LIS Associations' Commitment and Effort in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI): Content Analysis, Term Analysis, and Topic Modeling

Rong Tang[a] and Zhan Hu[a]

[a]School of Library and Information Science, Simmons University, U.S.A.

rong.tang@simmons.edu, zhan.hu@simmons.edu

ABSTRACT

In this study, we investigated 28 LIS associations' DEI efforts as evidenced through their websites. We report results of content analysis, along with term analysis and topic modeling of DEI definitions, diversity statements, position statements, competency frameworks, and codes of conduct. Despite notable gaps in associations' DEI practices, their commitment to DEI, community, culture, professional practice, and their members is evident. Results show that associations have been steadfast with DEI principles, keenly aware of current events to declare and advocate their positions, and to condemn discrimination and violence against marginalized communities. Our findings contribute to a better understanding of the role of associations in promoting DEI through specific actions. LIS associations should make a consistent and visible effort to lead their professional communities towards robust work in DEI on all fronts and to enhance, advance, and sustain those efforts by forming a coalition to advance DEI progress in our profession.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

social justice; standards; education.

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); LIS professional associations; definitions; diversity statement; position statement; competency framework; code of conduct; term analysis; topic modeling.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, a variety of library and information science (LIS) associations have reaffirmed their commitment to and/or declared their positions on supporting and promoting efforts concerning Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). Nevertheless, the exact role of associations in fostering elements of DEI within their membership communities, and incorporating or integrating DEI elements into professional competency standards, has largely been unexamined. According to Poole et al. (2021), "Demographic change and social justice are vital reasons to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in library and information science (LIS)" (p. 259). However, Poole et al. (2021) further observe that "the field of LIS continues to face a vexing paradox. Its longstanding ideal of and concomitant commitment to serving diverse communities and users equally has failed to translate into diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the profession or in LIS education" (p. 258). While a number of research studies have focused on DEI in LIS education (e.g., Montiel-Overall, 2009; Jaeger et al., 2014; Poole et al., 2021), few have investigated the role that LIS associations play in promoting and supporting DEI in LIS practice. We believe that it is not only crucial for associations to declare DEI competencies as a part of their overarching missions and core values and implement them through various initiatives and activities, but it is also essential to see DEI knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) explicitly outlined in professional competency frameworks.

Our research questions (RQs) are as follows:

RQ1. What web presence and visible components that various associations use to publicize their DEI efforts through their websites?

RQ2. How do various associations define DEI? What topic focuses emerged from the definition texts?

RQ3. What are the patterns of associations' diversity statements and position statements? What topics emerged from the statement texts?

RQ4. What are the patterns of associations' codes of conduct pertaining to DEI? What topics emerged from the codes of conduct?

RQ5. What are the patterns of associations' competency framework? What topics emerged from the DEI competency areas?

DEI COMPETENCIES AND RESEARCH

The concept of DEI, especially the term "diversity," as indicated by Poole et al. (2021), is often "protean and contested" (p. 260). In the field of LIS, a number of associations have provided definitions of DEI. According to ALISE, "Diversity refers to the representation of the wide variety of backgrounds (including racial, cultural, linguistic, gender, religious, international, socioeconomic, sexual orientation, differently-abled, age among others) that people possess and is often used to address quantitative requirements/agendas/goals." The Medical Library Association (MLA) defines equity as "takes differences into account to ensure fair and

impartial processes and outcomes, and equal opportunity." Meanwhile, the Society of American Archivists (SAA) identifies inclusion as "A commitment to ongoing and cumulative efforts (e.g., policies, principles, practices, activities, and infrastructures) that take responsibility for creating an increasingly diverse community in a welcoming, equitable, and responsive manner. Continuous proactive steps to ensure that marginalized members of our organization are seen and cared for."

LIS professional associations establish competency standards or frameworks to guide the education and practice of their relevant communities. The information literacy framework developed by the Association for College and Research Libraries (ACRL) is a well-known example. Likewise, ALA, ARL (Association of Research Libraries), AASL (American Association for School Librarians), ALCTS (Association for Library Collections and Technical Services), CARL (Canadian Association of Research Libraries), MLA, SAA, and YALSA (Young Adult Library Services Association) have all established competency standards. However, not all competency frameworks include DEI elements or a dedicated area for DEI.

