

# Diversity in Research and Practice

## What Have We Learned and How Do We Move Forward?

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LRS V: Integrating Practice and Research

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## What we hope to accomplish

- Discuss what we as researchers can do to bring our ideals about diversity in librarianship closer to reality
- Begin a conversation that will help us come up with ideas that we can use to extend our current stock of diversity knowledge

## How we plan to do it

- Brief presentation of 3 aspects of LIS diversity research:
  - Current issues in LIS diversity research
  - What we have learned from some of our diversity efforts
  - The role of LIS education in supporting diversity
- Discussion of the future of LIS diversity research

# **I. THE CURRENT STATE OF DIVERSITY IN LIS**

II. WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

III. THE ROLE OF LIS EDUCATION

## Traditional LIS diversity efforts are usually...

- Framed in terms of racial/ethnic diversity
- Focused on the four traditionally underrepresented ethnic groups
- Targeted toward recruitment with some focus on recruitment and advancement

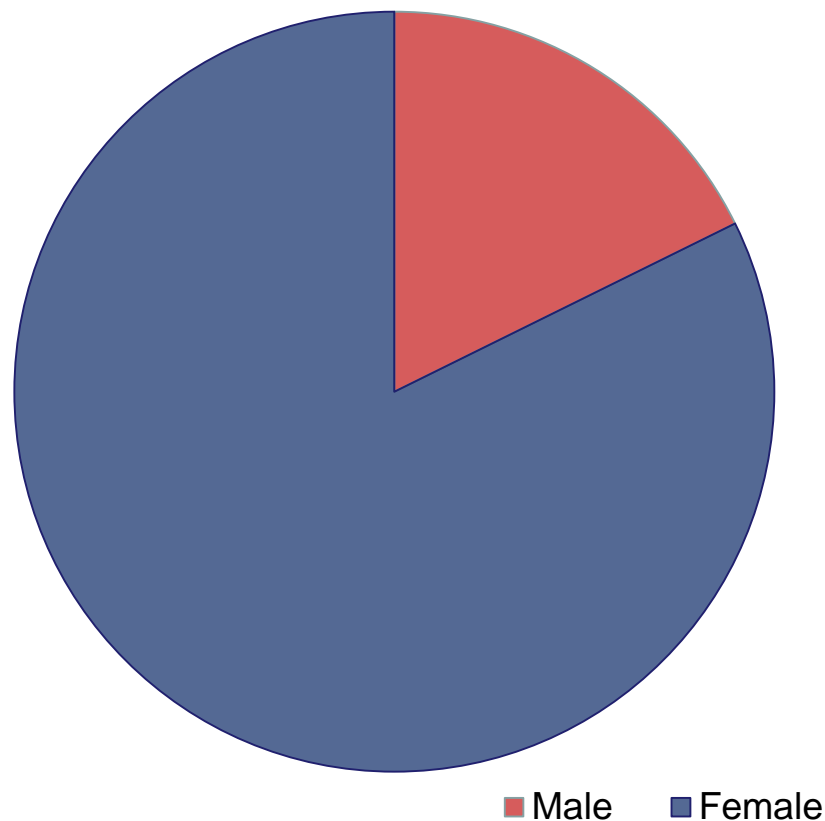
## Identified Barriers

- Small pool of qualified applicants
- Lack of recruiter knowledge about targeted populations
- Institutional barriers that impede the promotion and advancement of diverse candidates

## Research Gaps

- There are few empirical studies on how to retain diverse candidates once the academic residency, internship, or other special program has ended (Neely and Peterson 2007).
- Still only moderately successful in recruiting diverse candidates, and much less successful in retaining and promoting them.

