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# Diversity Statements in Collection Development Policies in Libraries at CCCU Institutions: Applying Antiracism and Critical Theory to Academic Library Policies



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## **ABSTRACT**

The Council of Christian College and Universities (CCCU) has made diversity a major focus of the organization, but commitment to diversity among individual CCCU institutions and within their departments, such as academic libraries, varies. Diversity is a core value of the library profession and complements the CCCU's commitment to diversity, yet despite this convergence of interests, a review of the literature indicates that nothing has been written about diversity initiatives within academic libraries at CCCU institutions. This study was devised to begin to fill this gap in the literature and, thus, starts to investigate racial diversity within Christian higher education through the purview of the academic library's collection development policy. To that end, this study focuses on whether collection development policies in academic libraries at CCCU institutions include a diversity statement, and, for those that do, document analysis is used to identify the themes and connotations that emerge around the term *diversity*. The study frames its analysis of diversity through the lens of critical theory and antiracism, provides guidelines for writing an exemplary diversity statement, and reflects on the responsibility of academic libraries at Christian institutions to promote diversity through its collection development.

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## **Introduction**

In 2021 the Council of Christian College and Universities (CCCU) launched the Racial & Ethnic Diversity Resources database, in 2017 it hosted its first annual Diversity Conference, and in 2015 it published the edited volume *Diversity Matters: Race, Ethnicity, & the Future of Christian Higher Education*, yet enrollment of racially diverse students is lower at CCCU institutions when compared to other four-year private institutions and public four-year institutions (Paredes-Collins, 2013; Confer & Mamiseishvili, 2012; Longman, 2017; College Insights, 2021). Despite lower enrollment of racially diverse students at CCCU institutions, Jadhav (2020) reports, "the work of diversity in Christian higher education has gained prominence in the last 15 years or so" (p. 195). Demonstrably, diversity is a focus of the CCCU, but commitment to diversity among individual CCCU institutions and departments on

campus, such as academic libraries, varies. Though the focus on diversity within the CCCU has been a slow progression compared to secular counterparts, diversity has been a core value of the library profession for decades demonstrated by the American Library Association's (ALA) "Core Values of Librarianship" (2006) statement and the Association of College & Research Libraries' (ACRL) "Diversity Statement" (2012). Despite this convergence of interests between Christian higher education and academic libraries, a review of the literature indicates that nothing has been written about diversity initiatives within academic libraries at CCCU institutions. This study was devised to begin to fill this gap in the literature.

This lack of information raises the following questions that form the basis of this study: How are academic libraries at CCCU institutions in North America supporting diversity, specifically within collection development, and do the collection development policies for academic libraries at CCCU institutions include a diversity statement? Addressing the lack of diversity within faith-based institutions (Confer & Mamiseishvili, 2012; Nieves, 2012; McMurtrie, 2016; Menjares, 2017) is a moral imperative, as well as a means to survive in an era of declining enrollment (Gusa, 2010; Hoover, 2020) and a diversifying demographic (Pew, 2015; U.S. Census Bureau, 2019; Vespa, et al., 2018). In this context, library collections that do not reflect diversity, through either content or authorship, may contribute to the demeaning experiences of diverse students and resulting attrition (Gusa, 2010). One way to counter this is to create more welcoming institutions through changes in policy. This study begins to investigate racial diversity within Christian higher education through the purview of the academic library's collection development policy. To that end, this study focuses on whether collection development policies in academic libraries at CCCU institutions include a diversity statement. This study first identified all CCCU institutions in the United States and Canada, then gathered collection development policies through a search on each library's website. If no collection development policy was found, an email request was sent to each library director or equivalent. Document analysis, a qualitative research method, was used on the policies containing diversity statements to identify themes. The study examines treatment of diversity within CCCU academic libraries through the lens of critical theory and antiracism and concludes with reflections about the responsibility of the Christian academic library in promoting diversity on campus through its collection development.

### **Terminology: Addressing Ambiguity**

This study examines collection development policies at CCCU libraries to determine if a diversity statement is included, and if so, the connotation of the term *diversity* used. Due to the limited scope of this study, *diversity* is narrowly defined in terms of race and ethnicity. Other key terms are defined below. Over the last several decades *diversity* in Library and Information Science (LIS), and in society at-large, has derived

different meanings. In LIS diversity was defined narrowly in the 1980s and 1990s to connote differences in *race* and *ethnicity* and was used in reference to *underrepresented groups*, *minorities*, *the marginalized*, and *people of color* (Ciszek and Young, 2010; Hussey, 2010; Winston and Li, 2000; Chadley, 1992). In the early 2000s diversity began to be defined more broadly, addressing intersectionality, to encompass, not only race and ethnicity, but gender-identity, sexual orientation, age, church doctrinal differences, ability/disability, socioeconomic status, family structure (single-parent, same-sex parents), immigration status, language proficiency, etc. (Cruz, 2019; Morales, et al., 2015; Knapp, et al., 2012; Young, 2006). In the 2010s and beyond, while the broad meaning of diversity is still prevalent, there has been a return to an emphasis on race and ethnicity demonstrated by the synonymous use of the terms *multiculturalism*, *antiracism* and *anti-white supremacy* with *diversity* (Cruz, 2019; Hudson, 2017). In this study the term *diversity statement* refers to any clause in a collection development policy that includes the term *diversity* or *diverse* or a synonym connoting diversity of race and ethnicity. When using broad terms such as *diversity* effectively in policies and in research, it is imperative to explicitly define such terms in their intended contexts to avoid ambiguity.

