

# UCLA

## UCLA Previously Published Works

### Title

Making the Invisible Visible: Library Outreach and Engagement at the Intersections

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1c83j2c5>

### ISBN

979-8892556217

### Authors

Alburo, Jade

Romero, Renee

Ali, Ibraheem

### Publication Date

2024

Peer reviewed

## CHAPTER 3

# Making the Invisible Visible:

## Library Outreach and Engagement at the Intersections

*Jade Albuero, Renee Romero, and Ibraheem Ali\**

### Introduction

Academic libraries often face pressure to prove their value and show increased and sustained usage. This leads to a push for an increase in initiatives relating to outreach. With an ever-expanding array of programming possibilities, technical tools, and social media applications at their disposal, there is an inclination to want to utilize them all and go in several directions at once. However, there is often a lack of—or even no—personnel to focus on these activities. Thus, in the quest for numbers and to make the most of limited staff time, promotion and engagement efforts tend to be more mainstream, designed to appeal to wider swaths of the campuses' communities. This often means that historically disadvantaged groups, particularly Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOCs), are often overlooked, leading to the further exclusion of students who are more likely to suffer from university and library anxiety.<sup>1</sup> In addition, since outreach is usually more generalized, it often neglects the particular perspectives, needs, and issues of marginalized communities in specialized fields such as the sciences or area studies. How do you

---

\* Positionality statement: All of the authors of this chapter are BIPOCs. Albuero is a multilingual immigrant from the Philippines. Romero is a mixed-race cis woman. Ali is a mixed-race, multilingual man. The authors' personal backgrounds and experiences have shaped their commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice, their desire to foster BIPOC student success, and their passion in advancing inclusion in libraries.



integrate representation and inclusion into your outreach? How do you make the people invisible to regular outreach efforts visible, and how do you make hidden collections more conspicuous? Furthermore, how do you highlight the intersections of identities, disciplines, and geographies while reaching out to minoritized groups?

In this chapter, the authors describe how two specialist teams at the UCLA Library have independently developed inclusion-centered strategies for outreach and engagement, with the underlying goal of helping students of color and other marginalized groups feel comfortable, heard, and seen at the library. The first team, co-led by authors Romero and Ali, is the Sciences Outreach Team, which re-envisioned its outreach approach to center the stories and experiences of marginalized communities, loosely using the ACE (assess, connect, engage) framework conceived by Romero to formulate an engagement plan. The second team, led by author Albuero, is the International & Area Studies (IAS) Outreach Team, which initiated an outreach strategy that showcases IAS collections and situates them within broader, cross-regional conversations about global historical and contemporary issues. Both teams' strategies not only prioritize representation and inclusion but are also meant to create spaces for discussion and engagement in ways that explore the connections between various disciplines and the interrelatedness between communities, both global and local. Their initiatives serve as examples of how libraries and their staff can choose to highlight people, collections, and intersecting disciplines that are usually at the periphery, thus rendering the invisible visible.

## About UCLA

The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) is a top-ranked public university in the ten-campus UC system. It has over 47,500 students, approximately two-thirds of whom are undergraduates and one-third are graduate students and medical and dental interns and residents.<sup>2</sup> Unlike many universities, UCLA's undergraduate student population is majority non-white, with approximately 34 percent Asian, 26 percent white, and 20 percent Hispanic/Latino, and minuscule numbers for African American, American Indian, and Pacific Islander (table 3.1).<sup>3,4</sup> The percentage of white students for advanced degrees is noticeably higher, comprising 30 percent of graduate students and 38 percent of health science residents. The lack of ethnic diversity is even more glaring among faculty, with only 29 percent of full-time instructional faculty (not including clinical faculty) belonging to an ethnic minority group.<sup>5</sup>

Most (76 percent) of UCLA's undergraduates are California residents, with only 14 percent from out of state and 10 percent from abroad (three-fourths of whom are from Asian countries).<sup>6</sup> Twenty-seven percent receive Pell Grants for low-income families.<sup>7</sup> According to the most recent undergraduate profile available (2019–2020), less than half of new students (46 percent freshmen, 34 percent transfers) have English only as their first language and 36 percent of those who graduated that year were first-generation students.<sup>8</sup>

	Under-graduates	% Under-graduates	Graduate students	% Graduate students	Health science residents	% Residents	Total
African American	1,806	5.62%	970	6.93%	86	6.13%	2,862
American Indian	202	0.63%	90	0.64%	4	0.29%	296
Asian	10,801	33.62%	2,952	21.09%	511	36.42%	14,264
Hispanic/Latino	6,554	20.40%	1,688	12.06%	144	10.26%	8,386
Pacific Islander	74	0.23%	49	0.35%	12	0.86%	135
White	8,340	25.96%	4,209	30.08%	531	37.85%	13,080
Unknown, domestic	1,135	3.53%	564	4.03%	69	4.92%	1,768
International	3,210	9.99%	3,472	24.81%	46	3.28%	6,728
Total	32,122	99.98% <sup>9</sup>	13,994	99.99%	1,403	100.01%	47,519

**Table 3.1.** UCLA student population, fall 2021.

## About UCLA Library

Consistently ranked among the top academic libraries in the country, the UCLA Library is one library with many physical locations (in nine different buildings) focused on various disciplines or material formats. It includes libraries or archives for undergraduates, humanities and social sciences, life sciences, arts, management, special collections, music, East Asia, physical sciences and engineering, and film and television. It also includes the Southern Regional Library Facility, the on-campus storage facility for the five southern UC campuses. In addition, UCLA has several other libraries and reading centers across campus that are affiliated with the UCLA Library but are not managed by the library.

### Outreach in the UCLA Library

UCLA Library is an organization with many locations, and each one historically supported its own functions, including collection development, public services, and outreach. In 2017, many public service-oriented locations and units were centralized into one larger division called User Engagement (UE). Within UE, teams were created to support functional areas including outreach, creating opportunities for collaboration between locations

that did not exist before. However, this structure gives a false sense of equitable representation since several library units are not a part of UE and do not typically participate in these functional teams.

Outreach at the library is supported in two primary ways. First, the UE Outreach Functional Team facilitates library involvement in campus-wide events, such as new student orientations, and conversations related to marketing, communications, and event planning. The team also creates infrastructure and guidelines for library unit activities. Second, the Library Communications department manages a consolidated social media account and provides programmatic support as needed. All library units are welcome to create content for the UCLA Library accounts, though they are vetted by the social media content team to determine the best approach and platform. The content team includes representatives from multiple library units and locations who come together to create content, guide the direction of posts, and actively work to make the inclusion of diverse perspectives and initiatives a priority for the library's social media accounts.

