

Early Recruitment of Students from Underrepresented Backgrounds to the
Archives Profession
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- Premise:
 - High median age and racial homogeneity in the archival profession → efforts to diversify new recruits
 - Existing recruitment programs focus on students who already have a demonstrated interest in the archives.
 - Question: What recruitment efforts have taken place to introduce the archives to young students (high schoolers and early undergraduates) as a potential career path?
- Why focus on underrepresented populations?
 - Archival science practices—appraisal, description, and arrangement—are subject to unconscious biases
 - A homogeneous workforce means that commonly held biases can create exclusion.
- Dimensions of diversity
 - The literature largely focuses on racial and ethnic diversity, and there is a lack of consideration for intersectionality between other social identities, such as age, ability, sexual orientation, or gender.
- How does diverse recruitment relate to access?
 - The literature does not make an explicit connection between these two ideas.
 - One significant issue that came up in the literature was that of approachability. In a study of university students' perceptions of academic librarians' approachability, Black students considered white librarians to be less approachable than Black or Asian librarians. These findings on approachability have even more bearing in the archives, where users typically need more guidance from information professionals.

- The literature suggests that dispersing knowledge about archives to underrepresented populations can lead to their increased use of archives.
- Case Studies of Recruitment Programs
 - Cornell University Library (CUL) Junior Fellows Program
 - Local high school students hired to participate in a program at Cornell exploring the purpose and use of academic libraries.
 - Rutgers University Hunterdon Central Regional High School (HCRHS) archives project
 - Rutgers University archivists partnered with HCRHS to create an in-school archive based on oral histories and materials collected from students, alumni, and former and current teachers and administrators.
 - Yale University Family and Community Archives Project (FCAP)
 - Archivists from Yale University partnered with history teachers at a relatively diverse magnet school to teach students over the course of an academic year how to preserve family and community histories.
- The Importance of Community Engagement
 - Through inviting community input, the above case studies were able to secure funding for their recruitment programs, incorporate local knowledge into their collections, and connect the archives (or librarianship) to school curricula
- Limitations of the Literature
 - Based on this group of case studies, it is unclear whether the recruitment programs actually increased students' interest in archives or LIS
 - None of the programs in the case studies appear to have lasted past their initial year of establishment.

- The literature largely focuses on academic librarianship, not on the archives specifically.
- A Call to Action
 - Future scholarship on this topic should
 - Make the connection between archival access and recruitment of students from underrepresented backgrounds more explicit
 - Expand the definition of diversity beyond race and ethnicity
 - Develop strategies for measuring the impact of the recruitment programs so that it can be known whether they are actually beneficial in influencing students to go into the archival field
 - Determine methods to ensure that recruitment programs last as long as they are needed
 - Focus more specifically on the archives