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# Race and Leadership in Library and Information Science Education: A Study of African American Administrators

MAURICE B. WHEELER AND DANIELLA SMITH

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## ABSTRACT

The recent US presidential campaigns and the subsequent election have laid bare many highly charged political and social issues that historically remained unresolved but have over the years slipped into a sphere of topics avoided in polite and civil conversation. Among the many discussions and topics that took hold as a result of Hilary Clinton's campaign for US president was that of the glass ceiling. The reemergence of the discussion of racial and gender barriers in politics and professional life in America provides an opportunity to revisit the history of racial barriers in the library profession, particularly in library education. This essay provides a framework for understanding the racial and social dynamics that led to the development of a separate but unequal system for educating African American librarians in America. And, of equal or perhaps greater significance at this stage in our profession's evolution, it highlights the significant contributions of African American leaders in library education who also overcame tremendous obstacles and systemic barriers, and ultimately changed the profession regarding who it invites in, and who and how it seeks to serve.

## INTRODUCTION

The recent US presidential campaigns and the subsequent election have laid bare many highly charged political and social issues that historically have remained unresolved but over the years have slipped into a sphere of topics avoided in polite and civil conversation. Observance of the media and its impact has also shown how one aspect of a topic can overshadow the bigger picture. For example, the highly debated issue of illegal immi-

gration has eclipsed the broader discussion about the value and necessity of ethnic and cultural diversity in our nation. Social and political rhetoric around the topic of race and issues of difference is now so extreme that the basic respect for diversity often taken for granted in our daily lives seems under attack.

Among the many discussions and topics that took hold as a result of Hillary Clinton's campaign for US president was that of the glass ceiling. The reemergence of that topic in the national media was for many a sign of hope for the future and for the cause of equality in the workplace. Many voters were hopeful that the election of Clinton as the nation's first female president would shatter the already severely cracked, but still intact, system of gender favoritism. In reality, the election of Clinton, or any other woman, would not have eradicated sexism in hiring any more than the election of President Barack Obama eradicated racism.

Since the election of the new president, more Americans have come to acknowledge the extraordinary achievements of the nation's first African American president despite the systemic barriers and obstacles that shaped his presidency. The reemergence of the discussion of racial and gender barriers in politics and professional life in America provides an opportunity to revisit the history of racial barriers in the library profession, particularly in library education. This essay provides a framework for understanding the racial and social dynamics that led to the development of a separate but unequal system for educating African American librarians in America. And, of equal or perhaps greater significance at this stage in our profession's evolution, it highlights the significant contributions of African American leaders in library education who also overcame tremendous obstacles and systemic barriers, and ultimately changed the profession regarding who it invites in, and who and how it seeks to serve. For the purposes of this essay, the terms *black* and *African American* are used synonymously with the awareness that a distinction is often made in relation to origin of birth within the African diaspora.

### POLICY AND POLITICS AS CONTEXT

Despite some of the media's attempt to perpetuate the perception that President Obama's election in 2008 signaled the end of racial politics in America, at no point during the eight years of his presidency could America, with any degree of honesty, be considered a postracial society. Those who promote the existence of a postracial or race-neutral society are denying the realities of the current social system and structures. Segregation and racial disparity continue to be entrenched in our society and in our educational institutions (Okahana, Feaster, and Allum 2016). There is still resistance to and denial of the existence of a glass ceiling, with the accomplishments of many African Americans and women being highlighted as evidence. Yet the existence of a glass ceiling is no less true today than it was

in 1995 when the Department of Labor issued a report that asserted “the existence of invisible, artificial barriers, blocking women and minorities from advancing up the corporate ladder to management and executive level positions” (U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission 1995, iii). The federal government agreed and confirmed that the glass ceiling affected women and people of color.

When the Glass Ceiling Act was passed, a commission that functioned from 1991 to 1996 was established. That, and many other attempts at remedies to reduce bias and discrimination in hiring, such as affirmative action, brought charges of reverse discrimination from whites who were unhappy with legally mandated measures to level the landscape of access and opportunity. The term *affirmative action* had been originally coined in the late 1980s to identify systemic practices that kept women out of administrative and executive level hierarchies traditionally reserved for white men (Lockwood 2004). Over a decade later, the numbers of African Americans and women in the workforce have risen, but their collective status in corporate America and in academia remains low (Zweigenhaft 2013). For decades, diversity has been for some leaders in higher education a call to arms and for others an obligatory buzzword, along with the terms *sustainability* and *transparency*.