Over the years, several independent competency frameworks related to DEI, such as cultural competency, have been developed by associations or authors (e.g., Montiel-Overall, 2009; ACRL, 2012). Nevertheless, a very limited number of competency frameworks have a dedicated DEI area. The ALA 2021 Draft Version of Core Competencies of Librarianship includes a new area of "Social Justice," which entails, "Contribute to an organizational climate that encourages, supports, assesses, and rewards work that promotes social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion" (ALA, 2021, p. 8-9). CARL has a competency area on "EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION," specifying that "Academic librarians uphold the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion in their practice and research, and in support of the research library's diverse user communities" (p. 9).

Meanwhile, few research studies have examined the role of associations in promoting and fostering inclusive professional practice. Adkins et al.s (2020) study focused on the history/activities of SAA, ALA, and their ethnic caucuses. The authors use the concept of the "virtuous circle" proposed by Jaeger and Franklin (2007) to indicate that the starting point of promoting DEI might be the diversity among LIS educators to "bring to the profession and for inclusive education to produce a more inclusive professional practice" (p. 162). Our study aims to fill the gap by examining specific DEI efforts manifested through LIS associations' websites..

METHODOLOGY

After consulting multiple resources of LIS associations, we established a study sample of 28 organizations based mainly in the U.S. and Canada (See Table 1).

Table 1
LIS Associations (based primarily in the U.S. or Canada) Reviewed

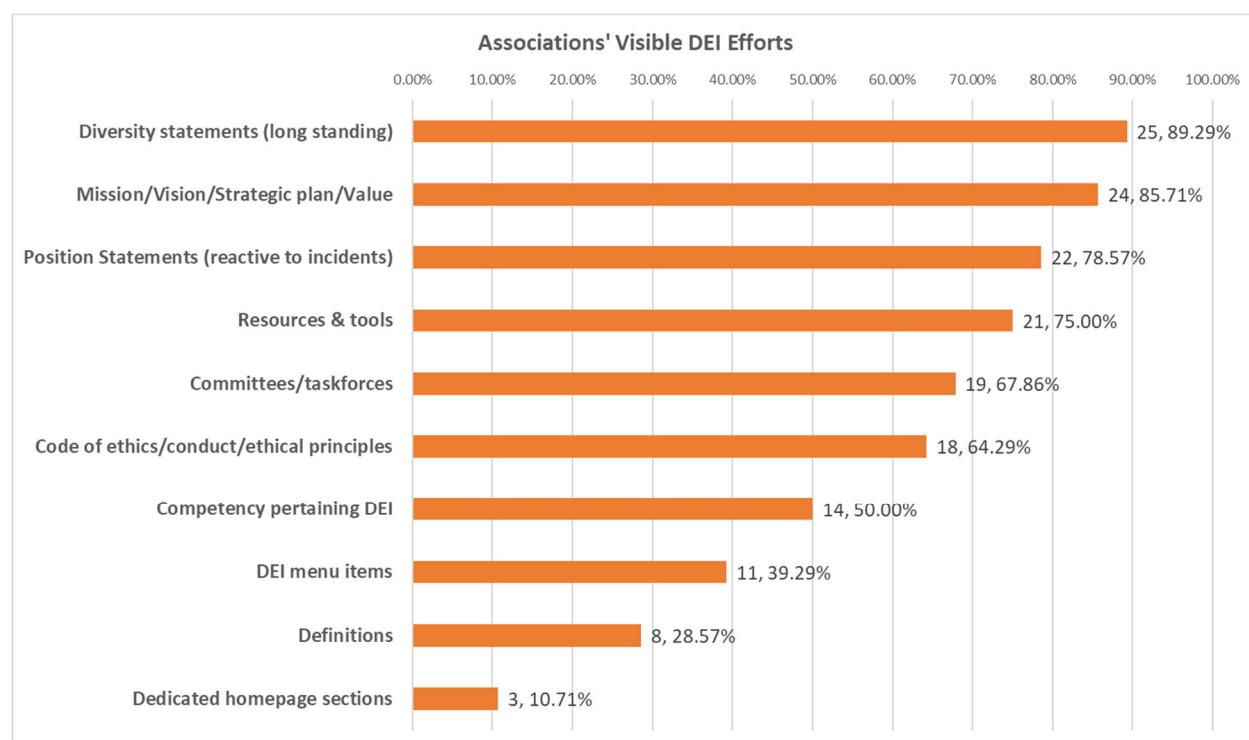| Association	Abbreviations
American Library Association	ALA
Association of College and Research Libraries	ACRL
Association of Research Libraries	ARL
American Indian Library Association	AILA
Association for Library & Information Science Education	ALISE
Black Caucus of ALA	BCALA
International Federation of Library Associations & Institutions	IFLA
REFORMA - The National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking	REFORMA
American Association for School Librarians	AASL
American Association of Law Libraries	AALL
American Medical Informatics Association	AMIA
American Society for Indexing	ASI
Association for Library Collections and Technical Services	ALCTS
Medical Library Association	MLA
Music Library Association	MLA
Special Library Association	SLA
Society of American Archivists	SAA
Association for Information Science & Technology	ASIS&T
Association for Educational Communications & Technology	AECT
Association of Records Managers and Administrators, Inc	ARMA
Association for Computing Machinery	ACM
Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers	IEEE
Progressive Librarians Guild	PLG
Public Library Association	PLA
Art Libraries Society of North America	ALSNA
Asian Pacific American Library Association	APALA
Canadian Association of Research Libraries	CARL
Young Adult Library Services Association	YALSA