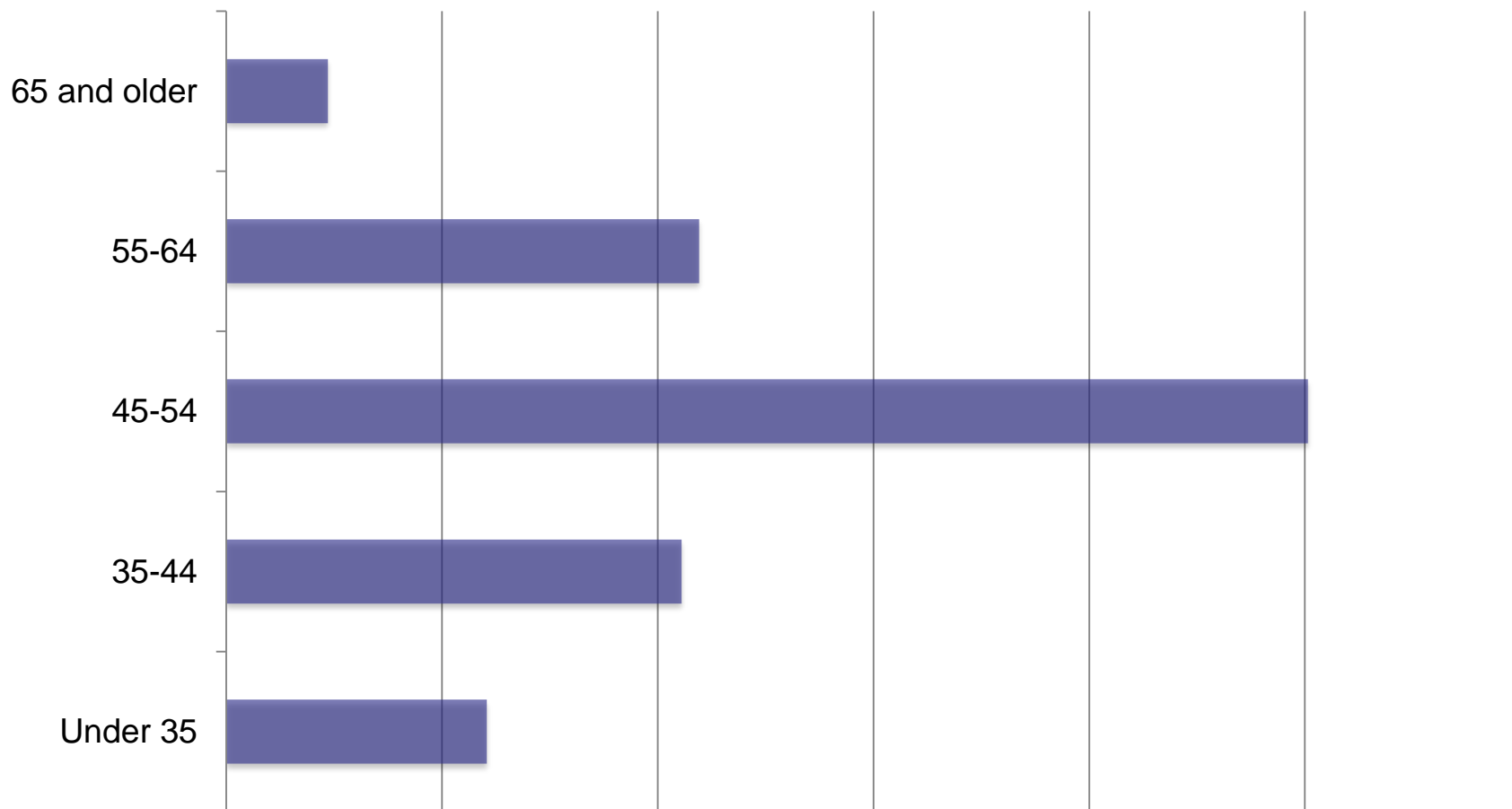
# Librarianship remains a predominantly female profession