Those who are engaged in making diversity truly operational recognize that virtually no diversity efforts move past the rhetorical stage if leaders are not cajoled and patrolled at a level of organizational authority to facilitate the intended change. Recognition of that fact is supported by the eventual addition of “inclusion” to the diversity equation, acknowledging that recruitment and retention is futile without organizational cultural change that requires overhaul of mindsets and practices that limit the success of people of color once they are recruited. And, it is supported by the recognition that such a cultural change does not happen without top-down strategic oversight by people in higher education positions of authority created specifically for that purpose, such as a Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion.

Diversity continues to be perceived by some as a threat to established norms, equality, and fairness. The pendulum has swung back, and once again diversity is being discussed as a moral and philosophical argument rather than a business and social imperative. For those who perceive diversity as a not-so-cleverly veiled version of affirmative action (Myers 1997), it will never be any more acceptable than affirmative action. Morin (2001) confirmed that whites’ distorted views of black success were a strong factor in their resistance to efforts that level the playing field. Many whites feel that blacks’ achievements have now surpassed their own and those of their communities.

Often, the mere physical presence of people of color is used to suggest a level of institutional social and cultural evolution that is not accurate. The

presence of people of color as a recognizable group gives the impression that institutions have exerted a sufficient effort into recruiting and retention and that everyone is now on equal footing. Yet African Americans who are part of those communities continue to have experiences that are reminders that even when students, faculty, and administrators of color are present, their presence is not necessarily a reflection that the institutions are highly evolved socially and welcome their presence and input (McMurtrie 2016).

The case for diversity has long ago been more than adequately identified, justified, and embraced by large segments of public and private education as well as public and private industry. The recruitment and retention of a diverse student body has become a cause for celebration on many campuses. Yet for those who are supportive of and active in the promotion of diversity, there is likely dismay at the abysmal quantitative pictures drawn by the overall demographic data related to African Americans in higher education and in many professions. In 2013, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES 2013) reported that nationally African Americans represented only 6 percent of all faculty, versus the 79 percent represented by whites. Although the core values of the American Library Association (ALA) (ALA 2016, para. 7) champion diversity and seek “to reflect that diversity by providing a full spectrum of resources and services to the communities,” the level of professionals of color within its ranks does not come close to reflecting the level of diversity in American society.

The statistics for African American students, faculty, and administrators in the library and information science profession are particularly alarming. Men account for only 12 percent of librarians, and the vast majority of librarians are white women (ALA 2012). In the late 1980s, a flurry of professional association activity seemed to have made headway in addressing the issue of minority student recruitment. ALISE, ALA, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), and other organizations were all engaged in programing and initiatives that encouraged attention and action. Despite focused efforts such as the ALA Spectrum Scholarships, there is still a deficit of African Americans entering the library and information science (LIS) profession. This is evident in the latest statistics provided by ALISE (2016). During the 2013–2014 academic year, African American students accounted for only 632 (4.7 percent) of the 13,544 ALA accredited master’s degrees awarded. In the same year, only 70 (5.5 percent) of 1282 students graduating with doctoral degrees were African American. For those in the profession who have labored for decades to elevate the awareness, importance, and necessity of cultural and ethnic diversity in library collections, staff, and faculty, this is a disturbing observation.

Despite recognition that a culture receptive to diversity has come slowly to the LIS profession, there have been periods of tremendous bravery and

foresight from leadership at all levels of the profession that has over many years ushered in extraordinary change. The inclusion of blacks in libraries as professionals, and eventually as educators, required significant change in the profession, and that change was built on a foundation of courage, pragmatism, political and social savvy, and vision for the future.

### AFRICAN AMERICANS IN LIS EDUCATION

Edward Christopher Williams, the first African American to earn a degree in library science in the United States, graduated from the New York State Library School in 1900 (Jackson 1939). Williams also became the first African American library science faculty member when in 1904 he was hired to teach at the Western Reserve University Library School. Williams was born during Reconstruction and was educated during a short period in the nation's early history when there was less resistance to blacks' social and economic mobility, particularly in the North.

