
Meeting Minutes

Anti-Black Racism Working Group

Wednesday, January 10, 2024, 6:45 pm

In-person – Central Library Silent Room 1

Attendees: Romina Diaz-Matus (online), Charmain Brown (Notetaker), Marsha Hinds Myrie (online), Samantha Adebisi, Teronie Donaldson

Library Staff: Shobha Oza, Sabrina Yung, Lala Comrie, Shahin Dashtkian (Events), Rebecca Courtney (Collections), Lala Comrie (Marketing), Amanda Marsh (Marketing)

Guests: Stephen Linton, Shaibu Gariba (6:15 to 6:45 only for Appreciation Reception)

Absent: Bernadette Hood-Caesar, Titi Katibi, Nicole Facey

Appreciation Reception

Prior to the formal monthly meeting, ABRWG members hosted an appreciation reception for SL and SG, to thank both exited members for their contributions to the ABRWG. Remarks were shared by current members and staff, as well as SL and SG.

The formal monthly meeting's start time was delayed to 6:45pm, to support the reception period.

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1. Land Acknowledgement and Ancestral Acknowledgement
 - Read by SY and SA.
2. Conflict of Interest Declaration
 - A reminder that quorum is now 5 (50%+1). This changed due to the recent departure of 2 active members.
 - No conflicts of interest declared.
3. Review Meeting Minutes
 - December minutes reviewed.
 - No additional edits were tabled. December minutes were approved.
4. Events and Collections Marketing – Part 2
 - LC shared department overviews from marketing and collections based on work informed by ABRWG and ongoing library priorities and initiatives.

- Discussed the marketing short- and long- term action plan opportunities along with current areas of need, focus and priority.
- ABRWG members asked questions, shared advice, and gave suggestions to better understand the current and move forward the future work of the marketing team. This included:
 - SA shared posting information about an event facilitator (i.e. fun facts, personal information, event highlights) on a daily basis leading up to the scheduled event helps with user engagement.
 - TD suggested using QR codes as another vehicle for marketing events.
 - RDM spoke to libraries being colonized spaces and therefore there needs to be intentionality to ensure that the library is embracing diversity to be fully inclusive.
 - CB suggested including photos of the various spaces in the library to be included on the website to support accessibility needs and community event planning.
- There was discussion around the current members of ABRWG and their individual engagement with the library services and any barriers they may be experiencing that prevent use of library collections and resources.
 - Collections
 - Members in attendance reported use is 100% print. No digital library usage. May use the online catalogue to search, but still prefer print materials.
 - Borrowing of print ranged from 0 to 50 print items in a year.
 - Events
 - Some members in attendance reported having attended 2 to 3 library programs in the past year. Some members have not attended library programs in the past year.
 - Comparatively, all members reported a low attendance at non-library (Pickering) community events in the past year – range was 0 to 1.
 - Where are members currently getting their PPL collections or events information from?
 - Social media
 - Website
 - Organic web content
 - Library Liaison emails
 - Print flyers.
- There were continued questions and discussion around how to better engage and create impact in and within the community in all aspects of the library and the library programming. Ideas included:
 - For Collections Marketing
 - Want to see more promotions about the Maker Space.
 - Will search about a book heard about through word of mouth – important that recommended titles can be found in the collection. Recognizing that when a title is not available, can be demotivating and deter continued trust or interaction with the collection.
 - Displays that feature recommended BIPOC reads. However, don't focus just on race. Consider nationality as part of identify. Connect to heritage and history. The term 'Black' does not resonate with all

community members, so displays or booklists emphasizing 'Black' may be a disconnect if the individual doesn't identify with the term.

- Increase awareness about digital library and digital learning resources.
- Consider how people enjoy working at the library for telework and their (positive) interaction with the study or workspaces may lead to browsing the collection.
- Consider local BIPOC influencers making recommendations about books in the collection.
- Consider a virtual tour and/or gamifying online preview of the physical library spaces. Add more appealing photos on the website.
- Adding reading suggestions to event listings and other possible promotions. Make it easy to link to explore the collection for related materials.
- For Event Marketing
 - Multiple posts (as opposed to one) about the facilitator and include where they may have recently presented as well as their credentials.
 - QR codes that incorporate the presenters' images.
 - Staff to have presence at the entry point of the event, to welcome, engage, and inform even attendees (about the event they're attending and similar upcoming events).
 - Youth events focusing on youth entrepreneurship would draw interest.
 - Explore the culture of "Google University" or "Youtube University" and leverage the exposure to reach more potential users.
 - Add photos of the event space so potential participants with accessibility needs can preview the type of space they may be signing up to visit.
- Short term action plan opportunities were shared by LC. These included:
 - ABRWG social media stories of collections recommendations
 - Event facilitators select a collection item that they recommend that is shared with library clients.
 - Pick of the week – ask an in-library client to suggest a book leaning into diverse reads that represent diverse voices.
- Long-term action plan opportunities were shared by LC. These included:
 - Booklist creation – How do we diversify the creators of the booklists (and displays) so that different identities are represented?
 - Tell human stories connected to the ways clients engage with the library collection.
 - Create a Black Resources webpage which highlights community partners, events, and collections that are Black community focused.

5. Self-Evaluation Feedback Review

- Due to time constraints, it was decided by the ABRWG that the self-evaluation feedback review would be added to and addressed during the next ABRWG regular meeting (February 2024).

6. Durham Family and Cultural Centre (DFCC) Kwanzaa Event (December 28) – Requested Support
 - Appreciation was given to AM, SA and CB who attended and represented ABRWG at the DFCC Kwanzaa event. CB shared there was positive feedback and appreciation from participants about the resources (children books/treats) that were made available. Many asked for further information about the library and the ABRWG.
 - If giving books away, consider donation opportunities as many attendees who received a free book voiced wanting to donate to the library in exchange.
7. City of Pickering EDI Strategy Update
 - A reminder that City staff will be at the February meeting to provide an update on the City of Pickering's EDI strategy.