We reviewed association websites and coded relevant information regarding their DEI efforts in the aspects of (1) Mission, vision, core values, and strategic plans, (2) DEI definitions, (3) DEI diversity statements and position statements, (4) Codes of ethics/conducts/ethical principles, (5) Dedicated units, (6) Competency frameworks, (7) Resources and tools, and (8) DEI information presence on the homepage or as menu items. Data was collected from late 2021 to early 2022. We performed content analysis, further term analysis using the Voyant Tool, and topic modeling using the jsLDA tool.

RESULTS

The presence of DEI efforts on websites.

Among the 28 associations, the most frequent way of addressing DEI was through the associations' long-standing diversity statements (n = 25, 89.29%), followed by Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Strategic Plan, or Core Value Statement (n = 24, 85.71%). Twenty-two associations (78.57%) had position statements reacting to specific incidents happening during particular time points, whereas 21 (75.00%) associations provided resources and tools on DEI on their websites. Nineteen (67.86%) associations had a dedicated unit to coordinate the DEI efforts. Eighteen (64.29%) associations' codes of conduct contained wording related to DEI. However, when it comes to professional competencies, only half (n = 14, 50.00%) of the associations' competency standards had a DEI subarea. Other efforts such as having a menu item on the website, having a definition of DEI, or having a dedicated DEI section on the homepage are much less common, ranging from 39.29% to 10.71%.

Figure 1
LIS Associations' Visible DEI Efforts

Associations' Visible DEI Efforts

Category	Value
Diversity statements (long standing)	25, 89.29%
Mission/Vision/Strategic plan/Value	24, 85.71%
Position Statements (reactive to incidents)	22, 78.57%
Resources & tools	21, 75.00%
Committees/taskforces	19, 67.86%
Code of ethics/conduct/ethical principles	18, 64.29%
Competency pertaining DEI	14, 50.00%
DEI menu items	11, 39.29%
Definitions	8, 28.57%
Dedicated homepage sections	3, 10.71%

Twenty-two (75.00%) associations provided a total of 23 DEI resources/tools on their websites. Four types of resources were present: A list of resources (n = 16, 69.57%) was the most common, followed by events and programs (n = 7, 30.43%), reports (n = 3, 13.04%), and featured interviews of members of color (n = 2, 8.7%). Only three associations listed tools (n = 3, 13.04%), which included a toolkit, scorecard, and a list of tools.

Of the 19 associations that had dedicated DEI units, 8 (42.11%) had multiple units. Twelve (63.16%) had a dedicated committee for DEI, 8 (42.11%) had a DEI task force, whereas 6 (31.58%) had a SIG or section or community dedicated to DEI efforts. An example of Committees is PLA's Committee on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Social Justice. Examples of Task Forces are ARL's Task Force on Structural Equity and Inclusion and CARL's EDI Working Group. Examples of a SIG/section are SLA's Diversity Inclusion Community Equity

(DICE) Community, ALISE's Equity and Social Justice SIG, and IFLA's Library Services to Multicultural Populations Section.

DEI definitions.

      Only 8 (28.57%) of 28 associations provided explicit definitions of DEI. For example, for diversity, ALA indicates that "Diversity can be defined as the sum of the ways that people are both alike and different. Visible diversity is generally those attributes or characteristics that are external. … Invisible diversity includes those characteristics and attributes that are not readily seen." While several associations presented separate definitions of the three terms, others focused on diversity alone. Without explicit and thoughtful definitions of DEI, associations may face problems in getting their members on the same page about the fundamental concepts of DEI.

