Embedding Inclusive Excellence in an Academic Library

Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Considerations

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Overview

- What is inclusive excellence?
- Infrastructure
- Planning & Taking Action

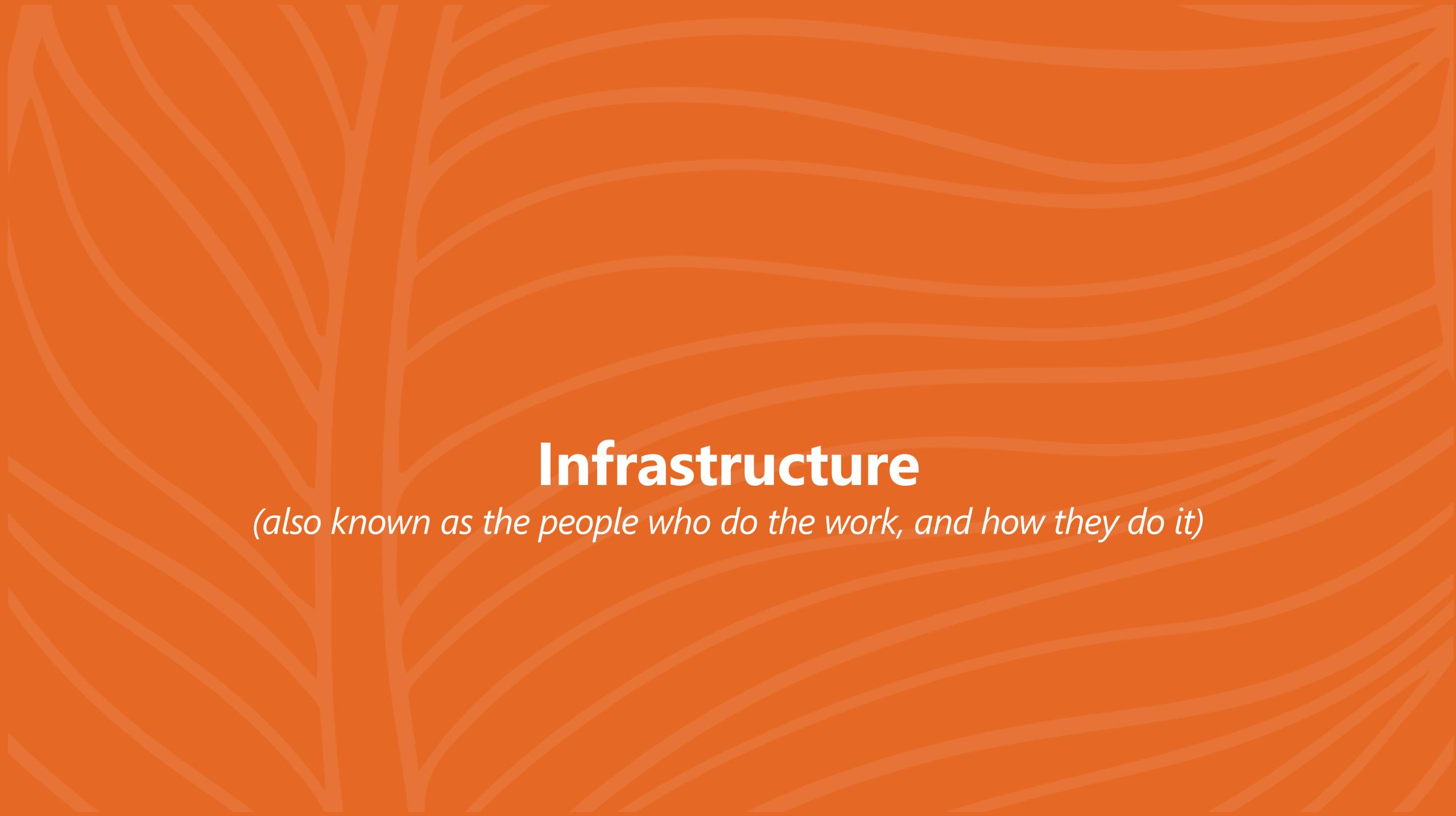# What is inclusive excellence?