While there are efforts to systematize outreach within the library, most outreach remains segmented with different units creating disparate strategies to cater to their specific campus communities. In the following sections, Albuero, Romero, and Ali describe how their two teams—the Science Libraries within UE and the International and Area Studies department outside of UE—planned and implemented their outreach efforts. While the authors developed their programs independently and used different methods, their goals were ultimately the same: to elevate historically marginalized voices and amplify inclusion for the highly diverse UCLA campus community.

## Sciences Outreach Team

The UCLA Science Libraries is part of the UE division and has staff split into three different locations:

1. Louise M. Darling Biomedical Library, which focuses on the full breadth of medical and health sciences;
2. Science and Engineering Library (SEL) Geology, which focuses on geospatial, geographical, and space sciences; and
3. Science and Engineering Library (SEL) Boelter, which focuses on engineering, mathematics, and other physical sciences.

Sciences librarians are subject specialists who focus on instruction, reference, and outreach to their respective liaison communities. Though librarians and staff are stationed in three locations, the team has a strong sense of solidarity and meets regularly to create a shared vision and collaborate on approaches to information and data literacy, outreach, and instruction.

## Sciences Outreach: Background

Prior to the formation of the UE division, the three Sciences Libraries mostly operated as separate entities, conducting their own outreach, reference, and instruction. Each location had its own social media accounts and, while collaboration occurred for specific events such as the Graduate Science Fair where graduate students were invited to the SEL Boelter library to learn more about resources, this was not the case most of the time. After UE was formed, the three libraries became Sciences User Engagement (SUE) and worked together to make unified decisions related to outreach and other functional areas. After the implementation of the matrix structure, outreach activities in SUE were primarily facilitated by their representatives in the UE Outreach Functional Team.

The Sciences Outreach Team was formed in 2019 when authors Romero and Ali joined the Outreach Functional Team as the first BIPOC-identifying librarians to oversee outreach in SUE. Previous outreach efforts addressed equity, diversity, and inclusion by highlighting immigrants who have made contributions to the sciences. Romero and Ali decided to shift SUE social media content to go beyond this and instead focus on highlighting students, faculty, and staff of color. They also wanted to create a space where the UCLA community could discuss how science and culture intersect. They hired an undergraduate outreach assistant, Princess Udeh, who had a strong passion for social justice topics and ideas about implementing them. Soon after, a graduate research assistant, Kate Pham, joined the team. Both students are from underrepresented minority groups.

## Sciences Outreach: Creating a Strategy

To develop their outreach strategy, the Sciences Outreach Team used the ACE framework, created by author Romero in 2019 while she was getting her master's in library and information science at the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. ACE is a user-centered engagement framework designed to give librarians and other information professionals a starting point in determining how to engage with their communities. This framework has three steps: assess, connect, and engage.

The first step in the framework is to **assess** user needs. Approach the process with as few preconceived notions as possible of what users need or want. Methods such as surveys can identify needs users are aware the library can help with, while informal methods such as chatting with users can help identify information needs that they are not aware they have. Be creative and look outside of the library (e.g., social media) for ways that users identify or communicate needs and desires among themselves.

The Sciences Outreach Team identified BIPOCs as a primary user community with the most significant potential for impact based on a number of methods. First, by reflecting on their own experiences in academia and by interviewing student staff, Romero and Ali discovered that most support for BIPOCs came from their departments, and those whose departments did not already have established programs or groups received very little

support. Second, they examined the campus culture of the sciences by reviewing historical social media posts, participating in committees focused on issues of diversity and inclusion, and gathering feedback from workshops where the authors were able to interact with the campus community. Third, Romero and Ali found that BIPOC students in the sciences often exhibit signs of impostor syndrome and often do not feel as though they belong on campus. They are overwhelmed by the vast array of information and resources available and need more support to navigate these resources. Students also noted that many courses in the sciences fail to address how scientific discoveries and technological developments may not be accessible for BIPOC communities and may even exacerbate social and health disparities.

The second step of the ACE framework is to identify **connection** points. Based on the needs identified during assessment, find points or pathways where the library can connect users with the information, resources, or skills they need. These points may include resources the library does not currently offer. Devise as many connection points as possible. For example, if an assessment survey reveals that students need help searching databases, some connection points could be a workshop, a research consultation, a LibGuide, an online tutorial, etc. During this phase, creativity can come into play and help lead to unique ways of meeting the community's needs.

Based on their assessment findings, the Sciences Outreach Team recognized that the science community's needs could be met in several ways. They could leverage social media strategies, hold programs in the library, start an open access journal, create relevant instruction sessions, and more. Ultimately, the team decided that BIPOC students craved academic experiences that related more to their lived experiences. Therefore, they set out to engage with students in an intersectional way, bringing together the rigor of the science curriculum with the rapidly changing perspectives seen in society and culture.

The final step in the ACE framework is to **engage** with users. Determine which connection point(s) best meets the user community's needs, based on their situation. For instance, if the users needing help with databases are commuter students, then an online tutorial would likely be the best method of engagement, whereas research consultations might work better for on-campus users. Engagement plans can be either library-led or collaborative initiatives; decide which model would work best in terms of funding, space, marketing, and synergy. Consider any partnerships that the library already has or that the library can potentially develop. It is important to note that engagement plans should be immediately actionable. Even if an engagement plan involves many steps, it should still be achievable.

After assessing user needs and identifying connection points, the Sciences Team decided to pursue three main areas of outreach and engagement: (1) social media, (2) instruction, and (3) a multimedia publishing platform focused on intersectional topics.

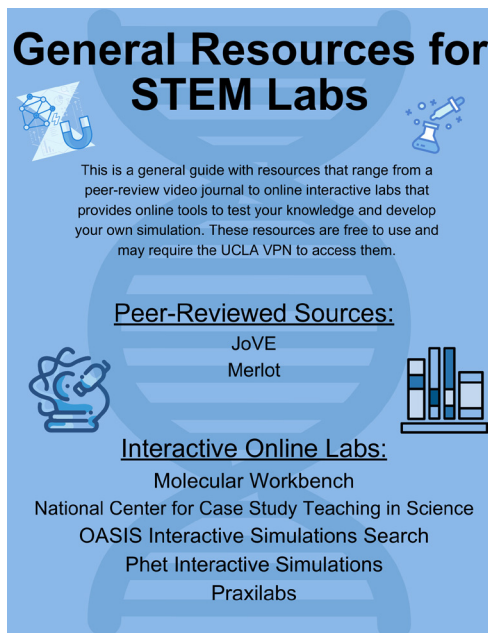
## Sciences Strategy 1: Social Media

Prior to the creation of the consolidated UCLA Library social media accounts, the Sciences Outreach Team maintained SUE's Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook accounts on which



student staff regularly posted. Their posts included two strategies designed specifically to make social media more useful and relevant to BIPOC students: communication of relevant campus events and social media campaigns highlighting BIPOCs affiliated with UCLA.

