

“I Wish I Knew This in My Career A Lot Earlier”: Improving Career Preparation for First-Generation LIS Professionals

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ABSTRACT

The lack of research on first-generation graduate students presents an equity and diversity issue that impacts workplace success. Challenges related to one’s first-generation student identity do not end at graduation. Just as first-generation students navigate a hidden curriculum of academia (Chatelain, 2018), there exists a hidden curriculum of the workplace (Jehangir et al., 2022). Additionally, the fast-paced nature of hiring and onboarding does not allow sufficient time to learn the ins, outs, and idiosyncrasies of a workplace. Impacts are particularly felt by individuals from intersecting first-generation and BIPOC backgrounds. To decolonize library workplaces, which prioritize dominant cultural norms, it is important to learn from these professionals’ experiences. This research investigated these experiences through online focus groups with currently employed first-generation, BIPOC library professionals from school, public, and academic libraries across the United States.

Data on graduate-level students is scant as research on first-generation students tends to focus on those at the undergraduate or doctoral level. Further, LIS’s own education professional association, ALISE, does not collect data on first-generation students. This poster will share participants’ suggestions for how LIS programs can better support their entry into the workforce. This project aims to advance the discipline by advocating for the collection of first-generation student data as a part of diversity and inclusion efforts and promoting a deeper examination of this diverse and important population, which in turn may lead to inclusive and diverse environments.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Education programs/schools; Students; Curriculum

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

First-generation professionals; BIPOC; Workplace challenges; LIS programs; Libraries

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21900/j.alise.2025.1944>

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