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A Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Approach to Collection Development in a University Library

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ABSTRACT: University of the Pacific's objective in a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) audit of library collections was to examine the voices and subjects represented and reveal diversity gaps. During Spring 2021, in collaboration with library employees, eight student interns determined the methodology, assessed print and eBook collections, and provided recommendations on closing identified collection gaps. Initial results from auditing ~4,000 representative titles indicated University of the Pacific's library book collections lack the diversity to adequately reflect racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of students and their expectations for assignments and research. This paper documents the audit process and its impact on collection development decisions and policy.

Keywords: DEI, diversity, equity, inclusion, collection audit, collection development

INTRODUCTION

Primary obstacles to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in academic institutions include not only individual biases and interpersonal discrimination, but also unjust structural and systemic power structures (Brook et al., 2016; Rapchak, 2019). Libraries and librarians cannot remain neutral towards white supremacy anti-racism (Ferretti, 2018). The impact of library programs and

educational influence extends far beyond to a broad range of library users. Since the status quo maintains historically unjust structural issues in diversity, specific measures surpassing the day-to-day operations of the library need to be taken to gather the quantitative data regarding the state of diversity, equity, and inclusion in library resources. With actual data to serve as a baseline of understanding, even if it only serves to reaffirm already existing assumptions, new goals and expectations can be established. The rationale for a diversity, equity, and inclusion audit is that it makes the abstract concepts measurable and quantifiable, which in turn informs organizational framework for future support of DEI activities and tracking concrete progress.

The University of the Pacific is a medium-sized, private university on the west coast of the United States. The goal of the DEI audit initiative was to assess the library collection, examine the voices and subjects that are represented, and to reveal gaps by means of direct and active student participation. During Spring 2021, eight student interns were hired to assist with the DEI audit of the library. Before the DEI Audit, several pilots were conducted at the University Libraries that were limited to specific collections (Ding et al., 2020; Wells & Gibney, 2021).

When the study commenced in January 2021, the authors investigated the state of DEI audits in the literature and could find very little that was applicable. Primarily DEI audits had taken place in K-12 school libraries (Lifshitz, 2016; Duval, 2020; Bogan, 2020) and public libraries (Jensen, 2018; Mortensen, 2019; Cahil et. al, 2021; LACONI Technical Services, 2021). However, since the spring of 2021, a far greater number of examples have appeared, many of which are in academic libraries. These audits are not always centered on collection development specifically, but cover a wider range of DEI topics in library management such as:

- inclusive metadata and resource description (Deng, 2021b; Deng, 2021a; Deng & Slutskaya, 2022);
- a children's collection in an academic library (Kester, 2021);
- an initial DEI audit at University of Alaska Southeast's Egan Library (Cox, 2021);
- a DEI audit at Thomas Tredway Library at Augustana College (Emerson & Lehman, 2022);
- a DEI audit at University of West Florida by the University Libraries which compared collections against Resources for College Libraries (RCL) holdings and subject headings (University of West Florida, 2022).
- auditing archival and special collections at University of Nevada, Las Vegas (Jones et. al, 2021);
- a focus on auditing collection accessibility for students with disabilities (Cain & Fanshawe, 2021; Litwak, 2021; Chee & Weaver, 2021);
- a DEI audit of plays in the library collection at University of California, Irvine (Stone, 2020)
- and diversifying music library collections in higher education (Abbazio et. al, 2022).

The example most closely aligned with the process at University of the Pacific's library is that by Augustana College which also used student workers to complete parts of the audit. The methodology at University of the Pacific is also very similar to that utilized at the University of Alaska Southeast.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The official DEI audit of the collection began in the Spring semester of 2021. Members of the DEI audit project team included: the Head of Library Research and Learning Services, the Head of Publishing and Scholarship Support, the Director of Collection Strategies and Discovery Services, the Head of Special Collections, the Health Sciences Librarian, the University Curator, as well as eight student interns. The student interns were required to have sophomore standing knowing that they would have at least completed Pacific's first year seminar that incorporates library research sessions and a research paper and therefore have some understanding of how to utilize University of the Pacific's library's resources. The DEI audit project team collectively determined the methodology of the DEI audit, including the procedures for implementing the audit and assessing the collection, and made recommendations for closing identified gaps. The DEI audit project team met semi-monthly for project updates and to discuss assigned reading(s), and they also worked individually to analyze assigned areas of the collection.