First, the team focused on highlighting events and resources available from both the library and the campus in order to help combat information anxiety—“a continuous element of minority students’ information behavior [that] creates a barrier to obtaining and using information for academic work.”<sup>10</sup> Because students can be overwhelmed by the quantity and variety of information that exist on campus, including library resources, the team hoped to make it easier by creating a space where students can check to find the information they need to succeed at any time, not just during workshops or lectures. Figure 3.1 is an example of the types of science-related campus resources shared on social media channels. Figure 3.2 includes a list of campus events for the week, reminding students of other opportunities that exist on campus to help students.



**General Resources for STEM Labs**

This is a general guide with resources that range from a peer-review video journal to online interactive labs that provides online tools to test your knowledge and develop your own simulation. These resources are free to use and may require the UCLA VPN to access them.


**Peer-Reviewed Sources:**

- JoVE
- Merlot

**Interactive Online Labs:**

- Molecular Workbench
- National Center for Case Study Teaching in Science
- OASIS Interactive Simulations Search
- Phet Interactive Simulations
- Praxilabs

**Figure 3.1.** Social media post on resources for STEM labs.



**UPCOMING CAMPUS EVENTS**

**WORKSHOPS**

- 03/03 | Boyer Hall, 529
- WSa: RNA-seq | Analysis  
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- 03/04 | Boyer Hall, 529
- W4: Galaxy for NCS Data Analysis  
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- 03/04 | CHS 43-105A
- FSPH Center for Global & Immigrant Health | Global Health Certificate Session  
12:00 PM - 2:00 PM
- 03/05 | Powell CLICC Classroom A
- Moving Image Archival Research  
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

**CAREER CENTER**

- 03/05 | Career Center, Room 200
- Ask Me Anything (AMA):  
Moving Beyond the Bench in  
Biotech  
5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

**PLANETARIUM & TELESCOPE SHOWS**

- 03/04 | 8th floor of  
MS Building  
UCLA Planetarium  
and Telescope Show  
7:00 PM

**Figure 3.2.** Social media post on campus events.

Second, the team regularly ran campaigns to promote student awareness of facts and people in the sciences. One such campaign was the Notable Figures in Science campaign, which was primarily led by outreach student assistant Udeh. Born out of a desire to inspire



students to see themselves in their faculty, this series was not limited to only featuring faculty of color. However, because BIPOC students often do not see themselves reflected in the heavily white faculty, the team prioritized faculty of color to highlight. In doing so, they aimed to counteract racist narratives that minorities are less capable than their white counterparts. They also made sure to have the campaign during a month that was not connected to any particular community (such as Black History Month) to emphasize that people of color can be celebrated and recognized at any time, not just during a particular time period. By creating awareness of faculty of color, the team not only strengthened their relationships with BIPOC faculty but also generated some of the most popular social media posts.

Figure 3.3 showcases Dr. Tracy Johnson, the dean of the UCLA Division of Life Sciences, while figure 3.4 features Dr. Terence Keel, an associate professor with a split appointment in the Department of African American Studies and the UCLA Institute for Society and Genetics.

Notable Figures in Science  
**Dr. Tracy Johnson**




- Dr. Johnson serves as dean of the UCLA Division of Life Sciences.
- Her research focuses on the mechanisms of gene regulation, particularly RNA splicing, chromatin modification and the intersection between these reactions.
- She started the UCLA-HHMI Pathways to Success Program, which is in partnership with the Howard Hughes Medical Institute to support the success of students from diverse backgrounds in STEM fields.

UCLA Library

**Figure 3.3.** Social media post on Dr. Tracy Johnson.

Notable Figures in Science  
**Dr. Terence Keel**



- Terence Keel, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in UCLA's Departments of African American Studies as well as Society and Genetics.
- His first book, "Divine Variations," explained how Christian thought made possible the development of the race concept in Euro-American science while also shaping the moral and epistemic commitments embedded in the study of human biology.
- Keel is the first Black Studies professor to receive the Harold J. Plous Award—the highest honor given to a junior faculty member in recognition for exceptional scholarship and teaching in his previous position at UC Santa Barbara.
- Keel is the founding director of the BioCritical Studies Lab, an interdisciplinary space committed to studying how discrimination, inequality, and resilience are embodied in human and non-human beings.

UCLA Library

**Figure 3.4.** Social media post on Dr. Terence Keel.

## Sciences Strategy 2: Instruction

The team viewed outreach and instruction as intertwined, with one feeding into the other. They believe there was a great opportunity to reach BIPOC students outside of traditional class instruction and so they began to engage in instruction in both physical and digital media.

UCLA Sciences librarians have a heavy load of in-person instruction for courses and departments, so they have done less outreach to student groups, many of which are formed around specific sociocultural identities. Graduate student research assistant Pham had a particular passion for instruction and worked with Romero and Ali to connect with

several programs and student groups on campus. She particularly focused on student groups with historically underrepresented identities in academia, including first-generation undergraduates, UndocuBruins, Academic Advancement Program, McNair Research Program, Pilipinos in Engineering and Science, American Indian Science and Engineering Society, Art Science Undergraduate Society, and Organization for African-American Students Excelling in STEM. Pham led the instruction sessions with Romero and Ali present to provide guidance and moral support. The information Pham shared with the groups was information commonly shared in instruction to classes but appeared to be new information to the student group members. With a peer sharing this information, as opposed to a full-time staff member, students asked questions more readily. By meeting them in their extracurricular groups rather than in their classes, the team provided a safer space—among students they are familiar with—to ask questions that may be hard to ask in a larger and more traditional classroom setting.

Another approach the team used was instructional tutorials. The team’s student members worked with a learner-centered design team in the library that focuses on peer-to-peer education through interactive online learning modules called WI+RE (Writing Instruction + Research Education). Author Romero and former UCLA colleague Doug Worsham partnered with the Center for Education, Innovation, and Learning in the Sciences to obtain an institutional grant to create science tutorials that would benefit students from underrepresented communities in the sciences. Romero and the team used this support to elevate and support BIPOC students as authorities on topics such as Calculating Species Diversity, DNA Replication Mechanism, Using Simpson’s Diversity Index, and more. In doing so, these tutorials served to model students from diverse backgrounds as key voices at UCLA, something critically lacking for the team’s target audience. The Sciences Team’s student members also helped design and provide voiceovers for the creation of tutorials broadly relevant to the campus community, such as “Using PubMed”<sup>11</sup> (figure 3.5), “Your Remote Ebook RoadMap”<sup>12</sup> and “Remote Access—Get Configured with VPN or Proxy”<sup>13</sup> (figure 3.6).



