

## Introduction

Librarianship has long been characterized as a profession lacking in diversity, perhaps a result of misunderstanding about what librarians really do and contribute to the world of education, a lack of marketing, and a lack of access to graduate level education. To try and remedy this phenomenon there have been various initiatives to recruit a more diverse workforce, not only for the benefit of the profession, but also to better serve increasingly diverse library clientele and communities. Programs such as the Spectrum Scholarship Program (the American Library Association), Knowledge River (the University of Arizona's School of Information Resources & Library Science), and the Initiative to Recruit a Diverse Workforce (the Association of Research Libraries) have dedicated ample time and funding to recruiting aspiring librarians from racially diverse or underrepresented backgrounds (i.e., American Indian / Alaskan, Asian / Pacific Islander, Black / African-American, and Hispanic). These well-meaning initiatives have not gone unchallenged, and even after many years of consistent work, the field is still not as diverse as it should be. This is especially true of doctoral programs in library and information science (LIS) and of the faculty ranks in LIS graduate programs. By examining one initiative designed to diversify the LIS professoriate, the following study builds on the base of prior research and theory to: 1) ameliorate the critical problem of lack of diversity, 2) ascertain the enablers and barriers doctoral students experience as minority students in LIS PhD programs, and 3) analyze the information gathered to improve the success of future doctoral initiatives.

Even within the umbrella term of diversity, sometimes the outcomes are sharp and explicit: racism, white privilege, homophobia, heterosexual privilege, inequity of access, institutional racism, organizational barriers, apologies, and reparations. Sandra Rios Balderrama (2000), the founding director the American Library Association's (ALA) Office for Diversity, extends the definition of racial minorities by including "non-English speaking, non-white, non-user, old boys' network, and old girls' network" (p. 195). She continues by stating,

Sometimes the definitions and visualizations are easier on the senses and perhaps more elusive: celebration of difference, internationalism, intellectual diversity, global village, multiculturalism, organizational cultures, pluralism, diversity of work styles, and diversity of learning styles. At times the term is simply empty and unfulfilling and has not earned its credibility. (p.195)

As a long time LIS educator and University of Buffalo faculty member, Lorna Peterson (1999) has suggested that issues of diversity are often perceived as threatening by the majority in the field and are conflated with issues of race and

racism. As related issues, they tend to inspire passionate responses and feelings of exclusion. She states:

If diversity were as non-threatening a concept as the rhetoric of difference would lead us to believe, then expressions of anger would not occur when practices to readdress past discrimination are enacted. "No one helped me to get here!" is their cry, but they don't recognize that there was no barrier either. Expressed resentment means diversity may be about achieving equity (which means loss of privilege for some), but the scant evidence of progress may mean that diversity is not about equity at all. (p.18)

Missing from these discussions and initiatives to diversify the library workforce is the importance of recruiting minority candidates to doctoral level programs, with the hope and intention that these candidates will eventually work in accredited LIS graduate programs (Cooke, 2013; Subramaniam & Jaeger, 2010; Totten, 1992). While there is literature about recruiting librarians of color into the field, literature about minorities in doctoral programs (Achor & Morales, 1990; Ellis, 2001; Gardner, 2008; Nettles, 1990; Offerman, 2011; Olson, 1988; Pruitt & Isaac, 1985; Turner et al., 2008), and literature about minorities in higher education as a whole (Antonia et al., 2004; Chesler & Crowfoot, 1989; Denson & Chang, 2009; Olneck, 2000; Rankin & Reason, 2005) there is a dearth of research explicitly about minority doctoral students in LIS education. This research aims to contribute to this area of inquiry and emphasize the importance of adding this dimension to the ongoing discussions of diversifying the field of librarianship.