By the 1920s and '30s, whites' fear of black mobility and the perceived privileges that came with it caused a retrenchment and countermeasures whose effects are still apparent over a century later. Few blacks succeeded Williams in entering library education programs in white institutions. Until 1925 the only targeted opportunity African Americans had for acquiring education and training in librarianship was in an apprenticeship program at the Louisville Public Library in Louisville, Kentucky (DuMont and Caynon 1989). Because of Jim Crow laws in the South and Jim Crow sentiments in other parts of the country, by the time the Hampton Institute Library School (now Hampton University) opened in 1925, only five other blacks had obtained degrees in library science (Mussman 1998). Established primarily through the encouragement and facilitation of the ALA, the Hampton Institute Library School operated from 1925 to 1938.

Even with the steady graduation rate at Hampton, it would take years before a large enough group of educated and experienced black librarians would be available to take leadership roles in libraries, even at institutions that served blacks exclusively. A 1930 study showed the overwhelming majority of libraries (45 out of 50) on black college campuses were still headed by white librarians (Peterson 1996). A decade later, most degreed black librarians were choosing to work in academia and were gaining the experience necessary for future consideration of leadership positions. In a 1940 dissertation study, results show the vast majority (70 percent) of graduates from the Hampton program were working in academic libraries (Dumont and Caynon 1989).

During the years it operated, the library school at Hampton depended very heavily on support from foundations (Campbell 2000). Hampton's school was perpetually underfunded and closed for that reason, not for lack of interest (Smith 1940). The provision of library education was begun in the nation's South as early as 1936. From 1936 to 1939, several histori-

cally black colleges and universities (HBCU), including Atlanta University, operated a Negro Teacher-Librarian Training Program supported by private funds (Sutton 2005). After the Hampton program's closing, the opening of other ALA sanctioned schools devoted to educating African American librarians followed in quick succession at North Carolina Central University and at Atlanta University.

The School of Library and Information Sciences of North Carolina Central University (NCCU) was officially established in 1939 at what was then called the North Carolina College for Negroes. The school began operating by 1941 and awarded its first master of library science degree in 1951. The ALA accredited the master's degree program in 1975 (NCCU 2017). The school experienced significant growth in the 1970s, partly because of ALA accreditation and the increased availability of targeted financial aid. The school at NCCU is now the only library education program remaining in a HCBU.

Neither the director of the Hampton Institute Library School nor the first dean of the school at North Carolina Central University was African American. At the time, there were few African American degreed librarians, and the social and political climate dictated the presence of a seasoned white administration. Eliza Adkins Gleason, the first African American to earn a PhD in library science, was the first dean of the school at Atlanta University. At the end of the 1942–1943 academic year, the ALA accredited the Atlanta University School of Library Services, which officially opened in 1941 (Woodson 1991). Over a period of fifty years, the school at Atlanta University made a significant impact on the profession through its faculty and graduates. Austerity measures begun in the early 1980s were a harbinger of greater financial challenges throughout the next decade, and the school closed in 1991.

## RESEARCH REVISITED

Although a few African Americans had received degrees in library science at the beginning of the twentieth century, not until the late 1930s, with the opening of the program at Hampton Institute, did African Americans begin to earn degrees in significant numbers. Considering the aptitude and ambition of the first wave of newly educated librarians in the late 1930s, it is no surprise that the first blacks with PhD degrees in the profession began to appear only a few years later, in 1940.

Handsel Ingram's (2000) study of African American librarians with earned doctorate degrees from 1940–1990 provides a remarkable listing of 171 degrees earned. While not a comprehensive listing, it offers provocative data on which to build a wide range of future research. Because the initial educational accomplishments were made before the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decisions of 1954 and 1955, the listing presents an intriguing opportunity for mapping the progression of de-

degrees and dissertation research topics with the trajectory beginning with mid- and late twentieth-century social and educational advances. Of the doctorate degrees listed in the study, only four were obtained before the *Brown* decision.

Somewhat surprisingly, after the *Brown* decision there does not appear to have been a barrage of black librarians who rushed to take advantage of the opportunity now afforded them to obtain the terminal degree, aspiring to become LIS faculty or academic library directors. The listing indicates only one additional degree was conferred in the late 1950s.

