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Lian Ruan and Weiling Liu

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The Role of Chinese American Librarians in Library and Information Science Diversity

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ABSTRACT

With a goal to examine the role of Chinese American librarians in Library and Information Science (LIS) diversity in the 21st century, the authors conducted a study funded by the ALA (American Library Association) Diversity Research Program between 2013 and 2014. This study included a national survey of CALA (Chinese American Librarians Association) members and qualitative semi-structured interviews of ten selected survey participants (both senior and emerging leaders of CALA members). Despite some limitations of the study, the research findings document best practices and lessons learned among Chinese American librarians to inform and improve the diversity initiative, namely by increasing CALA's leadership training and mentorship opportunities, improving communication and cultural understanding, and developing connections with other people or organizations with diversity agendas. The findings have provided fruitful ideas to CALA in many ways especially its 2020 strategic planning, collaboration with other organizations and Leadership Training initiatives occurring between 2015 and 2017. The findings also suggest strategies for the recruitment and retention of Chinese American librarians to the LIS field. The findings and outcomes also provide much needed evidence to increase the role of Chinese American librarians in the diversity efforts that support 2017 ALA's Strategic Directions: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Keywords: diversity, Chinese American librarians, Chinese American Librarians Association

INTRODUCTION

Diversity is a crucial focal point of discussion and progress in librarianship today. As ALA states in its policy, " in the services and operations of libraries, efforts to include diversity in programs, activities, services, professional literature, products and continuing education must be ongoing and encouraged (ALA, 2010). " diversity continues to be one of ALA's strategic directions as it was adopted by the ALA Council at the 2017 Midwinter Meeting in Atlanta, GA. Research on diversity in librarianship is essential for change to happen and is a way to realize ALA's strategies to: "(g)ather, develop, and disseminate research documenting the value of equity, diversity, and inclusion" (ALA, 2017). Diversity is an abstract concept and people may have different interpretations about what it means. ALA's diversity strategic directions include a broader concept. The definition used for this article refers to "[s]tate or fact of being

diverse; different characteristics and experiences that define individuals (ACRL Racial and Ethnic Diversity Committee, 2012. p.551)." It is focused more on the racial diversity issues related to the differences such as in language, cultural background and professional experience. The authors intend to identify, document, and examine the critical role Chinese Americans librarians have played in LIS diversity through reporting the findings and outcomes of the study they completed in 2014.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As related statistics reports show, the demographics of the American population are quickly shifting, and libraries in America need to adjust to these changes. The Asian American population is expected to increase rapidly and is estimated to account for 9.3 percent of the total population in 2060 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015, p. 9). According to the 2010 Census, the Chinese population was the largest Asian group in America (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012, p. 1). In contrast, however, some researchers indicate that diversity in LIS has not changed greatly over time (Jaeger, Subramaniam, Jones, & Bertot, 2011, p. 166) and "across the spectrum of library types (academic, school, special, and public), the demographic makeup of the profession has remained predominantly white and female" (Morales, Knowles, & Bourg, 2014, p. 441). This is clear evidence as to why diversity is still significant for ALA and the librarianship profession.

In many studies on race and ethnic diversity in LIS, the attention has been focused on recruitment or retention; for example, Kim's study on recruiting LIS students of color (2008) and Riley-Reid's literature review on retention issues of library faculty of color (2017). The starting point of these researches is from the perspective of the organization. There are some studies from individuals' perceptions; for example, Vinopal's ClimateQUAL study on staff perceptions about the organization's climate (2016) and Alabi's research on racial microaggression (2015). As studies about the diversity have become central to LIS, "[i]dentifying research opportunities related to diversity and underrepresented populations can occur in numerous ways. Any specific population can serve as the starting point for research" (Jaeger, Bertot, & Franklin, 2010, p. 177). Inspired by ALA's diversity agenda, the authors attempt to explore diversity issues related to Chinese American librarians. The literature review reveals that with bilingual and bicultural backgrounds, Chinese American librarians have played a key service role to Chinese communities and LIS within the U.S. and have acted as a bridge between mainstream American culture and the Chinese culture to fill language and cultural gaps (Jiang, 2012, p. 11; Liu, 2001, p. 59; Zhao, 2012, p. 12; Zhou, 2003, p. 18). However, a review of the literature on LIS diversity shows a rather limited discussion of diversity programs involving Chinese American librarians. It is hoped that this study will fill in the gap by gathering evidence about diversity initiatives engaged in by CALA members and facilitating further discussion about how the role of Chinese American librarians in diversity efforts can be improved.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The research objectives of the study are threefold: (1) to offer insights into the implications of diversity in promoting Chinese American librarianship and understanding their role within LIS; (2) to identify and document Chinese American librarians' best practices and lessons learned for diversity practices from

which other ethnic/minority librarians may benefit; and (3) to further the discussion of diversity that will improve the role of Chinese American librarians within the LIS community.