## Literature Review

### *Christian Higher Education in a Multicultural Society*

This review of the literature begins by examining diversity within Christian higher education in a multicultural society, and then focuses on diversity within academic libraries. The CCCU is an international association representing over 180 Christian institutions worldwide with 150 institutions in the U.S. and Canada (CCCU, n.d.). In a chapter titled “Biblical Multiculturalism: Moving forward in Deed and Truth” Byrd and Rybalkina (2012) call on CCCU institutions to prioritize the “biblical mandate for a multicultural community as the authentic representation of the family of God” (p. 225). In addition to the initiatives listed in the introduction, the CCCU also currently supports these diversity initiatives: an ongoing Commission on Diversity and Inclusion; a two-day virtual event “Faithful Leadership: Race, Politics, and Evangelicalism in America” hosted in February 2021; the Racial Harmony Award recognizing “progress in the areas of diversity, racial harmony, and reconciliation” issued since 2000; the Minority Concerns Project supported from 1991 to 1994; and publication of the edited volume *Ethnic-minorities and Evangelical Christian Colleges* in 1991 (CCCU, n.d.). Paredes-Collins (2013) states “If Christian institutions are to realize the full scope of their spiritual mission, diversity must be prioritized as a compelling interest” (p. 123). The CCCU has responded to this call by increasing its commitment to promoting diversity within Christian higher education as a means to fulfilling its mission with its emphasis on Christ-centered education and biblical truth (CCCU, n.d.). It is up to individual member institutions whether to follow the CCCU’s lead in working towards diversity and multiculturalism. In Galatians 3:26-28 Paul tells the church “in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through

faith. ... There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (*New International Version Bible*, 2011). Jesus set forth the core of the Christian faith when he spoke the first and second greatest commandments: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” and “Love your neighbor as yourself” (*New International Version Bible*, 2011, Matt. 22:37-39). Before we can follow the Greatest Commandments, we need to define who is meant by *neighbor*.

According to 2019 U.S. Census Bureau data, 60% of the U.S. population is White (not Hispanic or Latino) and the other 40% are minority populations: 18.5% is Hispanic or Latino, 13.4% is Black, 5.9% is Asian, 1.3% is American Indian or Alaskan Native, 0.2% is Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and 2.8% are two or more races. *Minority* will soon be a misnomer in its current denotation when, by 2045, non-Hispanic Whites will no longer make up the majority of the U.S. population (Vespa, et al., 2018; Pew, 2015). The CCCU does not keep member institutions’ enrollment records based on race, but in a study done on CCCU institutions in 2009 using IPEDS data, Paredes-Collins reports that within CCCU institutions in the U.S. “From 2000–2007, overall minority enrollment has increased from 12.6% to 16%” (p. 289). According to Confer and Mamiseishvili (2012), “In 2009, minority enrollment at CCCU member institutions had only increased to 19 percent, while the national average reached 33 percent” (p. 5). In *Diversity Matters* Menjares (2017b) calculates, based on IPEDS data, that within CCCU institutions “the proportion of nonwhite students in 2014 was 28 percent, up from 19 percent in 2004 ... During this same period, these campuses experienced a decrease in the percentage of white students (-9.36)” (p. 15). Though diversity is slowly increasing within the student body of CCCU institutions, the CCCU has not kept up with enrollment of non-white students compared to the private sector overall or when compared to the public sector of higher education (Paredes-Collins, 2013; Confer & Mamiseishvili, 2012; Longman, 2017). In the 2018–2019 academic year private four-year institutions, not just CCCU institutions, reported 38% minority enrollment, 56% White, and 6% race unknown, while public four-year institutions reported 45% minority enrollment, 52% White, and 3% race unknown (College Insights). Aleshare reports (2021) that within member institutions of the Association of Theological Schools, some of which are also CCCU schools, the overall decline in enrollment over the last ten years has only been offset, to an extent, by the increase in enrollment of students of color (p. 67). Menjares (2017a) reports, as of 2017, “a growing number of campuses have enrollments where ‘minorities’ outnumber ‘majority’ students,” and, more specifically, “at least five CCCU institutions have achieved Hispanic Serving Institution status” (Section One). There is some indication that progress has been made, but, as seen in enrollment numbers, CCCU institutions struggle to attract and retain ethnically diverse students at the same rate it attracts White students (Confer & Mamiseishvili, 2012; Nieves, 2012; McMurtrie, 2016; Menjares, 2017b). Confer and Mamiseishvili (2012) conclude, “recruiting and retaining

racially diverse student populations continues to be a struggle for faith-based institutions” (p. 5). In a study of predominantly white institutions, like the majority of CCCU institutions, Gusa (2010) warns, “When Whites neglect to identify the ways in which White ideological homogenizing practices sustain the structure of domination and oppression, they allow institutional policies and practices to be seen as unproblematic or inevitable and thereby perpetuate hostile racial climates.” Further, Gusa (2010) asserts that “White institutional presence” contributes to an inhospitable environment for diverse students, which can lead to attrition of these students. Policies must change if racism is to be countered and diversity reflected at CCCU institutions. For academic librarians, one place to start is by supporting diversity through collection development policies.

