

LAMA Cultural Diversity Grant Application

Applicant: Jill Keally and the University of Tennessee Libraries' Minority Librarian Residency Program

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The Diversity Librarians' Network: Electronic Discussion List and Website.

Abstract:

The purpose of this grant proposal is to seek financial support for the development of the Diversity Librarians' Network to include an electronic discussion list and website. Information resources on diversity training programs (primarily defined here as residency, fellowship, and internship programs) are fragmented and, therefore, not easily available. A website with links to the existing programs, development opportunities, and relevant discussions in the library profession would provide a single point of reference. An electronic discussion list that brings together diverse librarians (as well as interested faculty, students, and human resources professionals) would foster a forum for sharing ideas and networking among participants. While the proposed service is focused primarily on academic libraries, the discussion list and website will be inclusive, covering all types of libraries.

Background:

Who Are We?

The applicants are three recent MLS graduates in their first year as Minority Librarian Residents at the University of Tennessee (UT) Libraries. As Minority Residents, we serve on the Libraries' Diversity Committee and are fully committed to the committee's goals which include:

- Promoting diversity in the Libraries' collections and its workforce,
- Making the library a more welcoming environment for an increasingly diverse staff and student body, and
- Taking a leadership role in enhancing diversity on campus and in the library profession.

Diversity training programs, such as the minority residency programs at UT and at other ARL libraries, actively foster the values embodied in these goals.

The Proposed Service:

Demonstrated Need:

The need for a service that connects interested searchers to information on programs that train diverse librarians may not seem obvious to most. There are many difficulties faced when a search on these programs undertaken, the first being – what terms should you search under. Choosing one search phrase, we demonstrate the difficulty searchers encounter when trying to locate information on these programs. A *Google* search on “Minority Librarian Residency Programs” (chosen because the terminology is often the most common used) provides immediate insight into why a more comprehensive and updated information resource on diversity training programs in libraries is needed:

- Most results are out-of-date; some include open position announcements for individual programs dating as far back at 1998.
- Programs referred to as “fellowships” or “internships” may not be located although they offer the same benefits and serve the same purpose as residency programs.
- The first listing of current residency programs is located at the bottom of the first page of results and had the following problems: not all current programs are listed, not all links connect properly, one program was incorrectly listed with the general programs rather than the diversity programs, the information includes only the name of the program and its institution with no other contact or deadline information, and it is unclear how often the page is updated.
- Another similar listing is not found until the second page of results and although it includes more information on the particular programs listed, the page has not been updated since 1998 and includes information on programs no longer in existence.

Found hidden in the *Google* search for “Minority Librarian Residency Programs” is the ARL Residency & Internship Programs Database. This searchable database relies on residency and internship programs to submit information related to their respective programs. A search of the database for programs with the word “minority” in the description located seven listings, three of which were for the same program in three different years. Subsequent searches for “diversity” and “underrepresented” resulted in similar problems, with overlap being the most noticeable.

Audience:

A website and electronic discussion list that offer up-to-date listings of current programs, a structured bibliography on diversity training programs, and the added benefit of a forum that allows interested parties to discuss issues related to these programs will improve access to information about diverse librarians, programs that train these librarians and networking opportunities. This more comprehensive resource will appeal to a wide audience, including:

- Current diversity training program leaders in search of information to help them evaluate and update their own programs.
- Academic libraries interested in beginning a training program at their own institutions.
- Diverse library and information science graduate students in search of information on current training programs.

- Diversity training programs interested in finding well qualified candidates.
- Current program participants in search of networking connections with previous participants.
- Previous program participants willing to mentor and share their experiences with current and future participants.

Goals and Objectives:

Goals:

1. Develop an electronic discussion list and website that fosters information sharing and communication among current, past and future participants in programs that train diverse librarians.
2. Enable future participants and emerging programs to obtain more current and comprehensive information.
3. Foster mentoring and networking opportunities for program participants and other diverse librarians.
4. Create a network that connects program administrators and future program participants.