**Figure 3.5.** Image from the PubMed tutorial.



**Figure 3.6.** Image from the Remote Access tutorial.

## Sciences Strategy 3: Multimedia Publishing Platform

Romero's and Ali's conversations with student assistants Pham and Udeh about the informal division between UCLA's North Campus (arts and humanities) and South Campus (the sciences) first spurred the idea of creating a multimedia publishing space to explore the connections between the hard facts of science and the humanistic realities of the world. Reflecting on their own time as students, Romero and Ali realized how difficult it was to find spaces where intersectional topics could be discussed openly. Further discussion with the outreach student assistants and other student employees revealed that they felt they could not discuss ideas such as race, identity, gender, etc. in a nuanced way during science classes. To carve out a space to have such discussions, the team created a website called Intersections in Science (<https://intersectionsinscience.wordpress.com/>). The website is composed of a blog section and an art section that celebrate the different ways that students express themselves.

The blog section is a space where students can explore their ideas and opinions on the relationship between science and culture. Posts are intended to be 1,600 to 2,000 words and are edited and reviewed by staff and students involved in outreach. During this process, authors meet with the team and discuss their posts and any suggested edits. This process helps students learn about the writing process as well as relevant library sources. The student topics varied greatly. One published blog post, titled "The Reality of Implicit Bias Against Black People in the Medical System," examines the perception by medical staff of the pain experienced by Black patients. Other students have proposed posts exploring the differing perspectives between the Indigenous community and astronomers regarding the building of the Thirty Meter Telescope on the summit of Mauna Kea in Hawaii and examining how antibiotic resistance to gonorrhea is influenced by various social factors.

The second area of the website displays the winners of Science is Art, a competition that invites the UCLA community to submit original artwork, images, and photographs that highlight the artistic quality of scientific materials, processes, instruments, findings, or data.

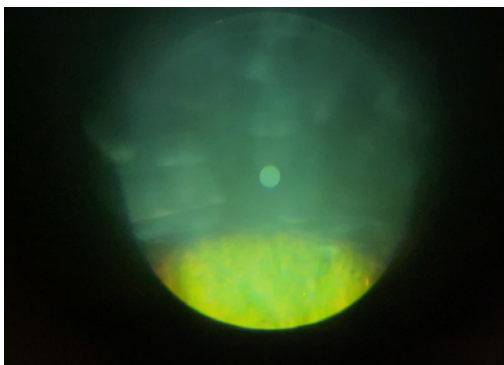
Conversations about an art contest had already been floating around SUE for about a year by the time the Sciences Outreach Team was formed. All members of the team love art and science, and they discussed how to create a space for science students to share their love of art. The team moved forward with the idea and has now held three annual contests, with competition winners announced via social media and a news story on the UCLA Library website. Figure 3.7 shows *The Spoon Fish* by a Neuroscience undergraduate. It is a fish made out of spoons and was inspired by a class discussion on anatomy and animals; it is meant to shine a spotlight on pollution in the oceans. Figure 3.8 is a still image from *Mutable*,<sup>14</sup> a stop-motion microscopy short film created from more than forty still images of green watercolor and featuring interactive experimental sound, by a design and media arts undergraduate.



---

**Figure 3.7.** *The Spoon Fish*, made from spoons.

---



---

**Figure 3.8.** Still image from the stop-motion film, *Mutable*.

---

## Sciences Strategy: Results, Lessons, and Future Steps

The Sciences Outreach Team's efforts to focus SUE outreach activities on highlighting students, faculty, and staff of color have been largely successful. The success is mainly due to how involved the student staff have been in planning and implementing their strategies. Because Romero and Ali treated student staff as equal and valued partners, this allowed them to thrive in coming up with ideas and being more willing to experiment with new approaches.

Some of the challenges the team faced were the COVID-19 pandemic and the consolidation of the library's various social media accounts into one UCLA Library account. The pandemic required the team to deprioritize areas the team hoped to expand on, such as in-person programming and events. The consolidation of departmental social media accounts led to a loss of control over how many posts could go out weekly, the look and message of the posts, and the ability to provide a space specifically for science students. While the team previously posted one to three times per week on the SUE accounts, posts now only go out about two or three times per month on the heavily vetted and shared UCLA Library account. Consequently, the team decided to shift more attention to the multimedia platform.

Since starting these outreach efforts, the team has learned some useful lessons. They found that the posts with the most consistent interaction were those that tied into larger initiatives, such as the Science is Art competition and the Notable Figures in Science campaign. Though the multimedia platform draws student attention, it has been difficult to cement a reliable editing process due to staff changes and lack of bandwidth among the existing staff. The team has had to work on a much slower timeline than originally anticipated and is currently publishing approximately two blog posts per year. The art

competition has done well each year, and the team has been consistently impressed with the quality of the submitted artwork.

The Sciences Outreach Team's future outreach efforts will focus on streamlining the blog editing process and incorporating in-person programming into its strategy. These programs will build upon the work the team has already done to make BIPOC science student voices more visible and valued.

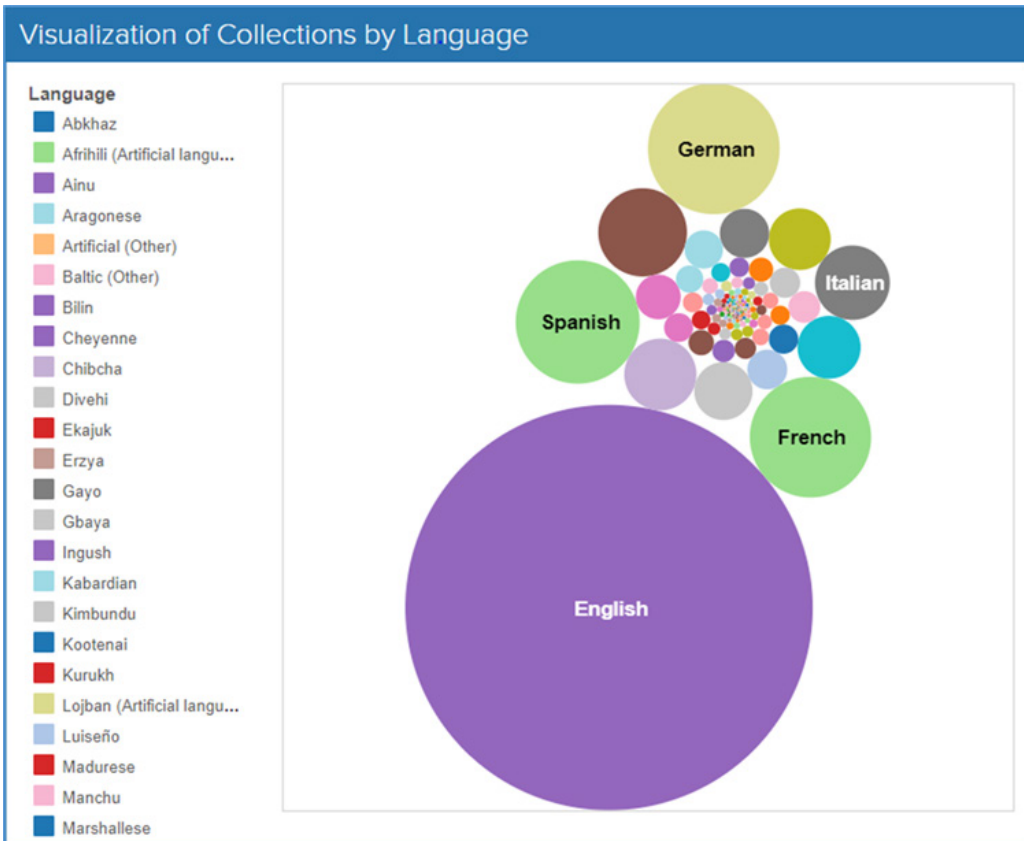
## International & Area Studies Outreach Team