### ***Diversity and Academic Libraries***

Diversity has been a core value of the library profession for decades demonstrated by the American Library Association’s (2019) “Core Values of Librarianship” statement that traces this value back to the 1930s. The Association of College & Research Libraries’ (2012) “Diversity Standards: Cultural Competency for Academic Libraries” states, “The standards are intended to emphasize the need and obligation to serve and advocate for racial and ethnically diverse constituencies.” Though LIS has embraced diversity as a core value (Hudson, 2017; Cook, et al., 2016; Roberts and Noble, 2016; Brook, et al., 2015; Chadley, 1992), non-whiteness has been problematized while Whiteness continues to be a considered normative or neutral within higher education (Adler, 2017; Farkas, 2017; Gibson, et al. 2017; Paisha, 2017; Brook, et al., 2015; Sadler and Bourg, 2015; Martin, et al., 2013; Gusa, 2010; Hussey, 2010; Elmborg, 2006). An example of structural racism in libraries is found within library catalogs and materials records. Racist Library of Congress Subject headings have long been documented (Adler, 2017; Roberts and Noble, 2016; Ciszek and Young, 2010; Oka, et al, 1994, “The many voices,” 1992), suggesting the Library of Congress’s quintessential reader is White (p. 144, Noble, 2018). Eurocentrism has been found to be a deterrent to minority use of library spaces (Brook, et al., 2015) and use of library collections (Adler, 2017; Hudson, 2017), “especially in science and history collections” (Overall, 2009, p. 180). As indicated, more work is needed to combat racism and promote diversity within LIS.

Academic libraries are uniquely situated within higher education to challenge structural racism and champion diversity, since libraries serve all students, faculty, and staff. Academic libraries’ commitment to diversity has been surveyed in several studies on collection development practices. Several of these studies focus on liberal arts institutions. Many CCCU institutions are liberal arts institutions, so these studies offer an apt comparison, particularly since there have been no studies published on diversity initiatives in academic libraries at CCCU institutions. A study of academic libraries at liberal arts colleges by Gilbert (2016) reports that 50.9% of liberal arts

colleges surveyed developed collections focused on diversity, while “Slightly less than one-third of survey respondents (32.1%) report that their library currently has a stated commitment to diversity, articulated in official library documents such as the mission statement” (p. 526). In an earlier study done in 2000 that surveyed liberal arts college library directors, Winston and Li report “nearly two thirds (63.1%) have undertaken activities to diversify their collections” (p. 211). Gilbert (2016) further reflects, “National liberal arts colleges do not manage diversity work well in comparison with libraries at research institutions” (p. 530). A study on collection development and diversity at member institutions of the “Committee on Institutional Cooperation” (CIC), comprised of the Big Ten universities and the University of Chicago and the University of Illinois at Chicago, by Young (2006) found that none of the CIC libraries with collection development policies available on their web sites had a diversity clause in their policy (p. 371). While some institutions embrace diversity more than others do, clearly there is more important work to be done within academic libraries to promote diversity. This study aims to fill in the gap in the literature on diversity and academic libraries within Christian higher education, where there is a biblical imperative to love your neighbor as yourself and recognize the image of God in everyone, but first a conceptual framework needs to be developed to guide this work.

### **Building a Conceptual Framework: Praxis Formation**

Critical race theory, as informed by critical theory and critical pedagogy, along with the practice of antiracism, form the conceptual framework of this study through the lens of a Christian worldview. Several key themes and seemingly disparate concepts emerged from the broader literature on diversity within Christian higher education and form the conceptual framework that shapes this study. Due to the limited scope of this study, these themes emerged initially as dichotomies or opposites: individual racism and structural racism; critical race theory and Christianity; self-reflection and mirrored reflection; good intentions and actual outcomes; and, obligatory caring and authentic caring. The author acknowledges that dichotomies are often oversimplifications lacking context, while more complex paradigms shape our experience and understanding of diversity in all venues. Dichotomies can also falsely equate opposition or division, or separation as implied by theorist Paolo Freire discussed further in this article. Though the dichotomies listed here may at first appear incompatible, hope and wisdom are found within the intersection of each pair, while more good work remains to be done to examine and make meaning of these apparent disjunctions and to identify more nuance. This paradox is rooted in the Christian tradition based on the Wesleyan notion of *via media*, or middle way. Since this study focuses on Christian higher education as represented by CCCU member institutions, it is appropriate that a Christian worldview is used as a framework through which to view diversity.

### ***Racism: Individual or Structural?***

This study applies critical race theory (CRT), which focuses on structural racism, to discrimination within academic libraries. The answer to the best way to address diversity and tackle the problem of racism differs depending on who is asked (Pew, 2021). In *The Chronicle of Higher Education* McMurtrie (2016) reports, “Black evangelicals are more inclined to see discrimination as a systemic issue, while whites tend to see it as a problem of individual behavior.” This discrepancy has aggravated the culture wars between progressives and conservatives, the pivotal question being ‘Is racism a problem of individual choice or is it systemic and perpetuated within the structures of institutions?’ The author of this study asserts both can be true, but real change requires addressing structural racism. Critical theory, along with its offshoots CRT and critical pedagogy, were chosen to frame this study for their focus on power structures, policy, and action (Roden, 2021; Tewell, 2015; Cannella, 2010; Bohman, 2005). Diversity within Christian higher education calls for a theoretical framework that broadly encompasses the ways these theories, practices, and concepts have interacted and intersected throughout recent history. Critical theory is an intersectional examination of how power structures enact oppression; further, critical theory must meet three criteria: “it must explain what is wrong with current social reality, identify the actors to change it, and provide both clear norms for criticism and achievable practical goals for social transformation” (Bohman, 2005). According to Cannella (2010) typical lines of inquiry that critical theorists pursue are, “Who or what is heard? Who or what is silenced? Who is privileged? Who is disqualified? How are forms of inclusion and exclusion being created? How are power relations constructed and managed?” (p. 22). These questions lend themselves well to an analysis of policy. As such, critical theory can be a powerful tool to increase diversity, challenge structural racism, and end discrimination.