All eight interns were hired as student workers in January 2021. Study participation took place over the course of one semester from February 1, 2021 to May 8, 2021 while all university students, faculty, and staff were learning, teaching, and working remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic thus added complexity as student interns met virtually and reviewed books as represented online, rather than using the physical books on the shelves in the library during their appraisal.

At the commencement of the project the eight student interns were presented with a semi-finalized list of audit rating criteria and each asked to complete a 15-title audit of diverse disciplines for three reasons: (1) for evaluators to become familiar and comfortable with the audit form; (2) to observe inter-rater agreement and consistency of answers; and (3) to suggest necessary changes and clarifications to the criteria and form before beginning the full audit.

The study made use of Google Forms to conduct the audit of the collection sample (See Appendix A), a Google Doc for clarifying criteria, and Google Sheets for the individual book title lists provided to each student intern. Depending on the disciplinary interests of the student intern, they were provided with multiple Google Sheets or one primary discipline list. In addition to the student interns, a few additional student workers and staff members were recruited to assist on the project mid-way through when it was determined the Interns would not be able to complete on deadline. These included three student assistants who worked for the scholarly communications library staff member, two of whom had assisted with reviewing materials during the pilot audits; plus, four staff members from the circulation (3) and cataloging (1) departments who were given instructions and training similar to the student interns' before starting. Table 1 includes a breakdown of the number of titles evaluated by each worker.

Table 1
Titles Rated Per Evaluator

Evaluator	Number of titles
Intern 1	166
Intern 2	89
Intern 3	1,291
Intern 4	280
Intern 5	432
Intern 6	415
Intern 7	707
Intern 8	200
Student Worker 1	76
Student Worker 2	367

Student Worker 3	48
Staff Member 1	50
Staff Member 2	170
Staff Member 3	50
Staff Member 4	50
Total	4,391

Student interns were instructed to limit their time spent on each title. The average time taken per title during the full audit was about 10 minutes. Some students were at the lower end of the range (5 minutes) and some were at the higher end (15 minutes). Information literacy concepts were incorporated into student training on accurately discovering information online, appraising information on recommended sites, and determining search terms to use. A limitation of this audit was that due to the large number of materials being reviewed and the number of students (plus staff) working on the project, secondary review of each title by library employees on the team was impossible. As a result of this, there are likely inconsistencies in the quality of the individual evaluations.

The overall audit covered a total of 3,505 print books and 839 music scores. The titles were identified by selecting the Library of Congress call number range that pertains to the programs and curriculum offered at Pacific. Depending on the numbers of books within that call number range, a randomized sample size of either 10% or 1,000, whichever was fewer, was selected for review. For example, the number of titles in the call number range for Education (L) is 1,610; therefore 10% of the titles were selected for a sample size of 161. Large primary disciplines, such as Humanities, Social Sciences, and STEM, contained multiple subjects or fields so that it was

feasible for the interns to evaluate them within the course of a semester. The breakdown of the collection, including Library of Congress Subject Heading (LCSH) categories, was as follows:

Education - L: 161 titles

Humanities: 1000 titles

- Art - N: 80 titles
- World History - D: 150 titles
- History of the Americas - E: 100 titles
- History of the Americas - F: 70 titles
- Language and Literature - P: 430 titles
- Music - Literature - ML: 40 titles
- Music - Instruction and study - MT: 10 titles
- Philosophy and Religion - B (excluding BF): 12 titles

Music Scores - M: 839 titles

Social Sciences: 1000 titles

- Psychology - BF: 130 titles
- Social Sciences - H: 670 titles
- Political Science - J: 200 titles

STEM: 1000 titles

- Science - Q: 780 titles
- Engineering and Technology - T: 220 titles

Non-binary	1	1							0%
Couldn't find gender	151							151	--
Other	340							340	--
Totals	3,327	2,308	54	88	3	96	26	752	8%

As evidenced by Table 2, there are predominantly white, male authors in the collection. Of the titles where gender was identified (2,836): 84.7% are by men, 15.2% by women. Of the titles where ethnicity was identifiable (2,575): 89.63% of the titles are by white first authors/editors with a sharp drop off to the next largest ethnicities (Asian, 3.73%; Hispanic/LatinX, 3.42%; Black, 2.10%; Mixed race, 1.00%; and Indigenous 0.12%).