Data Source: Diversity Counts (2007), Table A-1

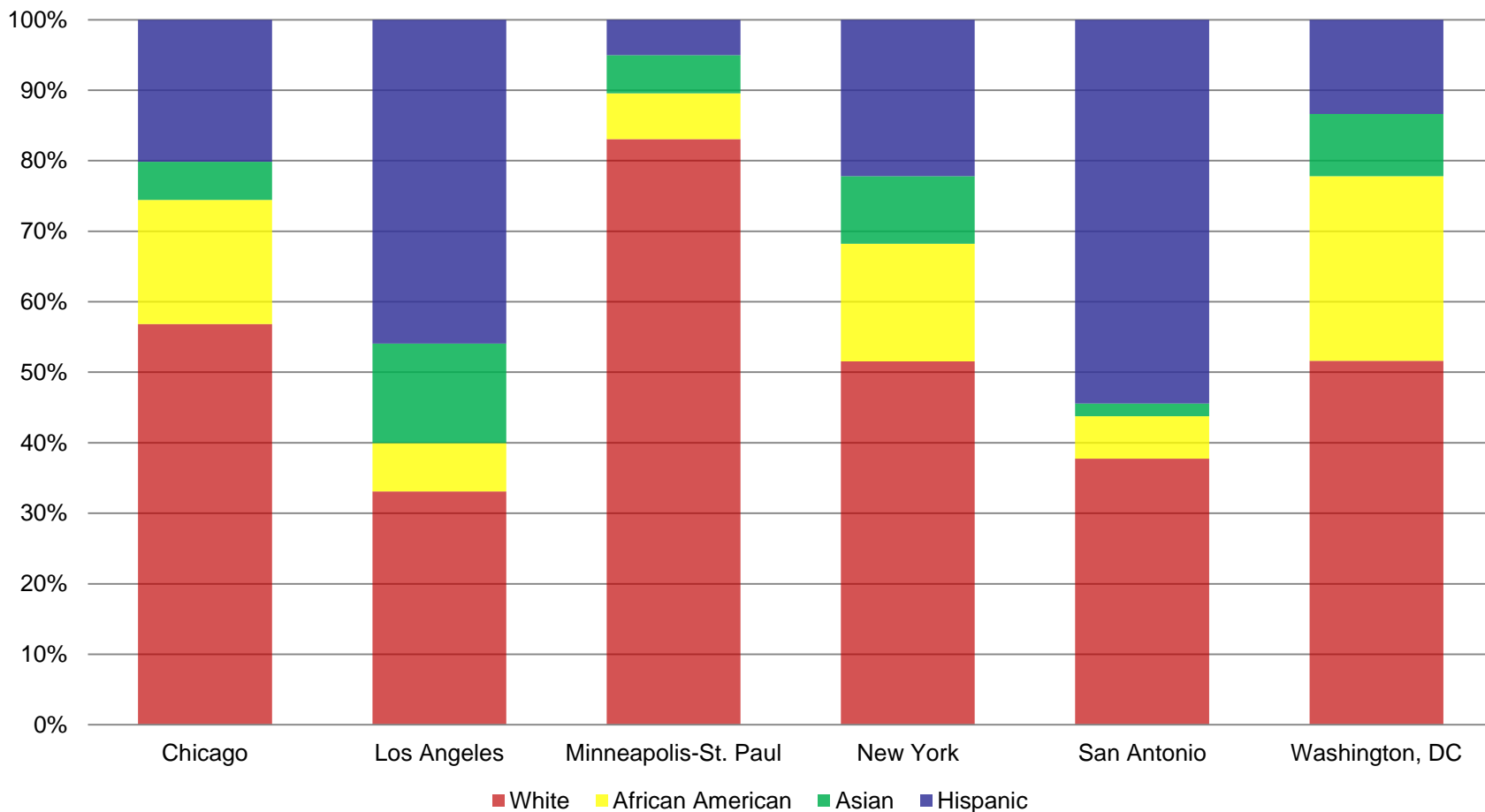


## We are also an aging profession



Data Source: Diversity Counts (2007), Table A-1

# “diversity balance” depends on where you look!



Data Source: 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

## Questions to consider...

- How successful can grassroots diversity efforts be without increases in the diversity of organizational leadership?
- What do we gain and lose by expanding the ways we define diversity?
- What are some alternatives to national population as a benchmark to guide our diversity efforts?