      When combining DEI definitions, the text corpus contained 1,071 total words and 413 unique terms. The most frequently used terms were diversity, equity, and inclusion, and the top ten terms with their relative frequencies are shown in Figure 2.

Topic modeling extracted three themes (see Figure 3): (1) equal opportunity for underrepresented populations, (2) organizational culture & value, and (3) DEI in LIS practice, which is providing fair access to the community.

Figure 2

Top ten most frequently occurring terms in definition, diversity statement, position statement, and competency framework

Definition	Diversity statement	Position Statement	Competency Framework
diversity (*n*=23, 2.15%)	diversity (*n*=43, 1.62%)	community (*n*=41, 0.99%)	library (*n*=26, 2.18%)
equity (*n*=13, 1.21%)	library (*n*=31, 1.17%)	library (*n*=35, 0.85%)	diversity (*n*=17, 1.42%)
inclusion (*n*=10, 0.93%)	inclusion (*n*=22, 0.83%)	association (*n*=34, 0.82%)	diverse (*n*=6, 1.34%)
opportunity (*n*=9, 0.84%)	community (*n*=22, 0.83%)	ALA (*n*=31, 0.75%)	cultural (*n*=14, 1.17%)
individual (*n*=9, 0.84%)	organization (*n*=19, 0.72%)	racism (*n*=30, 0.73%)	professional (*n*=12, 1.00%)
group (*n*=9, 0.84%)	value (*n*=18, 0.68%)	American (*n*=29, 0.70%)	competency (*n*=12, 1.00%)
organization (*n*=8, 0.75%)	association (*n*=18, 0.68%)	black (*n*=28, 0.68%)	community (*n*=12, 1.00%)
practice (*n*=7, 0.65%)	equity (*n*=17, 0.64%)	Asian (*n*=26, 0.63%)	practice (*n*=10, 1.00%)
policy (*n*=7, 0.65%)	professional (*n*=15, 0.57%)	statement (*n*=25, 0.61%)	access (*n*=10, 1.00%)
culture (*n*=7, 0.65%)	member (*n*=13, 0.49%)	member (*n*=23, 0.56%)	school (*n*=9, 0.84%)
		diversity (*n*=21, 0.51%)	

Figure 3

Topics extracted from the DEI definitions
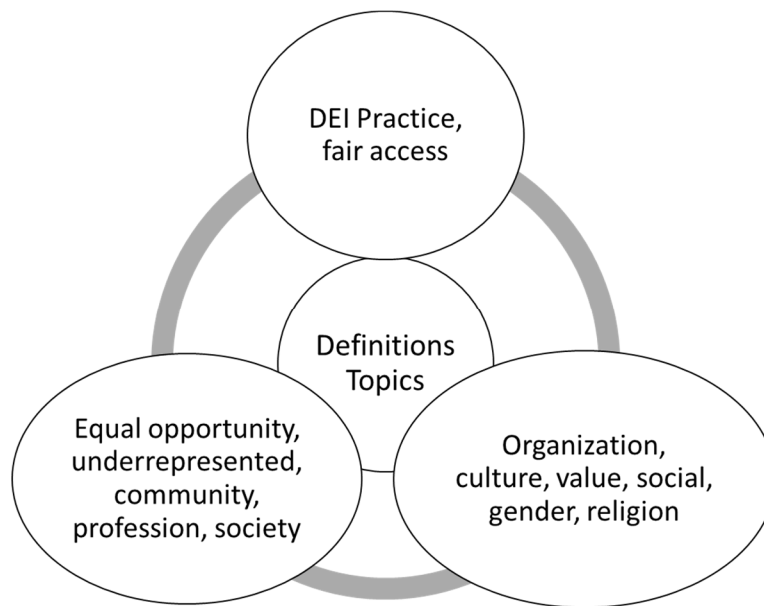
Diversity statements.

Twenty-five (89.29%) associations had a diversity statement addressing their long-term commitment to DEI issues. When combining these diversity statements, there were a total of 2,652 words and 781 unique terms. The most frequent words were diversity, library, and inclusion. See Figure 2 for the top ten terms with their relative frequencies.