Unlike the Sciences Libraries, the International & Area Studies (IAS) Department is not a part of the User Engagement division and is not required to participate in the UE Outreach Functional Team. Neither does it represent an entire library location. Instead, it is a part of the Distinctive Collections division and is one of many departments housed in the Charles E. Young Research Library (YRL), the library for the humanities and social sciences. In this section, author Albuero describes the IAS Outreach Team's informal and experimental approach to outreach and engagement, guided by the department's and team members' antiracist and inclusive practices and values.

IAS is a diverse, multilingual, and interdisciplinary unit that primarily supports the UCLA community by curating collections about most parts of the world, including Africa, Caribbean, Central Asia, Europe, Indian Ocean, Latin America, Middle East, Pacific Islands, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, as well as those by and about diasporic communities with ancestral and cultural ties to these places. It also covers Classics, Indo-European Studies, International Development Studies, Islamic Studies, and Jewish Studies. It collects in all subjects (but primarily in the humanities and social sciences) and formats. It also collects in numerous languages, with over 400 languages represented (figure 3.9) in the UCLA Library's print collections. IAS librarians provide specialized research and instructional services to the academic departments, programs, and research units in their areas of responsibility.

### IAS Outreach: Background

Individual IAS librarians, both before and after IAS became its own department in 2017, have always been responsible for outreach and programming in their subject areas. There was no outreach at the departmental level, but Albuero made initial movements toward instituting one as reference coordinator for YRL in 2017–2019. In this role, she and her team of BIPOC librarians and students initiated an outreach plan that aimed to support student success and inclusion through advanced research help and access to diverse collections.<sup>15</sup> Their activities included outreach events, targeted programs, and social media.



**Figure 3.9.** Visual representation of languages represented in the UCLA Library’s collections, with some of the lesser-known languages listed on the left side.

While none of these were IAS-exclusive, the social media initiative was mostly intended to highlight IAS collections.

In 2021, Alburo took on the role of IAS outreach coordinator, and she used the lessons learned from her previous team’s experience to inform her work. Having a team to create and implement a strategy worked well before, so the first thing she did was to form an IAS Outreach Team. The team is mostly composed of BIPOCs and includes Alburo, library assistant Tula Orum, outreach assistant Gissel Rios, and librarian Shannon Tanhayi Ahari.

## IAS Outreach: Creating a Strategy

Since IAS is primarily a collections-focused department, any outreach strategy would emphasize collections. Promoting the somewhat hidden IAS collections is an antiracist endeavor because area studies collections, in general, inherently provide diversity to libraries by adding stories and perspectives from parts of the world that are often



underrepresented in typical libraries with heavily Euro-American holdings. This work augments and provides a balance to dominant Western narratives. IAS collections, in particular, tend to be hyper-inclusive as IAS librarians go out of their way to include materials by and about Indigenous peoples, ethnic and religious minorities, LGBTQIA+ people, women, persons with disabilities, and so on. IAS librarians also try to be as comprehensive as the budget allows in terms of coverage (regional, national, and local) and format (e.g., traditionally published materials, government and non-government publications, local newspapers, non-print resources, comic books, zines, etc.), to ensure the representation of different voices. Thus, through area studies collections, users can learn about other nations, peoples, histories, and cultures, broaden their perspectives, and hopefully lessen their biases.

However, area studies collections are not just about teaching Americans about foreign countries because, in an ethnically diverse country such as the United States and a state like California, the global is local. Most of the ethnic communities in the US come from other parts of the world and they have been shaped by those histories and cultures, which makes those a part of US history and culture. At the same time, the specific struggles of ethnic minorities in the US, which have led to the formation of ethnic studies, share a history with revolutionary struggles in other places and have influenced social justice movements elsewhere. In this way, the local is also global. This symbiosis between global and local is part of the reason why IAS is also responsible for ethnic studies collections within the library.<sup>16</sup> It also shows why area studies collections are—or should be—valuable to Americans, particularly those who belong to ethnic minorities.

With the effort and care taken to curate and provide access to these inclusive materials, promoting these collections was the IAS Outreach Team's highest priority. This is reflected in the mission statement the team formulated at the outset: to create and implement an effective and sustainable outreach strategy that promotes IAS' work and collections and engages with other library departments, campus units, and local communities. Since the team's goals were tied to making the non-mainstream IAS collections more visible and to show how area studies intersect with other disciplines, the IAS Team's process for creating its strategy was different from the Sciences Team's. However, they had similar underlying goals. By making IAS collections more visible, the team hoped to make BIPOC students feel represented and to combat prejudices through knowledge expansion.

While area studies' faculty and students are obvious target audiences for IAS collections outreach, they are the ones who are already familiar with IAS resources. The less obvious target audience is BIPOC students writing papers in their general education classes or their specific disciplines—whether it is in history, sociology, public health, or environmental science, for example—who want to do research on their countries of heritage or their local ethnic communities.

Since IAS librarians are responsible for outreach in their individual geographic areas, the team wanted to focus on providing cross- or multi-regional perspectives. Mindful

of their capacity to do the work on top of other duties, Alburo and colleagues decided that, for the first year (2021–2022), they would focus on three areas: (1) social media, (2) reading lists, and (3) programs. They established a realistic schedule for each strategy item. When they started their work, all library locations were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so it made sense to start with virtual activities, namely social media and reading lists, and to focus on programs later.

## IAS Strategy 1: Social Media

The primary goal for social media was to promote IAS collections and resources, especially to students who were unaware of the collections or did not realize their breadth and depth. A secondary goal was to provide BIPOC representation. Instagram was chosen primarily because follower demographics of the UCLA Library's social media accounts indicated that more students use it than Twitter or Facebook. The IAS Outreach Team decided to use international holidays and country-specific holidays to highlight IAS collections.