Objectives:

1. Create an engaged community of participants within the first year of operation of the Discussion List and Website by:
 - Identifying and contacting potential subscribers to the electronic discussion list;
 - Initiating professional and social events that facilitate the sharing of work experiences, accomplishments, and challenges during and after the residency program;
 - Creating and distributing a brochure to market the electronic discussion list and website to Library and Information schools and future residents.
2. Make the discussion list and website lively and responsive tools for current awareness by:
 - Posting timely notices of – and encouraging participation in – diversity awareness and skill development opportunities;
 - Scanning the library literature for discussions of relevant issues and posting citations on the website;
 - Gleaning new ideas and resources from the list discussions and adding them to the website.
3. Facilitate networking between new program participants and faculty advisors (particularly past participants) across the country by providing a readily available forum for participants and interested library faculty to connect;

4. Plan for the longevity of the electronic discussion list and website by transferring them from the University of Tennessee to an independent host site.

Budget:

The development phase of the Diversity Librarians’ Network: website and electronic discussion list will be hosted by the University of Tennessee. Initially, the University’s listserv will host the electronic discussion list. The website will reside on a Library server. Both will be managed by one of the grant applicants. Funding is needed to move both the electronic discussion list and the website beyond the University of Tennessee in order to ensure a sustainable structure for future success and maintenance. The following budget outlines the resources needed to upgrade the electronic discussion list and website, to support information gathering, to produce promotional materials, and to support networking opportunities among those interested in diversity.

Contact, networking facilitation and information collection	\$100
Contact will include letters to residency programs introducing the project and requesting information and involvement in the project; letters to library and information science programs introducing the project and offering brochures and further information; and telephone calls to facilitate information gathering, networking arrangements and program promotion.	
Brochure and advertisement material production	\$400
Brochures will be used to advertise and communicate to others the information available through the site and via the electronic discussion list. Brochures will be used at local and national conferences, sent to minority residency programs and ALA accredited library and information science programs.	
Networking event at ALA 2004 or ALA-Midwinter 2005	\$200
An event to allow for face-to-face networking and information sharing will be arranged for either the 2004 ALA National Conference in Orlando or the 2005 ALA-Midwinter Conference in Boston. We will seek LAMA or other sponsorship for space, utilizing the funds for advertising and reception purposes.	
Electronic discussion list transfer from University of Tennessee listserv to a professional hosting site	\$225
Transferring the electronic discussion list to a professional hosting site outside of the University of Tennessee will enable future residents and administrators to contribute to and maintain the site, ensuring the longevity of the discussion list.	
Website transfer from University of Tennessee Libraries’ server to professional hosting site	\$125
Transferring the website to a professional web-hosting site will allow the website to have a personal, registered domain name that will lend it a unique identity, improve ease of location by interested searchers, and provide increased flexibility and expanded opportunities for future growth.	

In Kind Contributions	
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In kind contributions will include the work of the University of Tennessee Minority Residents to include: website maintenance and development; electronic discussion list management; brochure and advertisement material content, creation and graphic design; networking arrangements; poster session development; and promotion of the service at professional conferences. Travel funds for the Residents for conference attendance will be provided by the University of Tennessee Minority Residency Program.	
Total Budget	\$1150

Budget Narrative:

A broad objective of this service is to increase awareness of diversity training programs among potential future participants and other academic institutions. We are requesting \$100 for postage and long distance telephone service to contact potential users of the discussion list and website. Establishment of an electronic discussion list and a website with a personal domain name (for example www.diversitylibrarians.com) will help achieve these goals. Electronic discussion list activities will result in robust networking and communication among past, current, and future residents across the country. The creation of a website will provide a resource page intended for all diversity librarians as well as the much wider academic library community.

This grant will support creation and distribution of a brochure for program participants. This will reach an audience of current program participants, graduate programs in library and information science, and academic librarians across the United States. We are requesting \$400 for brochure production and postage.