METHOD OF THE STUDY

The method included a national survey and qualitative semi-structured interviews via telephone and digital recording of ten selected interviewees who had participated in the survey and diversity initiatives at their institutions (see Appendix A and Appendix B for questionnaires).

The survey questionnaire consisted of twelve questions regarding participants' demographic and educational background, their perception of diversity efforts and strategies, and their involvement with diversity. The survey was set up as a Web form using LimeSurvey (http://limesurvey.com), an online survey software. The survey welcome page included a background narrative on the study, a brief description of the project's goals and its voluntary nature, as well as the principal investigators' contact information, including email addresses and telephone numbers. The participants were asked to consent before they could continue with the survey. During the survey timeframe, follow-up emails for the survey were sent three times to increase the rate of participation.

For the qualitative interviews in this study, the cloud-based online meeting service AnyMeeting (http://anymeeting.com) was used to conduct and record these interviews, and the participants were interviewed in English. Prior to the interviews, all selected interviewees received an email invitation packet with the same information as was included in the online survey. They were asked to submit a signed consent form and were informed that the interviews would be conducted and recorded via AnyMeeting.

CALA's active members in the U.S. were the target survey population for this study. Surveying the views of CALA members in libraries is invaluable in that it uncovers challenges and potential solutions to diversity issues from an organizational perspective. CALA is one of the most active groups among U.S. minority librarian associations and has been affiliated with ALA since 1976. According to CALA's Constitution, their objective is to improve communication, collaboration, and professional development of Chinese American librarians and to facilitate discussion about related problems and professional concerns ("CALA: Constitution", 2016, p. 1). Diversity is a primary interest for CALA, making it an ideal organization to survey for this study. Any interested individual can become a member of CALA. In other words, CALA's membership does not include solely Chinese American librarians but any individuals who are interested in Chinese American librarianship.

The criteria for participation in the interview required that the interviewee must participate in the survey, have a leadership position in a library, and was participating or had participated in a diversity program. Ten interviewees were selected based on the above criteria, but one decided to withdraw. The professional titles among these were one director, one head, two deans, and five librarians. Six of the participants possessed a Master's degree and three had Ph.D. Seven of the nine interviewees were immigrants. In terms of leadership and diversity roles, two were founding members of the ALA Spectrum Scholarship Program (a program with the mission of providing scholarships to minority students), two were ALA Emerging Leaders (a leadership development program), three were former CALA Presidents, one was a former ALA President and one was a Spectrum Scholarship Program recipient.

For both the survey and the semi-structured interviews, approval for the use of human subjects in this study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of the institution with which the Principal Investigator was affiliated.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF THE PROJECT

Data analysis for the survey was done using the built-in report generated in LimeSurvey and MS Access. All digitally recorded interviews were fully transcribed into texts and analyzed. The participants' answers to the survey and interview questionnaires were confidential. To protect the privacy interests of the subjects, no names or other identifying information of any participants were included in the survey, interviews, or digital-voice recordings and full transcripts. A data key connecting participant names to a unique identifying number was used while data was extracted from the survey and digital-voice recordings, and throughout the analysis process.

For the interviews, the project team, consisting of two principal investigators who interviewed together and two native English-speaking graduate students who transcribed the interviews, gathered interview data analysis based on interview transcripts, coded the data, and then synthesized the data.

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Findings of the Survey

The survey was conducted in December 2013 and early 2014 (12/7/2013 - 4/18/2014). The online survey invitation was emailed to 347 active CALA members in the United States. Members who received the invitation needed to answer one question giving their consent first before they could precede with the survey. There were 140 respondents who completed the full survey. The response rate was 40%.

Of 140 respondents, 115 (82.1%) were in the age range of 40 or older (Question 5); 104 (74.3%) were female and 36 (25.7%) were male (Question 6). As to the highest degree possessed, 124 (88.6%) respondents held a master's degree and 16 (11.4%) held a doctoral degree (Question 7). Most of the respondents (66.4%, 93) were from an academic library and some (16.4%, 23) were from a public library (Question 8). The rest (17.1%, 24) were non-affiliated individuals or from a special library, national library, library school, information related company or non-profit sector. As Figure 1 shows, the number of respondents whose primary job responsibilities or LIS majors focus on traditional library functions remained a high percentage (Question 9).