Topic modeling yielded 10 clusters, with specific associations correlating with a given topic listed in the topic block, as shown in Figure 4. The red labels appear to be the topic gist. The clusters ranged from focusing on community, practice, professional environment and opportunities, academic research, teens, and schools, to association-related efforts such as having diverse membership, strategic goals, and providing training.

Figure 4

Topics extracted from diversity statements

Community, society, and group learning, support and development •[ASIS&T]	**Academic research** and participation/discussion technical computing to foster welcome •[ACRL] [ALCT] [SAA]	**Association leading training** and action in social justice •[PLA] [ALA]	Libraries and archives **professional environment** for EDI •[CARL]
Professional **practice providing resources** to combat inequity and lack of power in marginalized groups and cultures •[ALCTS]	Association would benefit from **diverse membership** and the value of inclusivity •[ALISE]	**Respect for people** of diverse gender, race, religion, status, sexual orientation, age, color, and ethnicity, and cultural origin •[ARLIS/NA] [IEEE]	**Professional opportunities** to engage personal members to advance efforts in anti-racism •[MLA] [IEEE] [ARMA]
	Organizations inclusively welcome **teens and school community** •[BCALA] [AASL] [ACM]	**Strategic goals**, policy and actions •[YALSA] [AECT]	

Position statements.

Twenty-two (78.57%) associations had position statements that were issued to react to incidents and declare their positions on movements such as Black Lives Matter. The combined position statements had 4,132 words and 1,101 unique terms. The most frequent words were community, library, and association. See Figure 2 for the top ten terms.

Topic modeling yielded ten topics (see Figure 5), ranging from the actual incidents, such as police brutality against George Floyd and Breonna Taylor or anti-AAPI shootings, to subject matter including combating systematic oppression and health disparities, creating inclusive library environments, listening to voices of indigenous people and people of color, valuing diversity in professional roles, and committing to social justice, inclusion, and diversity policies.

Figure 5
Topics extracted from position statements

Black lives matter police brutality george white institutions society • [SAA]	Address racism discrimination value **diversity professional role** and commitment to justice • [APALA] [CALA] [ALA]	Council president call on leadership and members to condemn **national attacks** • [ALA] [BCALA] [IFLA]	Statement racial injustice around united states solidarity with **floyd Breonna** and condemn **anti-asian hate and shootings** • [BCALA] [ACM]
Organization stand together with asian pacific individuals focusing on anti-racist work and [condemn] **racially motivated crimes and shooting** • [ARMA] [ASIST]	Continues to recognize the core of equity by committing to creating **inclusive library environment** to (welcome) marginalized members such as bipoc • [ALA] [MLA]	**Create material to help learners** to state professional principles, (recognize) oppressive behavior/incidents, & support (people of) color • [ARL] [AALL]	Acknowledge **systemic oppression and health disparity** and stand for inclusion and diversity policies •[MLA]
	Condemn violence & against structural racism & **violence against AAPI,** take action to form inclusive space & support inclusive practice • [REFORMA] [PLA] [ALISE] [ARLIS]	Mission includes listening to **voices of indigenous & (people of) color** on discriminatory treatment. (Create) equitable schools/community • [SLA] [AASL] [YALSA]	

DEI competencies.

Fourteen (50%) associations integrated DEI into their competency standards or had separate standards in topics related to DEI. Six (21.43%) associations (AASL, ALA, ALCTS, CARL, YALSA) had an independent DEI competency area. Five (17.86%) associations have separate DEI-centered standards. Examples of separate standards are the "Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity," currently co-developed by PLA, ARL, ACRL, and ALA.

Combining competency texts pertaining to DEI yielded a total of 1,195 words and 449 unique terms. The most frequent words in the DEI competency statements were library, diversity, and diverse. Figure 2 shows the top ten terms with their relative frequencies. Ten common terms emerged when comparing the top ten terms for definitions, diversity statements, position statements, and competencies, with *diversity* appearing in all four items, whereas *association* and *library* occurred in three places. The remaining terms appear in two different statements (see Table 2).

Table 2
Common top 10 most frequent terms across definitions, diversity statements, position statements, and competencies

	Definition	Diversity Statement	Position Statement	Competency
Diversity	√	√	√	√
Association	√	√	√	
Library		√	√	√
Equity	√	√		
Inclusion	√	√		
Community			√	√
Culture	√			√
Member		√	√	
Practice	√			√
Professional			√	√

The ten topics within competency texts (see Figure 6) focused on various competency areas that are connected with promoting DEI KSAs. They ranged from leadership skills, professional competencies, cultural proficiency, teaching and learning, diversity standards implementation, and indigenous ways of knowing and being to specific settings/subject matter such as schools and literacy, resources, workforce and community, and access and inclusion.