As a comparison, part of the original purpose for the audit and the diversification of the library's collection is to represent University of the Pacific's population more adequately. According to University of the Pacific demographics for the 2020-2021 academic year's undergraduate population, there were 52% female, 48% male students. Of these, 37% are Asian American and Pacific Islander, 22% are Hispanic, 4% are Black and 5% are multi-ethnic (University of the Pacific, n.d.).

Furthermore, as an additional comparison point, the United States national undergraduate statistics for 2020 encompassing 15.8 million students had the following averages: 51% white; 21% Hispanic/LatinX; 13% Black; .07% Asian; .04% multiethnic; .03% nonresident alien; and .01% American Indian/Alaska Native (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021).

University of the Pacific is comparable to the percentage of white and Hispanic undergraduates but quite far off in numbers from the other ethnicities on a national scale. Comparing the audit to

these data points assists collection development to address the library's success more adequately in serving the population it represents. Including materials by authors who represent a students' ethnicity can create a sense of belonging and welcome in the library, and by extension, at the university.

There were 340 titles authored/edited by corporations which were excluded from the total to determine the next two sets of data. This reduced the total resulting titles to 3,089. Of these, 51 were determined to most likely be LGBTQIA+, which is a total of 1.62% of the total surveyed. Out of the 51, 11 were female, 39 were male and 1 was non-binary. Forty-one of the 51 were white.

Out of the 3,089 titles, 54 first author/editors were determined to have a disability - 1.74%. For the purposes of this study, disabilities were identified as mental or physical disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, which states that a person with a disability has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (U.S. Department of Justice, n.d.). Out of those 54 first author/editors, 47 were white and 47 were male.

These two data points, LGBTQIA+ and disability, are most likely inaccurate. Statistically speaking, more of these first authors/editors are likely to be LGBTQIA+ or have a disability. As contrasting evidence, the majority of these authors/editors are United States-based, and the most recent Gallup poll estimated that 5.6% of Americans self-identify as LGBT (Jones, 2021). A result of 1.65% is therefore suspiciously small. With regards to disabilities, the number should be much higher. The Center for Disease Control ([CDC], n.d.) reports that 26% of Americans live with a disability.

A problem, and potential limitation to this study, is the extent to which legitimate

information can be found publicly online via author bio pages, publisher sites, interviews, obituaries, social media, etc. While some authors will publicly state their sexual orientation and/or gender identification in their bios or have a pride flag in their Twitter profile, most authors do not mention anything. The researchers had to make assumptions about authors married to someone of the opposite gender which may or may not be accurate. At one of the scheduled meetings, the DEI Audit group discussed an article from the *New York Times* about their own book reviewers (Sehgal, 2021). The results were that most *New York Times* book reviewers were white males and they mostly reviewed works by white, cis-gendered males. When they would review a BIPOC authored book or a publicly out LGBTQIA+ author, their reviews generally displayed implicit biases. Often, someone who falls outside of heteronormative and able-bodied labels is repressed in published literature - either by not getting a publishing deal in the first place or receiving harsh criticism in critical reviews which represent and reinforce public opinion; it may be theorized that authors would not feel comfortable disclosing any information that reveals their identity to be outside the established norm.

Once the authors/first editors were broken out by gender and ethnicity, the question arose of whether additional data could be seen by year (See Table 3) or by discipline (See Table 4).

Table 3
Author Identity Demographics by Decade

Publication Year	Male	Female	Non-binary	White	Black	Hispanic/LatinX	Indigenous Peoples	Asian	Mixed Race	% Female	% BIPOC
1803-1899	30	1		31						3%	0%
1900-1919	10			10						0%	0%
1910-1919	12			11				1		0%	8%
1920-1929	31	2		31		2				6%	6%

1930-1939	27	7		31				2	1	21%	9%
1940-1949	67	10		72		4		1		13%	7%
1950-1959	143*	13		138	1	8		4	2	8%	10%
1960-1969	358*	26		343	4	22	1	6	1	7%	9%
1970-1979	682*	76*		657	18	21		27	9	10%	10%
1980-1989	667*	140*		710	14	16	1	22	7	17%	7%
1990-1999	148	35		164	5	3		9	2	19%	10%
2000-2009	105	43		119	6	7	2	13	1	29%	20%
2010-2019	118*	74	1	163	7	7		13	3	39%	16%

NOTE: The * indicate decades where a number of the gender identified authors were not able to be identified for ethnicity by the student interns.