Q9. What are your primary job responsibilities or LIS major focuses if you are currently a student (select all that apply)?		
Answer	Count	Percentage
Reference/Instructional Services (SQ016)	45	32.14%
Cataloging and classification (SQ005)	36	25.71%
Collection Management (SQ004)	31	22.14%
Library administration/Management (Library director, University Librarian or Dean) (SQ012)	18	12.86%
Systems/Technology (SQ017)	18	12.86%
Acquisitions (SQ001)	16	11.43%
Electronic Resources/Serials (SQ010)	15	10.71%
Other	14	10.00%
Outreach/Scholarly communication (SQ015)	13	9.29%
Web Management/Webmaster/Web Services (SQ018)	13	9.29%
Circulation/Document Delivery/Inter Library Loan (SQ006)	12	8.57%
Metadata (SQ014)	11	7.86%
Digital Library/Special Collections (SQ008)	10	7.14%
Assessment/ User Experience (SQ003)	7	5.00%
Archives/Records (SQ002)	5	3.57%
Media Resources/Services (SQ013)	5	3.57%
Data/Geographical Information (SQ007)	4	2.86%
Distance Education (SQ009)	4	2.86%
Government Documents & Publications (SQ011)	4	2.86%

Figure 1. Primary Job Responsibilities or LIS Major Focuses

The majority of respondents were in intermediate or higher professional ranks: 41 (29.3%) were in Senior Level, 35 (25.0%) in Advanced Level, and 22 (15.7%) in Intermediate Level. Nineteen (13.6%) respondents specified in the Other option that they are in the rank equivalent to Intermediate Level or higher (Question 10).

As for leadership positions (Question 11), only four (2.9%) respondents answered as branch library manager, nine (6.4%) responded as library director, and six (4.3%) responded as dean. There were 36 (25.7%) respondents in the position level as department head/team leader and 24 (17.1%) as committee chair or service unit manager (Question 11). Almost half of the respondents (43.6%, 61) selected the option "Other". About 64.3% (90) of the respondents had worked in library and information science field for more than 10 years (Question 12).

As to the first four survey questions on diversity, 104 of 140 (74.3%) respondents answered that their organizations had diversity programs or initiatives, 36 (25.7%) reported that their organizations had no programs or initiatives. Among those (104) whose organizations had diversity programs, 58 of them had participated, 25 of them had not and the rest gave no answers.

The respondents ranked the effectiveness of their roles in diversity programs with a 5-level scale, 5 being the most effective and 1 being the least (Question 1). Of the 58 respondents who reported to have participated in diversity programs, 10 (7.0% of 140) participants ranked the effectiveness of their roles in diversity programs as 5; 25 (17.5% of 140) participants ranked it as 4 while 16 (11.2% of 140) ranked it as 3; four (2.8% of 140) ranked it as 1 and three (2.1% of 140) ranked it as 2. Table 1 shows the effectiveness ranks by professional rank and library type.

Table 1.

The effectiveness ranks of the respondent's role in diversity program/initiatives

Professional Rank	Type of Library	Total \Rank	1	2	3	4	5
Senior Level (e.g. Professor/ Librarian IV or V)	Academic Library	11	1	1	4	2	3
Senior Level (e.g. Professor/ Librarian IV or V)	Other	3			1	1	1
Senior Level (e.g. Professor/ Librarian IV or V)	Public Library	4			1	3	
Senior Level (e.g. Professor/ Librarian IV or V)	Publisher or Library Information Company	1				1	
Advanced Level (e.g. Associate Professor/ Librarian III)	Academic Library	14	2		4	5	3
Advanced Level (e.g. Associate Professor/ Librarian III)	Public Library	2			1	1	
Intermediate Level (e.g. Assistant Professor/ Librarian II)	Academic Library	6		1	3	2	
Intermediate Level (e.g. Assistant Professor/ Librarian II)	Public Library	1				1	
Entry Level (e.g. Instructor/ Librarian I)	Academic Library	1				1	
Entry Level (e.g. Instructor/ Librarian I)	Public Library	1				1	
LIS/MLIS Student	Academic Library	2				2	
LIS/MLIS Student	Other	1		1			
LIS/MLIS Student	School Library	1				1	
Other	Academic Library	2			1	1	
Other	Other	3	1		1		1
Other	Public Library	4				2	2
Other	School Library	1				1	

(Rank: 1 = the least effective, 5 = the most effective)

Concerning the awareness of ACRL standards and ALA diversity programs (Question 3), 94 (67.1%) respondents were aware of ALA's diversity initiatives and about 67 (47.9%) were aware of ACRL's Diversity Competency Standards (Question 2).

