



# Pursuing Racial Justice in the Duke University Libraries

ASERL FALL 2020 Membership Meeting  
November 13, 2020



# Duke University: Land Acknowledgement

Let us take a moment to honor the land beneath us. Duke University sits on the ancestral lands of the Shakori, Eno and Catawba people. We honor these tribes today by recognizing that this institution of higher education is built on unceded land. Additionally this land has borne witness to over 400 years of the enslavement and systematic mistreatment of African people and their descendants. We honor these people today by recognizing them in order to break the cycle of colonization and the continued erasure of Indigenous and Black peoples. We must acknowledge the history of the spaces and places we occupy to both understand and unlearn the many ways that we have been socialized.

Here are resources to help explain and ground the practice of this land acknowledgement:

- [The Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University Land Acknowledgment](#)
- [Duke Chronicle's article "This Land Is Not Our Land"](#)
- [The Catawba Indian Nation](#)
- [Tuscarora Nation of North Carolina](#)
- [A Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgement](#) (Native Governance Center)
- [Indigenous Land Acknowledgement, Explained](#) (Teen Vogue)

# Statement of Commitment



ANNOUNCEMENT, LILLY LIBRARY, MUSIC LIBRARY, RUBENSTEIN LIBRARY

## A Statement of Our Commitment

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The staff of the Duke University Libraries are angered and heartbroken by the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, as well as numerous other abuses of power against Black Americans. This racial injustice is rooted in historical and systemic white supremacy, and we recognize that our institution has played a role in that injustice. The longstanding impact of institutional racism must be addressed, and we commit to reckoning with it within our Libraries. Doing so will require engaging with our history, looking at our systems with a critical eye, further diversifying our staff, and re-centering our work to lift up marginalized and underrepresented perspectives. In this decisive moment, we will be intentional in our support for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, and will join with colleagues at other cultural heritage organizations to create, in the words of the [Association of Research Libraries](#), "an equitable, enduring research information environment."

In this work, we seek to live up to one of the guiding principles in our [strategic plan](#): "Diversity Strengthens Us." More than ever, we must prioritize our commitment and live this value in our work. Racial injustice is in the very fabric of our communities and institutions. The critical role of the Duke Libraries in our university's teaching, learning, and research makes it an essential space to seek understanding, have challenging conversations, and together determine what we can do to be a civic-minded and just society.

We have work to do to address the inequities so starkly revealed by recent tragedies. To expand our cultural competence and combat racism, we will carry on our efforts to:



## Racial Justice Strategy Task Force

Jennifer Baker - RL Research Services

Val Gillispie - University Archives

Arnetta Girardeau - Copyright & Schol Comm

Tom Hadzor - Development

Dracine Hodges - Technical Services

Christina Manzella - TS Resource Description

Katryna Robinson - Administration Office

Lucy Vanderkamp - RL Research Services



# Why a roadmap?

- A roadmap centralizes Duke University Libraries efforts to *plan and prioritize our commitment* to live up to our stated guiding principle, “Diversity Strengthens Us.”
- Roadmapping creates *shared understanding and transparency* in defining strategic racial justice goals and desired outcomes including the major steps or milestones needed for success. Critical to this also is the inclusion of information on DUL’s capacity to fund this work as well as acknowledged gaps.
- Serves as a *communication and accountability* tool, a document that helps articulate high-level goals and the steps for getting there.

# Community Reflection

Educating ourselves through information and activities aimed at building cultural competence and creating an anti-racist library.

1. Learn through [anti-racist reading lists](#) and/or workshops (e.g. [REI Groundwater](#))
2. [Use Book Discussions to Start Dialogues on White Fragility and Other Racisms](#)
3. Participate in open and respectful conversations about race and racism with [ground rules](#) that center BIPOC lived experiences
4. Create opportunities for staff to participate in [Racial Healing Circles](#)

# 21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge

- For 21 days, do one action to further your understanding of power, privilege, supremacy, oppression, and equity.
- Expand your awareness by reading, watching, listening, and participating in community reflection to learn.

