Diversity: Then is now. Commentary on Carter, J. R. (1978) Multicultural graduate library education.

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Robbins Carter's portrait of the librarian workforce is still true. According to the latest American Library Association (ALA) demographics, the profile of today's librarian is that of a white (87.1 percent) woman (80.7 percent) of middle age (57.1 percent, age 45 or older) (ALA, 2013). Despite these data, support for increased diversity is strongly present among LIS faculty and within professional organizations, "motivating certain initiatives such as site-specific funding, site-specific curricular foci, and national accreditation standards." The continuing challenge is recruiting potentially successful students of color into LIS graduate programs when the entry-level salary for library positions is less than $50,000 per year. The question remains: if the workforce demographics are relatively unchanged, how may diversity be better supported in master's level LIS education?

In 1978, Robbins noted that there were four categories of barriers likely obstructing recruitment of students of color into LIS programs: financial, educational, psychosocial, and cultural.

Financial barriers. Robbins observed that support for diversity within LIS programs was dependent on receiving external funds. This may indicate a less than sincere commitment to diversity and more of a preference for seeking convenient, and sometimes temporary, opportunities. Overall, this still seems to be the case. National attention toward increasing diversity often coincides with the awarding of federal funds through programs such as the competitive grants available through the Institute of Museum and Library Services' (IMLS) Laura Bush 21st Century Library Program. Note that international students are usually excluded from this targeted funding.

Some IMLS grants launched demonstration grants that tested approaches for limited periods of time, resulting in graduates who created ripples of influence in the workforce. Other grant-funded efforts reenacted earlier diversity initiatives and supported these earlier initiatives through a more secure presence, a legion of graduates, and continual reporting through presentations and publications. A third category of diversity support directly funds students. The most visible example is ALA's Spectrum Initiative Scholarships that have provided $5,000 in funding, a leadership institute, and networking support for over 800 students from underrepresented groups since the late 1990s. Given the current costs of higher education, most funding sources require additional commitment from the LIS programs to provide students with a package of support and, often, student employment.

The *educational barriers* are still seen. American Indian students, for example, are overrepresented nationally in the number of two-year degree holders. A lower percentage of bachelor degree completion means that their entry into master's degree

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programs is more challenging, requiring recruitment through long-standing personal contacts and the availability of distance-delivery course offerings. Schools continue to require application processes that students of color, especially first-generation graduate students, find overly complex and dependent on the quantitative measures of GRE test scores and GPA calculations. LIS education remains solidly in graduate education, although some LIS programs now offer undergraduate concentrations. In addition, there are library technical programs awarding certificates, two-year or four-year undergraduate degrees and the ALA-Allied Professional Association (ALA-APA) offers the Library Support Staff Certification Program.

Robbins Carter's *psychosocial and cultural barriers* are still present, some of which are tied to the image issue of librarianship. While some of these barriers may have been ameliorated over time with more parents supporting graduate education, other barriers—such as the lack of role models—continue to be challenging. Still, according to a study of the first five years of Spectrum Scholarship recipients, prior work in a library was the greatest predictor of whether a student of color would enroll in an LIS program (Roy, et al, 2006). Potential students who have worked in libraries are more aware of the many satisfying aspects of work that values intelligence, flexibility, versatility, and that provides the option for continual learning.

Recruiting from, and socialization within, the LIS programs and professional organizations could provide support for students to rely on in the face of psychosocial and cultural barriers. While selective programs provide pipelines to usher undergraduate students into graduate LIS programs, these efforts have remained localized and sporadic. Similarly, although mentoring has received much discussion, these efforts are intermittent and confused by non-uniform approaches to mentoring structures. The study of the Spectrum Scholarship recipients found, for example, that students were often alerted to the Spectrum opportunity through mentoring moments: this attention often came from a previously-unnoticed senior colleague (Roy *et al.*, 2006). Successful mentoring can be informal and somewhat fleeting but still useful as long as mentors provide personal attention and mentees are receptive to advice.

Recruitment of students of color is the most obvious, challenging, and measurable reflection of the profession's support for diversity. It requires not only continual funding, but also advocacy of one's own program and of the profession. I am convinced that faculty shares a concern for diversity and is committed to the accreditation standards that call on programs to have "policies to recruit and retain students who reflect the diversity of North America's communities" (ALA, 2008). Since all graduates of LIS programs will potentially serve communities of color, curricula should prepare all students for this eventuality. Innovative curriculum design is the area of greatest potential and can be reflected in targeted course plans or through service learning opportunities, providing students with the option to specialize in services for cultural communities. It is only through a curriculum with an embedded diversity worldview that LIS can take steps away from Robbins Carter's charge that institutional racism exists within our LIS programs.

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