Many factors likely contributed to the slow response. First and foremost, a wider range of educational opportunities for African American students did not suddenly appear in 1955 at the stroke of supreme judicial pens. Colleges and universities were very slow to change their admission policies. It took a second Supreme Court ruling and many more court cases before colleges and universities in the South were forced, sometimes with the aid of armed federal troops, to admit African American students. Also, the perception that all colleges and universities in the North met African American applicants with open and welcoming arms is a historical fallacy. Second, there was a clear and unromanticized recognition among black librarians that their career opportunities remained extremely limited. Third, the financial obligation required for pursuit of the degree was simply beyond most African Americans' financial resources at the time.

Only an additional seven PhD degrees were awarded in the 1960s. The preponderance of degrees were conferred in the last three decades of the century: forty-nine in the 1970s, seventy in the 1980s, and forty in the 1990s. The two schools that were the most successful at recruiting and retaining African American doctoral students through completion of the degree requirements were the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Michigan. At Pittsburg, the success was a result of the hiring of E. J. Josey as a full professor to teach and recruit students of color, in particular African Americans. The initial success at Michigan was a result of Dean Russell Bidlack's artful use of Title II-B fellowships from their inception in the late 1960s (University of Michigan 1978).

In the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965, Title II-B included a provision that made fellowships available for students in library science at the master's and doctoral level. Soon after implementation of the act, the Office of Education introduced guidelines that gave priority to programs with a focus on ethnic minority recruitment (Vale 1971). Congress continued to renew the provision for many years, despite the budgetary recommendations of various presidential administrations suggesting its removal.

In general, library schools at predominantly white colleges and universities historically made little effort to address the paucity of African American librarians. They had been content since the 1940s to allow the two financially struggling programs at the HBCUs in the South to educate

enough black librarians to satisfy the nation's black population (Dumont 1986). The funding available through Title II-B fellowships and the reluctance to allow that funding to be unutilized was central to the integration of most library schools in the US.

Affirmative action and the hope of greater opportunities was also a big inducement for African Americans to seek the PhD degree beginning in the early 1970s. The Office of Civil Rights introduced affirmative action in higher education in 1972 with the establishment of new hiring regulations (Wheeler 2000). At its core was assurance of equality of opportunity and the reduction of systemic barriers that limited those opportunities.

As the implementation of the *Brown* decision required additional measures to assure adherence, so too did affirmative action. And, although the number of African Americans seeking PhD degrees had increased notably, only years after affirmative action was established did a significant increase occur in the percentage of African American faculty members in predominantly white colleges and universities (Wheeler 2000).

Opposition to affirmative action was fierce, and opponents and supporters were equally convinced of the rightness of their positions. In 1978, the *Bakke* decision by the Supreme Court, although ruling in favor of a charge of reverse discrimination, upheld the use of affirmative action in higher education admissions (Berger 1988). Another twenty years would pass before the next successful challenge to affirmative action in admissions policies. In the *Hopwood* decision of 1998, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against race-based admissions, but in 2003 the Supreme Court, in *Grutter vs. Bollinger* (the University of Michigan), again affirmed the use of race in admissions (Alger 2003).

Ingram's listing culminates in the 1990s, which is the approximate period of time when diversity as a framework for changing organizational culture was taking hold. This refocus removed much of the attention away from affirmative action, and naively anticipated that diversity would make affirmative action less relevant and less necessary.

In moving the focus away from affirmative action and legally mandated regulations, the insertion of diversity as an approach also lessened what some considered was a rigid obsession with data and systemic structures. It is perhaps that shift away from oversight that has enabled a migration back toward the status quo and an apparent reinforcement of the glass ceiling. Nowhere is that shift more evident than when surveying the leadership of LIS education.

When any aspect of a population is not represented in the leadership and power structure of the group that espouses the virtues of diversity, it reflects a disconnect between rhetoric and reality and a failure of the structures established to build and embrace diversity on a variety of levels. Leadership is a privilege and an acknowledgement of organizational im-

primatur, and where leaders of color are concerned, it requires not only a redistribution of power but also changes in mindset that will enable that redistribution.

