

The literature review assignment was part of the research methods course in which we were tasked with understanding the previous research and literature on a topic of our choosing. We were taught that this is a necessary step when formulating our own research questions: to first look at what has already been said about the subject. Because scholarship is a conversation and research is a process, we have to understand evidence that has already informed library practice as we continue to ask questions. In this course, Dr. Burgess used these assignments to teach us that science is the truth as we know it now, and we must use previous scholarship to formulate what needs to be asked. In this assignment, I conducted a literature review of scholarship on how libraries support the success of first generation college students. In my review, I learned that a students' background can be an indicator of their potential academic success, which means it has become a priority for academic libraries to have specialized concern for these patrons who might experience additional barriers to their academic success. Going through the literature on the subject helped me understand what questions were left to ask in regards to how academic libraries can best serve patrons and what future research is necessary. By doing the literature review, I came to the conclusion that if I were doing research on this subject, I needed to ask first generation college students what methods of outreach they preferred and use that data to inform future marketing and outreach practices that will best connect first generation college students with resources from the library.

The other assignment included in this category is an explication of how a historical issue has impacted what current institutions are doing to provide targeted outreach to students in historically marginalized groups. This essay examines how something as basic as the physical environment of a college campus can impact whether a student feels included in their present academic environment, which can impact their student success. This essay also shows how

racism and oppression are woven into academics, which is necessary to understanding how to meet these populations in a current college environment. According to the literature, library staff and collections are often not reflective of the diverse student populations they serve, which is another way libraries are failing their patrons. The final part of the essay is an exploration of what libraries are doing to negate this crisis and make sure their patrons know that the library is a place for all. With the knowledge of this history, some libraries created guides and programming surrounding movements like #BlackLivesMatter as they responded to this crisis. Many libraries found ways to bring diversity into their spaces through bringing in art installations, which was part of a process of being intentional when it comes to the physical library space. According to what we know through this research, thought must be put into something so seemingly mundane as the artwork placed on the walls of the library, as we work to make sure the future of libraries are reflective of our diverse patrons. This assignment takes a look at an issue from a historical perspective and how that evidence can be used to alter the future of the library and make it an inclusive space for all. This assignment taught me the importance of examining bias in our current library practice as we strive to make libraries inclusive spaces of the future.