### ***Critical Race Theory and Christianity***

There is a faction within evangelical Christianity that claims critical race theory and Christianity are incompatible. When this study was devised and collection development policies were gathered from CCCU academic libraries in 2019, CRT was chosen as the conceptual framework for its focus on changing policy to achieve diversity, which, in this study, applies to achieving diversity within library collections. At this time, CRT was not yet in the national spotlight as it became in mid-2020 after former President Trump issued an executive order banning CRT from use by entities under federal contract (Roden, 2021). Prominent Christian leaders, such as Ed Stetzer, professor, dean and director of the Wheaton College Billy Graham Center who edited a series on CRT for *Christianity Today*, have addressed recent objections to CRT. Damon Horton, professor and Program Director of the Intercultural Studies program at California Baptist University offers, “My conscious is clear when saying I’m not compromising my assured salvation in Christ (John



1:12; 10:27-29; Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 John 5:11-13) or Christian worldview when I engage CRT.” Wheaton professor of the New Testament, Esau McCaulley (2021), laments:

I remain puzzled as to why discussions of racism and injustice stir up so much venom from fellow believers. They do not simply disagree. They are angry. Despite this hysteria, there is simply no theological or historical reason for Christians to hesitate over acknowledging structural racism. (para. 3)

Harmony in a multicultural society proud of its diversity can only be achieved by holding institutions accountable for structural racism. Further, in *The Christian College Phenomena*, Byrd and Rybalkina (2012) explain conservative Christians who feel threatened by the change to a multicultural society falsely equate cultural pluralism with moral relativism (p. 223). CRT has limits, like all theories, but it is not antithetical to a Christian practice, as its critics have suggested. CRT is not a replacement for a Christian worldview, but, rather, is a useful tool for understanding the way structural racism has been perpetuated.

### ***Reflective Action in Critical Theory and Antiracism***

The academic framework of critical race theory dovetails with the practice of antiracism, since both center on policy, self-reflection, and action in their attempt to combat racism. CRT has been used in academia for decades. CRT first came to prominence at Harvard Law School in the 1980s, with roots prior to that, and first focused on ways racism has been propagated by the legal system and government policies, since expanding into areas outside of the law (Torres, 2013). CRT moves beyond an academic examination of racism by requiring action (Roden, 2021). The call to action in CRT is analogous to the call to action in antiracism. In *How to Be an Antiracist* Kendi (2019) defines an antiracist as someone who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions, while making clear an antiracist should focus on structural change by changing bad policies rather than on changing individual people. Kendi locates the roots of the problem of racism within power and policies with policy being a concrete manifestation of the more abstract concept of power. To clarify, while individuals must choose to do the work of an antiracist, their work should focus on changing policies instead of individual people. Thus, an antiracist practice does not condone shaming individuals for racist attitudes. Rather, the antiracist is interested in challenging structural racism through change in policy. Further, Pashia (2017) writes, “Structural racism is not simply a matter of individual prejudice. Instead, it necessarily involves differences in access to power, whether that is social, economic, political, or other forms of power” (p. 87). This study asserts that academic libraries at CCCU institutions can help their institutions take actions to end the problem of structural racism and improve diversity through a focus on policy.

Critical pedagogy falls under the larger umbrella of critical theory and like CRT requires action and reflection in regards to teaching. Since many institutions in the CCCU are liberal arts institutions, many of their academic libraries can probably be categorized as teaching libraries focused on teaching information literacy and research techniques while also supporting the teaching and curriculum that happens at the institution beyond the walls of the library. Critical pedagogy is critical theory applied to teaching. Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire (1968/2012), the founder of critical pedagogy, asserts, “reflection – true reflection – leads to action” (p. 66). Further Freire argues, “Reflection and action become imperative when one does not erroneously attempt to dichotomize the content of humanity from its historical forms” (p. 65). Here Freire uses a definition of *dichotomize* that implies dividing or separating; in a previous section of this article the term *dichotomies* applies instead to binary opposites. In this sense, to “dichotomize the content of humanity from its historical forms” suggests omission of marginalized voices from curriculum and library collections is problematic, but can be avoided through reflective action. Libraries are responsible for reflecting all people, including people who have traditionally been marginalized, by choosing materials for their collections that accurately reflect all people in the historical record, to avoid decontextualizing and, therefore, dehumanizing marginalized people. Freire’s “reflection” refers to self-reflection practiced by both those in the minority and those in the majority. According to Tewell (2015) engaging critical pedagogy in LIS results in asking reflective questions that attempt to answer the *how* and *why* as he explains:

One issue of keen interest to critical pedagogy that is central to the core tenets of librarianship, in particular that of information access and retrieval, is the construction of knowledge, including how and why the dominant culture reinforces certain discourses and marginalizes others. (p. 26)

Framing these questions in application to academic libraries would result in this reflective question: How and why is the dominant culture reinforcing certain discourses and marginalizing others within library collections? A partial answer to this question may be found in collection development policies. According to Torres (2013), like critical pedagogy, CRT “takes reflective engagement as a fundamental feature of its methodology.” This study takes the analogy of *reflection* one-step further, suggesting reflection is imperative in both forms, self-reflection and mirrored reflection or representation. Thus, a library’s collection should reflect and represent the diversity of its community. Librarians engaging in an antiracist practice can use both forms of reflection in their work by self-reflecting on their library’s policies to determine if their policies help those who have traditionally been marginalized see themselves reflected in the library’s collection.