An informal meeting at the American Library Association Conference, National Diversity in Libraries Conference, or other major conference will strengthen networking capability. Such a gathering will enable us to generate novel and innovative ideas and to build new relationships. We are requesting \$200 to host a diversity networking reception at one of these conferences.

Moving the electronic discussion list and website to a commercial domain will sustain these services beyond sponsorship by a single library. We are requesting \$225 for electronic discussion list transfer from the University of Tennessee to a professional hosting site and \$125 to register the website with a professional commercial host.

Implementation:

Website design and introduction, electronic discussion list setup and introduction, program contacts, information collection and service promotion will all begin prior to the grant award decision and continue on the following projected schedule.

2003	December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin website design.
2004	January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend ALA-Midwinter; take informational sheets to share with attendees. • Contact programs, inform about project, collect information, gauge interest in future networking, and invite to join electronic discussion list. • Begin contacting library and information science programs.
	February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin entering collected information into website. • Establish electronic discussion list using University of Tennessee as host. • Plan poster sessions for National Diversity in Libraries Conference (May 2004) and ALA (June 2004) to promote service.
	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete and print brochure. • Follow-up contact to programs.
	April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin planning for networking event at ALA (January 2005); invite program developers, participants (past and current).
	May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend National Diversity in Libraries Conference; distribute brochures, information to interested attendees; offer informational poster sessions to promote service.
	June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend ALA – Offer information via poster session/table with brochures; Host networking event.
	Sep-Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin evaluating service via methods outlined in following section. • Continue gathering and adding information to website. • Continue monitoring electronic discussion list. • Continue promotion of both resources. • Plan further networking events at national and local conferences. • Begin researching and applying for future funding support.
2005	January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete report on first year evaluation of project.
	Feb – Aug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer electronic discussion list to professional hosting service. • Register for domain name; transfer website to professional hosting service. • Continue information updates on website. • Continue monitoring of electronic discussion list. • Begin recruiting new webmasters and electronic discussion list managers. • Designate a project coordinator for continued project maintenance.

Evaluation:

- Use comments/suggestions/contact information from the website to update, upgrade and improve the service.
- Design an evaluation form for both the website and the electronic discussion list to get feedback from our audience.
- Maintain a registration option in conjunction with the website counter to learn the number of people using our website as a resource page.
- Responses to queries for information from other academic institutions will reflect the success of our service. Post responses from other residency programs to create an information resource about productive diversity initiatives.
- Host a well-attended networking event at American Library Association Conference, National Diversity in Libraries Conference, or another major conference to demonstrate successful outreach to fellow minority librarians.

The Future:

The Diversity Librarians' Network: Electronic Discussion List and Website service has nearly limitless potential for future growth and advancement. As more people become involved in the service, it will become more successful. Future plans for the service:

- Gain recognition as a diversity information resource with national professional organizations.
- Present pre-conference workshops to bring together those who have created residency programs and those who want to create a program.
- Sustain website and electronic discussion list by involving new managers to insure new ideas and further development.
- Seek international exposure and involvement.

Conclusion:

This service will be a resource for library administrators and managers, diverse graduate students in library and information science programs, and diverse librarians throughout the United States. Academic research libraries interested in beginning diversity training programs will have a resource to help them build more successful programs. Diverse graduate students interested in locating a training program will have access to not only a listing of available programs but also to the personal experiences of participants who have completed the programs. Former and current participants will have access to networking opportunities with each other that will encourage mentoring and provide support for professional advancement.

The productive partnerships formed by those involved in this networking service will help academic librarians foster and sustain diversity while building an overall commitment to diversity at their institutions and within the library profession. The support network created for diverse librarians will increase their representation and advancement in the field of academic

librarianship, including administration and management. The contacts made through this service will lead to future partnerships among administrators in the library field and national organizations with interests in diversity issues and affairs. A few librarians committed to organizing a networking infrastructure to support diversity initiatives can achieve significant progress towards facilitating and fostering participation among a group that is currently not well connected.