>> Michelle Baildon: Hi. This is Michelle Baildon. I'm the collections strategist for arts and humanities and the librarian at MIT libraries.

>> Julia Lanigan: And this is Julia Lanigan. I am the collections assistant and administrative assistant at the MIT libraries.

>> Michelle Baildon: And just to let you know, I have like really bad allergies right now. So please pardon me. I'll try not to cough too much over our presentation. So we're really excited to tell you more about the work that we did over the past year or so, a little more than a year. On the diversity inclusion and social justice task force of our directorate, the MIT directorate. We had recommended that participants take a look at our report in advance. It only just got posted this morning so luckily we had planned to give you a quick overview of the basic work of our report anyway.

And also quickly, a disclaimer. So Julia and I are both members of scholarly communication and collection strategy department at CCS and we just want to be clear that we're speaking from our own individual perspectives as individual participants on the task force, and also as -- from the perspective of members of this department, not as the official voice or the official representation of MIT libraries. And we are hoping, actually, that we might have some other members of our task force on the chat right now and we definitely welcome you guys to chime in and, you know, add your perspective, and, you know, corrections and, you know, share your point of view as well.

So in our really brief time with you, after an overview, Julia and I are each going to focus on two specific sections of the report that both of us had large role in drafting. So both of us were the original drafters, like the first draft of these two sections of the report. And we're going to -- let's go over quickly what they are and also to talk about our thinking behind those sections.

So we know that a lot of times, library presentations focus on, you know, what we did, and today, we are hoping to shift the focus a little bit and talk about why we did what we did for the report. The title of our presentation is Creating a Social Justice Mindset, and it just so happens that the two sections that we're going to go over today are directly relevant to the question of creating a new mindset.

A lot of times in library presentations we focus on process and productivity, and today we're trying to say that ideas and emotions and human interactions and culture are also all key elements of the infrastructure of libraries and have to do with our productivity, and, you know, getting done what we should be doing.

So anyway, any questions about the particulars about our process, about our specific recommendations, updates, since we finished the report, you know, what's next, we're going to mostly put that off to the

Q & A discussion portion, and we also want to point out that we posted a discussion guide to the site and you can use that to help think about, you know, what we should talk about in the Q & A.

So okay. I am going to turn it over now to Julia.

>> Julia Lanigan: Thanks, Michelle. So the central question we were asked to grapple with was how do we operationalize the values of diversity, inclusion and social justice in our daily work? And, you know, often we talk in the abstract about our values, but we continue to have to focus on meeting deadlines, making the purchases we know our users want and trying to do everything efficiently and within a limited budget. But to really make the kind of change that we were, you know, working on here, it requires stepping off of that conveyor belt to really think about how to make these changes, and that's part of what's hard. Some basic facts about how this all came to happen. We were charged with MIT's associate director for collections. He sent out a call to all members of the directator inviting people to express their interest in being a part of this task force, and from those of us who volunteered, he selected eight members. We represented the three departments in the directator. The team was made up of archivists, and support staff. And we convened from March through November and our final report was released in February.

Ultimately, we did a systematic review of all of the areas of our directator and all the areas that are on the slide, but really to talk about it a little bit first, we first met and started just jumping right in there, doing literature review, everyone was finding articles that they thought were exciting, and then we kind of realized that we had to step back for a moment and make sure we were on the same page, and that's when we spent the time to sit down together and draft the definitions, shared understanding and also think about our conceptual framework, and that was really very helpful part of our process. Another topic that I will come back to a little later was the importance of seeking input from all of our colleagues in the directator and giving them multiple opportunities to provide insights to us. And for you back to Michelle.

>> Michelle Baildon: So up on the slide, on the screen, you can see our basic definitions. These are definitions that our group worked on collaboratively, and in combination with our literature review. And this is one of our most fundamental steps, because the definition of diversity means so many different things to so many different people, and what we're talking about here at MIT libraries, and with the task force is a social justice interpretation of diversity. So it's not a question of diversity of opinion or diversity of perspective. It really does have to do with structure the power -- systemic power and balances, which are questions of social justice. And I won't go over the definitions, but the one -- the key thing to know about these definitions is that they're kind of a package, that you can't understand what the MIT libraries -- at least our task force, what we meant about diversity without also understanding our definition of inclusion and our definition of social justice.