### ***Avoiding Obligatory Caring Pitfalls: Good Intentions and Authentic Caring***

Action without self-reflection can have unintended ill consequences or be ineffective, even action undertaken with good intentions. Many libraries undertake a variety of actions in support of diversity, along with adding diversity statements to collection development policies, yet in all instances this work runs the risk of being insignificant or even damaging if mismanaged or insincere. Self-reflection helps turn good intentions into authentic caring, resulting in lasting and positive outcomes, while avoiding obligatory caring pitfalls, such as performative allyship. Overall (2009) recommends “Reflecting on values” by asking “do the espoused values align with the practiced values?” (p. 196), which can lead to a “transformation from obligatory caring to authentic caring” (p. 195). For example, an institution can create an official antiracism statement, but if it comes across as an attempt at obligatory caring instead of authentic caring it can be demoralizing to those experiencing racism on campus, for instance, if the statement has no action items attached to it rendering an intangible impact. Further, Gibson, et al. (2020) found “In private correspondence, several BIPOC [black, indigenous, people of color] information workers have remarked that their organizations were eager to issue statements but have not worked to create anti-racist cultures or dismantle internal cultures of white supremacy” (p. 76). Likewise, librarians with good intentions can add a diversity statement to their collection development policy, but unless the guidelines in the statement are followed during collection development activities, the pattern of materials acquisition and the content of the collection may not change and marginalized voices may remain marginalized. Freire (1968/2012) warns, “One cannot expect positive results from an educational or political action program which fails to respect the particular view of the world held by the [marginalized] people. Such a program constitutes cultural invasion, good intentions notwithstanding” (p. 95). If those who have traditionally been marginalized cannot find themselves represented in the contents of our library collections, if libraries do not respect their importance in the historical record, our libraries contribute to their dehumanization. Even carefully curated collections can disregard diversity. Further, Brook, et al. (2015) warn, “Though well-meaning, celebrations of ‘diversity’ and ‘multiculturalism’ can be ways of ascribing difference and otherness among both library patrons and library workers, once again affirming that Whiteness is the neutral, normal way of being in libraries” (p. 247). Reflective action, opposed to inaction, is necessary for an antiracist practice, as well. According to Kendi (2019), “there is no neutrality in the racism struggle. The opposite of ‘racist’ isn’t ‘not racist.’ It is ‘antiracist.’” (p. 9). For Kendi, neutrality can be equated to inaction, while being antiracist requires intentional choice and self-reflection coupled with action. Hudson (2017) offers this critique: “The anti-racist conviction of LIS diversity writing is undoubtedly sincere. But the centering of inclusion as its defining anti-racist modality profoundly constrains the diversity paradigm’s capacity to meaningfully challenge contemporary regimes of racial subordination.” (p. 10). Here Hudson warns that well-meaning diversity initiatives can distract and even

replace the more important work of changing racist systems and policies. Without both self-reflection and action, in spite of good intentions, authentic engagement and actual change is illusive. Libraries can follow through on good intentions and create positive and impactful outcomes by combining reflection with action.

## Methodology

The impetus for this study was the lack of research available, as evidenced in the review of the literature, on diversity initiatives within academic libraries at CCCU institutions. To acquire and study diversity statements in CCCU libraries' collection development policies, the author identified all CCCU institutions in the U.S. and Canada, and then conducted a search on each library's website for a "collection development" or "collection management" policy. If no policy was found on the institutions' website, an email request was sent to each library director, or equivalent, with a two-week response deadline, followed by a follow-up email (see Appendix A for the content of the initial email and Appendix B for the content of the follow-up email). The terms *collection development policy* and *collection management policy* are used interchangeably within LIS (San Jose Montano, 2014, p. 94) and so are used synonymously in this study. In April 2019 the author generated a list of 152 CCCU member institutions within the U.S. and Canada. All but one institution had an academic library. To encourage participation and to protect each library, all identifying information about each respondent and each institution was removed from the policy before the policies were analyzed. Of the 152 institutions identified, 84 policies (55.3%) were retrieved and 68 (44.7%) of the institutions either did not have a collection development policy, the policy was not available on the library's website, or the library director did not respond to the email request. A search on each libraries' website retrieved 46 collection development policies and an additional 38 collection development policies were supplied by the library director, or equivalent, upon request, via email, for a total of 84 collection development policies.

All 84 collection development policies were analyzed through document analysis and for word frequency through use of Voyant Tools, a free web-based reading and analysis tool for digital text to determine word count and themes. Identifying word frequency answered two questions; one, which, if any, other synonyms for *diversity* or *diverse* were used more frequently, and, two, upon determining *diversity* or *diverse* were the most commonly used terms, which policies contained one or both of these terms for closer analysis. Synonyms for *diversity* and *diverse* were first identified in the Terminology and Conceptual Framework section of this study. Synonyms for *diversity* and *diverse* were truncated, when appropriate, and searched for in each of the 84 collection development policies using Voyant Tools. The truncated synonyms and their word count include: ethnic\*, 14; race\*, 15; multicultural\*, 7; minori\*, 4; underrepresented, 2; racial, 1; and, marginalized, 0. In all 84 policies, the term *diversity* was found 46 times and the term *diverse* was found 37 times; 34 policies contained

one or both terms. As indicated, no other synonyms for *diversity* and *diverse* were used more frequently. Document analysis was used on all 34 policies to identify themes around the use of the terms and to determine their connotation, specifically to determine if these terms pertained to racial or ethnic diversity or a different type of diversity. Themes and connotations that emerged from the document analysis will be discussed in the next section. Additionally, the term *collection development policy* was used 1,090 times and the term *collection management policy* was used 103 times.