This research is a case study of one program, the ALA's Spectrum Doctoral Fellowship Program. This study sought to gather data from the original 12 Spectrum Doctoral Fellows in order to discover what enablers and barriers the Fellows encountered during their doctoral programs, and to use this information to improve future recruitment efforts and the experiences of minority LIS PhD students in the future. Of the 12 original Fellows, 10 participated in this study. Participants were minority students in LIS doctoral programs at five different library schools across the United States, and 8 of the participants came to their doctoral degree programs after working in the field as professional, degreed librarians. Among the goals of the Spectrum Doctoral Fellowship Program was to diversify the LIS professoriate and as of this writing 5 of the study participants have successfully completed their programs and are teaching and/or conducting research in library and information science.

### **The Challenge**

For over two decades the melding of fertility and immigration data has demonstrated that the population of the United States is becoming steadily more

diverse, with increasing numbers of racially diverse groups. The 2010 Census indicates that minorities now constitute 36 percent of the nation's population, a five percent increase since 2000. Although the total population increased by 9.7 percent, the majority of that growth occurred in minority groups, which increased in number from 86.9 to 111.9 million over the prior decade, an upward swing of 29 percent. Caucasians were the only group that declined. Based on the trend indicated by this data, by the end of the next two decades the majority of Americans will be people of color. The Census Bureau predicts that in 2042 minorities will make up fifty percent of the nation's population. This ongoing transformation in the demographic composition of the population has led to a change in the nomenclature, in which minority groups as a whole have been renamed the "emerging majority" (Turock, 2003, p. 494).

While the demographics of our country are shifting, those of the professions and the disciplines that support them remain essentially static. The dearth and attrition of minority students has, for a protracted period of time, held a prominent place in the literature of higher education; all disciplines face this challenge of struggling to attract and maintain diverse students (Manzo, 1994; Meacham, 2002; Pruitt & Isaac, 1985). This problem is even more acute in library and information science (Brown-Syed, et al., 2008; Franklin & Jaeger, 2007; Reeling, 1992). A corollary issue of diversity recruitment and retention in LIS education, typically addressed in relation to master's level degrees (Alire, 2001; Barlow & Aversa, 2006; Dewey & Keally, 2008; Gollop, 1999; Honma, 2005; Jaeger et al., 2010; Neely & Peterson, 2007; Stringer-Stanback, 2008; Wheeler, 2005; Winston, 2008), is minority recruitment and retention in PhD programs, which deserves fresh and dedicated attention and study. The latest statistics available from the Association for Library and Information Science Educators (ALISE) indicate that the LIS professoriate remains sorely lacking in diversity:

Only 3.7% of the fulltime faculty members are Latino, as compared to 14.5% of the total population, while African Americans comprise just 5.5% of the fulltime faculty as compared to 12.1% of the population. In 2002 to 2003, of the 82 LIS doctoral degrees awarded, only two went to African Americans and one to a Latino (Sineath, 2005). As a result, the faculty population in LIS has remained static in its level of diversity with the percentage of African Americans and Latinos in LIS faculties changing little since the passage of the Civil Rights Act in the 1960s. (Sineath, 2005, as cited in Jaeger & Franklin, 2007, p. 21)

These trends and their associated meaning for library education caused Dr. Betty J. Turock to sound the alarm. Turock (2003) stated, "Overall, the involvement of people of color at the doctoral level can be fairly characterized as minimal. The need for immediate response is acute" (p. 493).

The rates representing the demographic base in the doctoral faculty closely parallel those of minority librarians working in libraries. Jaeger and Franklin (2007) have proposed the phrase “virtuous circle” (p. 20) to describe a new cycle that promises to strengthen and perpetuate a more representative profession. The virtuous circle underscores the critical importance of recruiting and retaining minority LIS PhD students and emphasizes the need for librarianship to be representative of the communities served. Totten (2000) writes:

In the circular, self-feeding style of education and librarianship, minority school and public librarians who serve as role models for minority children may inspire the children to go to college. In college, minority academic librarians and library school faculty may inspire them to go to graduate school to become librarians and role models themselves. (p. 16)

