VCU Libraries Faculty Organization

Cultural Competency Resolution

In the January 12, 2022 meeting of the VCU Libraries Faculty Organization, the faculty voted to adopt the following resolution:

We believe that the students, staff, faculty of Virginia Commonwealth University, along with members of the communities in which VCU is embedded, should be able to work, study, research, create, and live authentically. As such, we feel it incumbent on us as stewards of VCU's libraries and archives to understand our users in all of their diversity. This includes not only their interaction with our collections, technologies, and spaces, but also their experiences generally with library facilities, personnel, policies, and practices.

VCU has historically mandated no base level of employee knowledge on topics like race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, and socioeconomic status, although it has occasionally required education on narrower related topics, often in accordance with federal, state, or similar requirements. We support VCU's recent establishment of institution-wide cultural competency training ("The Road to Cultural Competence"), the recent addition of mandatory nondiscrimination training ("VCU Preventing and Responding to Discrimination"), and the ongoing work of the Office of Institutional Equity, Effectiveness and Success. While we recognize that mandated trainings can only be one step in the ongoing process of developing cultural competence, we applaud these initial requirements.

We resolve to embrace cultural competence as a fundamental and essential underpinning of good practice in our work as information professionals, which we commit to advancing individually and collectively, supporting when advanced by the university, and developing while listening to the voices of our communities. In support of this, we will pursue such actions as:

- Seeking feedback and partnership from students, staff, and faculty representing VCU's diversity when exploring new services or conducting research

- Featuring diverse authors, scholars, researchers, and creatives in events and other programming offered by VCU Libraries
- Setting measurable standards for public-facing work to keep us accountable for providing culturally competent service to library users
- Exploring, as researchers, works from diverse authors and creators, citing inclusively to avoid the perpetuation of systemic biases
- Striving to make VCU Libraries an accessible and safe space where all patrons feel welcome and supported.