So out of our task force, we ended up with over 40 recommendations, and the recommendations broke down across four themes. The first one, scholarly publishing and academic library marketplace was meant to address economic questions, economic concerns. The next two representation of marginalized perspectives and community inclusion and outreach, are meant to address disparities of power based on social and political categories such as, you know, race, gender, ability, et cetera. But representation of marginalized perspectives, address issues about how those hierarchies and how those disparities are expressed in our work, like here in libraries. Community inclusion and outreach addressing how those hierarchies and disparities are expressed here in our community, on campus, in Cambridge and in academic libraries, more broadly. And then the fourth set of recommendations, building organizational infrastructure for diversity, inclusion and social justice, has to do with the kind of organization we need in order to achieve all the other recommendations, like all the other aims of our task force. And Julia will be going over that in a little bit more detail later on.

So that was our quick overview of our entire process, our entire task force work, and now we're going to go into the two sections in a little bit more depth that each of us took a leading role in drafting. So I'm going to start out with the section called big picture, some contexts of our work. So this whole section was inspired and guided by ideas of our director, Chris Burg, who has maintained a really popular, well-read blog called fair librarian, and we are very much inspired by many of her writings on that blog. So the context section is broken up in to two broad sections about power structures that academic libraries basically existed. One about economic systems, and the other about systems of social and political privilege and oppression, and just to acknowledge that those two are interrelated. And we recognize that.

So the section on systems of social and political oppression and privilege, you know, really had to do with ways that our society and culture in the United States, in North America and worldwide are structured around hierarchies and, you know, just to reiterate, categories like race, gender, ability, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, et cetera, in addition to global inequities between the global North and the global South.

The economic section was broken down in to three major pieces. The first about neoliberalism, which to me was actually a new concept that I was not aware of until a few years ago. Neoliberalism really has to do with a dominant ideology in the United States and around the world where the individual market actor is grounded, so logics in metaphors of market exchange come to intrude, or be expressed in areas of our life and our study that may or may not be appropriate, like, for example, higher education.

So an example would be, are we here at universities to produce the most efficient workers for corporations, or are we here, for example, to, you know, prepare our students to be effective local citizens and to take part in civic life. Neoliberalism, one of the areas we talked about.

Another area under economics that we discussed was a commercialization or the over-commercialization of scholarly publishing, and this would be the area that probably most academic librarians are very familiar with, like having to do with consolidation of commercial publishers with a big deal and the ways that ineffective or broken economic system of publishing makes it difficult for us to do our work.

And then the third had to do with the corporatization of libraries, and basically outlining how libraries are now reliant on the mediation of external corporations to provide our most basic functions, from the ILS to discovery layers to access to E-journals through, you know, licensed packages, that libraries are no longer able to provide some of our basic services and resources directly to patrons without the intervention of external corporations.

So academic libraries existing within this particular context, these structures of power, at the same time librarians and archivists have very clearly defined that the values that are articulated by ALA, and other organizations, and these values include diversity, democracy, social responsibility, the public good, you know, access, and that these values have clear implications for how we react to the wider political and social and economic structures that we exist in. And acting on behalf of our professional values suggests our responses, and that includes working together as professionals for a wider change.

So that's the what of the context section. And so now just a few minutes about the why. And so I think we realized that to operationalize the values of diversity inclusion and social justice that we need to create a new mindset here in the MIT libraries, and creating a new mindset requires thought leadership. So as Julia already articulated that there's a gap between our broad statement valued and the daily decisions, the work that we do every day, buying books, cataloging items, serving patrons in the archives, et cetera.

So the next level down under a broad statement of values is really what we were trying to do with this context section, so the idea was to clearly and comprehensively articulate what we see actually happening in the real world so interpreting those high level values, you know, at a large scale, like in the real world, a little bit like articulating, you know, a world view. And so practically speaking, by articulating a world view, like world views have implications and can yield specific actions, so, you know, basically once you have an overall conceptual framework, the actions that the library takes come out logically, like from whatever that world view is. And, you know, without the clear thought leadership, you know, that spells out our assumptions, oftentimes you can have people working at cross purposes with each other. So by providing thought leadership, by revealing the assumptions that we're working, you know, upon, like -- that our work is based on, it actually helps our organizations be more efficient. By not having people working at cross purposes, by making sure that people understand why we're making the changes that we make.

So more specifically, Julia and I, as members of scholarly communication and collection strategy, a new department that was just founded in January of 2016, it is a department based on some big ideas and, like, trying to make some big changes. So our department is formed on the basis of transforming communication towards openness and increased access, and we take the values of open access, diversity and social justice as a lens for framing our decisions. So the formation of our new department preceded the diversity, inclusion and social justice task force, and I think I perceive this task force as an opportunity to set forth a basic document that can provide some clear thinking to help us as a new department understand what exactly it is we're doing, and it was a way to get people on board with this new course.