### **The Spectrum Initiative: Responding to the Challenge**

During her tenure as President of the American Library Association, Turock sought an immediate response to the imbalance between the population shifts in our nation and the lack of a concomitant shift in the composition of librarianship. In collaboration with then ALA Executive Director Elizabeth Martinez, Turock spurred the creation of the Spectrum Scholarship Program, a program designed to recruit and fund members of underrepresented minority populations to graduate programs in library and information science. Because librarianship was accurately known and characterized as a primarily Caucasian and female field, Turock espoused the view that the field and discipline must undergo transformation and that library service could become optimally responsive to their diverse clientele only if staff were equally diverse. She credits her friend and mentor E. J. Josey with being a major force in the creation of the Spectrum Initiative. Expressing his frustration and “disgust” for the lack of diversity in the library discipline and field, Josey stated that “ALA only recruits one minority librarian per year and thinks that’s progressive” (personal correspondence between Josey and Turock, May 7, 1994). Determined to change this trend, Turock, in consultation with the ALA’s ethnic affiliates, including the American Indian Library Association, the Asian and Pacific Librarians Association, the Black Caucus of ALA, the Chinese American Librarians Association, and REFORMA (which promotes services to Latinos and the Spanish-speaking), made a prominent goal of her presidency that the Association recruit and fund the education of at least 50 minority students annually to become librarians. And so Spectrum began.

All members of the ALA did not uniformly welcome Turock’s initiative, and if it were not for her tireless effort, the Spectrum Initiative would not have come to fruition. She faced significant resistance from the members of the ALA

whose support was needed to pass the Initiative. As Sandra Rios Balderrama (2000) observed, diversity inspires different reactions in different people and instead of having difficult and revealing conversations it is easier to stifle and ignore new ideas and initiatives like Spectrum.

Turock's efforts in regards to Spectrum were about "advancing social justice and human rights within organizations and the profession" and wanting minority librarians and the population they serve to not only survive, but also thrive. Turock has repeatedly pointed out that without a focus on diversity "it is not clear that libraries will continue to support diverse populations, or understand their experiences, their needs, their languages, or their perspectives. And if we don't support them, how can we expect them to support us?" (personal correspondence, May 7, 2009). About Spectrum's long journey to acceptance, Elizabeth Martinez remembers:

It was a grand idea that we developed when I was Executive Director of ALA. At that time, I was frustrated that, after hearing for 20 years how much diversity was a priority for ALA and the profession, there still were no national scholarships for librarians of color. The ALA Council struggled with accepting the proposal, and past president Betty Turock shamed them to vote yes. It was later embraced and supported by library schools and the profession, and I am grateful that there are over 600 graduates. Today it is the largest and most prestigious ALA scholarship. (personal correspondence, May 20, 2009)

Recruitment theory, a LIS theory discussed by Simpson-Darden (2003), Turock (2003), and Winston (1998, 2001), and research in the literature had by that time established the key factors that needed to be in place to attract minority scholars to Spectrum, including financial support, role models, mentoring, and networking. Begun with seed money from the ALA, donations from every ALA division, and personal donations, the ALA launched the Spectrum Initiative using recruitment theory research as a guide to establish a national model for diversity within master's level LIS education. Financial support of \$6,500 was made available to each scholar. The ALA's Office for Diversity was established to institutionalize and maintain the long-term work of the Initiative. Annual Leadership Institutes were established to bring the scholars into contact with role models and mentors and provide opportunities for scholars to initiate their own networks and be introduced to the networks of professional leaders.