Day	Read	Watch	Connect	Engage	Act	Notes
1	✓					Read How White People Got Made. Why didn't I learn this stuff sooner?!
2	✓					Read Microaggressions. Finally get what they are. And..have I done that?
3		✓				Watched Miseducation-no wonder I don't know anything! #ChangeNeeded
4			✓			Found Local Group. On mailing list, liked FB pg. Going to meet on 9/18!
5	✓					Read local Group's website. Couldn't stop reading.
6				✓		Attended Local Group film + discussion. Awesome people.
7	✓	✓		✓		More I learn more I learn I don't know. Want more, more, more!
8				✓		2 <sup>nd</sup> day in a row I called a new Local Group connection for ideas.
9	✓					Reading how to interrupt racist jokes. Do I dare? Feeling scared.
10			✓			'Liked' three national racial justice organizations on FB.
11			✓		✓	Attended lecture by John Powell at Local U. Wow. Where have I been?
12	✓	✓				New FB likes post amazing stuff. Feeling inspired!
13	✓	✓	✓			Focusing on whiteness in schools. So many orgs/resources. Who knew?
14					✓	Called 8 friends for dinner + film. All psyched but John. Pissed me off!
15	✓				✓	Read up on ways to address people like John. Called. Good-ish talk.
16					✓	Signed up to take class at Local Community College.
17				✓		Attended Local Group MeetUp. Talking Guidelines super helpful.
18				✓		Met MeetUp friends for a beer. Went to part of town I'd never been to.
19	✓					MeetUp friend loaned me <i>Birth of a White Nation</i> . Can't put it down.
20			✓		✓	Hosted dinner + <i>White Man's Image</i> film. Shocking, bonding, motivating.
21					✓	Asked boss how to get on diversity committee. Want to join.

## [21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge Tracking Tool](#)

# Why talking about race matters

**EVERYONE HAS  
A RACIALIZED  
IDENTITY.**

**RACIALIZED  
IDENTITY HAS  
MAJOR IMPACT  
ON A PERSON'S  
LIFE.**

**RACE IS A  
DEFINING  
SOCIAL  
CONSTRUCT IN  
AMERICAN  
LIFE.**

# Recruitment and Retention

Duke University Libraries must create and sustain workplace diversity and inclusive practices to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse Duke community.

1. Assess inclusiveness of our library workplace culture (connects to “Comprehensive Climate Assessment” in Duke roadmap)
2. Complete outstanding recommendations from [Task Force for Diversity in Recruitment Report](#) (connects to “Expanded Diversity Hiring Program” in Duke roadmap).
3. Prioritize funding for [HBCU Library Alliance Conservation Internship](#) and other opportunities for underrepresented groups (connects to “Significantly expand internship, training, and apprenticeship programs” in Duke roadmap)
4. LHR Onboarding Task Group report recommendations

# Libraries as Inclusive Space

Making spaces safe, where diversity is recognized, and equitable access is normative.

1. Implement Black Student Study [Recommendations](#)
2. Install [new signage](#) welcoming everyone to the Duke Libraries in Perkins and beyond
3. Visually celebrate and affirm racial diversity
4. Develop inclusive service training for all staff and student workers

# Collections and Description

Dismantle white supremacy in DUL collections and practice more inclusive metadata creation.

1. Codify and abide by inclusive description principles
2. Revisit our collection development policies to better center BIPOC history and culture and to engage more diverse vendors, donors, and sources
3. Explore ways to support scholars from a broader range of backgrounds in our scholarly publishing and to pursue more diverse publishing formats
4. Charge a small task group to increase the diversity of authors and subject matter represented in monographs in Current Lit and New & Noteworthy

# Research and Instruction

We must reconsider our role in research and course support through a racial justice lens.

1. Use the Rubenstein Library's [approach to instruction](#) to make library instruction more welcoming and inclusive
2. [Use critical pedagogy for library instruction](#)
3. Acknowledge the unequal [politics of citation practices](#) and explore alternatives
4. Moving beyond the reproduction of racism in research support

# Reckoning with Duke's History

Duke University Libraries holds the University Archives, and library staff have expertise in research, analysis, data visualization, exhibition curation, scholarly communication, and other areas that will support the work of understanding and confronting Duke's history.

1. Facilitate coursework and projects that explore under-researched aspects of Duke's history
2. Partner in initiatives to explore and reckon with Duke's history and engage with University departments and committees that undertake this work
3. In collaboration with faculty, students, and individuals representing other units on campus, develop exhibitions and public programming to explore and share Duke's history
4. Provide staff expertise and University Archives collections to support the Duke Centennial, so that we can "appreciate Duke's history of innovation, service and leadership while acknowledging the entwinement of that history with slavery, segregation, and white supremacy" (from President Price's introduction to Duke roadmap)

DUL Racial Justice  
Roadmap

21-Day Racial  
Equity Challenge

"Talking About  
Race" Session

Staff Work Culture  
Survey

Report  
Recommendations  
Transparency Tool

# Call to action!

“We seek to live up to one of our guiding principles - ‘Diversity Strengthens Us.’ More than ever, we must prioritize our commitment and live this value in our work.”

-DUL Statement of Commitment



Questions? Comments?

Thank You.

