library's approval plan, so that plans can be further refined.

c) Develop EDI criteria to review, negotiate, and approve e-resources licensed by UTL. Prevalent evaluation tools, including circulation statistics, electronic resource usage statistics, and peer-institution recommendations should be evaluated for bias and for their capacity to assess the collection for different aspects of diversity

d) Encourage review of our purchasing rubrics and practices by faculty members and institutional peers, and commit to documenting, and sharing collection practices for feedback.

3. **Challenge:** It is sometimes unclear how our diverse community can provide ongoing collections feedback, which is a barrier to inclusion. Community member input affects the diversity of collections.

   Opportunities:

   a) When the university solicits feedback about inclusion, diversity and equity, include library collections as a feedback point and ensure such feedback and any meaningful analysis is shared with members of the Collections Committee and individual selectors where appropriate.
   b) Continue work to encourage solicitation of feedback from faculty, students, and staff on a regular schedule. Some examples of avenues include the librarian liaison program, promotion of feedback forms on social media, web banners, or direct faculty feedback solicitation.
   c) Development of rubrics or assessment plans should be conducted in partnership with a representative group of stakeholders.
   d) Develop a process for diversity and equity in collections discussions to become an ongoing part of the Library Advisory Committee's agenda. Work with the University Chief Librarians Office to add summary of progress on EDI objectives to the UTQAP templates

4. **Challenge**: Vacant selector positions, cross-appointments, and selector workloads may be affecting the ongoing expansion of diversity of our collections. Our staff may not have the time, knowledge, or experience to diversify collections appropriately.

   Opportunities:

   a) The University of Toronto Libraries to develop transparent and public-facing policies for identifying, acquiring, promoting, providing access to, and preserving the works of BIPOC scholars in all fields and disciplines – especially works by those who work or reside in Canada.
   b) When filling new and existing positions the Library shall develop processes and criteria to ensure those engaged in developing collections policies and acquisitions relationships (with publishers, vendors, departments, etc.) that include ethnic, religious, and cultural aspects have either deep connections to those communities or can demonstrate or show lived experience or education and training that develops cultural competency proficiency.
   c) That policies and procedures be developed, implemented and reviewed for training and mentorship of information professionals from diverse backgrounds,

but especially Canada's BIPOC communities, in building and maintaining research-grade collections. This should include partnerships with the iSchool (or other relevant information professional education institutions in Canada)

d) Provide training opportunities for staff to learn about endangered or lesser-taught languages

5. **Challenge**: Metadata descriptions in the library contain subject headings that bring forward racist, colonial, ableist, misogynistic, and otherwise harmful language and ways of thinking. These do not reflect our values as outlined in UTL's Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Statement, and have real world impacts on the ways that people see themselves, their communities, their cultures, and their religious practices being reflected and valued by the University of Toronto Libraries.

   Opportunities:

   a) Collections will continue its work evaluating and changing subject headings through engagement with the wider library user community and through internal groups such as the Indigenous Metadata Working Group, who are pursuing projects such as:
   b) Changing the display of problematic or offensive subject headings in order to support researchers using preferred terminology in their searches.
   c) Drafting a statement on harmful language and bias in descriptive metadata, which will be displayed and provide opportunities for feedback from users when they encounter harmful language or bias in metadata

6. **Challenge**: Advancement activities and donor priorities may impact the nature of library collections and reinforce Euro-centricity.

   Opportunities:

   a) Make it a priority to raise funds from donors to strengthen or establish collections by diverse populations and to establish targeted funds which will allow for purchasing and processing of diverse collections over the long term.
   b) Examining our policies and practices around how special collections are created and sustained. When funds are raised to acquire BIPOC special collections, commit library collections funds for the acquisition of supporting materials.
   c) Incorporate a diverse group of stakeholders into the planning process for fundraising campaigns. Work to develop strategies for building mutually beneficial relationships with possible donors from Canada's BIPOC communities.

7. **Challenge:** There are complex relationships that Canada and the University of Toronto share with Indigenous communities. These relationships include responsibilities to Indigenous communities

around knowledge sharing and knowledge keeping that should be incorporated into collections and access practices.

Opportunities:

a) As individuals, commit to learning about Indigenous knowledge protocols, the First Nations Principles of ownership, control, access and possession (OCAP), and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
b) Proactively investigate materials in our collections which may not be handled appropriately, and communicate with the appropriate community to find the correct course of action.

8. **Challenge:** The removal of material from public spaces and increased reliance on digital resources erases the visible diverseness of our collections and may lead to feelings of exclusion by non-University affiliated visitors (i.e., high-school students, tourists, external researchers, etc*.): "If you can't feel like you can belong in a place to study, it almost feels like you might not be able to belong. So, if you don't feel a sense of belonging in the most basic aspects of (university) college life than how can you expect to feel that sense of belonging in general"* (Mathuews & Broughton, 2019)

Opportunities:

a) Offer barrier-free access to collections through enhanced interlibrary loan and scan and deliver services and increased support to Open Access initiatives (e.g. TSpace) to provide access to collections on an as research-needed basis regardless of whether users are members of the University of Toronto community.
b) Incorporate collections into library spaces (physical and/or virtual (e.g., LibGuides, websites) to help make them welcome and engage our communities of diverse users.
c) Provide space and increase access to technology and online learning and creative tools, and to digital resources, for communities of color, people with disabilities, and other under-engaged communities.
d) Organize exhibitions that engage community members and that help to lead conversations about equity, diversity, and inclusivity at the University and in the greater Toronto area and in the broader national and international community.
e) Advocate for active consultations with Indigenous, BIPOC, and international-studies librarians by curators of physical or online exhibitions on broad themes to increase diversity of displays across UTL.