The Spectrum Scholarship Program now boasts a formidable number of alumni scholars who have received financial support for their education, completed LIS master's programs, and now work in the field. Ironically, and sadly, despite having made a significant impact on the library profession (Kenney, 2005; Roy et al., 2006; Whitwell, 1998), having benefitted over 800 master's level scholars, and now 18 doctoral students (from 2007, 2008, and 2013), there is

still some resistance to supporting Spectrum and its work. In 2010 the ALA launched a new campaign that Turock chaired (and to which she donated a substantial initial contribution to encourage others to do likewise). The goal was to raise \$1 million dollars to continue Spectrum's mission. When addressing ALA Council members at the January 2010 Midwinter meeting to announce the new initiative, she met with lukewarm response, about which Oder (2010) wrote: "It's not clear that all Councilors will follow her example. After Councilor-at large, Pat Wand, suggested that each Councilor make a donation, the applause was fairly weak" (para.12). On the positive side, however, the \$1 million fiscal goal was met and surpassed. The Spectrum Initiative remains "ALA's gift to library education" (personal correspondence, May 7, 2009). Turock's bold promise to the profession continues to sustain the recruitment of professionals who will serve as essential links between the understanding of cultures and knowledge and society at large.

A student and mentee of Dr. Turock, the author of this research is also a professor, librarian, trainer, and library diversity advocate specifically interested in the retention of minority librarians. The author also had the privilege of being a member of the original group of 12 Spectrum Doctoral Fellows. The study was inspired by a conversation with Dr. Clara Chu who is a known diversity advocate in librarianship, and a Professor and Department Chair of the Library and Information Studies department at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. With this research, the author sought to document this historic fellowship program and provide information that would benefit future recruitment and retention programs in the area of LIS doctoral education.

### **The First Spectrum Doctoral Cohort**

New bridges were built once again with the implementation of the Spectrum Doctoral Fellowship program. In 2007 and 2008, with a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the University of Pittsburg and the ALA's Office for Diversity provided full fellowships for 12 Spectrum Doctoral Fellows to enable them to pursue advanced LIS degrees at accredited institutions around the country. The ultimate goal of the Spectrum Doctoral Fellowship program is to increase racial and ethnic diversity among the discipline's and the profession's next generation of LIS faculty and leaders. The Spectrum legacy sponsored 12 doctoral students in 2007 and 2008, and continues with a new round of six doctoral students who began study in the fall of 2013, providing the impetus to begin new initiatives.

The 12 Fellows from the inaugural class all come from underrepresented ethnic populations (American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander). They

are in various stages of education and employment—from completing coursework and exams, to working on doctoral dissertations, to serving as members of LIS faculties at ALA accredited programs around the United States.

### **Literature Review**

From current research it is clear that a good deal more is known about recruiting and retaining emerging majorities than is systematically applied. This study builds on the base of prior research and theory to: 1) ameliorate the critical problem of lack of diversity, 2) ascertain the enablers and barriers doctoral students experience as Fellows and as minority students in LIS PhD programs, and 3) analyze the information gathered to improve the success of future doctoral initiatives.

Dr. Camila Alire (2001) lists the benefits of increased diversity in the field of librarianship and observes that people of color will: recognize and root out obstacles to achieving diversity; advocate for organizational culture in which change thrives and discrimination ends; serve as mentors, leaders, and spokespersons; and provide links to diverse service populations.

The importance of more representative professional and disciplinary populations is also clear if the operationalization of the virtuous circle within librarianship is to occur (Jaeger & Franklin, 2007). This virtuous circle theory proposes that increased numbers of minorities in the LIS professoriate will shape and transform LIS graduate curricula and programs, which in turn will impact and inform the next generations of minority librarians, who will then be better equipped to adequately and appropriately serve the diverse communities that patronize libraries.

Hopefully, then, minority librarians will model and inspire up-and-coming students to pursue librarianship as a career and encourage them to enter the professoriate. Bonnici and Burnett (2005) show their support for the virtuous circle model when they say, “Doctoral fellows serve as the nucleus of energy for the continued recruitment of a diverse doctoral population. Attrition through graduation will extend the diversity to the LIS professoriate. Future generations of librarians are educated by the professoriate” (p. 125).