Figure 6
Topics extracted from competency frameworks

|	
Leadership	*Leadership Role & Relationship Development & Change Profession*
Schools & Literacy	*School Librarian; Cultural Competency; Professional preparation; Literacy*
Cultural Proficiency	*Diversity, equity, & racial privilege; cultural proficiencies & respect; academic institution & libraries*
Teaching and Learning	*Knowledge; teaching and learning; commitment*
Resources	*Associations resources; values and beliefs*
Standards Implementation	*Diversity standards and implementation; equity & inclusion; library practice*
Workforce & Community	*Public practice; white provision & inequities; workforce & community inclusion*
Access & Inclusion	*Provide access; Promote competence; Create active & inclusive community*
Indigenous Way of Knowing	*Indigenous way of knowing & being; research ethics*
Professional Competency	*Professional competency & community collaboration; ethical & core social principles of librarianship*

Code of conduct.

Eighteen associations mentioned DEI in their codes of conduct. Part of the CARL code of conduct reads, "Disrespectful or discriminatory actions, language, or imagery with regard to

race, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, disability, or genetic characteristics are not appropriate." The combination of associations' codes of conduct produced a total of 1,326 words and 492 unique terms. The most frequent words were: gender ($n = 17$, 1.28%); sexual ($n = 16$, 1.21%); identity ($n = 12$, 0.90%); status ($n = 11$, 0.83%); religion ($n = 11$, 0.83%); race ($n = 11$, 0.83%); orientation ($n = 11$, 0.83%); harassment ($n = 11$, 0.83%) and age ($n = 11$, 0.83%). Note that these top terms are unique from the four previously reported areas included in Figure 2.

The ten topics that emerged from topic modeling (see Figure 7) focused on activities or delivery settings pertinent to DEI practices. They ranged from association events, group environment, member participation, program platforms, LIS services and education, online environment, and working communities to specific conduct or communication media such as providing equal and fair spaces, prohibiting the use of offensive and abusive comments, and media communication with inappropriate content.

Figure 7
Topics extracted from codes of conduct
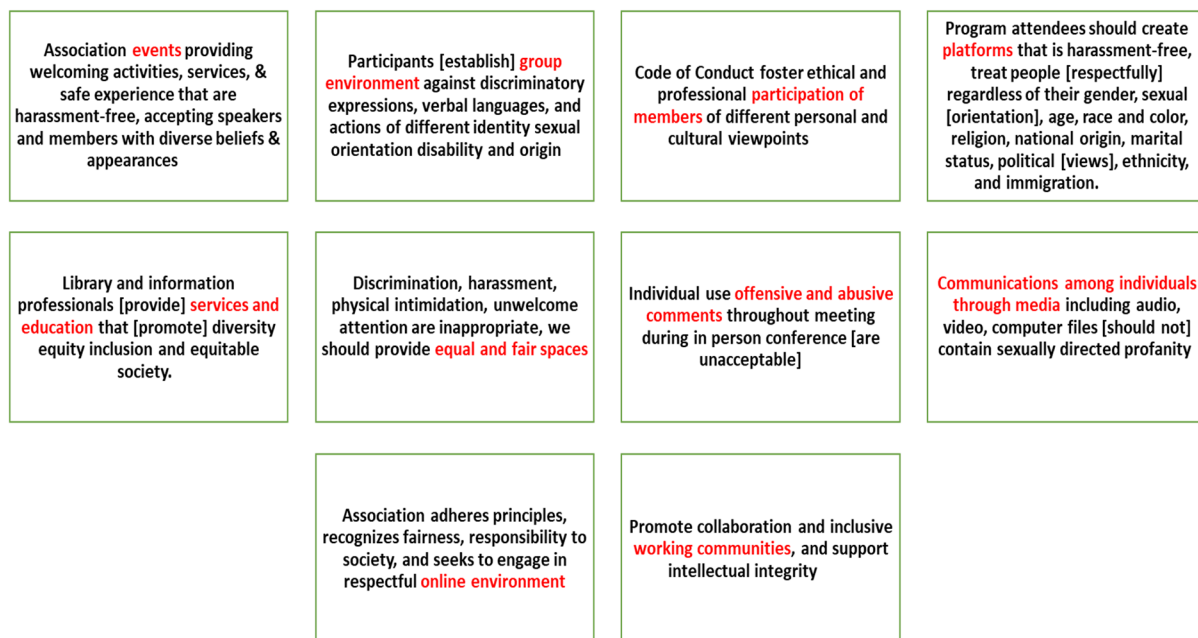
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Among the 28 associations, the most frequent way of addressing DEI was through the associations' long-standing diversity statements (n = 25, 89.29%), followed by Mission Through investigating 28 LIS associations' DEI efforts, we revealed the patterns of the presence of such efforts manifested through associations' websites. We also reported the results of term analysis and topic modeling. While it is not surprising that the majority of associations had a diversity statement (89.29%) and had DEI explicitly stated in their Mission, Vision, Goals, or Values (85.71%), only eight (28.57%) provided definitions. More importantly, just half of the