GLOSSARY:

Ableism: A network of beliefs, processes and practices that produces a particular kind of self and body (the corporeal standard) that is projected as the perfect, species-typical

and therefore essential and fully human. Disability then is cast as a diminished state of being human. (Campbell, F. A. K. (2001). Inciting Legal Fictions—Disability's Date with Ontology and the Abieist Body of the Law. Griffith Law Review, 10(1), p.44)

Approval Plan: See [Dealer Select Order](#).

Big Deal: The licensing of electronic journal content in the form of large bundles, rather than as single titles, from major academic publishers.

BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, and Person of Color

Collections: In this document we conceive of "collections" as including all physical and digital formats, but will use the term collections as a shorthand.

Dealer Select Order (DSO): Dealers are authorized to select and send important new publications first produced in their respective countries which, in their treatment and subject interest, are felt to be of university research quality.

Data Sovereignty: "[T]he inherent and inalienable rights and interests of indigenous peoples relating to the collection, ownership and application of data about their people, lifeways and territories." (Taylor & Kukutai, 2016, p. 2)

Discretionary Funds: Unallocated funds that provide the library with flexibility to strengthen current programs, to respond to unforeseen financial needs, and to seize new opportunities to serve researchers, students, and scholars.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI):

Equity: Equity is not the same as formal equality. Formal equality implies sameness. Equity, on the other hand, assumes difference and takes difference into account to ensure a fair process and, ultimately, a fair (or equitable) outcome. Equity recognizes that some groups were (and are) disadvantaged in accessing educational and employment opportunities and are, therefore, underrepresented or marginalized in many organizations and institutions. The effects of that exclusion often linger systemically within organizational policies, practices and procedures. Equity, therefore, means increasing diversity by ameliorating conditions of disadvantaged groups.

Diversity: Diversity can be defined as the sum of the ways that people are both alike and different. Visible diversity is generally those things we cannot change and are external. However, diversity goes beyond this to what we call 'invisible' diversity. Invisible diversity includes those attributes that are not readily seen. So, when we recognize, value, and embrace diversity, we are recognizing, valuing, and embracing the uniqueness of each individual.

Inclusion: an environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully; are valued for their distinctive skills, experiences, and perspectives; have equal access to resources and opportunities; and

can contribute fully to the organization's success. (Garner, 2015) as cited in (Cardenas-Dow & Pringle, 2018)

Keep@Downsview: A partnership of the University of Toronto, the University of Ottawa, Western University, McMaster University, Queen's University, and Memorial University to preserve the scholarly record in Ontario in a shared high-density storage and preservation facility located at the University of Toronto's Downsview Campus in North Toronto.

Indigenous Knowledge Protocols: "Indigenous knowledge protocols may include direction for the collection, use, internal approvals and validation, review, interpretation, and protection of Indigenous knowledge [...] Indigenous knowledge protocols may be provided in written form, there may also be oral traditions, including unwritten rules or protocols" (Canada, 2020 see espeically the Appendix for links to Indigenous Knowledge Protocols)

Request for Information (RFI): A common business process whose purpose is to collect written information about the capabilities of various suppliers.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC): A commission to provide those directly or indirectly affected by the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools system with an opportunity to share their stories and experiences. The TRC presented findings in its multi-volume final report, including 94 "calls to action" (or recommendations) to further reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous peoples. The University also has its own TRC Document – Answering the Call. Wecheehetowin – this document continues the commitment to "Updating collection development policies related to Indigenous language materials and children's resources" (Steering Committee for the University of Toronto Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2017, p. 112)

University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP): "Outlines the protocols for the assessment and approval of new programs, review of existing programs, modifications to existing programs and closures of programs" (University of Toronto, 2019, p. 5).

Works Cited

Canada, I. A. A. of. (2020, November 26). *Indigenous Knowledge under the Impact Assessment Act* [Guidance]. https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessment-agency/services/policy-guidance/practitioners-guide-impact-assessment-act/indigenous-knowledge-under-the-impact-assessment-act.html

Cardenas-Dow, M., & Pringle, L. (2018). *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI): An Equitable Future for Libraries and the Profession*.

Garner, M. (2015, October 4). Update and Definitions. *ALA Connect*. http://connect.ala.org/node/229669

Mathuews, K., & Broughton, K. (2019). *Challenging Inclusivity and Access in Academic Library Spaces and Services*. IDEAL Conference, North Hollywood, California. https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1djKoHe_ir0E-HXMpnoDzEXX7rb7mtb4mw49PSk_EVQw

Steering Committee for the University of Toronto Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2017). *Answering the Call: Wecheehetowin: Final Report of the Steering Committee for the University of Toronto Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. University of Toronto. https://www.provost.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/155/2018/05/Final-Report-TRC.pdf

Taylor, J., & Kukutai, T. (Eds.). (2016). *Indigenous data sovereignty: Toward an agenda*. Australian National University. http://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/n2140/pdf/book.pdf?referer=2140

University of Toronto. (2019). *University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP): Revised version approved by the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance*. https://www.vpacademic.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/225/2019/09/utqap-2019.pdf

June 16, 2022