Mark Winston (1998, 2001, 2008) has provided seminal research on the recruitment and retention of people of color in the profession and the disciplines that support it. His early studies determined that common themes emerge across the literature of the professions. One such commonality is that what is known about the basis on which individuals have chosen their professional specialties provides a worthwhile basis for the development of recruitment strategies, since similarities exist between those currently employed in a given profession and those who are likely candidates for recruitment into it (Winston, 2001). A model

developed by Barbara Simpson-Darden (2005) that builds on Winston's work suggests that people drawn to careers in librarianship are facilitated or enabled by several factors, including work experience in libraries; targeted recruitment; membership in professional organizations; conference attendance; having work accepted to publications, the support of colleagues, family, and friends; and affirmative action (pp. 341-343).

Perhaps more interesting and telling are the barriers that these same librarians encounter. They include: financial need; lack of role models and mentors; insufficient access to and inclusion in networks; and affirmative action (when used as a stigmatizer) (pp. 339-341). As important as the successes are, the barriers contain the information that can enable current programs to grow, expand, and provide the impetus to begin new initiatives. This research endeavored to uncover whether Simpson-Darden's enablers and barriers are encountered by current Spectrum Doctoral Fellows.

Later research undertaken by Winston (2008) makes the case that past studies indicate a "predisposition to avoiding topics, such as race and racism, which is reflected in the use of more benign terms, such as diversity." He focuses in his article on "diversity, race and affirmative action and the relationship among them as a more informed approach from which to address the continuing lack of diversity in the profession," and by extension in the discipline and the professoriate (p. 3). The basic necessity to address communication about the difficult topics, as described by Winston, and to take on his challenge for research that "goes beyond what has been presented in the library literature" (p. 4) leads the research presented here to consider the broader context of the topics heretofore left unaddressed and their relationship to how greater diversity can be fostered within librarianship and in the professoriate in the future.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research was informed by a phenomenographic approach to uncover rich, meaningful, and useful information, which can benefit not only the Fellows themselves, but also the fellowship granting agency and the LIS professoriate. A derivative of the philosophical approach phenomenology, phenomenography is "an interpretive approach that seeks to describe phenomena in the world as others see them, the object of the research being variations in ways of experiencing the phenomenon of interest" (Marton, 1981, p. 177). A qualitative method originally found in educational and instructional design literature (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000; Richardson, 1999), it is also used in library and information science (Bruce, et. al, 2004; Budd, 1995; Limberg, 2005), communication, and media studies literatures.

Recruitment theory (Simpson-Darden, 2003; Turock, 2003; Winston, 1998; Winston, 2001), which influenced the creation of the Spectrum Initiative, provided the theoretical framework for this research. Recruitment theory suggests that future decisions and strategies about a particular workforce and profession are best informed by those currently in the profession and carefully considering their experiences and opinions. It also highlights the barriers and enablers of a group of professionals. The theory, especially as modeled by Simpson-Darden (2003), “empowers diverse professionals” (Turock, 2003, p. 495) because it provides opportunity for participants to express individual stories and engenders subsequent strategies for success and effective leadership. Similarly, presenting recruitment theory based questions to the Spectrum Doctoral Fellows enabled counter-storytelling to occur (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Counter-storytelling facilitates the sharing of experiences that differ from accepted norms (e.g., the stories of doctoral scholars of color), which in turn combats stereotyping (Solorzano, 1997) and raises awareness of the lack of diversity in the higher education community (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004).

### **Method and Data Analysis**

This study is a qualitative case study (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003) of one fellowship program, the ALA Spectrum Doctoral Fellowship program. Case study methodology allows related phenomenon, individuals, and organizations to be investigated in context, and in this case reveals information that benefits LIS students, faculty, administrators, and administrators of grant funding agencies (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 544). The goals of this case study are to evaluate the program and its participants’ experiences, develop theories that will contribute to doctoral and LIS education, and to develop interventions that can be implemented in the future recruitment, retention, and development of doctoral scholars of color.