associations (50%) mentioned DEI in their competency standards/frameworks, and less than a quarter (21.43%) had a dedicated DEI competency area, which is alarmingly inadequate for the development of LIS professionals.

Our term analysis and topic modeling shed light on the associations' commitment to DEI. With the exception of codes of conduct, which address specific behaviors, the definitions, diversity statements, position statements, and competency frameworks have common top terms, showing various associations' shared commitment to DEI, community, culture, professional practice, and their members. Topic modeling also revealed that LIS professional associations are steadfast with DEI principles and have been keenly aware of current news and events to declare their positions, to advocate for DEI practice, and to condemn any discriminatory activities and violence against BIPOC and other marginal communities.

The findings of our research contribute to a better understanding of the role of associations in promoting and fostering DEI through specific actions. We recognize that not all DEI efforts are documented on an association's website, and we also acknowledge that our study sample of 28 associations is by no means the entirety of all LIS associations. Nevertheless, through this study, we wish to urge our associations to make a more consistent and visible effort to lead their professional communities towards robust work in DEI on all fronts and to enhance, advance, and sustain those efforts by committing to various DEI initiatives, and collaborating with other associations to form a powerful coalition to advance DEI progress in the LIS profession.

REFERENCES

Association of Computing Machinery (ACM). (n.d.). About ACM's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Computing. https://www.acm.org/diversity-inclusion/about

Adkins, D., Buchanan, S. A., & Alston, J. K. (2020). LIS association activities in promoting and sustaining an inclusive profession. Library Quarterly, 90(2), 162–172. https://doi-org.ezproxy.simmons.edu/10.1086/707672

American Library Association. (n.d.). ODLOS Glossary of Terms. https://www.ala.org/aboutala/odlos-glossary-terms

Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE). (n.d.). ALISE Diversity Statement. https://www.alise.org/alise---alise-diversity-statement

Canadian Association of Research Libraries. (n.d.). CARL Definitions for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. https://www.carl-abrc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/CARL-Definitions-for-Equity-Diversity-and-Inclusion.pdf

College of Information, University of North Texas. (n.d.). Professional Organizations. https://informationscience.unt.edu/professional-organizations

Hastings, S. K. (2015). If diversity is a natural state, why don't our libraries mirror the populations they serve? The Library Quarterly, 85, 133-138.

Jaeger, P. T., & Franklin, R. E. (2007). The virtuous circle: Increasing diversity in LIS faculties to create more inclusive library services and outreach. Education Libraries, 30)1), 20-26.

jsLDA: In-browser topic modeling. Retrieved from: https://mimno.infosci.cornell.edu/jsLDA/jslda.html

Medical Library Association. (n.d.). About MLA: Vision, Values, and Mission. https://www.mlanet.org/p/cm/ld/fid=21

Montiel-Overall, P. (2009). Cultural Competence: A conceptual framework for library and information science professionals, Library Quarterly 79 (2): 189–90.

Poole, A. H., Agosto, D., Greenberg, J., Xia Lin, & Erjia Yan. (2021). Where Do We Stand? Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice in North American Library and Information Science Education. Journal of Education for Library & Information Science, 62(3), 258–286. https://doi-org.ezproxy.simmons.edu/10.3138/jelis.2020-0018

Society of American Archivists (SAA). (n.d.). SAA Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. https://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-statement-on-diversity-equity-and-inclusion

Voyant Tools: See through your text. Retrieved from: https://voyant-tools.org/