In Table 3, the percentages of female and BIPOC author/first editors are very low until after 2000. There also are some years without a large sample size which brings up the differences in decades of higher education spending on physical books. Anecdotally, during a presentation of these results, the audience of librarians posited theories that many libraries at higher education institutions spent heavily in the 1970-1980s on print collections as library budgets were at their most prosperous during these decades (Wells et al., 2021a). Overall, the numbers reflect expected ranges based on publication standards for those decades. While the numbers do not accord with a diverse or inclusive collection, they are a cross-section of representation in academic publishing within their respective time periods.

Table 4
Author Identity Demographics by Discipline

Discipline	Male	Female	Non-binary	White	Black	Hispanic/LatinX	Indigenous Peoples	Asian	Mixed Race	% Female	% BIPOC
Education	83	53		113	7	2	1	4		39%	10%
Humanities	761	128		725	23	59	1	20	8	14%	13%
Medicine	215	68		221	11	10	1	20	9	24%	18%
STEM	588	48		538	1	5		22	2	8%	5%
Social Sciences	750	130	1	700	15	11	1	30	7	15%	7%
Totals	2,397	427	1	2,297	57	87	4	96	26	15%	11%

Subsequently in Table 4, the data for author/first editor is broken out by the top-level disciplines studied in the audit, making it apparent which disciplines had the most female and the most BIPOC author/first editors. Education had a higher percentage of female authors (39%). STEM had very low female (8%) and BIPOC numbers (5%) from the audit. The Humanities - which had the largest individual number of books in the study for BIPOC authors (59 Hispanic/LatinX; 23 Black; and 20 Asian) - conversely reflected a percentage (13%) on the lower end of diversity, which the authors expected due to the very large number of Humanities' books purchased by the Library from traditional publishers throughout the previous decades.

Of note within the Humanities discipline, are the numbers for History, Language & Literature, and Music. Of the Music titles (46), all of them were written by white first authors/editors. Language & Literature (344 titles), which the authors expected would have a diverse authorship from multiple backgrounds, contained surprisingly low percentage at 5% BIPOC first author/editors. Similarly, it had been hoped that the History titles (319), would include higher representation from multiple ethnicities writing about their own nations, but results showed that they also had a low BIPOC percentage at 13%. Future actions can rectify this lack of diversity

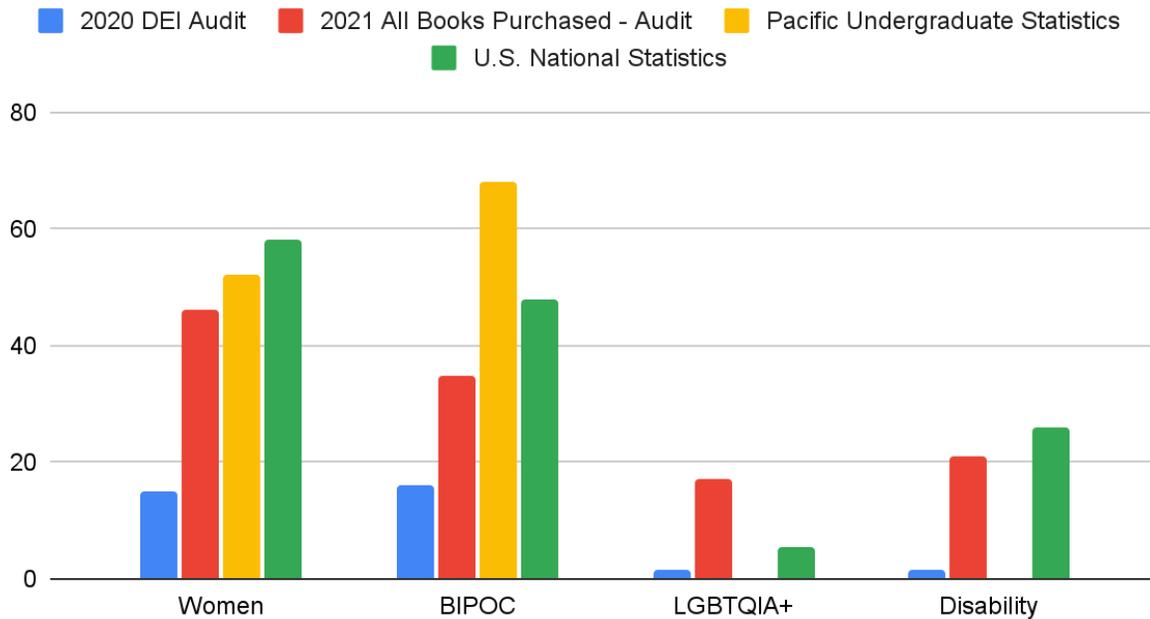
in collection development policies by focusing on purchasing more #OwnVoices (Duyvis, n.d.) titles in forthcoming years, which can support student understanding of DEI in subject coursework from the authors and experts who write from their own perspectives.