Looking at the answers to the questions on diversity issues in sociological, educational, professional, philosophical, and political areas (Question 4), the top three issues ranked as the most critical by the participants were sociological issues (72.1%, 101), educational issues (46.4%, 65) and professional issues (45.7%, 64). The next two were political issues (40.7%, 57) and philosophical and historical issues (27.9%, 39).

After the completion of the survey questionnaire, the study moved to the interview stage. It took about one and half months to complete all interviews.

Findings of Interviews

Qualitative interviews are believed to be an effective means of performing an in-depth investigation into the role of Chinese American librarians in LIS diversity. This approach mixes structured and open-ended questions to obtain additional information (M. Gall, J. Gall, & Borg, 2003). It permits the principal investigators to collect rich data in a limited period of time. Furthermore, it is optimal for this study because of its small scale. ACRL's standards on cultural competence offered a framework to examine Chinese American librarians' roles in engaging with the complexities of providing services to diverse

populations (ACRL, 2012, p. 551).

One interviewee asked to withdraw from the study, so only the answers from nine interviewees are reported in this article (A1-A9). Seven themes emerged from analyzing the interview data. They are: 1) expand leadership opportunities and enhance leadership training; 2) improve communication skills; 3) provide mentors and identify role models; 4) build partnerships with researchers, educators, ethnic caucus, and ALA; 5) Be aware of cultural identity and learn about other cultures (suggested rephrase: offer cultural and educational programs); 6) develop CALA as an important platform for professional development and advancement; and 7) continue CALA recruitment and retention. Interviewees believed that improvement in these seven areas will effectively enhance the role of Chinese American librarians in the LIS diversity. These areas are critically important and call for immediate attention and timely action of the part of CALA and Chinese American librarians.

Leadership opportunity and leadership training

One of the themes revealed through the interview synthesis was the need for leadership training and leadership opportunities. The strategies and factors most stated by interviewees include the importance of the support and involvement of leadership in diversity programs as well as the importance of providing opportunities and training in leadership roles for librarians and staff. Having diverse training programs in place will help provide those leadership opportunities. A2 pointed out that there was more and more inclination to implement initiatives and a number of other leadership institutes—not necessarily targeting just individuals of color, but being very inclusive of the idea that there was, on many levels, a kind of glass ceiling [A2]. Others also offered their careful thoughts:

> I believe we need more Chinese Americans going to leadership positions… So, when you are in the leadership position, you can make better policies, such as a better recruitment policy to recruit those people. [A5]

> You cannot recruit from a population in which you have no leadership… One of the really important things is that you have to have leaders of the program, leaders who are interested in promoting the role of Chinese American Librarians in Library and Information Science and its diversity. [A7]

Acknowledging the importance of leadership in making changes to improve diversity, how can one find leadership opportunities? Interviewees suggested taking calculated risks, going beyond one's comfort zone, and outlining a career plan as a roadmap to achieve career advancement.

Communication skills

All interviewees worked in libraries that had at least a minimally diversified staff: mostly white/Caucasian, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian/Native American, presented here in approximate order of percentage, highest to lowest. The most commonly expressed challenge among the interviewees was communication, whether linguistic or cultural, and their difficulties communicating within library systems that consist mostly of white/Caucasians and native English speakers. All interviewees were concerned about communication and believed it to be very important. As A5 put it, librarians promoting diversity should "make our voices heard, and outreach ourselves. Yes, we need to do outreach… The most

important strategy we should keep in mind is communication" [A5]. Most interviewees talked about how communication is one of the greatest difficulties for Chinese American librarians. The language barrier between native and non-native English speakers is an issue since many are immigrants. The facets of communication that deserve attention are communication environment, the virtue of listening, and the need to get one's voice heard.

A1 acknowledged the difficulty language had in communicating cultural or personal differences in work styles and expectations. The issues A1 encountered is "basically miscommunication." Diversity efforts could help improve communication, and the point A1 made shows the pressing need. A1 also witnessed how challenging it could be to use email communication because English is still the second language. A1 believed that the best way to communicate is face-to-face when handling issues too sensitive or too difficult to handle in an email. This is essential for creating a conversation environment that encourages efficient communication while eliminating the confusion or conflicts that arise from cultural or linguistic miscommunication.

A parallel requirement is the virtue of listening as a factor of good communication in a diversified setting. A3 makes the point that listening is important in a position of leadership, and A4 reflects on a particular listening tactic for ensuring understanding. A number of strategies can be used to improve listening skills to promote better communication abilities as A8 suggested. Looking forward, implementing workshops or offering training materials to improve listening skills could be beneficial in a diverse community.