To conduct this study, the doctoral Fellows were contacted via a private listserv housed and maintained by the ALA’s Office for Diversity. After an initial email to the scholars explaining the rationale and plans for an IRB approved study, their participation and personal contact information was requested. Ten of the 12 Fellows (or 83%) who comprised the total Spectrum doctoral population agreed to participate in the study ( $N=10$ ). Follow-up emails were sent to their personal email addresses.

Data from the 10 Fellows were collected via an online survey, the link to which was also sent via email. The survey included a demographic survey and semi-structured in-depth interview questions; questions were open-ended, designed to be congruent with recruitment theory, and encouraged participants to discuss their specific experiences and thoughts about their doctoral programs.

Participants were asked about their respective programs, their feedback to the fellowship administrators, and their advice to minority students considering doctoral study. These questions were mounted on a web survey tool hosted by the researcher's institution. Collected data were examined with a constant comparative approach, in which new information was compared with previously identified information, patterns and themes were identified, and those themes were developed and refined as necessary (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 28-52).

The interviews for this study were conducted electronically, via survey tool (with follow-up by email). The limitation of this mode of data collection is the lack of ability to follow up on statements made by respondents in real time. While this approach allowed the respondents to carefully consider their remarks, future research would be well served by collecting data in real time, either in person or via a synchronous web-based tool such as Skype.

## **Findings**

### *Profile of the Participating Fellows*

Ten of the twelve Fellows provided the data collected in this study. The four men and six women respondents ranged in age from 20 to 49 years: three Fellows were between the ages of 20-29; five Fellows were between the ages of 30-39; and two Fellows were between the ages of 40-49. Four self-identified as Black/African-American, four as Hispanic/Latino, one as Asian, and one as South Asian. Eight Fellows hold the MLS/MLIS degree and indicated librarianship as their first career; all of the Fellows had previous library experience, ranging from 3 to 15 years. Seven Fellows had 0-4 years; two had 5-9 years; and one had 10-15 years of experience.

At the time of the data collection three Fellows were completing coursework, four had completed comprehensive or qualifying exams, two Fellows were writing dissertation proposals, and one Fellow had defended their dissertation proposal. Once their doctoral programs were completed the Fellows indicated some uncertainty about their professional careers and were considering multiple options (Fellows were allowed to select more than one option for this question). Nine Fellows were considering positions teaching in graduate LIS programs; seven in libraries; five outside of librarianship; and one in a non-profit organization. Four Fellows were also entertaining the possibility of using their degrees to conduct research in a non-academic setting.

### *Enablers and Barriers*

“This process has been an emotional roller coaster for me. I have felt every emotion from love and euphoria, to hatred and rage. I have loved being a PhD student in LIS and I have despised it” (Spectrum Doctoral Fellow, Quinn H.).<sup>1</sup>

In most ways, the enablers and barriers to doctoral study experienced by the Fellows are universal to all doctoral students. The enablers identified include receiving the ALA/IMLS funding and a stipend, moving through their programs with a cohort, finding information mentors, family and community support, and having freedom to chart their own academic courses. Perhaps the most interesting and telling results from the study are the barriers that these same students encounter. They include a lack of mentoring; lack of compatible faculty; loneliness and isolation; lack of support; Fellows specifically mentioned that they felt their programs perceived them to be a “token,” (Fellow, Avery G.) “cash cow,” (Fellow, Parker T.) or “show pony” (Fellow, Bailey S.). These perceptions of exclusionary treatment, in conjunction with preferential treatment towards students not of color, prompted comments such as “they don’t know what to do with us,” “I have skills they have yet to tap,” and “I would pick a LIS program with more diverse faculty members and students,” (Fellow, Jordan B.) in addition to feelings of being pigeon holed as a student of color and having to constantly prove themselves as better because of their minority status. Some Fellows felt a general lack of understanding from other students and faculty in their programs, and felt they were made to feel less-than because of special minority funding. They also experienced subtle and not so subtle comments indicating institutional racism (e.g., their admittance to the program was based solely on their minority scholarship) and a lack of confidence or awareness of what minority students are capable of (e.g., such candidates would certainly get jobs because they are diversity candidates), resulting in dissatisfaction with the doctoral experience.