The framework for leadership in the academy must continue to be examined to determine what beliefs, practices, and structures are excluding black faculty from leadership roles. Regarding barriers, the same fears that Redwood (1996) identified twenty years ago are still prevalent, perhaps even more so today. White males in particular feel they have lost opportunities and the competitive edge because of the inclusion of people of color and women. Yet in reality, positions of power, authority, and leadership continue to go primarily to white males.

The warnings of the past two decades regarding the low level of recruitment and retention of African Americans in the profession and in LIS education have not been heeded (Wheeler 2000). The term *underrepresented*, which has for far too long characterized the presence of African American leadership in LIS education, now seems woefully inadequate.

#### AFRICAN AMERICAN LEADERS IN LIS EDUCATION—PAST AND PRESENT

A review of former and current black LIS administrators provides illuminating data through which to explore this topic further. Created for the purposes of understanding the organizational impact African American administrators have had on LIS education historically, an extensive listing has been created. Although not comprehensive, it is illustrative of the sustained and broad impact on a profession that has neither fully honored that history nor their service to it. This listing consists of two groups. First are administrators who guided the library schools at HBCUs through the challenges of functioning in a racially segregated society, and the ramifications of historical dynamics on finances and sustainability that have lasted into the current century (see table 1). The second group is black administrators who have been pioneers as leaders in predominantly white library schools (see table 2). They blazed a trail that current examination of administrative positions shows has narrowed significantly.

Until his retirement in 2016, Herman L. Totten had been the only African American dean of a predominantly white library education program throughout the United States for nearly ten years. In 2017, of the approximately one third of administrators in top leadership positions in LIS education who have the title of dean, there still is only one African American. Dr. Jon Cawthorne will begin as the new dean of library and information science at Wayne State University in the fall of 2017. The only other African American who holds the title of dean is employed at the only remaining library education program based at a HBCU. Of the remaining current top leadership positions with overall responsibility for academic

Table 1. African American LIS Administrators at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Academic Institution	LIS Administrator	Position(s)	Dates	
Hampton Institute North Carolina Central University	Florence Rising Curtis*	Director	1925–1939	
	Susan Grey Akers*	Dean	1941–1946	
	Dorothy Williams Collins	Dean	1946–1947	
	Benjamin F. Smith	Dean	1947–1949	
	Daniel Eric Moore	Dean	1949–1963	
	Evelyn B. Pope	Dean	1963–1970	
	Dr. Annette Phinazee	Dean	1970–1983	
	Dr. Benjamin Speller Jr.	Dean	1983–2003	
	Dr. Robert Ballard	Interim Dean	2003–2005	
	Dr. Irene Owens	Dean	2005–2016	
	Dr. Jon Gant	Dean	2016–Present	
	Clark Atlanta University	Dr. Eliza Atkins Gleason	Director	1941–1945
		Dr. Virginia Lacy Jones	Acting Director	1945–1946
			Director/Dean	1946–1981
Edward Fontenette		Assistant Dean	1974–1978	
Dr. Lorene Brown		Associate Dean	1978–1981	
		Dean	1981–1989	
Guy C. Craft		Interim Dean	1989	
Dr. Charles Churchwell		Dean	1990–1996	
Dr. Arthur Gunn		Dean	1996–2003	
Dr. Anita O'Neal		Interim Dean	2003–2005	

Note. \* denotes not of African or African American ancestry

programs identified as directors or chairs, there are only three African Americans.

In predominantly white institutions, Totten was the first African American faculty member to move into a top administrative position in an ALA-accredited program when in 1971 he was hired as an associate dean. Mohammed Amman followed soon after in 1973 as the first director of a program (see table 3). In 1974 Totten also became the first African American to be appointed as a dean. Miles Jackson was appointed to a deanship in 1975. Almost ten years would pass before another African American was appointed as dean, when Mary Lenox became the first African American dean on the campus of the University of Missouri–Columbia in 1984. Robert Wedgeworth, who became dean of the library school at Columbia University, is the only dean to have been hired from a nonfaculty position.