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## Current Initiatives

- ALA's Spectrum Initiative (Masters and PhD)
- ARL's Initiative to Recruit a Diverse Workforce
- LIS Access Midwest Program (LAMP)
- SLA's Diversity Leadership Development Program

## Local and Institutional Initiatives

- Indiana Librarians Leading in Diversity project
- Kent State University - Academic Librarian Diversity Internship
- University of Iowa Libraries - Residency Program
- University of Minnesota Libraries - Resident Librarian Position
- The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Libraries - Diversity Resident Librarian

## Local and Institutional Initiatives, cont.

- University of Pittsburgh - ULS Public Services Librarian Diversity Resident Program
- University of Washington, Seattle - Washington Doctoral Initiative (WDI)
- University of Arizona - Knowledge River
- The Broward County (FL) Library - Graduate Intern Program
- The California State Library

## Local and Institutional Initiatives, cont.

- Mount Holyoke College - Collaborative Librarian Recruitment Program.
- The New Jersey State Library / Rutgers University - Librarians for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- Oberlin College Library - IMLS Diversity Intern Program
- The Vigo County Public Library (VCPL) (Terre Haute, Indiana)



# Finishing What We Started

- Library Fellows Program funded by the United States Information Agency
- Minority Intern Program managed by the Office of Literacy and Outreach Services(OLOS)
- Project Athena (PhD)

# What's Not Working

- Too many players
- Moving above and beyond financial support
- Multilayered and multi site support
- Starting earlier

## Questions to consider...

- Have the national recruitment efforts, residency and fellowship programs been effective in practice?
- If not, how should they be improved? What does the model initiative look like?

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## Three main challenges for the library in the multicultural information society:

- Being competent in multicultural communication in all dimensions of library work
- Giving cultural groups the ability to survive linguistically and culturally and to develop services tailored to the information needs and barriers of specific groups
- Serving as a meeting place that can facilitate cultural integration and community.

*European Curriculum Reflections on LIS Education (Kajberg & Lørring, 2003)*

## Goal for the MLIS program:

- To educate MLIS students who are able to work effectively in culturally diverse environments.

## Student interests w/in the Library Studies Specialization:

- Services to children and youth in multicultural communities
- Design of library collections and services to meet intergenerational needs and the needs of specific communities including people with disabilities.

Field and internship placements as requirement



## NEW - Information & Diverse Populations Concentration

### Required foundational courses

- Diverse Populations, Inclusion, and Information (LBSC 620)
- Information and Universal Usability (LBSC 622)

<http://ischool.umd.edu/programs/diversepop.shtml>

## Need for research

“If students are not aware of the range of issues of diversity, inclusion, and underrepresentation related to information and the ways to provide services that meet the needs and expectations of diverse populations, these students will not be able to adequately serve their communities or their profession. ***Simply put, research in this area needs to be an integral part of every MLS curriculum***”

(Jaeger, Bertot, & Franklin, 2010, p. 179).



# Need for research

From systems

...to users

...to user groups?

- Social epistemology as a foundation for LIS
- Social informatics

## Questions to consider...

- Should diversity considerations be foundational to the MLIS curriculum?
- What are the relative advantages and disadvantages of the different approaches to incorporating diversity into MLIS curricula?
- How effective are the various approaches?

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# Approach 1: Diversity as part of the MLIS mission

The logo for the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, featuring the text "UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies" in a serif font, centered within a dark, textured rectangular background.

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[http://is.gseis.ucla.edu/academics/degrees/mlis\\_program.htm](http://is.gseis.ucla.edu/academics/degrees/mlis_program.htm)

UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies

## Student interests within MLIS Specializations:

<b>Library Studies</b>	<b>Archival Studies</b>	<b>Informatics</b>
Services to children and youth in multicultural communities	Development of new methods for providing access based on the needs of diverse and non-traditional constituencies	Community and social informatics
Design of library collections and services to meet intergenerational needs and the needs of specific communities including people with disabilities.		Participatory and ethnographic methods for user research and system design

## Approach 2: Diversity Track



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## Approach 3: Individual Courses

### Track: Human-Information Interaction Systems

<i>Lead course</i>	510 - Human Information Behavior
<i>Central courses</i>	511 - Research Methods 518 - Designing User Centered Information Services and
<i>Specialization courses</i>	512 - Interface Design 514 - Information, Media and the Curriculum 515 - Traditions in Oral Narration 516 - Children's and Youth Services <b>517 - Planning Outreach Services</b> 519 - User Instruction