So all right. I'm going to turn it over now to Julia to talk about the building organizational infrastructure section.

>> Julia Lanigan: Thanks, Michelle. So we may not always think of it this way, but organizational culture is part of the infrastructure. The initial question we were asked to grapple with on this task force was big, and perhaps kind of unique in academic libraries in terms of its focus on our daily work. But if this group simply made a bunch of recommendations, that's not going to automatically make anything happen. It's critical that we all work together to create the bigger change within the organization as a whole, to allow this to happen.

And so to accomplish what we're recommending, and tell you about some things that we've suggested need to be created, and this is all in the report. First thing is a culture that celebrates the values of diversity and inclusion and social justice. Next is a deliberate reprioritization of our work to advance these values.

We need staff members who are knowledgeable about diversity, inclusion and social justice values and committing to making them central to our work. And finally, a cultural -- excuse me -- a culture of mutual respect that extends across work units, departments, directorates and organizational roles. We can't make these kind of innovative changes to the fundamental structures of our work without appropriate training and conversation, and the success of our initiatives depends on all of our staff feeling valued, heard and engaged in their work, because as we noted in the report, for the MIT libraries to focus on making value driven changes in which only some can participate would be far from inclusive.

So some of our specific adjusted strategies towards that end are to, as Michelle mentioned earlier, but more specifically, to adopt definitions of diversity, inclusion, social justice across the whole organization, you know, so we all have a shared understanding of our terminology, to communicate that every member has a role in implementing the statement on diversity, to acknowledge that there is apprehension among some stuff about participating honestly in this type of work and to try to frame it as an opportunity for innovation rather than an opportunity for failure, and finally to recognize and

celebrate our work in the areas of diversity, inclusion and social justice, however small or incremental they may be.

So I think we've only got a couple minutes left, so I think it's time for us to move on to questions.

>> Michelle Baildon: So yeah. Happy to answer any questions.

No questions coming in. Julia, did you want to share maybe a little bit about our process?

>> Julia Lanigan: Sure. People are typing. That's exciting. About our process. Ooh, okay. We got a question, Michelle.

>> Michelle Baildon: There's been a lot of excitement certainly within our department and enthusiasm for the report. In our department at CCS, we are actually using -- like, as we had hoped, we're using the DISJ report as a foundational document, and, in fact, you know, are having discussions about it. We recently had a retreat about defining criteria for a your subscription and retaining subscriptions based on the thinking and the recommendations of the report.

And we've also seen some excitement about it in other parts of the MIT organization. So actually having been invited or given the opportunity to talk about the work of this report in other parts of the organization to help, you know, guide or inspire thinking elsewhere in the MIT libraries.

So anything else?

>> Julia Lanigan: I mean, I think it's still sort of an ongoing process. We released the report, and as Michelle mentioned, got a lot of positive feedback, but things haven't -- you know, we're starting to do things, but things have not been sort of operationalized across the directator yet and I think that we will hear more as things are sort of more put in to practice.

>> Michelle Baildon: So another question from Penn. Some of the practical recommendations made and implemented? So the report was only just released officially in February, so right now, we are very much so in the discussing and thinking phase, but one particular recommendation that's coming up really soon, like in the summer, is that we are going to be inviting a representative from our sort of mainstream book vendor approval plan vendor to come in and talk to us about how we can better structure our approval plan to meet our recommendations around diversity inclusion, around representation of marginalized perspectives, including more independent press view, et cetera. So that would be one example of a practical recommendation made.

>> Julia Lanigan: And I think we have time for about one more question.

>> Michelle Baildon: Let's see. How do you address socially conservative peers in this framework? I'm not sure if you mean peers here in the libraries. So I guess I would say that the interpretation that we took, like, is very much founded on the stated values of ALAs, and that we think that our interpretation -- you know, it's hard to question the basic values of our profession, and we think that our recommendations are in line with that. I'm not sure. That's not really something that's come up.

>> Julia Lanigan: That hasn't really come up. And I'm just realizing that it's 2:52, so maybe Robin wants us to stop.

>> Robin: Thank you so much, Michelle and Julia. That was a really wonderful and important presentation. And just a reminder that if we didn't get through the questions, you can join Michelle and Julia in their online forum. And next up is Helen. And just a reminder that Helen's presentation is pre-recorded. So you can engage with her afterwards in the forum as well. . .