Inclusive excellence:

- recognizes that an institution's ability to successfully advance its mission depends upon how fully it values, engages, and includes the diversity of its constituents

- requires a comprehensive, cohesive and collaborative alignment of infrastructure, resources and actions

- should be a framework for all areas of an educational institution, including:
  - recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion policies & processes
  - admissions & enrollment
  - curriculum and faculty development
  - co-curricular learning opportunities
  - administrative structures and practices

If your institution is not intentionally diverse, excludes marginalized perspectives in decision-making process, and not working to create greater equity, by definition, *it cannot be excellent.*

History of DEI work at UD Libraries

Formation of Library Diversity Committee	University Libraries Strategic Plan Issued	University President's Statement	Libraries Diversity & Inclusion Team Formalized	New Associate Dean Appointed	University Libraries Plan for Inclusive Excellence Issued
2003	2017	2017	2018	2021	2021
Volunteer committee with an appointed chair established in the Libraries	New strategic plan that establishes diversity as a foundation for the plan and articulates inclusion as a core library value	University of Dayton President Spina issues statement affirming DEI commitment, including hiring inaugural VP for D&I	Cross-divisional team with required representation from around the Libraries; no longer volunteer-driven; formal charge established	New Associate Dean for Inclusive Excellence, Engagement, and Operations appointed; new portfolio includes oversight for DEI initiatives across the Libraries	Following the issuance of new university diversity plan in 2020, Libraries creates its own context-specific plan that also aligns with university goals

Infrastructure

(also known as the people who do the work, and how they do it)

Structural supports for DEI

- **What do you have in place to support inclusive excellence at your library?**
  - Policies
  - Plans
  - Processes
- **Who does the work?**
  - Formal positions
  - Committees

Volunteer Diversity Committees

Diversity Committees used to focus on celebrating different cultures, but not challenging the status quo:

- Book displays
- Events with an emphasis on food
- Film screenings

Sound familiar?

Moving from Invitation to Expectation

Formalizing the University Libraries Diversity & Inclusion Team

UD Libraries
Diversity & Inclusion Team (ULDIT)

Charge:

The University Libraries Diversity and Inclusion Team (ULDIT) advances the mission of the Libraries by providing leadership, offering support, and serving as a resource around diversity, equity, and inclusion endeavors across all areas and for every unit of the Libraries, including but not limited to: collections, professional development, programming, services, spaces, and overall climate. Driven by our Catholic and Marianist social justice traditions, the ULDIT supports the Libraries' efforts to meet diverse and changing user needs. The ULDIT also acts as a strategic resource for and partner with campus departments that create programming and other activities for the broader community that explores issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Membership

- **ULDIT Chair (standing member; currently Associate Dean)**
- **Professional Development Team Chair (standing member)**
- **Student Success Librarian (standing member)**
- **Assistant to the Dean (ex-officio)**
- **Access Services (one representative)**
- **Collections Strategies and Services (one representative)**
- **Information Systems and Digital Access (one representative)**
- **Marian Library, U.S. Catholic Special Collection, and University Archives (one representative)**
- **Research & Instruction (one representative)**
- **At-large members (up to two)**

ULDIT Activities

- **Weekly email digest sent to all library employees compiling readings and links to professional development opportunities focused on DEI/accessibility issues in libraries**

- **Blog posts highlighting information resources by and about underrepresented and marginalized groups**

- **Lunch & Learn series**

- **Programs & Events (both online and in-person)**

- **Creation of resource guides focused on DEI topics**

  - Anti-racism resource guide: libguides.udayton.edu/antiracism

  - Black History Month resource guide: libguides.udayton.edu/bhm

  - LGBTQ+ Pride Month resource guide: https://libguides.udayton.edu/lgbtq_pride

ULDIT Highlights

Book read & discussion for team members

- *But I'm Not Racist! Tools for Well-Meaning Whites* by Kathy Obear

  - Series of discussions for team members that used a critical lens to evaluate the book, and members' own privilege (caveat—we didn't like the book!)