The team's Instagram posts generally fell into a few types. The first type showed diverse **examples** of books on a particular topic. Though the team used holidays as starting points, they sought to go beyond what was obvious and provided as wide of a variety as possible. For example, for International Francophonie Day (figure 3.10-3.11), the post showed not only French titles from France, but also from Algeria, Belgium, Canada, French Polynesia, Haiti, Morocco, the Republic of the Congo, and Vietnam.

The second type of post highlighted a specific **database**. The UCLA Library has access to hundreds of databases, and the team aimed to raise awareness of those with area studies



**Figures 3.10–3.11.** Instagram posts that highlight diverse examples on a specific topic and a specific database.

content. To emphasize ways geographic areas and topics can intersect, the team sometimes used more than one holiday for their posts. For instance, they combined World Refugee Day and World Music Day (figure 3.11) to highlight five movies on Kanopy that reflect both holidays, such as *Sierra Leone's Refugee All-Stars* and *Sonita: An Afghan Feminist Rapper*.

The third type of Instagram post featured a specific **collection**. IAS has collections based on format, genre, or topic, and the team wanted to showcase some of them. For International Holocaust Remembrance Day (figure 3.12), the team featured the library's collection of *Yizker-bikher*, or memorial books written by survivors to commemorate their families and communities destroyed during the Holocaust.




---

**Figures 3.12–3.13.** Instagram posts that highlight a specific IAS collection and a local figure.

---

The fourth type of post spotlighted a **local figure**. Because IAS is also responsible for ethnic studies and most UCLA students are Californians, the team featured figures with ties to the Los Angeles area. On the Day for Remembrance of the Slave Trade and Its Abolition (figure 3.13), they spotlighted Biddy Mason, a former slave turned LA landowner and philanthropist, using pictures from the library's digitized Miriam Matthews Photograph Collection. Even though UCLA does not have that many Black students, it is important that they and their classmates know that African Americans have had a role in the city's history for a long time.

The last type responded to **current events**. When the US was pulling out of Afghanistan in 2022, there was so much coverage that focused on the war that the IAS team wanted to counter that by showcasing novels, memoirs, and poetry books about the country and

its people (figure 3.14). When other countries are featured in the news, the stories rarely focus on the cultures and histories of those peoples, but IAS collections can provide a fuller picture of not only what led to these events but also a more humanizing perspective of those affected by the events. By responding to current events in this way, the team is adding to conversations that students may be having as well as acknowledging students with ties to these events and locations.



**Figure 3.14.** An Instagram post responding to a current event, the US pullout from Afghanistan.

Through these different types of Instagram posts, the team aimed to raise student awareness of the variety of resources, topics, and formats available to them from different regions of the world. Simultaneously, these posts provided representation for BIPOC students who may have ties to the featured areas and figures, while demonstrating that geography and research fields can intersect in a multitude of ways.

## IAS Strategy 2: Reading Lists

Reading lists are another way to promote IAS collections and are intended to create awareness of diverse international authors and works and show the connections between



regions. The IAS Outreach Team particularly wanted to expose research areas that may be new to students, underscoring the convergence between geographic areas and topics, while providing a spotlight on places that our diverse student population may be from or may not be aware of. The reading lists, which came out quarterly, were also a way to get the whole department involved in the team's outreach efforts.

The team produced five lists from spring 2021 through summer 2022. The examples in figures 3.15 and 3.16 are the summer 2021 and fall 2021 lists. Acknowledging that most people had been unable to travel as usual for over a year due to the pandemic, the first example gave a nod to summer travel by curating novels with a great sense of place—i.e., that have descriptions that give the reader an idea of what a place looks or feels like. To mark the change to the darkest part of the year, the team created the supernatural and horror list, featuring works, both fictional and scholarly, that explore the otherworldly and the frightening. A sense of place and folklore are such integral components of cultures that these themed lists make great starting points for students who may wish to learn more about aspects of their heritage or those of others. The other two regular lists were on poets (spring 2021) and scholarly and nonfiction works by women about women (winter 2022). As IAS librarians and staff wanted to provide as much representation as possible, they selected works by authors of diverse backgrounds from different countries or territories for each reading list and included those in other languages. This highlights the fact that IAS collections include numerous languages and acknowledges that, as previously mentioned, more than 50 percent of our students do not only speak English at home and some are international students.



**Figures 3.15 and 3.16.** Social media posts for reading lists on sense of place and supernatural/horror.

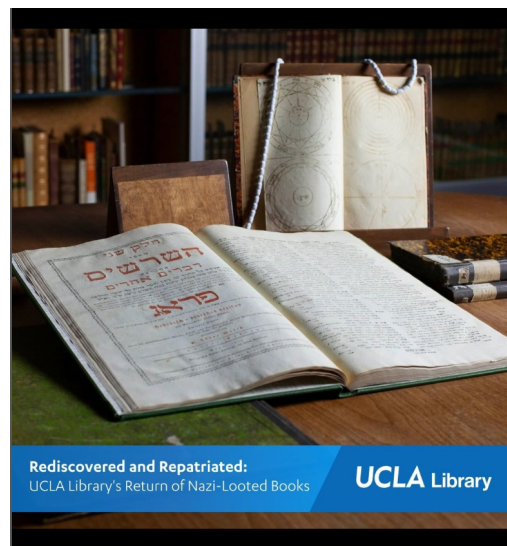
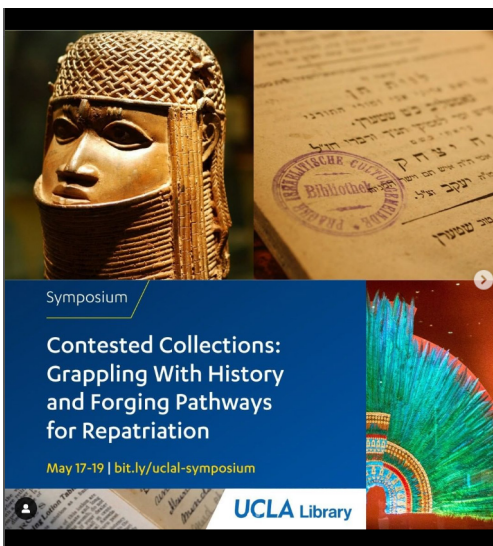
In addition to the reading lists mentioned, the team built on one created by team member Orum the previous year and released the second annual Black History Month (BHM) Quick Picks, designed to showcase Black creators to read, watch, and follow.

While the regular reading lists are intended to show users, especially students, that IAS has resources on all sorts of topics, the BHM Quick Picks are intended to appeal to those who may be interested in contemporary popular culture or looking for something more leisurely to offset the rigors of academia.