**Table 1**  
*Word Count for Terms Diversity, Diverse and Their Synonyms*

Term	Word Count
diversity	46
diverse	37
race*	15
ethnic*	14
multicultural*	7
minority*	4
underrepresented	2
racial	1
marginalized	0

Note: This table demonstrates the number of times the terms diversity, diverse, and their synonyms were found in the collection development policies analyzed in this study. Terms with an \* have been truncated and searched for in that form. A total of 84 collection development policies were analyzed.

## Findings and Discussion

### *Clear and Explicit Policies*

Analysis of the policies with a diversity statement found several with explicit language and several with vague language. Effective collection development policies are practical in nature and should be written in a style that encourages their application, and, thus, must use clear and explicit language. Further, Ciszek and Young (2010) take a positive view of the usefulness of collection development policies stating, “A clearly written collection development statement for the library is essential, providing rules and guidance for creating a well-balanced collection based on user needs and the mission of the institution” (p. 158). Of the 84 collection development policies obtained, 34 (40.5%) contained the word *diversity* or *diverse*, but not all instances of these usages pertained to race or ethnicity or even clearly defined *diversity*. Themes emerging from document analysis revealed that of these

34 policies containing a statement on diversity, 16 (47%) policies' use of the terms *diversity* or *diverse* were in reference to cultural, racial or ethnic diversity, while 18 (52.9%) policies did not explicitly imply diversity related to race or ethnicity. Analysis found the content of the text around the use of the term *cultural diversity* connoted racial or ethnic diversity, so policies including *cultural diversity* were included in the total of policies with diversity statements. For example, one policy stated the library will "provide materials to inform and educate on topics of social justice and equality, diverse cultures, backgrounds and worldviews." Another policy stated, "Collection materials reflect cultural diversity and promote respect and appreciation for specific cultures and the global community." Yet another policy states it collects materials "documenting the historical, confessional, and socio-cultural diversity of the global Christian tradition." *Global* was often closely associated with the term *cultural diversity*, as in the previous and subsequent quotations. This statement, which includes reference to *globalization*, is borrowed from the "Standards of Accreditation" from The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and was found in two policies: "The collection shall include relevant materials from cognate disciplines and basic texts from other religious traditions and demonstrate sensitivity to issues of diversity, inclusiveness, and globalization to ensure access to the variety of voices that speak to theological subjects." In addition to ATS, standards from two other national associations were cited on diversity within the policies analyzed. These two policies included diversity statements taken from ALA's "Library Bill of Rights" and ACRL's "Diversity Statement." The following exemplar policy is explicit in its guidelines for acquiring materials that promote diversity stating, "the Library's selectors have a mandate to expand the search for resources that reflect global concerns, ecumenical perspectives, and ethnic/socioeconomic diversity." This same policy requires built-in accountability and trackability further down where it states, "When adding a title to the buy list, the selector will indicate the primary conspectus category of the item, and if pertinent, indicate whether the item emphasizes a global, ecumenical or diverse perspective." Collection development policies must clearly define the term *diversity* and should include some form of trackable accountability to ensure materials that support diversity are being selected.

### ***Vague Policies***

Further analysis of the policies including a diversity statement found several policies offered only a vague definition of diversity and several other policies used a generic definition of diversity that did not signify racial, ethnic, or cultural diversity. Of the 34 policies containing a statement on diversity, 18 (52.9%) policies did not explicitly imply diversity related to race or ethnicity. In these instances, most commonly the term *diverse* modified synonyms of the term *viewpoints*, including *views*, *points of view*, *ideas*, and *thoughts*; the term *diverse* also frequently modified the terms *experiences*, *expressions*, *content*, and *traditions*. Of the 18 policies including generic denotations of the terms *diversity* or *diverse* unrelated to race, ethnicity or culture, two policies

referred to supporting diversity for a single program of study and not in all library collections, and three policies referred to diversity in relation to the university's mission statement and not necessarily library collections, and, so, were not counted towards the policies with diversity statements. Ciszek and Young (2010) stress, "Libraries must have a clear sense of what diversity means to the organization before embarking upon collection assessment" (p. 155). A collection development policy can include a diversity statement that references the institution's mention of diversity in its mission statement, but the policy should also explicitly state how materials are to be acquired to support diversity as alluded to in the mission statement and not just generally mention the mission statement. Additionally, a collection development policy must be updated were the institution to update its mission statement or add supporting documents to its mission, such as an antiracism statement. Snow (1996) warns that the weakness of collection development policies "is the written policy's inflexibility, its unresponsiveness to changes that occur at the college or university" (p. 192). Because of their inflexibility, collection development policies are at risk of quickly becoming outdated. Further, Brook, et al. (2015) caution that it is problematic when *diversity* is not clearly defined or its use is inconsistent (p. 267). Several policies analyzed by this study only offer a vague usage of the term *diversity*. For example, one policy only offered, "In its mission to support the college, the library holds a tremendous variety of information resources containing a great diversity of content and viewpoints – beautiful, ugly, true, deceptive, startling, offensive, conventional, and inane." Another vague policy states, "It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those which are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority." Not all policies including a diversity statement demonstrated sensitivity to the importance of diversity, as in one such policy that grouped diversity with controversy under the sub-heading "Diversity and Controversial Issues"; why diversity is considered a controversial issue is not explained in the policy.