Session co-sponsored with Professional Development Team on Critical Race Theory (nearly all Libraries employees attended)

- **Invited Prof. Dalindyebo Shabalal from UD Law School as a speaker**

  - Employees applied CRT framework to analyze actual library scenarios as part of the session

Session on LGBTQ+ Identities as part of Lunch & Learn series

- **Guest speaker Riley Jelenick, Coordinator of LGBTQ+ Student Services at UD**

Hosted film series for Latinx & Hispanic Heritage Month that partnered with Multi-Ethnic Education & Engagement Center and Welcome Dayton

- **Film screenings included guest facilitators/speakers from the wider Dayton community**

  - Opportunity for an exploration of lived experiences around immigration

# Developing the Associate Dean for Inclusive Excellence position

- Pre-pandemic, the Chair of ULDIT had expressed interest in reconfiguring their position to have full-time responsibility for DE&I projects and initiatives in the Libraries

- In late 2020, the Associate Dean for Collections & Operations announced retirement

- Other personnel changes led to a reorganization of the University Libraries, including designing a new portfolio for Associate Dean replacement

- New responsibilities include oversight of DEI initiatives across the Libraries

- Responsible for coordinating implementation of Libraries' diversity plan

Planning & Taking Action

(enacting inclusive excellence)
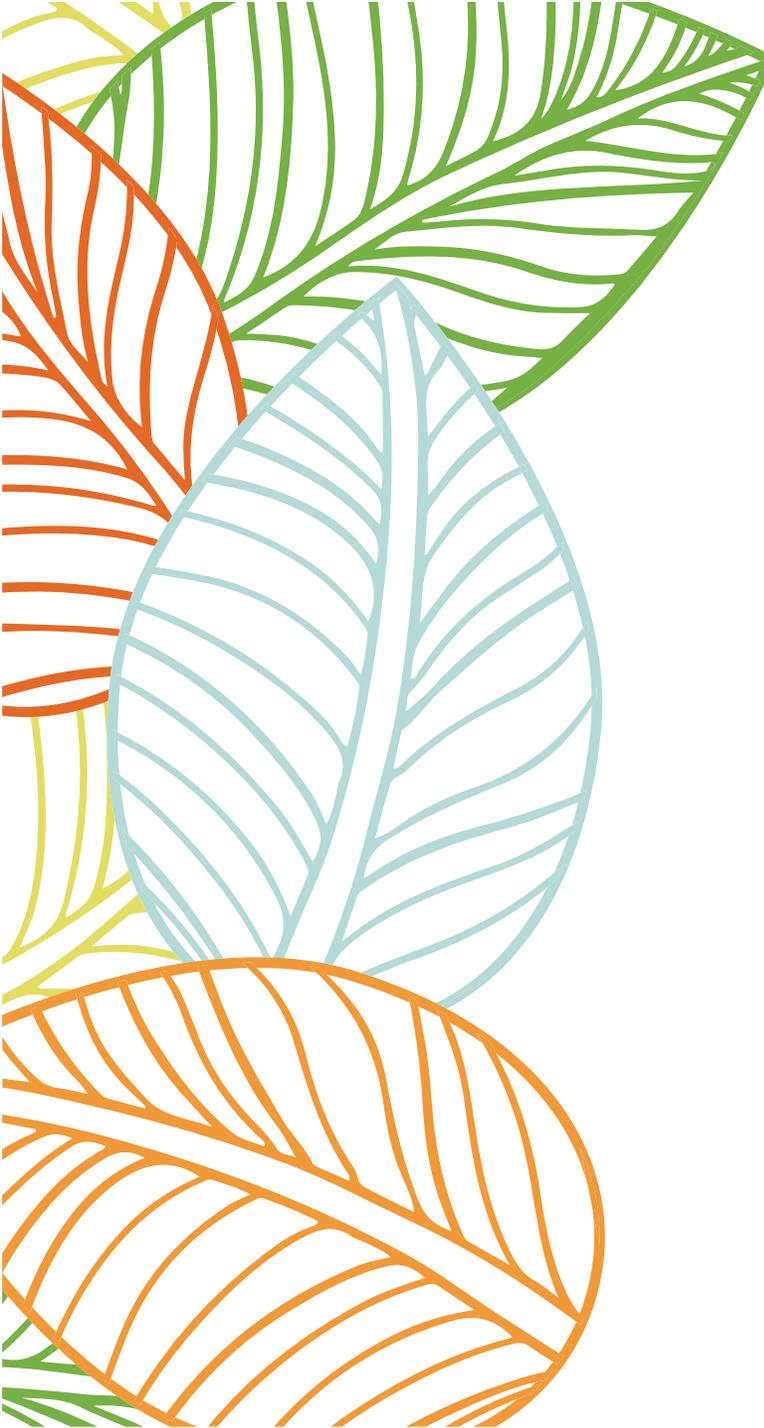
Strategic Planning

Does your <u>university</u> have a diversity plan?

