

E PLURIBUS PLURES

Diversity in Academic Libraries

It is no secret that dramatic demographic changes are occurring in California and indeed in the nation as a whole. Ethnic minorities and other culturally diverse groups are increasing in unprecedented numbers. By the year 2000, it is estimated that approximately one-third of the nation's population will belong to ethnic minorities. In major cities and metropolitan areas their number will exceed one-half.

Although minority enrollment in California colleges and universities has fluctuated during the past decade, the trend has been upward. Furthermore, according to the 1992 Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac, almost 400,000 foreign students were enrolled in U.S. institutions of higher education in 1990-91 academic year. Fourteen percent, or 54,100, of the total are studying in California.

The implications of these dramatic changes for academic libraries are obvious. As an academic librarian in California, have you ever felt the need for a forum to discuss the effects of these demographic shifts with other colleagues as they impact the way you provide reference services, develop your collections, and administer your library? If so, you will be interested in a new organization which is in its final states of formation. It is called DIAL: Diversity in Academic Libraries. The good news is that there are no additional dues for membership in DIAL. It is an Interest Group within CARL and as long as you are a CALR member in good standing you are invited to join. DIAL believes that diversity is a national resource which should be preserved rather than a problem in need of a solution. Its objectives are as follows:

To promote cultural diversity among academic librarians and in all aspects of academic librarianship; to provide opportunities for professional development, education, and participation for all its members so that they can better understand the information needs of multicultural populations and improve service to them; to encourage and promote exchange of ideas, information, and provide a forum for networking among its members; to sponsor relevant programs and workshops; and to work with other regional groups in order to improve service to multicultural populations.

Notices of DIAL meetings and activities will appear in the CARL Newsletter or will be mailed directly to its members. Please watch for a survey questionnaire to appear in the next issue of the CARL Newsletter soliciting information regarding DIAL members. The questionnaire will also be used for a Multicultural Resources Directory planned by DIAL. However, before the next issue, please contact me (give me your name and address, etc.) if you would like to be a part of the network of librarians interested in multiculturalism and be placed on DIAL's mailing list. You will also be placed on DIAL's mailing list. You will also receive the announcement for DIAL's first business meeting and program. We hope that DIAL will also stand for DIALog and invite you to send your comments, suggestions, etc. to the following address:

DIAL
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