## IAS Strategy 3: Programs

Programs are intended not only to highlight IAS' work and collections but also to engage the campus community by delving into specific topics. Albuero and team's initial strategy was to produce quarterly programs, with a mixture of substantive and quick programs, but they seized an opportunity and ended up with a first program that was much bigger in scope, taking five months to plan and execute. In 2021, the library was contacted by the Jewish Museum in Prague (JMP) about Nazi-looted books in its collections that they wanted repatriated. The IAS department thought it was a good idea to do a program related to it, and the outreach team decided to put it within a broader global and historical context. To coincide with a repatriation ceremony, the team held an online symposium and created a digital exhibit.

The symposium, titled *Contested Collections: Grappling with History and Forging Pathways for Repatriation*<sup>17</sup> (figure 3.17), consisted of four programs held over three days. The symposium featured a diverse slate of foreign and domestic experts who discussed the complicated histories of Western cultural heritage collections, the expropriation of artifacts through colonialism and war, the politics and ethics of ownership and restitution, and



**Figures 3.17 and 3.18.** Instagram posts for the repatriation symposium and digital exhibit.



decolonization in libraries, archives, and museums. The digital exhibit, titled *Rediscovered and Repatriated: UCLA Library's Return of Nazi-Looted Books*<sup>18</sup> (figure 3.18), contextualized the books that were repatriated within the history of Jews in Prague, World War II and Nazism, and the JMP library as well as provided description of the books, their rediscovery, and their repatriation.

The primary audience for the symposium was library, archival, and museum workers and students; however, the team also promoted the event to scholars in anthropology, area studies, art history, history, Indigenous studies, and law. The team sought to expose people, including students, in these fields to these interconnected topics that are so relevant to countries in the global south. In addition, by bringing these issues to the 700+ attendees, particularly those in the library world, they hoped to change the way these workers approach the collections that they make available to students and other users.

## IAS Strategy: Results, Lessons, and Future Steps

As planned, the IAS Outreach Team launched a three-pronged outreach initiative in 2021–2022 and made some headway in promoting IAS collections and highlighting international issues. The infographic below (figure 3.19) shows some of their accomplishments. Not having done much social media in the previous years, the IAS team's posts meant a 1,000 percent increase. The reading lists featured works from 120 countries and in forty-five languages. These certainly went a long way toward highlighting IAS' diverse collections. The repatriation symposium and exhibit brought to the forefront a global issue that is widely discussed in the museum world but mostly invisible in libraries and archives. In discussing the colonial and racist history of library collecting practices, this symposium has initiated conversations about provenance at the UCLA Library and hopefully will have sparked related discussions elsewhere.

The team learned a number of lessons from the first fifteen months' activities. While they did accomplish their goals of making the somewhat invisible IAS collections more visible, featuring diverse communities in order to represent BIPOC students and highlighting the intersections of geographic and subject areas through their social media posts and reading lists, they did not reach a wide audience. While the UCLA Library's Instagram account does have the most engagement of all the libraries' social media platforms, the level of engagement, particularly from students, did not warrant the amount of staff time it took to plan and make the posts. In addition, since IAS did not have its own official hashtag and could only use the building location's hashtag and name in its captions, students and other audiences could not tie these posts and resources to IAS. As for the reading lists, the team did not come up with a good way of promoting them, especially to students. In terms of programs, the team learned, through the repatriation symposium, that it is possible to reach a wide audience and that virtual programs enabled greater participation from international and non-local speakers and audiences.



**Figure 3.19.** An infographic showing some of the IAS Outreach Team’s 2021–2022 achievements.

Based on these lessons learned, the IAS Outreach Team's 2022–2023 strategy is more focused on programming initiatives. Their main activities, including social media, reading lists, and programs, will revolve around the central theme of diasporas. This is not only a great way of highlighting diasporic communities—large and small—around the world and the IAS collections related to them, but it also shows movements around the world, the connections between regions, and why Los Angeles and UCLA have such a diverse population. Since IAS' focus is international, the team will be continuing with virtual programs to facilitate the involvement of foreign speakers and audiences. In addition, the team will be conducting in-person events and is being more intentional about involving the campus community, especially BIPOC students, in these. One of the planned activities is a student showcase, where students who are members of diasporic communities share their creative expressions related to migration and notions of home and belonging.

## Conclusion

A generalized approach to outreach does not work for a university that is as large and diverse as UCLA; in some cases, a generalized approach is likely to marginalize historically disadvantaged populations like BIPOCs further. Even so, most libraries also do not have the capacity to create multiple outreach strategies to meet the unique needs of their various campus communities. As a result, individual departments are often forced to strategize how to utilize their resources best to meet the specific needs of their respective patrons. At the UCLA Library, the Sciences and International and Area Studies (IAS) outreach teams independently found creative ways to engage their communities and achieve their goals despite limitations in staffing, time, resources, and budgets. Both teams focused on integrating inclusion into their efforts, making the invisible visible, reaching the BIPOC student community, and creating space and opportunity to explore the intersections of disciplines, geographies, and identities. However, their strategies and implementation were different from each other.

The Sciences Outreach Team used the ACE framework and built a strategy by first assessing user needs in order to ensure the activities were relevant to their target community. Authors Romero and Ali worked closely with student outreach assistants and student groups to contribute to student success by providing instruction and information about events and resources as well as increasing student inquiry into and expression of the intersections between science and society. The team met the students where they were comfortable expressing their social identities—whether through their student groups, in blog posts, or through art—to create a more inclusive environment that BIPOC students craved. Through these efforts, they made what was invisible—the BIPOC student and faculty experience and the intersections between science and society—more visible.

The IAS Outreach Team's process was more informal and based on previous outreach experience and ongoing departmental needs. Author Alburo worked with a core team, composed of librarians and staff, to amplify its diverse and inclusive collections and resources as well as to interrogate and emphasize the complex and interrelated connections between collections and communities, whether at the campus, local, or global level. In making IAS collections more visible, the team aimed to reach BIPOC students by providing representation of BIPOC faces, stories, and scholarship. In focusing on the intersections between geographic areas and fields of discipline, they aspired to indirectly shed light on the intricacies of and interconnectedness in BIPOC identities and experiences. At the same time, by creating awareness of these collections, they endeavored to open minds to underrepresented narratives and potentially reduce existing biases.

Both the Sciences and IAS teams used a variety of approaches—from instruction and programs to social media and blogs, a sense of experimentation, and a high degree of flexibility to achieve their goals of highlighting people, collections, research areas, and identities in ways that centered inclusion and equitable representation. While libraries will continue to face capacity problems, these teams show that creativity partnered with assistance from student assistants or a team sharing the load can go a long way. The desire to help BIPOC students feel seen and valued can be an especially motivating factor for teams that include BIPOC members. However, it is important to note that both teams stayed cognizant of their bandwidths and adjusted their expectations and plans accordingly. The examples in this chapter demonstrate that a mindful, antiracist, and/or user-centered approach to outreach can lead to increased visibility for and engagement with BIPOC students. In sharing their processes and experiences, the authors hope that readers can find some inspiration in the work they have so far accomplished.