While listening is a virtue, an individual will not hear anything unless there is something said. A6 noted that Chinese American librarians do good work but they usually shy away from standing out to get credit for it. A6 suggested is a cultural thing as we are taught to be humble. Quietness and humility are good virtues, but they should be supplemented with agency and confidence. Taking active steps to be heard will significantly improve the conversation about diversity.

This change to be outspoken is not limited to direct and oral communications. A5 believed that written and formal publications are powerful and influential:

> The lesson that I learned is that you have to have things written down. You can get your voice out, you can speak, you can make presentations, you just have your voice heard— but that's not enough. You have to have it written down. Like in the GOAL 2000 document, we have it written down as an official document. Then they began to pay attention to it, and then they have some scholars in the Spectrum Scholarship established.

Conversation requires an environment effective for communication, for those involved to listen to each other, and for them to speak out. These principles are basic, but their application on a cultural level takes time. Chinese American librarians are encouraged by the interviewees to apply these communication principles in their career development and advancement.

Mentor and role models

Language and specific cultural barriers raise communication issues within the library as well as in the training and mentoring programs for LIS students and new library professionals. These concerns point to

a need for more and longer mentorships with linguistically and culturally/ethnically diversified mentors. Diverse mentors would help build stronger communication channels between emerging professionals and existing library leadership and groups, as A3 suggested:

> Help people understand what is going on, especially when their English language skills are not so advanced. Have mentoring and training programs for incoming Chinese librarians such as the program in CALA. You need to promote this program more.

Interviewees' responses show the importance of educating future and new library professionals about the various library fields available and providing them with mentorships that will facilitate the matching of their interests with the corresponding library field(s). This will help with retention in diversified libraries in the future.

The requirement for mentoring as a diversity need is repeated throughout the interviews. "I always think mentoring is very important. I just cannot emphasize it enough" [A4]. A4 defined mentors as being role models who share their experiences with younger librarians so they can learn from the mentors' experiences. Interviewees appreciated the CALA mentoring program for providing a good role model. As A2 observed:

> When we actually think about mentoring our younger professionals, we tend to cluster around the things we know. So, if there's not already a propensity to work in this area of diversity across different spectrums then it doesn't come naturally to us...I think actually the training and the thinking and the cultural shift has to happen at the coaching and mentoring level.

Interviewees pointed out that mentors need to be experienced in communication to act as an intermediary between native English speakers and those who have less experience with the English language. Mentors should be trained and educated in matters of diversity because they are the ones who pass their knowledge on to their mentees. Improving the mentorship initiatives in LIS as it relates to diversity will promote diversity. CALA's mentoring program needs to reach out to more CALA members and to collaborate further with the mentoring programs of other ethnic affiliates and organizations.

Partnership with researchers, educators, ethnic caaucus, and ALA

Collaboration is an implied agenda of diversity efforts. Working together to encourage progress is the primary agenda of diversity initiatives and research. A4 recognized that making real commitments and sustaining diversity efforts are both challenging for any institutional library. Individual effort alone is not enough. Collaboration is necessary to promote and sustain diversity in LIS. Interviewees discussed partnerships between researchers and practitioners in the LIS field, while A7 observed that more research on diversity is needed as A7 had done research on how library educators and librarians in the field work together on various issues. Collaborative research as a means of promoting and instructing on matters of diversity is an application of its subject matter in itself. Collaborative research about diversity becomes more diverse for the fact that it involves different people from diverse backgrounds. This observation emphasizes the power of collaboration in research on diversity.

To push beyond research, one of our interviewees pointed to the importance of organizational

collaboration. Specifically, A5 suggested that CALA establish good relationships with ALA and the other four ethnic caucuses like AILA (American Indian Library Association), APALA (Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association), BCALA (the Black Caucus American Library Association), and REFORMA (the National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking), and cosponsor programs or do joint conferences. A5 argued that CALA should foster a close relationship with the current ALA Diversity Office and do outreach.

To go even broader, collaboration and partnership also mean going beyond the United States with international partners to receive mutual benefits. A1 gives a specific example of how international collaboration with China as a diversity initiative can have a positive effect on the mission of the LIS field and it is mutually beneficial. A1's library has the rare "oracle" bones collection and materials from China's republican era. In collaborating with partners in China, A1's library was able to digitize the collection so they can better preserve the Chinese heritage as well as be more easily accessed by scholars worldwide, including Chinese scholars and Chinese users. A1's example is one of many practical ways we can benefit from efforts to increase partnership with organizations and people, both domestic and international.