In addition to the author identity information, the audit form also included a wide range of additional criteria to check, which included information on book covers, subject content, CEO identities, publisher house location, etc. While this data - after cursory review - may be interesting, it has not been fully analyzed as of this writing. The focus at University of the Pacific has been on author identities, which can be directly compared to the student population at University of the Pacific. Future analysis and extrapolation of the remaining data may be the focus of another paper with additional DEI concerns, such as policies of current publishers, backgrounds of publishing leadership, or representation of underserved populations on book covers or in book content.

At the University of the Pacific, additional data will also be continuously collected moving forwards in order to improve DEI within the library book collection. The 2021 calendar yearbook purchases have already been audited with the same methodology as the spring 2020 work and saw significant progress from the original audit (See Table 5).

Table 5

Comparison of DEI Audits and Demographics



In 2021, the library purchased 211 print books. A significant portion of them (100) were bought specifically with funds earmarked for DEI purchases from an internal university grant of \$10,000. From the 211 books purchased, 46% were written by women versus 15% from the previous audit. Thirty-five percent of the books were by BIPOC authors versus the original data point of 16%. LGBTQIA+ identifying authors, which was 1.6%, and authors identifying with a disability, which was 1.7%, in the initial audit, were also increased significantly with 17% and 21% in the 2021 purchases audit, respectively.

DISCUSSION

The implication of undergoing the DEI audit is that significant action will be taken to produce positive change, rather than being an empty talking point to mollify an academic community

becoming more aware of social justice issues. Expectations and goals can be made using data and statistics rather than the data being the end goal. Data from the DEI audit will work as a core component to implement practical change in policy. First, the library will make the results widely transparent and accessible (Wells et al., 2021a; Wells et al., 2021b; Wells et al., 2022; Wells et al., 2023). Secondly, discussion regarding the status of DEI in the library will be promoted and feedback will be actively sought on campus via presentations, social media, and additional outreach efforts to faculty, administration, students, and staff (Gibney et al., 2021). Thirdly, the library will be able to use evidence-based library and information practice as a framework and basis for purchases and future plans, following the recommendations of Koufogiannakis and Brettle (2016).

While the audit results show definitively that the collection skews white and male, it was helpful to gather concrete numbers and uncover particular areas for improvement. The library intends to set aside collection development funds specifically for purchasing DEI titles moving forward and preferential purchasing will be given to titles authored by BIPOC, self-identifying LGBTQIA+ authors and authors with disabilities. One potential strategy for collecting Humanities materials can be to select titles by authors discussing their own cultures and languages and move those to the head of the queue, especially if such texts support learning objectives found in coursework and research activities. The same could be applied to fields like Business and Education, for authors who write about the experiences of Black, LatinX, and Indigenous people in those settings, as the work they do improves understanding of DEI issues not only within these subject areas, but also provides foundational understanding of how diversity, equity, or inclusion affects outcomes in a particular subject. For example, in the School of Health Sciences at University of the Pacific, learning objectives in departments such as the

Social Work program include the effect of healthcare disparities on minorities, LGBTQIA+ and people with disabilities, and how respecting diversity, human rights and equality can improve health outcomes, economics, and policies of vulnerable populations (University of the Pacific, n.d.; Siegel, et al., 2018). DEI resources that address the causes and potential solutions to equity issues in the community not only support student learning but will also support improvements in society.

During the research study, the DEI Audit team considered concrete purchasing decisions that can be made on sourcing materials in efforts to negate the predominantly white academic publishing industry (Greco et al., 2016; Inefuku, 2021). If an academic institution has a BIPOC owned bookstore in their town and is purchasing physical books, ordering through them is one way to support underserved communities. Smaller publishers with more diverse leadership and a DEI focused title catalog are also a good place to start: their books can fit the needs of the institution and provide supplemental content uniquely suited for specific learning goals. For institutions that cannot overhaul the collection development process overnight, these are but a few small decisions that can be made to move a library's collection into a more diverse and equitable direction.