#### *Feedback to Fellowship Administrators*

When asked what information should be passed on to doctoral program administrators and funders, the Fellows unanimously asked for more transparency; they all felt that more communication on a more regular basis would be beneficial. They stated that more communication between funders and the schools, funders and the Fellows, and the Fellows and their own program administrators would make the process more positive and productive. The Fellows were in new organizations and in brand new situations, as were most of the program administrators, and many assumptions were made (e.g., no other

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<sup>1</sup> The names of participants have been changed to protect their anonymity in the study.

support was needed since the fellows had outside financial assistance, and that they would easily and independently acquire mentors and advisors). As a result problems emerged and information was overlooked or withheld. Adding to the communication issues is the simple fact that every school has its own agenda, organizational culture, and expectations of doctoral study; as a result, every program has its own (or no) system for assigning mentors, designating specific liaisons to the Spectrum program, and offering specific support to Fellows.

Fellows also suggested that external funders and program administrators (in this case the American Library Association's Office for Diversity) provide opportunities for Fellows to meet and remain in contact— a “more structured means of fostering ‘team spirit’” (Fellow, Jordan B.). Fellows also expressed the need to have the Office for Diversity initiate more structured contact with participating schools and make consistent contact with the individual Fellows (for example, general wellness check-ins). One Fellow commented that the Office for Diversity should “take a more active role in ensuring that the students (who may be the only Fellow at their institution) are supported by the schools themselves” (Fellow, Taylor W.)

Finally, Fellows would have liked the Office for Diversity to provide them with mentors or opportunities to acquire mentors outside of their home institutions. The feedback to the Office for Diversity is applicable to any funder of doctoral students; while the Fellows were adults, and in most cases practicing and accomplished LIS professionals, doctoral study was a brand-new and intimidating experience. Although the funding from the Spectrum Doctoral Fellowship program was integral, support and encouragement (even a bit of hand-holding) proved to be as crucial an element to success and completion of this level of advanced study. As Jordan B. stated:

They should really concentrate more on connecting the doctoral students with mentors and research opportunities. One of the barriers that minorities face is a natural inclination towards feeling oneself to be an outsider. It would have been helpful if I had had some connections to depend on.

#### *Advice to Future Doctoral Students*

When asked to impart advice for future doctoral students of color, the responses were again universal, and included cautions to find a committed advisor (even before official enrollment in a program) and additional mentors early on in the process; to be aware of the time and lifestyle commitments required by the program; to be aware of the physical and emotional toll the program will introduce; to attempt to be as debt free as possible before enrolling (stipends rarely cover all expenses); to get involved in research as soon as possible, to be diligent about pursuing teaching experience; and to select a program that fit

professional and personal goals, as well as personal needs and preferences (for example, climate, scenery, and community characteristics). Experience has taught the Fellows other lessons, including being very careful about contracts and other issues involving funding; being assertive and learning how to say “no” and be judicious with time and energy (physical and mental); seeking and surrounding yourself with supporters and not naysayers; and, as one Fellow suggested, “kick the critics to the sidelines” and persevere through discouragement and frustration.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this research concur with and extend the work of Winston (1998, 2001, 2080) and Simpson-Darden (2003, 2005) by further pointing out the critical lack of diversity in the field of librarianship. Findings extend recruitment theory by applying it to doctoral students who aspire to be faculty members in LIS graduate programs. To that end, results of this study begin to describe and explicate the enablers and barriers that doctoral students experience as minorities in LIS PhD programs. Results of this study also begin to form recommendations that can be used to improve the success of future doctoral initiatives.

