

San José State University ***BIPOC Become Librarians***

BIPOC Become Librarians (BBL) aims to introduce Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) to careers in Library and Information Science (LIS). The proposed program identifies with the LB21's Goal 1 to build a diverse workforce of library and archives professionals, and its corresponding Objective 1:1 to develop programs to encourage students from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds to pursue careers in Library and Information Science.

Leading *BBL* is San José State University's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library (SJSU King Library) working in collaboration with San José State University's School of Information (SJSU iSchool) and San José Public Library (SJPL). *BBL* addresses the ongoing lack of diversity in library, information and archival studies by developing and testing a combined internship and mentorship program for high school, undergraduate, and non-traditional students (e.g., second career seekers) from BIPOC communities. SJSU King Library seeks a \$122,410 two-year Planning Grant to support the development and pilot of *BBL*. At the end of the two years, we will have a pilot *BBL* program to scale nationally in collaboration with BIPOC librarian associations and their chapters across the country and other partners.

Project Justification

The lack of diversity remains a challenge for the library and archives professions. [In 2020, just 9.5% of librarians identified as Black or African American, 9.9% as Hispanic or Latino \(of any race\), and 3.5% as Asian-American or Pacific Islander.](#) Numerous studies over the years have noted [the social, economic and cultural barriers, as well as the lack of support BIPOC students face when entering the library and archives professions.](#) IMLS has funded many projects to address these issues, including SJSU King Library's *Preparing Librarians to Serve Diverse Communities*, a collaboration with SJPL and the National Hispanic University Libraries in 2007. *BBL* aims to expose more BIPOC students to Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) careers by focusing on the two areas with the most impact on increasing diversity: mentorship and internship. Our work draws on recent IMLS funded projects such as Hampton University's *Leading the Charge* (2020), Johnson C. Smith University's *Digital Archivists Partnership* (2020) and the Public Library Association's ongoing *Inclusive Internship Initiative!*

Over the next two years, we will develop and pilot a mentorship and internship program aimed at BIPOC students. Our work will be informed by research we conduct about the barriers BIPOC students face and the type of mentoring and hands-on learning they need to guide them. By hearing directly from BIPOC students, we will be able to create a program that speaks specifically to their needs to help them pursue LIS careers. We will also draw from our current working relationship with BIPOC librarian associations such as [CALA](#), [APALA](#), [BCALA](#), [AILA](#) and [REFORMA](#) to help guide the development of *BBL*.

SJSU King Library, SJSU iSchool, and SJPL are all well-positioned to undertake *BBL*. Each brings a unique blend of experiences to the program that include developing/assessing learning outcomes, mentoring/advising, designing/implementing internships and community outreach/engagement. Our location in Santa Clara County and the City of San José, [the most diverse metro area in the country](#), will also help facilitate our outreach to BIPOC students and potential partners for mentorship and internships during our pilot.

Project Work Plan

Planning activities for *BBL* consist of three phases over the next two years: 1) Research; 2) Program Development; and 3) Pilot. Details for each phase are listed below.

Research: During the first six months, we will begin our research by conducting outreach to BIPOC students and recruiting them to participate in three to five focus groups of five participants each. The focus groups will respond to at least five leading questions to delve into the ongoing barriers BIPOC students face and the types of support they seek to consider LIS careers. Our outreach efforts will draw on the BIPOC librarian associations' access to the BIPOC communities, SJSU iSchool's recruitment

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strategies (e.g., virtual events, online resources, email communications and campus graduate fairs) and SJPL Equity and Inclusion Services efforts to reach BIPOC students in the San José area. Additionally, we will identify and invite faculty and staff from SJSU King Library, SJSU iSchool, SJPL and the BIPOC librarian associations who represent a variety of skill sets, experiences and work settings to serve as mentors. We will conduct an environmental scan of sectors hiring MLIS graduates and identify specific companies, organizations, libraries, and archives as potential internship partners. We will start with SJSU and SJPL's existing partnerships with places such as Adobe and NARA, and explore new ones.

Program Development: In the second half of the first year, we will analyze the data we have gathered from the focus group discussions by coding themes that emerge and using them to develop our mentorship and internship program. Mentors who have joined *BBL* will take part in a training led by one or two of the BIPOC librarian associations, such as [APALA](#) and [REFORMA](#), that have existing mentoring programs and have expressed interest in *BBL*. The training will help the mentors to develop a mentoring program that incorporates themes from our focus groups. Similarly, we hope to solidify at least five partnerships with companies, organizations and libraries to participate in *BBL* and work with them to build both in-person and virtual internships with guidelines, learning objectives, and possible projects for both interns and supervisors that are mindful of BIPOC students' needs gathered from the focus groups.

Pilot: In our second year, we will pilot our mentorship and internship programs locally with prospective BIPOC high school students, undergraduates from SJSU and other universities in the area, and non-traditional students through SJPL and the BIPOC librarian associations. We hope to have at least five mentor/mentee relationships established and two to three internship partners representing companies, libraries or organizations. Lessons learned from our pilot will help us to further refine *BBL*.

Diversity Plan

Diversity is a core part of *BBL* from our team to our planning activities. Many members of the *BBL* team identify with the BIPOC community and bring with them insights and personal experiences that will offer an equity lens to enrich our planning activities. In addition, our planning activities will be grounded in equity and inclusion principles that will help to ensure they are culturally appropriate and sensitive to all members of the BIPOC community.

Project Results

At the end of the two years, we will have a pilot *BBL* that will help us to scale the program in partnership with BIPOC librarian associations and organizations like the Online Computer Library Center ([OCLC](#)) to reach BIPOC communities nationwide and develop a national *BBL*. We will also develop an Open Access report from the findings of the focus groups that we will present at conferences (e.g., Association for Library and Information Science Education ([ALISE](#)), American Library Association ([ALA](#)) and conferences hosted by MLIS programs) and on SJSU King Library, SJSU iSchool, SJPL and the BIPOC librarian associations' websites and social media channels.

Budget Summary

The anticipated budget for *BBL* is \$122,410 with \$66,250 for student support and stipends, including fringe, to mentors and project coordinators, \$14,100 for training and focus groups incentives, \$2,500 for participant costs (e.g., travel and food), \$1,500 for IT support and \$38,060 for indirect costs calculated at the SJSU's current rate for on-campus research of 46.5%.