An Equity Audit for DEI Data in an Academic Library

Library Assessment Conference
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Context

Who we are and how we got here
Context: Rowan University

R2 research university in southern New Jersey, ~20,000 students

- Main campus: Campbell Library
- Cooper Medical School of Rowan University (CMSRU)
- School of Osteopathic Medicine
All-libraries DEI Committee formed late 2019

Self-assessment revealed a need for user feedback on needs and experiences

Equity audit as data gathering approach
The Equity Audit

About our choice of approach
What is an equity audit?

Most common in K-12 education
Study to identify barriers and discrimination in practices


Why an equity audit?

Framework adaptable to our specific needs

Community-based equity audit (Green, 2017): focused on eliciting genuine concerns & needs

Review and act on results communally
3 Implementation

How we gathered data
Mixed-methods approach:
- Mostly quantitative survey
- Smaller set of focus groups / interviews

Survey design:
- General service and experience questions
- Cross-analyze with demographics
Implementation stages

Spring 2021
Survey 1
Pandemic limited
Focused on online resources & services

Early spring 2022
Survey 2
All resources and services included
Much larger return

Late spring 2022
Interviews
Included medical student participants
Single and pairs

Summer 2022
Analysis
Chi-squared tests for relationships
Qualitative coding
Findings & Onward

What we learned and what’s next
Findings: Patterns by identity

- Gaps in relevant resources and representation
- Positive impressions of staff, but varying comfort and satisfaction levels
- Physical access, navigation, and comfort issues
- Difficulties using, searching, and accessing resources
Acting on findings

Direct basis for next DEI strategic goals

Communicating out & brainstorming with all staff

Underpinning general strategic planning process
Recommendations

For other practitioners using similar methods
Overall takeaways

A useful approach with strategically vital results

Administrative support is extremely valuable

With follow-through, the audit is an intervention
Specific lessons learned

Use direct outreach and coordinate with others

Keep questioning simple to maximize return

Possible issues: Length, wording, and repetition
Thanks!

Any questions?

Contact:
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  - with questions for me or the whole committee!