- If yes, does your library use it to guide your work?

Does your <u>library</u> have a diversity plan?

- If not, will you be working to create one in the future?

- Who will be responsible for developing and implementing the plan?

- How will you ensure accountability for the plan's goals and directions?

UD Libraries Diversity Strategic Planning Task Force

Ione Damasco (chair)—tenured faculty; chair of Diversity & Inclusion Team

Kevin Cretsos—staff; Information Systems & Digital Access

Hector Escobar—tenured faculty; Education & Information Delivery

Heidi Gauder—tenured faculty; Education & Information Delivery

Henry Handley—tenure-track faculty; Marian Library

Chloe Massie-Costales—staff (also recent UD graduate); Access Services

Diane Osman—staff; Dean's Office

Scott West—staff; Collection Strategies & Services

Guiding Principles

- **Active listening in task force meetings; room for each person to share ideas**

- **Incorporating input from partners outside of the Libraries**

- **Provide multiple opportunities for anonymous feedback**

- **Acknowledge limitations and challenges along the way**

- **Be flexible**

Planning Timeline (Jan-March 2021)

January 2021

- Convened task force; overview of planning steps

- Began preliminary work on assessment tool

February 2021

- Shared University's plan with the Libraries; solicited feedback and questions through the use of online forms

- Collected/reviewed related university resources/documents/policies related to diversity, equity, and inclusion

- Guest speaker Rachel Barnett spoke to task force about the concept of critical assessment

March 2021

- Held update sessions for Libraries employees

- Distributed self-assessment to all Libraries employees; student employees were sent a separate survey

- Distributed surveys for campus partners, including other units, departments, and student organizations

Planning Timeline (April-July 2021

April 2021

- Analyzed survey data

- Shared findings/broad themes with everyone in the Libraries

May-June 2021

- Identified specific DEI goals under each strategic area of the University Libraries Strategic Plan

- Developed additional strategic area and corresponding goals (if needed) on focused DEI work (which will include recommendations for assessment and implementation)

July 2021

- Shared draft diversity plan with Libraries employees

- Task force hosted two open sessions for Libraries employees to engage with draft plan

Planning Timeline August 2021-January 2022

August 2021

- Feedback incorporated; task force finalized a draft and shared with Libraries Council and Dean's Council for approval (approved with some revisions)

- Plan sent to the University Inclusive Excellence Council (UIEC) for review

October-November 2021

- Plan revised and finalized based upon UIEC comments

December 2021

- Dean's Council organized plan implementation into phases and identified co-leads for Phase 1 projects

January 2022

- Launch of plan implementation

Libraries Plan for Inclusive Excellence, 2021-2024

5 major areas of focus:

- Workforce
- Collections
- Environment
- Engagement
- Assessment

Phase 1 projects underway

Workforce

- Compiling a toolkit of best practices for faculty, staff, and student employee recruitment, hiring, and onboarding

Collections

- Addition of inclusive subject headings for indigenous groups and related topics

- Exploration of more inclusive, alternative controlled vocabularies to describe special collections materials

- Outreach to CAP DSJ faculty by liaison librarians to acquire library resources to support DSJ curricula

  - Common Academic Program = general education curriculum

  - DSJ = Courses tagged as having Diversity & Social Justice as a course learning goal

Phase 1 projects underway (continued)

Engagement

- Internal repository on inclusive pedagogy resources for instruction librarians is being developed

Environment

- Several professional development sessions held for Libraries employees on universal design and accessibility; included an audit of library spaces for accessibility

Assessment

- Outreach to two library assessment experts at NKU and Montana State to offer a workshop on participatory design approaches for library assessment projects

- Incorporating article reads & discussions on critical assessment during regular Libraries Assessment Team meetings

Some key lessons

- **Empower all library employees to invest in your initiatives around inclusive excellence and accessibility**

- **Dialogue skills, which includes affirmative listening, are essential to creating space for multiple perspectives and greater empathy**

- **Connect your initiatives to your institution's values and mission; clarify in your own library what your mission and values are**

- **Underscore the fact that this is not extra work, this is core to what we do**
  - This means balancing workloads to make room for new initiatives that will eventually become a part of normal operations

Learn more about Inclusive Excellence at UD Libraries

Visit the Libraries Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Excellence website:

https://udayton.edu/libraries/about/diversity.php

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Questions?

Thank you!