Specifically, the enablers and barriers described by the Spectrum Doctoral Fellows coincide with the enablers and barriers put forth by Simpson-Darden (Simpson-Darden, 2005; Turock, 2003); the factors that draw people to careers in librarianship are not surprisingly some of the same that draw library professionals to LIS doctoral study. Likewise, both populations experience similar barriers that can hamper or halt their progress and/or impact their desire to remain in their positions or programs.

Results from the study, especially those in which words such as “token”, “cash cow”, and “show pony” were used, raise questions of institutional racism and potentially discriminatory treatment (whether intentional or not) of the Fellows. These findings coincide with Winston’s (2008) challenge to address uncomfortable issues in LIS research, go beyond “what has been presented in the library literature” (p. 4), and facilitate the continued discussion of topics that remain taboo or inflammatory within librarianship and its professoriate. Issues such as race, privilege, equity, and discrimination should not be invisible or “tiptoed around” (Homna, 2005) or diluted with less threatening terms (Peterson, 1995, 1996, 1999) in discussions about the future of the profession.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

The sample consulted in this study was very small, but is representative of this particular Fellowship program. Future study should include face-to-face communication with the Fellows, ideally in a focus group, to reach even deeper

into their experiences. It should also encompass future Spectrum Doctoral Fellows to see how the program is changing over time and track the progress and impact of the 12 original Fellows. Future research should investigate other current and former Doctoral programs that facilitate and encourage the study of students of color, such as Project Athena (a now defunct collaborative effort between The University of Washington, The University of Illinois, and Florida State University), the Washington Doctoral Initiative, and La SCALA (a collaboration between the University of Tennessee and the University of Arizona), in order to continue the investigation into this targeted population.

### **Conclusions**

This research is significant because it impacts the LIS profession on several levels, by informing the participants (who may become LIS professors), existing LIS faculty, LIS administrators, professional organizations, and agencies that fund initiatives to diversify the library profession, by providing insight into the experiences of students of color in LIS doctoral programs. Among the expectations of this research was the provision of feedback to the ALA's Office for Diversity with feedback on the Doctoral Fellowship program. This feedback would inform and direct future grant writing endeavors to secure monies for recruiting and supporting additional Spectrum Doctoral Fellows. Information from the study will inform ALA's Office for Diversity about the benefits of the process as well as areas that can be improved for future grant cycles (e.g. the need for mentoring and a solid point person at the participating schools). This research will also help the Office advertise and market future grant initiatives. *Indeed, preliminary results of this research have informed the recruitment of the next set of Fellows who began doctoral study in 2013.* Another expectation of this study was that the library community would be better informed about the importance of recruiting minority candidates to PhD study. It is hoped that this study will inform LIS faculty and programs of the specific needs of students and beneficiaries of this fellowship and will perhaps inspire other programs to actively seek and support minority PhD candidates in library and information science and inform LIS education, curriculum, and pedagogy.

At the time of writing this article five Fellows have graduated and accepted faculty positions in US graduate library and information science programs. The Spectrum Doctoral Fellowship program has already added to the diversity of the professoriate. The question remains whether they will be retained in faculty positions — an important professional issue that warrants its own dedicated inquiries. It is expected that this research will also point to some areas in which LIS schools and faculties can modify, change, and/or improve their

environments and support structures, thereby improving the chances that talented minority faculty candidates will be retained in tenure track positions.

This study is in direct response to Dr. Betty Turock's (2003) call for action, an attempt to address the "acute need" (p. 493) for minority LIS PhD students. As is the tagline of the Spectrum Scholarship Initiative, *The Future Is Overdue*, and the library profession must make an effort to better reflect the communities it serves. While the continued recruitment and retention of minority PhD candidates will have a direct and lasting impact on the LIS professoriate and the field of librarianship as a whole, the doctoral process is a difficult one, and made more complicated when considering minority doctoral students, as the results of this study clearly demonstrate. Nonetheless, it is a vital, transformative, and worthwhile process that more librarians, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds, should seriously consider.

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