The Spaces Between: critical partnerships between an academic Library and Cultural Center to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion
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Contextualizing critical partnerships

- Elon University snapshot
  - Private, liberal arts institution (started off as a regional college)
  - Doctoral/Professional University (Carnegie classification)
  - Student Population ~7000
  - Located in the Triad area of North Carolina
  - Historically White Institution with 18% students of color
Contextualizing critical partnerships

● Strategic Planning at Elon
  ○ “An unprecedented university commitment to diversity and global engagement”
Contextualizing critical partnerships

- The Center for Race, Ethnicity & Diversity Education
  - Mission
  - Goals
  - The core of our work
NCLAO Presentation

- Strategic Planning
- Institutional Culture
- The work of the CREDE and Belk Library
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History and Memory

● History and Memory refers to the way by which groups of people create and then identify with specific narratives about historical periods or events.

● Historical memory is sometimes called collective memory or social memory and is a dependent upon a variety of things.
History and Memory as Pedagogy in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

- History and Memory as a framework for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Systems Analysis

- Helps to appropriately situate the participants to mitigate local and more global history in a way that prompts synthesis and meaning making.
History and Memory Work at Elon

- Committee on Elon History and Memory
- Diversity and Inclusion Grant - Courses with an emphasis on Elon History and Memory
- Universities Studying Slavery
- Black Histories and Narratives at Elon
Black History at Elon - Examining the Gaps

Glenda Phillips-Hightower, Elon’s first Black student, 1963
Engaging Our Campus - Challenging Historical Narratives
Embedding Archives in CREDE Programming
Black Oaks Restoration Project
Learning from the CREDE

- How to think and talk about Elon’s Black history, institutional memory, and larger contexts
- Engaging students in adding to, analyzing, and discussing Elon history and memory
- Develop frameworks for future history and memory work

Elon’s Black Cultural Society, 1979
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Please Share Your Story: reimagining library spaces through the eyes of under-represented students
Intercultural Consciousness Certificate Program:

• Opportunity for faculty/staff across campus to deeply engage in identity reflection, cross-cultural dialogue, and develop a project in their area related to diversity and inclusion

• Our Project: use our ICC experience and expertise in libraries to find a way to make the library more inclusive

• IRB approved focus groups
Campus Climate:

• **Elon University Strategic Plan:** An unprecedented university commitment to diversity and global engagement

• **Belk Library Diversity Statement:** Demonstrates a commitment to diversity and inclusion

• **Belk Library Strategic Plan:** Library = academic heart of the residential campus
Collaborations with Center for Race Ethnicity, & Diversity Education (CREDE) and Global Education Center
Needs Assessment Project:

A long term needs assessment plan utilizing focus groups with under-represented students to assess the climate of Belk Library in order to create a more inclusive library by decreasing invisible barriers and fostering an environment where all students feel connected to the library.
Focus Group Sample Questions:

- What does interaction with the library mean to you in your academic and social life?

- Are there ways that library staff could be more approachable and welcoming? Please explain.

- Do you feel it is important that library staff reflect aspects of your identity? Such as your racial or gender identity. Please explain?

- Describe things about the space that are barriers?
CREDE students Fall 2019:

"It feels good to see people we look like. You don’t really think about it but it’s nice" (Identity)

"I don’t attribute lack of representation to the library. It is more the university." (Identity)

"We associate the library with productivity and 'communal suffering' or a combination of studying and socializing." (Space and Collection)
International Students Fall 2020:

“It’s hard for me because we are just a small country in Southeast Asia. Not a lot is known about us. It would be nice if Elon had those materials.” (Collection)

“The presentation room really boosts my confidence and helps me to be better prepared for presentations.” (Space)
Next Steps:

- Spring 2020: Disabilities Resources and Faith Communities

- Assessment and what do we do with the data - how will we adapt/change the library to reflect growing diversity of students at Elon

- Assessment and User Experience Librarian
Questions? Comments?

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