Cultural identity and learning of other cultures

When two cultures interact, differences need to be acknowledged, and the people involved in the interaction should be prepared to react and respond to these differences appropriately. A6 recommends educating Chinese and Chinese Americans on "how to survive in a different culture", that is, how to get along in Western culture, with Western colleagues, and communicate better. By promoting Chinese cultural identity and by encouraging the exchange of cultural education between people of western culture and those of Chinese heritage, LIS diversity efforts will not be as hindered by cultural miscommunications and misunderstandings. A3 pointed out that CALA should do more in promoting Chinese American librarians and in helping to promote Chinese culture, literature, and the CALA organization to non-Chinese users.

In order to promote a cultural identity in LIS, the culturally diverse librarians actively associate with the cultures that define them. A9 believed recognizing individual's own cultural identity is important in diversity efforts across other ethnic groups. "There are all kinds of ethnic groups and they all have their own kind of culture and heritage that I think needs to be respected and identified and promoted as well" [A9].

A2 grew up in a diverse community and was sometimes misidentified regarding her ethnic identity. A2 raised their children to think about not only cultural diversity but also cultural similarities:

> I think that one is good for promoting Chinese culture in this diversified world. It's very important for our organization [CALA] to have money to support and to promote those programs. I just feel like the Chinese American Librarian Association should do more about Chinese things to promote our culture… every year, we need to have some money for those programs.

A1 also explained the balance of the two sides of maintaining cultural heritage and being open to learning other cultures, especially "the main stream":

One thing I want to emphasize is that, on one side we have to emphasize that we are special, we are unique, and on the other side we have to say that we are part of the main stream… And, you have to do it using the same language as the main stream.

CALA as an important platform for professional development and advancement

All interviewees enthusiastically talked about the important role CALA has played and how much they benefited from CALA in many ways. All believed that CALA is a good venue for promoting the increased role of Chinese Americans in LIS diversity. Interviewees made insightful comments regarding the importance of CALA in advocating for Chinese American librarians in career development and advancement.

As A9 commented, CALA as a platform for professional development has been a great source and support for young librarians.   The interviewee applied for the CALA conference travel grant and was one of the full recipients. CALA's website is a good source and provides members with rich information about what happens in the library and information profession. "CALA has been providing us a great platform and we need to make good use of this platform to promote ourselves and cooperate with each other and support each other" [A9]. A6 was able to join the ALA Emerging Leader Program because of CALA. The interviewee encouraged CALA members to take full advantage of CALA resources for career development and advancement

Recruitment and retention

Of further importance is incorporating the diversity efforts into recruitment efforts based on community demographics and specific community needs, which are often culturally or ethnically represented. These diversity efforts consist of diversity in hiring/staffing, recruiting for LIS, library practice, and information equity, including digital information equity. Interviewees' specific suggestions include outreach programs in high schools, colleges, universities, and in library's local communities. These programs should direct their efforts to recruit specific groups that are representative of the community's demographic and that cater to the dynamic and changing needs of that specific community.

To recruit successfully, Chinese American librarians should make themselves visible and reach out to the community of Chinese Americans. A4 pointed out that Chinese American librarians need to be more visible even if they work in the backend offices such as systems, technical services or website management: "you must purposely go to the community." When Chinese American librarians are seen in the LIS profession, it becomes normalized, which makes the recruitment of more Chinese Americans into the LIS field easier because the risks associated with feeling out-of-place are effectively removed.

Focusing on specific underrepresented groups in recruitment efforts could make the process more efficient and yield more successful results. In CALA, generations X (those born between the early 1960s and early 1980s) and Y (those born between the early 1980s and early 2000s, referred to as Millennials) are underrepresented. Many from these age groups are also American Born Chinese (ABC), which is an important factor to keep in mind when recruiting this population. A2, as an ABC, offers insight from personal experience:

[A] lot of the meetings and lot of the side-bar conversations are held in Chinese, and

especially Mandarin. [W]e have Cantonese speakers and we have Mandarin speakers. Sometimes, there is a feeling of exclusion that comes out, even though it's totally unintentional.

Some level of the recruitment effort always needs to give attention to ensuring that the environment is suitable for new recruits. Finding ways to be inclusive to ABC participants in CALA, especially when it comes to language barriers, will be an impactful step in the process of recruitment because it will help the new ABC recruits feel like they belong. It is also important to recognize and acknowledge cultural differences between generations. A2 offers this observation:

"[T]hey loved the social part, they learn so much. But, for them it's not just about culture, and so to focus only on the culture all the time is very weighing on them. They don't know how to deal with that and they opt out. They think it is a little too heavy and it seems very old school for them. So, they would rather be associated with something that is innovative, creative, and engaging, and that is going to make the maximum use of their skills, whether it is in the IT industry or whether it is in early literacy.