## Recommendations

### *Writing an Exemplary Diversity Statement*

Collection development policies have their limitations and there is more work to be done on diversity beyond collection concerns, but despite these drawbacks, a diversity statement should be added to existing collection development policies and should follow these guidelines. As discussed in the previous section, the policy should clearly define the scope of diversity being upheld and should reflect the larger institution's definition of diversity and, further, should reflect the library's stance on diversity, if a formal declaration has been made. In addition to clear and concise language, according to Cruz (2019), an effective diversity statement should include goals, action items, and assessment measures. Goals should be specific and measurable and should reflect the language around diversity used by the larger institution and the library; expanded definitions of diversity may be included, but

the definition used by the institution and the library-at-large should be addressed first. Action items should include procedures that can be easily replicated by all involved in collection development, including classroom faculty, such as using a coding system, or a “diversity acquisition code” (Cruz, 2019), to keep track of titles purchased that reflect diversity. An exemplar diversity statement must also include assessment, such as determining the percentage of the monograph budget that was spent on titles that support diversity; an annual internal audit, that could be based on based on an annual inventory, analyzing the percentage of the collection that supports diversity; or a snapshot audit, which is a close examination of a small section of the collection. For example, a procedure could be put in place that requires an annual report, a self-reflection prepared by the library, shared with stakeholders, on the assessment findings and solutions for any goals unmet. Once assessment has been completed, if goals have not been reached, the diversity statement should briefly outline a plan for how this problem should be addressed. For example, if goals were not met, the diversity statement could recommend a brief written plan put in place at the beginning of the next fiscal year that includes educating title selectors on where to find titles reflecting diversity. A search for titles reflecting diversity may include reaching out to stakeholders such as faculty and students for title recommendations and by exploring the catalogs of small and independent presses known for publishing books on diversity (Morales, et al., 2015). To summarize, an exemplar diversity statement should include:

- Explicit language that clearly defines diversity and reflects the institution’s and library’s definition of diversity
- Language specific enough for practical application, yet flexible enough to be effective with future changes to acquisition models, budgets, programs, and curriculum
- Goals, such as quotas of number of items purchased or percentage of budget spent on materials reflecting diversity
- Action items in the form of clear procedures for accomplishing the goals
- Assessment measures followed by analysis or self-reflection on what was learned through assessment
- Accountability, such as triggers in the action plan were goals not met based on assessment
- Instructions for application to a variety of sources, including print monographs, electronic books, and leased online content
- Impetus for updates should the institution or library to amend, expand on or add support for diversity to its mission statement or other foundational charters

Other diversity-related initiatives that could be added in a diversity statement include a regular outside audit or review of the collection, the creation of a diversity



committee that would regularly review the collection and new purchases, gathering regular input from stakeholders such as diverse faculty and student groups, and pursuit of outside funding such as awards and grants to be used towards purchasing materials that support diversity. No matter the exact nature of the diversity statement, all effective diversity statements must start by using clear and explicit language and address each of the essential components listed above.

### ***Limitations to Collection Development Policies***

The purpose of a diversity statement in a collection development policy is to increase the number of materials in a library's collection that reflect and promote diversity, but collection development policies do not always speak to a library's entire collection. Most electronic and digital materials, such as electronic books, electronic periodicals, and databases, are leased through subscription, while most print monographs are purchased title-by-title (Daniel, et al., 2018). According to ALA (2019), "Digital media titles in US academic libraries have increased by 50% since 2014." When a library considers its holdings and collections available to patrons, both the materials the library owns and the materials leased through subscription are considered, but collection development policies have traditionally only addressed the former. Thus, collection development policies do not necessarily affect subscriptions and leased materials. According to ALA's "State of America's Libraries 2020: Academic Libraries," "All academic libraries spent an average of 73.8% of their materials budget on ongoing subscriptions." Only the remaining portion of materials budgets, after subscriptions, are spent on titles that could be individually selected by librarians and other selectors. Not only are diversity statements needed in collection development policies for title-by-title acquisitions, but diversity statements should also specifically address in some way electronic materials and leased content. For example, quotas could be set specifying the percentage of a budget or collection that should reflect diverse content and authors of electronic or leased resources. This would allow librarians to use the policy in pressuring vendors and resource-sharing consortia into allowing libraries more control over the content of electronic resources, such as electronic books, leased through bundles. The libraries in several university systems, including the University of California, have recently tried to negotiate with and have boycotted big vendors like Elsevier and Wiley in an attempt to gain more control over the content of bundles and to reduce rising subscription costs (Ellis, 2019). Another problem with electronic resources leased through bundles is replication of collections by libraries that use the same big-name vendors and are part of the same resource-sharing consortia. Brunvand (2019) warns "One consequence of sidelining local knowledge has been homogenization of information as libraries end up buying the same materials from the same vendors, much of it licensed online content" (p. 3). Further, diversity being the opposite of homogenization, Brunvand extrapolates that "Localization is about adaptation to diversity" (p. 8). Diversity statements in collection development policies are one tool librarians can use to build and maintain

diverse, unique, and useful collections, but they have their limitations and there are other tools to consider.

### ***Beyond Collection Development Policies***

Adding a diversity statement to an existing collection development policy is one way to increase diversity in an academic library, but further work is needed. First, the inclusion alone of a diversity statement does not ensure the statement is followed or appreciated by librarians. Librarians may need training on cultural competency and awareness. According to Overall (2009) authentic caring, as discussed above, begins with cultural competence, which “consistently refers to essential natural abilities of empathy, respect, understanding, patience, and nonjudgmental attitudes” (p. 189). Furthermore, Overall explores the three domains of cultural competence for library and information science professionals: cognitive, interpersonal, and environmental. According to Overall, cognitive cultural awareness requires self-awareness and self-reflection (p. 192), while interpersonal cultural awareness ushers in a “transformation from obligatory caring to authentic caring” (p. 195), and environmental cultural awareness addresses whether the library is “culturally sensitive, comfortable, familiar, and relevant” (p. 198). Like the necessity of using clear and explicit language in a collection development policies, so too should librarians, staff, and other stakeholders understand the importance of supporting diversity through academic libraries.

