



UPPER HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM

Together. For Better Libraries.

Equity Committee meeting, 8.18.23

x	Chair – Judith Wines, UHLS
x	UHLS at Large Member – Mary Fellows
x	DA Member – Andrea Nicolay, APL
x	DA Member - Christiann Gibeau, COHS
	At Large Member - Tracey Pause, VOOR
	At Large Member - OPEN
x	At large member – Seth Strock, GUIL
	At Large Member – OPEN
x	At Large Member – Sarah Romeo
x	Guest - Anne Myers

Call to order: 2:12pm

EC Challenge feedback review - 8.18.23

Should we:

Add Organizational Commitment as a step? Use a commitment form?

Andrea: Sees some value in it, would want it to be a spiritual commitment forever, not just limitations of a grant or the program itself. This should be an ongoing process and should be an organizational value.

Mary: We want libraries to have a commitment to equity work in general forever, but in this case it means a commitment to this particular project that has particular asks and rewards. We are assuming there is a baseline commitment to equity.

Judith: If we add this as a step, make sure to make it official with board consultation, etc. Make it clear to organizations that this is a scalable commitment.

Mary and Judith will work on official commitment draft.

Encourage adding to long-range plan?

Mary: This would be helping libraries again make the commitment more firmly. If we think this is a good thing to do, we'll add it. Should we add this to a long range plan?

Andrea: Thinks it's a good idea to add to long-range plan, but when board approves long-range plan the goals and objectives are set language but the actual process can change. Make it as yearly action items instead.

Judith: Agrees with Andrea, libraries may not be able to add it to long-range plan.

Mary: This would not be a requirement. *Add as optional item with acknowledgement of time frame challenges.*

Clarify how the challenge is evaluated (i.e. that it is self-reported)?

Mary: Doesn't see a downside to this

Add this to overview

Assign individual advisors rather than just the EC? How would that work?

Mary: Libraries who have gone through this before might consider being advisors.

Judith: Each committee member would have area that they're responsible for and would field questions regarding them.

Sarah: Advisors may not be strong in particular areas

Andrea: We [the Equity Committee] are homogenous as a group, topics are more complex than we may be able to inform on. If the Equity Committee is going to advise, we should have a disclaimer that we are not the experts, and introduce element of humility. If we assign individual mentors, we may lose out on group knowledge and resources, and skill-sharing.

Mary: Thinks we should *stick with original plan and have individual mentors*; no objection from EC.

Andrea: Is there a pathway for communication, e.g. if you need assistance this is how you get in touch with EC? Mary said this is TBD.

Develop communication pathway

Add a recorded training? What would that look like?

Sarah: Are they looking for a training on how to do the challenge, or how to do individual parts?

Mary: This is unclear. maybe they meant a brief training as an overview of the challenge, and it also could be presented to board like a promotional.

Christiann: Clarified that “recorded training” means guidance ideas to get started. The amount of time to do this is pretty intense. There could be a quick intro a la summer reading (e.g. “it’s coming”), but probably can’t do one for each component

Andrea: Every library has to own it for themselves; if we make a video the EC is viewed as the owners of this project, which is a message we don’t want to send.

Christiann: If there are concepts that are more abstract than others, that’s where mentors/advisors come in.

Add lighter lifts, like attending/listening to a UHLS training or having UHLS-presented board training.

Judith: Thought we were pivoting away from the training idea, focusing on action and implementation

Andrea: *Resources given are just links, not specified as article, website, video, etc. We could specify this and let people know the time commitment, if they can delegate it, etc.*

Is it too daunting? Options: segment the whole challenge, require fewer items completed per section; or pare down number of items in each section.

Segmenting example: Release annual list of items each of three years rather than all at once. Each year a new list, but libraries can still finish up old list.

Requiring fewer items, e.g. using Section 1: complete 8 out of 12 rather than 9 out of 12? Or pare down to 10 items and ask for 7 or 6 out of 10?

Christiann: Likes segmenting idea, the caveat is some people are big picture thinkers and it might be good to send out the full scope of everything and “grey out” things that will and won’t be done now

Andrea: Scope the ask down a little bit, doesn’t agree with EC choosing which items should be focused on first. Give libraries the full menu and have people pick what they’re going to do rather than prioritize things by putting them in the first year, second year, etc. These give libraries more autonomy to decide what they think is most important for their library.

Christiann: Maybe for the first year they could pick one item from each section, or pick some from each section that you think is important for your library, and build on that for the following years.

Mary: Do you think this is daunting enough that it needs to be pared down in some way?

Sarah: no

Andrea: It seems sad to remove things that are deemed not as important. This is big work, paring it down to make it more palatable is not what EC is about.

Judith: When we asked libraries how likely they were to participate, none of them said “5” [most likely]. The value is in libraries taking action. Having a robust challenge isn’t meaningful if libraries aren’t going to do it.

Mary: Suggests we *go back and look at the requirements and see if we think there’s a way in some of the categories to drop the number of requirements. Leave everything on there, but make requirements less, in the hopes that once they’re done they will go back and see what else they will do.*

Amend the opening statement to reflect the inclusive nature of the challenge (adding in LGBTQIA+, disability, age, and other accessibility language)?

There was unanimous agreement

Add food allergies to the programming section?

There was unanimous agreement

Add quick bathroom access to facilities?

There was unanimous agreement

Explicitly list the ADA facets as they might get lost in the master list?

Seth: Is there a way to find a condensed version and add it to the resource section?

Mary: e.g. read this list of ADA requirements and find the ones that your library needs to work on.

Christiann: Use this resource as a simpler guide:

http://accessadvocates.com/ada-compliance-library/?fbclid=IwAR0Fu8_3AdzLd9UauOgzwcV8elxzBWMekkm7IT11w8dGZydlSWllcWoaKNY

Include facilities resources for accessibility for individuals for non-physical disabilities?

Christiann will investigate

Add Resources for signage?

This should go under marketing rather than facilities

Weekly/bi-monthly reminders? Who would do these?

Christiann: Weekly is way too frequently; monthly or quarterly is better. Maybe use visuals to show people where libraries are at.

Andrea: Make reminder email fun, e.g. use fact or something from resources and have the body of email be a link to resource. This will offer useful information and also reminding people to do the challenge

Mary: Likes this idea, it can be done in advance and won't be a huge lift. A spreadsheet can be created for this.

Does the size of the incentive make this a competition? (No one thought it was too little \$)

Mary: It's a competition with yourself, not with other libraries.

Andrea: This is an opportunity to recharacterize incentive as equity. This cash is us promoting equity among ourselves, e.g. for smaller libraries.

Judith: Provide a list of potential purchases that would underlie the message.

Is a September rollout still realistic?

Sarah: It seems too soon to start in September, maybe in January.

Judith: It doesn't seem high on people's radar. It's more important that the messaging is set since there is some need for clarification. More comfortable with starting in October rather than holding to September and rushing.

Mary: We won't address this until we get further along in September and see where we are (EC has 2 meetings in September). We'll say that we're okay with pushing it out to October if necessary, and keep working on to-do list.

Christiann: This could be a good intern project.

Next Meeting: 9/14, 9/24

Adjournment: 3:07