Creating programs that specifically deal with the issues of retention would be useful as interviewees suggested. These programs could focus on procuring, producing, and curating archives, which could be used to learn about current hiring practices, training and mentoring methods, retention rates among the various emerging minority populations, recruitment strategies, and previous retention programs' successes or failures. Through the collection, synthesis, and documentation of this information, new recruitment and retention strategies can be created and refined. This process will also enable the continuation of such efforts in future generations of librarians. A7 stressed that after recruitment, retention programs require the most emphasis:

because we can go out and recruit; we can promote particularly within the large ethnic compositions in cities like Queens, San Francisco, etc.; we can recruit and promote, but… we don't know enough about what happens to these diverse librarians once they are in the profession. What is it that keeps them? What is it that makes them turn away? … look very hard at retention in two places: the programs of education and then the libraries that employ them. This is a best practices issue—what's done that retains and keeps enthusiastic the people that are brought in, and what is it that turns them away? Concentrate on developing the kind of best practices that surround retention.

Diversity in LIS is a practical and achievable goal, but that does not mean that it will be easy. Making changes will take time and effort. Using the recommended strategies will improve the role Chinese American librarians have on diversity in LIS.

SIGNIFICANCE, IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT OF THE STUDY

This study has significance for Chinese American librarians as the findings shed light on some key areas of focus in diversity and potential improvement for the role of Chinese American librarians to promote and increase LIS diversity. The findings expand the understanding of the Chinese American librarian community in terms of their unique cultural experience and expand on the best practices and lessons

learned as they relate specifically to diversity efforts. To strengthen the diversity efforts in LIS, it is crucial for the minorities to be in the leadership positions. Leadership and professional development mentoring programs have proved to be the best practices in providing opportunities for librarians to grow. Communication skills are fundamental and learning of cultural backgrounds would help narrow the gaps. Partnering with ALA and other ethnic minority librarian groups will help each learn from the others in refining strategies for recruitment and retention.

In order to show the positive effects of the research performed, the authors would like to illustrate a few examples of how these findings were applied to CALA from 2014 to 2017. Following A7's advice, the authors presented the report at the CALA Poster Sessions during the 2014 ALA Conference and 2014 CALA Midwest Chapter Annual Conference Program as well as to the ALA Diversity Council at the 2014 ALA Annual Conference. In 2015, the 2020 CALA Strategic Plan Task Force co-chaired by Lian Ruan used the study findings in the planning process to develop Striving for Excellence: CALA 2020 Strategic Plan (2015-2020) that was approved by the CALA Board. The plan outlines six strategic areas to maximize strengths, utilize expertise, sharpen skills, deliver high value to members, and heighten the association's far-reaching impact on CALA and the LIS field. The six areas are: 1) membership recruitment, retention, and engagement; 2) leadership training and development; 3) local chapter development; 4) professional development opportunities through training and mentoring; 5) professional networking through cutting-edge technologies; and 6) CALA's impact on local, state, national, and international levels. Programs and initiatives that applied the ideas suggested by the findings also include the 2015 CALA Annual Program chaired by Lian Ruan with the theme of "Partnership beyond CALA: Training Leaders of Color for Action." Barbara Stripling was invited as keynote speaker and the Presidents of five ethnic affiliates served as panel speakers (Eileen K. Bosch - APALA; Isabel Espinal - REFORMA; Janice Rice - AILA; Zhijia Shen - CALA; Kelvin Watson - BCALA). The ALA Committee on Diversity and the ALA Task Force on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion were invited as co-sponsors of the event. Drawn from the study findings, an IMLS (Institute of Museum and Library Services) grant proposal titled "Librarian Leadership Academy for Leaders of Color" was initiated and proposed by CALA President (2015-2016), in partnership with ALA, ARL, and ethnic affiliates. As a result of the study, the first CALA Leadership Training Academy was organized in 2016 during the ALA Annual Conference, which offered a series of training activities that included a one-day workshop during the ALA Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida and five virtual sessions with webinars and evaluation. This series was organized by the CALA Leadership Training Academy Task Force led by Hong Wu, who worked with Maureen Sullivan, a former ALA President. The CALA Leadership Training Academy under President Qi Chen (2016-2017) continued its program in 2017 during the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago. The program was extended to other ALA Conference attendees and was well-received. The 2018 program under President Le Yang (2017-2018) is under preparation.