At University of the Pacific, the library will engage in future campus dialogues that will provide important insight on several serious questions of how practical applications can be implemented for DEI: What do the students expect of future goals and expectations for the library collection? What benchmarks on DEI authorship should be aimed for, and how flexible should they be? Should the transformation of power structures in the academy be gradual or rapid, and how can the library spark that change? What purchasing strategies in collection development should be established for future prospective titles, such as prioritization of texts that

focus on #OwnVoices and health disparities? Conversations about the feasibility of implementing changes within the library are excellent; however, changes to power structures at the institutional level would require buy-in from multiple departments and administration. At a minimum, the library will dedicate funding annually to DEI purchases and continue expanding the collection to increase representation by authors, subject content, and publishers by performing regular collection development audits. The practical applications should be significantly, although not necessarily wholly, determined by the results of the audits, with the understanding that DEI work is never fully complete, but rather an ongoing and transformative process.

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DECLARATION OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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APPENDIX A

FINAL CRITERIA FROM AUDIT FORM

- Who are you?
 - [list of student names]
- What is the Title?
- Who is the first listed Author or Editor? (Last name, First name)
- What is the publication year?
- What Discipline is this?
 - Art
 - Education
 - Engineering and Technology
 - History
 - Language & Literature
 - Medicine
 - Music
 - Philosophy, Psychology, Religion
 - Science
 - Social Sciences
- What is the first Author/Editor's gender:
 - Male (cis-gender)
 - Female (cis-gender)
 - Transgender
 - Non-binary

- Couldn't find anything
 - Other: _____
- What is the first Author/Editor's ethnicity?
 - White
 - Black
 - Hispanic/LatinX
 - Indigenous Peoples
 - Asian
 - Mixed Race
 - Couldn't find anything
 - Other: _____
- If you can find any information on the first Author/Editor's sexual orientation, do they identify as LGBTQIA+?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Couldn't find anything
 - Other: _____
- If you can find any information on whether or not the first Author/Editor's has a disability, do they or don't they?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Couldn't find anything
 - Other: _____

- Does the first Author/Editor appear to be based in the United States? (live, work, etc.)
 - Yes
 - No
 - Other: _____
- (skip logic question) Are there people on the cover?
 - If Yes:
 - Are all the people on the cover white?
 - Yes
 - No
 - People are drawings and it's not obvious
 - Are all the people on the cover cis-gendered males?
 - Yes
 - No
 - People are drawings and it's not obvious
- (skip logic question) Is this fiction or non-fiction?
 - Works of fiction:
 - By reading the abstract, is the main character a cis-gender male?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Other: _____
 - By reading the abstract, is the main character white?
 - Yes

- No
 - Other: _____
- By reading the abstract, does the main character have any mentioned disabilities?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Other: _____
- By reading the abstract, does the main character identify as LGBTQIA+?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Other: _____
- By reading the abstract, do any of the characters besides the main character have any mentioned disabilities?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Other: _____
- By reading the abstract, do any of the characters besides the main character identify as LGBTQIA+?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Other: _____
- Works of non-fiction

- Does the book cover a subject related to social justice?
 - Yes
 - No
- Does the book cover a subject related to minority or marginalized cultures?
 - Yes
 - No
- If you answered YES, which minority or marginalized cultures did you identify the book covering? (choose as many as appropriate)¹
 - LGBTQIA+
 - Senior citizens
 - Racial/Cultural minorities
 - Military Combat Veterans
 - Persons of below average intelligence
 - Hearing, visually, and Physically Challenged Persons
 - Persons with a serious and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI)
 - Persons with Cognitive Impairments
 - Gamblers and Substance Abusers
 - Autism Spectrum Persons
 - Gifted and Talented Persons
 - Persons with disfigurements
 - Persons Living in Poverty

¹ (Garrett, 2016)

- Sex Offenders
 - The Homeless
 - Felons
 - Other: _____
- Is the publisher located in the US
 - If NO - What country is the publisher located in?
 - If YES - What state is the publisher located in?
- Find the publisher's website and a picture of the President or CEO, are they male?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Cannot find picture
- Same picture - is the President/CEO white?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Cannot find picture
- Copy/paste the websites you used to ascertain your information for this title.
- Did any problems or questions occur for this particular title? Let us know so we can discuss!