Once librarians and others responsible for selecting titles are culturally competent, effective selection can begin. Additionally, since bibliographies quickly become outdated and no definitive clearinghouse of diverse titles or authors exists, librarians must intentionally and continuously seek materials representing diverse authors, titles, and publishers and should be more intentional about publicly and regularly sharing this information with one another to mutual benefit. Another challenge is that librarians may be required to select titles only recommended or approved by classroom faculty who may not prioritize diversity, which can quickly deplete an entire monograph budget. If this is the case, conversations about diversity with other faculty selectors may be needed; reference to a recent collection audit may be useful in this conversation. The exemplar diversity statement highlighted in the Findings and Discussion section of this study has built-in accountability by requiring librarians use a code to label the type of diversity their selections reflect. Another way to determine if collections reflect diversity is through an environmental scan of the library’s collections to determine where there are gaps that need to be filled. To fill these gaps, a portion of a library’s materials budget may need to be designated or alternative funding, such as grants or awards, may need to be pursued. Even if a diversity statement is followed, Hudson (2017) argues, “the presence of such works in a library does not ensure their agency” (p. 13). New acquisitions lists should be shared among those working in the library and with other stakeholders such as classroom faculty to improve the chances new materials will be used.

Addressing diversity within collections is just one area in which libraries can support diversity. Other ways include, but are not limited to: addressing diversity in library instruction and pedagogy (Elmborg, 2006; Fister, 2013; Tewell, 2015), hiring diverse librarians (Brook, et al., 2015), supporting and retaining diverse librarians once hired (Brook, et al., 2015), creating culturally sensitive physical spaces (Overall, 2009), supporting diverse scholars through awards or scholarships (Brook, et. al., 2015), and purchasing library materials from small academic and independent presses that tend to publish more diverse authors than large publishers (Brunvand, 2019; Cruz, 2019). Other areas in the library that can address diversity, in addition to collections, are staffing, culture, services, and programming (Cruz, 2019). For libraries just beginning this work, ALA provides a template for building a diversity plan (ALA, n.d.). Hudson (2017) warns libraries of stopping short of changing racist systems and structures, and instead, for example, only focusing on one area of diversity such as inclusion, diversification of staff or collection, or cultural awareness training. Regardless of the type of work undertaken to increase diversity and combat racism, Hudson's critique is a good reminder of the need to keep the end goal in sight: changing racist systems.

## Conclusion

In the last two years protests worldwide have called attention to discrimination against black people, indigenous people, and people of color (Burch et al., 2021). The protests coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic are evoking major change in the institutions and structures that make up the fabric of our society. As nations grapple with their own complex histories of racial discrimination, prominent social institutions such as the church and higher education have a particular responsibility to dismantle racism within their structures. This reconciling work can begin through self-reflection that leads to action and, eventually, to changing policies for a lasting and positive impact. Academic libraries have a responsibility to labor alongside their institutions to help bring about these positive changes. Not only is this the right thing to do, this work will help prove worth and relevance to the institutions academic libraries serve. CCCU member institutions, particularly liberal arts colleges and smaller institutions such as seminaries and Bible colleges, are more vulnerable to upheaval and a deteriorating financial outlook complicated by COVID-19 than larger university systems and many may face higher rates of closure in the coming years (Adams, 2020; Hoover, 2020). As student enrollment declines (Hoover, 2020) and overhead increases, institutions in higher education are shoring up budgets by various means including reorganization, prioritization, budget cuts, marketing to more diverse potential-students, and the addition of new revenue-generating programming. Departments within these institutions may be called upon to prove their worth by delineating their contributions to student enrollment, retention, persistence, and completion; these categories apply not just to White students, but all students, including students of color. White students and students of color have the same graduation requirements, attend the same classes, and use the same library

resources, but are not supported in the same way. Improving library collections is one way to serve all students, including traditionally underserved students. Collections must demonstrate relevance and must not be seen as obsolete by students, faculty, or the administration. Updating a collection development policy with a clear and accountable diversity statement is one potentially impactful way to serve students and demonstrate the library's worth to the parent institution. †

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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## **APPENDIX A**

Dear —,

I am conducting a document analysis study of library collection development policies at Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) member institutions. I am inviting you to participate in this study by sharing your library's collection development policy. I am interested in both up-to-date and out-of-date collection development policies, so if your policy is outdated, please still consider sharing it. Any descriptive statements about your policy, such as when it was last revised, are welcomed and encouraged, but not necessary. If your library does not have a collection development policy, a reply with this information would be appreciated.

I am conducting this research to explore themes that emerge from library collection development policies at Christian institutions. There is no known risk in participating in this study. All identifying information about you, your library and institution will be removed from the collection development policy before the policy is coded and the results of the study are published.

If you choose to participate in this project, please send the collection development policy as an attachment to xx@xx.edu within two weeks (by April 15th). This will save a follow-up email to you. If you require additional information or have questions, please contact me at xx@xx.edu or xxx-xxx-xxxx.

Thank you for your interest and participation in the study. I genuinely appreciate your time.

Sincerely,

## **APPENDIX B**

Dear —,

I am conducting a document analysis study of library collection development policies at Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) member institutions. If you haven't done so already, please consider sharing your library's collection development policy. My email from April 1, 2019, includes more details on the study.

If you choose to participate in this project, please send the collection development policy as an attachment to xx@xxx.edu by Monday, April 15th. This will save a follow-up email to you. If you require additional information or have questions, please contact me at xx@xxx.edu or xxx-xxx-xxxx.

Thank you for your interest and participation in the study. I genuinely appreciate your time.

Sincerely,

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