A long-standing common path to higher-level administrative positions in academia has been associate/assistant positions and administrative project assignments. Several LIS African American faculty currently serve as associate or assistant deans within their departments or schools, and one serves at the college level (see table 4). Other faculty members not included in the listing serve in leadership roles departmentally related to special programs or initiatives, such as Dr. Timothy Summers (director of Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Engagement) at the University of Maryland; Dr. Yvonne Chandler (director of several distance cohort pro-

Table 2. Black and African American LIS Deans at Majority White Institutions

Name	Position(s)
Dr. Mohammed Amman	Dean, School of Information Studies, Wisconsin–Milwaukee (1979–2002) Dean, School of Library and Information Science, Long Island University (1976–1979) Director, Division of Library and Information Science, St. John’s University in New York (1973–1976)
Dr. Jon Cawthorne	Dean, School of Library and Information Science, Wayne State University (2017–Present)
Dr. Carolyn Olivia Frost	Interim Dean, School of Information, University of Michigan (2006–2007) Acting Dean, School of Information, University of Michigan (2005) Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, School of Information, University of Michigan (1989–2005)
Dr. Miles Jackson	Dean, School of Library and Information Science Program, University of Hawai’i at Manoa (1975–1995)
Dr. Mary F. Lenox	Dean, School of Library and Information Science, University of Missouri–Columbia (1984–1996)
Dr. Herman L. Totten	Dean, College of Information, University of North Texas (2005–2016) Associate Dean, School of Library and Information Sciences, University of North Texas (1977–2005) Dean, School of Librarianship, University of Oregon (1974–1977) Associate Dean, College of Library and Information Science, University of Kentucky (1971–1974)
Dr. Robert Wedgeworth	Dean, School of Library Service, Columbia University (1985–1992)

grams) at the University of North Texas; and Dr. Claudia Gollop, who has served as the director of the Summer School program at the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill for over 10 years.

### REFLECTIONS FROM THE FIELD

In 2016, Dr. Carla Hayden made history as the fourteenth person appointed to head the Library of Congress. Her appointment was groundbreaking because she shattered barriers as the first woman and the first African American to be the Librarian of Congress. In her speech during her swearing-in ceremony, Hayden stated, “As a descendant of people who were denied the right to read, to now have the opportunity to serve and lead the institution that is the national symbol of knowledge, is a historic moment” (Hayden 2016, 2). In an interview, Hayden, who is a former faculty member at the University of Pittsburgh, went on to equate the ability to read and access information with freedom (Cox 2017). Indeed,

Table 3. Black and African American LIS Directors at Majority White Institutions

Name	Position(s)
Dr. Nicole A. Cooke	Director, Master of Science in Library and Information Science Program, School of Information Sciences, University of Illinois (2017–Present)
Dr. John Gathegi	Director, School of Information, College of Arts and Sciences, University of South Florida (2007–2009)
Dr. Jill Hurst-Wahl	Director, Master of Science in Library and Information Science Program, School of Information Studies, Syracuse University (2012–2017)
Dr. Michelle Martin	Director, Master of Library and Information Science Program, Information School, University of Washington (2018–Present)
Dr. Joi L. Moore	Director, School of Information Science & Learning Technologies, University of Missouri–Columbia (2016–Present) Associate Director, School of Information Science & Learning Technologies, University of Missouri–Columbia (2012–2016)

Table 4. Black and African American LIS Associate and Assistant Deans at Majority White Institutions

Name	Position(s)
Dr. Claudia Gollop	Associate Dean, School of Information and Library Science, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill (2004–2007)
Tracie D. Hall	Assistant Dean, School of Library and Information Science, Dominican University (2006–2008)
Dr. Laretta Henderson	Associate Dean, School of Information Studies, Wisconsin–Milwaukee (2015–Present)
Dr. Diane M. Hopkins	Assistant Director, School of Library and Information Studies, Wisconsin–Madison (1997–2002)
Dr. Em Clair Knowles	Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, School of Information and Library Science–Simmons College (1988–Present)
Jeffrey Tibbs	Associate Dean, School of Information and Library Science, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill (2007–2009)
Dr. Kelvin White	Associate Dean for Faculty Development and Community, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Oklahoma (2015–Present)

the presence of blacks in librarianship is a testament of growth within the United States. Conversely, Tracie Hall (2012) reflects that placing a black person in a position to educate themselves or others was once a crime. Hall writes, “History attests that the black body has posed a particular ‘problem’ in libraries in the same way that it has proved a quandary for formal education environments” (198).