In terms of promotion and recruitment, CALA is at a historic high with over 700 members as reported at the end of 2016-2017 fiscal year (ending on June 30, 2017). While there may be a number of contributing factors, this research has certainly contributed some small amount to the growth of the organization. Overall, this study had a very positive impact on CALA. The study's findings have been successfully applied in practical ways, which shows that the research the authors have done is both pragmatic and useful.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE STUDY

In terms of limitations, the target population of this research consisted of only CALA's active U.S. members during the research project time, and because of the demographics of CALA, most who received the survey were academic librarians and immigrants to the U.S. There is more to investigate regarding the role of Chinese American librarians in other library settings, including public, school, and special libraries. Comparative studies among different cultural backgrounds and from ethnic caucus affiliates may help further evaluate the role of librarians of color in LIS diversity and what can be done to enhance that role in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Appendix A. Survey Questions

1. Does your organization have diversity program and/or initiative?
   o Yes
   o No
   If yes, have you participated in it?

      o Yes
      o No

   Please rank **the effectiveness of your role in diversity program/initiative in which you participated (5 being the most, 1 being the least)**

   1 (the least effective)   2   3   4   5 (the most effective)

   _____

2. Are you aware of ACRL Diversity Standards: Cultural Competency for Academic Libraries (http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/diversity)?
   o Yes
   o No

3. Are you aware of ALA diversity initiatives (http://www.ala.org/advocacy/diversity)?
   o Yes
   o No

4. What type of diversity issues do you think are critical in library and information sciences (These types are topics used at IFLA WLIC 2013 LTR Section)? (3 = the most critical, 1 = the least critical)
   __ Sociological issues (e.g. Library staff, collections and services representing communities served?)

   __ Educational issues (e.g. LIS courses, library training, and internship programs)

   __ Professional issues (e.g. Multilingualism)

   __ Philosophical and historical issues (e.g. "community" concept, and model of libraries provided by UNESCO)

   __ Political issues (e.g. Libraries' role in diversity issues)

5. Which of the following age category best describes you (select only one answer)?
   o 20-29
   o 30-39
   o 40-49
   o 50-59
   o 60+

6. What is your gender?
   o Male
   o Female

7. What is the highest degree you possess (select only one answer)?
   o Master
   o Ph.D.

8. What is the type of organization you are working or last worked with (select only one answer)?
   o Academic Library
   o Public Library
   o School Library
   o Special Library
   o Publisher or Library Information Company
   o Other (Specify)

9. What are your primary job responsibilities or LIS major focuses if you are currently a student (select all that apply)?
   o Acquisitions
   o *Archives/Records*
   o Assessment/ User Experience
   o Collection Management
   o Cataloging and classification
   o Circulation/Document Delivery/Interlibrary Loan
   o Data/Geographical Information
   o Digital Library/Special Collections
   o Distance Education
   o Electronic Resources/Serials
   o Government Documents & Publications
   o Library administration/Management (Library director, University Librarian or Dean)
   o Media Resources/Services
   o Metadata
   o Outreach/Scholarly communication
   o Reference/Instructional Services

- o Systems/Technology
- o Web Management/Webmaster/Web Services
- o Other (please specify) _____

10. What is your professional rank (select only one answer)?
- o LIS Student
- o Entry Level (e.g. Instructor/Librarian I)
- o Intermediate Level (e.g. Assistant Professor/ Librarian II)
- o Advanced Level (e.g. Associate Professor/ Librarian III)
- o Senior Level (e.g. Professor/ Librarian IV or V)
- o Other (Specify)

11. What is your leadership position (select only one answer)?
- o Branch Library Manager
- o Committee Chair/Service Unit Manager
- o Department Head/Team Leader
- o Library Director
- o University Librarian /Dean
- o Other (Specify)_____

12. What is the total number of years of your services in library and information science field (select only one answer)?
- o Less than 1 year
- o 1 – 5
- o 6 – 10
- o 11 – 15
- o 16 – 20
- o 21 – more

Appendix B. Interview Questions

1. Please describe your involvement with the diversity programs or initiatives.
2. Please share your experience and suggestions on important strategies, factors, and other issues related to your diversity efforts.
3. What are your best practices?
4. What lessons have you learned?
5. To Chinese American librarians, what do you think we can do to promote and increase our role in LIS diversity?
6. What are your suggestions and recommendations to recruit, promote, and retain Chinese American librarians in diversity?

About the authors

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