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[SCU-Staff] The Library's role in confronting racial injustice

1 message

Lev Rickards <lrickards@scu.edu>

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To: SCU Staff List <SCU-Staff@lists.scu.edu>, SCU Faculty List <SCU-Faculty@lists.scu.edu>

We recognize that no statement is sufficient to acknowledge anti-Black racism, particularly when these responses, collectively, are coming far too late and only when prompted by such wide-scale unrest as we have seen over the past week. At the same time, we feel it is necessary to publicly acknowledge the pain, trauma, and fear of the Black community that the past week has surfaced once again. Black lives matter. We salute those who are expressing their right to free speech and demonstration.

We wish to articulate our commitment to addressing issues of oppression in our library and the broader field of librarianship. We recognize the multiple forms of oppression that impact our communities but would like to explicitly center this message around anti-Black racism. This does not detract from our commitment to addressing all forms of oppression and injustice. Libraries are built on the same foundation of white supremacy as all institutions in the United States. Academic libraries, in particular, as institutions within the broader institution of higher education, bear out this reality.

Our communities and institutions need systemic change to address anti-Black racism, equity, and justice. We are moving through a long and painful period of transition in the history of this country, and a more just and equitable future can only emerge if more and more people do hard work both at the individual and institutional level. This requires a long-term commitment to change. Over the past months our staff have engaged in strategic planning for the library, and we have firmly and explicitly centered equity and justice in this plan, which is nearing completion. Our plan's guiding vision is to create and apply a social justice model for our library. This commitment is infused throughout the strategic goals we are currently developing, which include learning and research, organizational culture, public service, and diversity in our collections. We are a long way from understanding what such a model would look like, but we are committed to the self-study and adoption of structural changes that support this commitment.

As we work to re-imagine our institutions, including the library, we invite you to engage in this work with us. Though we will be reaching out to the campus community for comments on our plan, please feel free to contact either Lev Rickards (lrickards@scu.edu) or Nicole Branch, (nbranch@scu.edu), co-interim University Librarians with thoughts, suggestions, or questions.

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