When considering the future of black librarianship and the statements of Hayden (2016) and Hall (2012), one must acknowledge the presence of a darker truth. As in many other facets of society, access to a career in

librarianship or the possibility of becoming a LIS faculty member does not necessarily dictate that there are equitable opportunities. Like librarians of color from other ethnicities, African American librarians are constantly trying to level the playing field while seeking opportunities for education, jobs, and advancement.

In general, research indicates that universities are not addressing diversity and inclusion as well as they think (Ross and Edwards 2016). Hence, addressing the lack of black LIS administrators is an educational problem that manifests itself as a lack of black LIS professionals who are qualified to pursue doctorate degrees. Few black students are being recruited into the LIS community. Those who do complete LIS degrees rarely find themselves in association with a black LIS administrator who can serve as a mentor or inspiration.

There was a time when mentors and inspiration could be found in higher education programs at HCBUs. Today, North Carolina Central University (NCCU) is the only remaining historically black LIS school. Yet, the most recent ALISE statistics for NCCU identify whites as the largest graduating demographic. Even at this last remaining HCBU library school, even with its distinguished history and African American role models, LIS is challenged to present itself as an attractive option for black graduate students in North Carolina. Nationally, ALISE (2016) reports the same trend. White LIS students outnumber all minorities. The continuing disparities in enrollment have pipeline implications in a profession that is predominantly white among practitioners, tenured faculty, and administrators.

Reports also confirm that black students indeed carry more student loan debt than their white counterparts (Holland 2016). While ALA offers the Spectrum scholarship, master's degree and doctoral-level support generally is no longer abundantly available specifically for students of color. For those who do earn doctoral degrees, the pressures of being faculty of color at predominately white schools can be intense. Alexander and Moore (2008) note that black faculty at predominantly white institutions frequently feel isolated. Many find that not only are they the only African American faculty member in their department, but there are few faculty of color on campus. And these institutions are often located in communities that do not have a broader community of color to support them.

## CONCLUSION

Though the topic of diversity has remained a constant in society and in the profession for at least the last thirty years, the level of discussion and length of focus has varied. For those who have for years been alarmed by the low number of blacks entering the profession, the current demographics are not a surprise. The entire profession must commit to focus-

ing whatever collective resources are required to increase the number of people of color. Only one LIS school remains in an HBCU, and it cannot be expected to shoulder the responsibility of appealing to all or only black students.

Renewing the profession-wide discussion of fundamental and overarching questions pertaining to diversity and inclusion may lead to new results. What is the future we envision for the profession relevant to serving communities of broad and complex differences? What is the value of diversity and inclusion for that future as it is currently defined and operationalized? What communities will be reflected in the leadership that will shape that future? In what ways will attaining the vision of the future be attributable to the current leadership in LIS education?

In addition to investigating these questions, the challenges that are experienced by black faculty and LIS professionals can be addressed with training programs designed to improve cultural sensitivity and the preparation of librarians of color. Support for master's degree programs will continue to be essential. However, new emphasis needs to also be placed on doctoral preparation. This preparation needs to include information about how to be successful after graduation. How does one cope with feelings of isolation? What should be done to find a mentor when one does not exist inside one's department? How should office politics be navigated? What should be done to be successful during the tenure process? How does one build a personal learning network? While the answers to these questions may seem fundamental to some, these are the answers that are needed by many black LIS faculty. They are the answers that will enable them to prepare for careers in administration. Without the answers, many new black faculty who have the potential to become administrators in LIS education may never reach their potential.

From the early 1920s, African Americans who aspired to become librarians took the initiative to create and explore opportunities for education, training, and experience. Their success in entering and subsequently influencing librarianship was possible because of the courage, foresight, and tenacity of early leaders in the profession. As in the 1920s, ALA and other associations such as ALISE again have the opportunity to be at the forefront of creating programs and environments that address race and culture in ways that will forever change the profession.

With every new generation of librarians, faculty, and administrators, there is a renewed need for awareness, education, engagement, and activism. Many who have labored to advocate for equity have grown weary of the repetitive and cyclical nature of the struggle. Rather than throw their hands up in defeat, they have conceded the work to the next generation. Who will be this generation's Florence Rising Curtis, Virginia Lacy Jones, or Herman L. Totten?

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