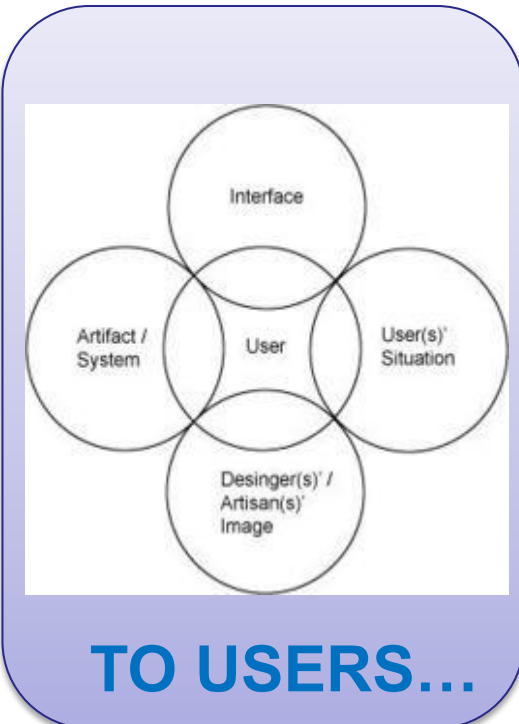
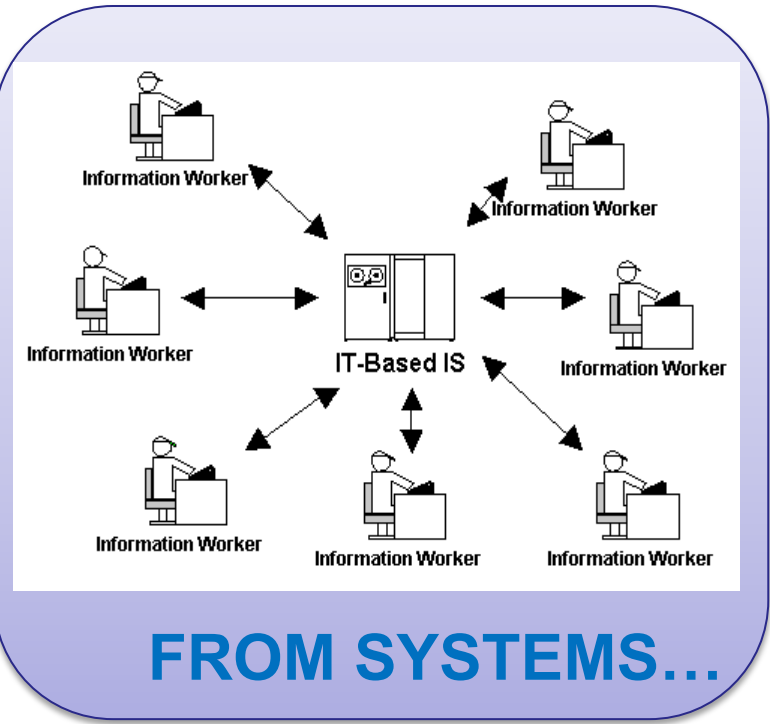


## Need for research

“If students are not aware of the range of issues of diversity, inclusion, and underrepresentation related to information and the ways to provide services that meet the needs and expectations of diverse populations, these students will not be able to adequately serve their communities or their profession. ***Simply put, research in this area needs to be an integral part of every MLS curriculum***”

(Jaeger, Bertot, & Franklin, 2010, p. 179).

# Need for a “new” research paradigm?



## Questions to consider...

- What role should the MLIS curriculum play in preparing professionals for serving increasingly diverse populations?
- Should diversity considerations be foundational to the MLIS curriculum?
- What are the relative advantages and disadvantages of the different approaches to incorporating diversity into MLIS curricula?
- How effective are the various approaches?



Diversity in Research and Practice

Audience Discussion  
and Questions

# Thank you for your time and participation!

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