

Equity Committee Meeting  
August 15th at 2 p.m.

Attending: Mary Fellows (UHLS), Judith Wines (UHLS), Anne Myers (UHLS), Andrea Nicolay (APL), Seth Strock (GUIL), Sarah Romeo (BETH)

**Review of [minutes](#) from July meeting**

No additions

**Communications with Equity Challenge libraries (continued)**

Here is a first draft of language we might use in sharing the submitted Action Item work with other libraries:

Dear Equity Challenge Libraries:

We're excited to share an example of a completed action item. Albany Public Library has submitted the results of their work in "Board Learning and Recruitment" and has kindly agreed to have their outcomes shared with the group. If you have any questions, please reach out and we'll work with Albany Public to answer them. (and of course, we know that your library's work will be tailored to your community. This is meant as inspiration, not a prescription!)

<b>TASK TITLE</b>	<b>Your Answer</b>
<b>Board Learning &amp; Recruitment</b>	
Provide the board up-to-date demographics on your service area, including languages spoken. How many languages are used, and which are they?	The City School District compiles data about which languages other than English are spoken by students in the district. In the 2021-2022 report, Spanish, Arabic, Pashto, and Karen were listed as the top four languages spoken, with "other" listed as the 5th category. A total of 922 people in Albany were identified as speakers of one of these five categories of languages.

<p>Review your board mission statement, by-laws and strategic plan for language about welcoming diversity and/or how equity and inclusion are foundational to the purpose of the library. If no such language is found, revise accordingly. For your strategic plan, if your plan is not due for revision soon, create a draft for possible inclusion in the next strategic plan. Quote the applicable section.</p>	<p>APL's mission is broad and inclusive: "Educate, entertain, and empower" our community. The 2023-2025 Strategic Plan includes four goals, one of which is "Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access." Under that goal are the following Objectives: 1) Strengthen recruitment, retention, development, and training practices to ensure the staff reflects the diverse community APL serves. 2) Align current policies and procedures with DEIA values. 3) Assess the needs of the community re: DEIA and expand marketing strategies to reach underserved groups. 4) Ensure that programs, presenters, and materials reflect the diversity and interests of the community.</p>
<p>Include in your trustee orientation information on the library's commitment to equity and inclusion, and board practices supporting this commitment. Quote or describe the relevant portions.</p>	<p>Reviewing APL's Strategic Plan is an important feature of the orientation process for new Board members. Since APL's current Strategic Plan includes a section devoted to our DEIA goal (quoted in 1.2, above), we are able to maintain compliance with this Equity Challenge item.</p>
<p>Create a plan to bring onto the board people representing segments of the population not currently represented, whether your trustees are appointed or elected. Share your action steps.</p>	<p>The Board's Nominating Committee is responsible for encouraging Board candidates to run. The 2024 Nominating Committee met several times in advance of the elections, which took place in May. The topic of recruiting diverse candidates was addressed at each meeting, and committee members pledged to reach out to their personal and professional networks about the (3) available seats. The committee also encouraged the full Board at the meetings that led up to the election. The result was that we had (12) candidates diverse in race, age, and gender. One of the winning candidates identifies with the LGBTQ+ community, and all (3) are women. While this leaves zero men or non-binary people on the Board, it is also true that the majority of the people who ran were women.</p>

<p>Hold an open house or a live and recorded virtual "meet a trustee" information session for prospective trustees. Market the session to diverse populations. Tell us about how it went.</p>	<p>For the first time in anyone's memory, APL held not one but two information sessions for prospective trustees: one took place on a weekday evening, and a session was added on a Saturday morning to better accommodate working people. We had (7) attendees at the weekday session and (8) attendees on Saturday morning.</p>
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Andrea: We should add a link to the webpage/form (e.g. "see here for the blank form") since it may have been a while since people have looked at the challenge. Also mention that APL chose to do x out of the y suggested tasks (i.e. they didn't do all of them).

Edits were minor (mostly fixing syntax) and agreed upon.

**Next steps on ideas from June [brainstorming session](#) & [survey feedback](#)**

Look at the items we identified in June as supporting the current equity challenge and look at the feedback that came from the check-in with the libraries.

\*Pull together agendas for past staff development days from each library to help other libraries come up with ideas and resources.

\*Help libraries plan diverse programming (e.g. an implementation guide or resource guide such as Programming Librarian)

\*Help libraries surface diverse history

\*Universal design and how library construction grants/aid can enable this

\*Ability to articulate the issues with Dewey Decimal System and staff trainings on the problematic history of librarianship

There is a potential tie-in for the asterisked items with the suggestions in the survey

Mary and Andrea said we should consolidate the June brainstorming meeting with the check-in survey responses to make it easier to read. Andrea said we ought to focus more on the check-in responses (quarterly email digest and a virtual check-in forum) since that's what our colleagues are asking for.

Mary and Andrea suggested we set aside time before the DA meetings to discuss Equity Challenge ideas (e.g. pick a category to focus on depending on which areas libraries are working on). Mary said Facilities and Equipment would be a good one to start with since it's concrete and more pertinent to the people at the DA meetings. We will do this as a virtual

meeting before the virtual DA meeting, and leave a solid buffer between this and the DA meeting (advertise it as 9-9:30 and leave time in case it goes over).

Whoever is the point person for the action area in focus should facilitate the meeting (e.g. Judith would lead Facilities and Equipment). We'll go in with a few questions to start the discussion.

We will specifically invite the libraries that are currently working on this action item as well as anyone else who is interested.

Mary said we should let libraries tell us what they need rather than us compiling new resources that may or may not be helpful.

Meeting title: *Equity Challenge: Getting It Done*

Equity Challenge topics pages will live on the new UHLS website.

### **Reporting points**

Andrea will share at the September DA meeting that we will be starting these pre-DA meeting forums for Equity Challenge support.

Next (virtual) meeting: Thursday, September 26 at 2pm