## Notes

1. Amy Faye Bocko, LuMarie Guth, and Micha Broadnax, "Library Response to Black Liberation Collective: A Review of Student Calls for Change and Implications for Anti-Racist Initiatives in Academic Libraries," *Reference Services Review* 50 (1) (2022): 5–24, <https://doi.org/10.1108/RSR-07-2021-0036>.
2. These are 2021–22 figures. "Enrollment," UCLA Academic Planning and Budget, accessed October 17, 2022, <https://apb.ucla.edu/campus-statistics/enrollment>.
3. "Fall Enrollment at a Glance," University of California, accessed October 17, 2022, <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/about-us/information-center/fall-enrollment-glance>.
4. The authors are using the same language from their sources and did not want to mischaracterize what was originally intended by changing the terms.
5. "Common Data Set 2021–2022," UCLA Academic Planning and Budget, accessed October 17, 2022, <https://apb.ucla.edu/file/6bf8b12b-892f-4a83-87f4-c3d3a35abbca>.
6. "Fall Enrollment at a Glance," University of California.
7. Ibid.
8. "UCLA 2019–20 Undergraduate Profile," UCLA Academic Planning and Budget, accessed October 17, 2022, <https://apb.ucla.edu/file/43270191-33ff-4596-b8c4-1f955105563b>.
9. These are the percentages the authors got when they followed the usual rule of rounding up or down, which did not quite add up to a neat 100%. They thought it would be better to leave as is.
10. Patricia Fields Katopol, "Information Anxiety and African-American Students in a Graduate Education Program," *Education Libraries* (Boston, MA) 35 (1-2) (2012): 5–14, <https://doi.org/10.26443/el.v35i1-2.313>.

11. Kate Pham and Natalie Selzer, “Using Pubmed – Intro to the Advanced Search Builder,” WI+RE - Writing Instruction + Research Education (UCLA Library), accessed October 17, 2022, <https://uclalibrary.github.io/research-tips/using-pubmed/>.
12. Doug Worsham et al., “Your Remote Ebook Roadmap,” WI+RE - Writing Instruction + Research Education (UCLA Library), accessed October 17, 2022, <https://uclalibrary.github.io/research-tips/ebook-access/>.
13. Doug Worsham et al., “Remote Access – Get Configured with VPN or Proxy,” WI+RE - Writing Instruction + Research Education (UCLA Library), accessed October 17, 2022, <https://uclalibrary.github.io/research-tips/get-configured/>.
14. You can view the short film and other 2022 winners here: Lily Kiamanesh, “2022 ‘Science is Art Competition’ Winners!” UCLA Library, accessed October 17, 2022, <https://www.library.ucla.edu/about/news/2022-science-is-art-competition-winners/>.
15. To learn more, see Jade Albuero and Nicollette Brant, “Amplify Your Impact: Reframing Reference as Outreach: Expanding Engagement and Inclusion Through Reference Services,” *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 59, no. 3/4 (2021): 148–55, <https://doi.org/10.5860/rusq.59.3/4.7711>.
16. There are ethnic studies centers on campus that have their own libraries/reading rooms, but with non-circulating materials. Though they are affiliated with the library, they are not managed by it. Their librarians work closely with their respective ethnic studies department.
17. For more information, program recordings, and resources, visit the conference site: Jade Albuero, Tula Orum, Yessenia Perez, Dana Laderer, and Alena Aissing, *Contested Collections: Grappling with History and Forging Pathways for Repatriation*, UCLA Library, accessed October 17, 2022, <https://guides.library.ucla.edu/repatriationsymposium>.
18. To view the exhibit, go to: Shannon Tanhayi Ahari, Jade Albuero, Gissel Rios, and Magaly Salas, *Rediscovered and Repatriated: UCLA Library’s Return of Nazi-Looted Books*, UCLA Library, accessed October 17, 2022, <http://bit.ly/uclal-rediscovered>.

## Bibliography

- Albuero, Jade, and Nicollette Brant. “Amplify Your Impact: Reframing Reference as Outreach: Expanding Engagement and Inclusion Through Reference Services.” *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 59, no. 3/4 (2021): 148–55. <https://doi.org/10.5860/rusq.59.3/4.7711>.
- Albuero, Jade, Tula Orum, Yessenia Perez, Dana Laderer, and Alena Aissing. *Contested Collections: Grappling with History and Forging Pathways for Repatriation*. UCLA Library. Accessed October 17, 2022. <https://guides.library.ucla.edu/repatriationsymposium>.
- Kiamanesh, Lily. “2022 ‘Science is Art Competition Winners!’” UCLA Library. Accessed October 17, 2022. <https://www.library.ucla.edu/about/news/2022-science-is-art-competition-winners/>.
- Pham, Kate, and Natalie Selzer. “Using Pubmed – Intro to the Advanced Search Builder.” WI+RE - Writing Instruction + Research Education. UCLA Library. Accessed October 17, 2022. <https://uclalibrary.github.io/research-tips/using-pubmed/>.
- Tanhay Ahari, Shannon, Jade Albuero, Gissel Rios, and Magaly Salas, *Rediscovered and Repatriated: UCLA Library’s Return of Nazi-Looted Books*. UCLA Library. Accessed October 17, 2022. <http://bit.ly/uclal-rediscovered>.
- UCLA Academic Planning and Budget. “Common Data Set 2021–2022.” Accessed October 17, 2022. <https://apb.ucla.edu/file/6bf8b12b-892f-4a83-87f4-c3d3a35abbca>.
- . “Enrollment.” Accessed October 17, 2022. <https://apb.ucla.edu/campus-statistics/enrollment>.
- . “UCLA 2019–20 Undergraduate Profile.” Accessed October 17, 2022. <https://apb.ucla.edu/file/43270191-33ff-4596-b8c4-1f955105563b>.
- University of California. “Fall Enrollment at a Glance.” Accessed October 17, 2022. <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/about-us/information-center/fall-enrollment-glance>.
- Worsham, Doug, Nadia Brooks, Michael Lima-Sabatini, Kate Pham, Natalie Selzer, Kian Ravaei, Hannah Sutherland, Zoe Borovsky, Scott Martin, and Sylvia Page. “Remote Access - Get Configured with VPN or Proxy.” WI+RE - Writing Instruction + Research Education. UCLA Library. Accessed October 17, 2022. <https://uclalibrary.github.io/research-tips/get-configured/>.
- Worsham, Doug, Chris Lopez, Sylvia Page, Matthew Johnson, Kian Ravaei, Katherine Ramirez, Michael Lima-Sabatini, Ariane Bicho, and Hannah Sutherland. “Your Remote Ebook Roadmap.” WI+RE - Writing Instruction + Research Education. UCLA Library. Accessed October 17, 2022. <https://uclalibrary.github.io/research-tips/ebook-access/>.