

# Book Reviews



*Where Are All the Librarians of Color? The Experiences of People of Color in Academia.* Rebecca Hankins and Miguel Juárez, eds. Sacramento: Library Juice Press, 2016. 352p. Paper, \$35.00 (ISBN: 978-1936117833).

In *Where Are All the Librarians of Color?* Rebecca Hankins and Miguel Juárez have invited librarians of color from the academic community to reflect on their experiences with retention, job satisfaction, and the tenure process. Rebecca Hankins is Africana Resources Librarian and Curator at Texas A&M University, having previously worked as senior archivist at The Amistad Research Center at Tulane University. Miguel Juárez is currently a doctoral student in the Department of History at the University of Texas at El Paso and previously held positions in the libraries of the State University at Buffalo, the University of Arizona, Texas A&M University, UCLA, and the University of North Texas.

The editors begin this volume by acknowledging related scholarship on diversity in libraries and making a case for as much scholarship in this area as possible. They point out a heavy focus in the diversity-related literature on library student recruitment and entry-level hiring initiatives. To address the gap that this leaves, this volume focuses on issues that arise after library school and initial job placement.

This book is divided into three sections: Setting the Stage for Diversity in the Profession; How Diversity Benefits the Profession; and Personal Diversity Stories. While the third section focuses exclusively on first-hand accounts, almost every author includes some component of personal experience in their writing. Shaundra Walker affirms the value of this in her chapter on critical race theory (CRT) in the context of academic librarianship. Walker's introduction to CRT is an invaluable part of this book, and she reminds us that one of the key tenets of CRT is the value of the experiential knowledge of people of color (137). As we read this book and hear voices that agree, disagree, and present new complexities in each consecutive chapter, we see clearly how multilayered this issue is—and how diversity in our profession demands more attention, more thoughtful literature, and more action.

Several authors focus on, or at least mention, the role of mentorships for librarians of color. This frequent recurrence of the topic reveals its importance, and authors throughout this book give advice both to new librarians who are considering mentorship as well as to library leaders who are in a position to organize mentorships or be mentors themselves. Anantachai et al. emphasize the role mentorships play in developing crucial support networks for librarians of color, and they call out the important work of the ALA Emerging Leaders program as well as the Black Caucus of the American Library Association in developing mentorship opportunities (46). Royster et al. spend the most time breaking down how mentorships play out in reality; their findings are significant with regard to the impact they see mentorship having on retention (65). In his chapter on diversity residency programs within academic libraries, Jason K. Alston looks at the mentorship such programs provide and offers excellent questions to consider when planning and implementing such a program.

In her chapter on "Strengthening the Pipeline—Talent Management for Libraries: A Human Resources Perspective," Agnes Bradshaw, Human Resources Librarian for University Libraries at the University of North Carolina Greensboro, highlights issues that minority librarians face in entering and remaining in the profession. Bradshaw provides an excellent human resources perspective that brings a wealth of related information from nonlibrarian professions. She calls out the subjectivity of hiring and

promotion that librarians of color face and makes a strong argument for why librarians of color are so badly needed, concluding that “[h]aving people of color represented in the profession will ensure that libraries provide the services that mirror populations using them” (124).

Descriptions of racism faced by librarians of color echo through this book: Akilah Shukura Nosakhere’s description of working as a Black woman library administrator and Vince Lee’s chapter on entering the field as an Asian male make many of the issues faced by racial minorities incredibly transparent for those of us who do not experience them every day. Nosakhere briefly mentions the importance of self-care to cope with the impact of being a minority librarian (181). Further elaboration on this would have been a valuable addition to the book.

The tenure process isn’t something many librarians feel thrilled about. Rhonda E. Fowler and Karen Rogers-Collins provide an insightful look at additional issues faced by librarians of color when navigating tenure, and they make note of how the tenure process reinforces an expectation of conformity that many librarians of color face in the workplace. This point should provoke thoughtful discussion among those who implement the tenure process.

While the editors provide a summary of library diversity scholarship in their introduction, the most comprehensive literature review in this book is provided by Roland Barksdale-Hall at the beginning of his chapter, “Building Dialogic Bridges to Diversity: Are We There Yet?” Barksdale-Hall reviews the literature on minority discrimination in libraries, with an emphasis on scholarship about minority leaders. From these two literature reviews, readers are given an excellent list for further study.

In their own chapters, Miguel Juárez and Rebecca Hankins leave us with some of the most compelling calls to action. Hankins reflects on how her very existence as an African American Muslim woman archivist is helping to diversify the historical record. Her use of archives as a means of resistance to the dominant historical narrative is inspiring. Juárez concludes the book with a solutions-focused chapter that calls for a diversity library report card, building on tools and standards created by other professions as well as the ACRL Racial and Ethnic Diversity Committee. This excellent suggestion paves the way for future work in the realm of library diversity.

While the scope of this volume is clearly academic librarianship, Fowler and Rogers-Collins make brief mention of the fact that lack of diversity is common to all libraries, not just academic ones (237). Bradshaw notes that most minority librarians actually work in public libraries (100). It would be interesting and helpful to learn why librarians of color are more likely to work in public libraries; this could provide suggestions for change in academic libraries. Focusing this book on academic librarianship is useful and logical, yet insight from related spheres of librarianship could have provided an additional layer of reflection on the experiences of librarians of color in academia.

*Where Are All the Librarians of Color? The Experiences of People of Color in Academia* is required reading for every librarian. While the focus of this book is academic librarianship, it provides insight that should inspire changes in any library setting. This book is especially critical for library administrators who are responsible for the hiring and retention practices that impact workforce diversity. Not only do the authors provide clear detail on practices that do and do not work for retaining librarians of color, they also collectively leave no doubt that having a diverse racial workforce in the library is necessary. This book includes references and an index.—*Jen Hoyer, Artstor; Interference Archive*