

## *The K-State Libraries: Creating the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Multicultural Library*

### *History*

The K-State Libraries support of multicultural library services traces back to the social and Civil Rights movements of the 1960s and Kansas State University's desire to establish a center committed to the study of culture and identity. In 1971, the Kansas State Board of Regents authorized the establishment of the Minority Resource & Research Center that later became known as the Multicultural Resource & Research Center. The center was dedicated and renamed the Dow Chemical Multicultural Resource Center (DowMRC) on October 5, 2001 in recognition of funding provided by Dow Chemical Company. Headquartered in Midland, Michigan, Dow Chemical Company is a multinational company that values and advances the ideology of diversity in corporate America.

### *The DowMRC Endowment*

This fund, established by Dow Chemical Company in 2001 and used at the discretion of the Dean of Libraries, supports library acquisitions, professional development, and support for multicultural programming on campus and in the community for which the K-State Libraries is sponsor or co-sponsor. Funds are made available upon request through a sponsorship application form available on the web at <http://www.lib.k-state.edu/depts/dowmrc/index.html>.

### *K-State Libraries Multicultural Mission*

To serve as an interdisciplinary resource for students, faculty, staff, and community members who are interested in exploring the reality of human diversity, the changing landscape of American demographics, and the impact of globalization.

### *Vision*

As the K-State Libraries look ahead, we want to make sure that we are responding to the need of the university community for multicultural resources and programming. Since its inception, the K-State environment has seen a slow but steady growth in the number of students from underrepresented groups. In addition, international programs have grown, resulting in an increase in the number of international students in Manhattan and in the number of K-State students going abroad. In order to remain a relevant and vibrant service on campus, we must adopt a vision for the K-State Libraries that advances a deep and broad understanding of diversity and multiculturalism that fosters mutual awareness, respect, and dialog.

A guiding document in this effort is *The IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations) Manifesto*, approved by the IFLA Board in 2006 and endorsed by UNESCO's Information for All Programme in 2008. The manifesto recognizes the foundational principles of libraries are consonant with the goals of diversity and

multiculturalism, making the library a natural “gateway to a cultural diverse society in dialog.” The manifesto notes that “library services are driven by their commitment to the principles of fundamental freedoms and equity of access to information and knowledge for all, in the respect of cultural identity and values.” The document can be viewed in its entirety at [://www.ifla.org/VII/s32/pub/MulticulturalLibraryManifesto.pdf](http://www.ifla.org/VII/s32/pub/MulticulturalLibraryManifesto.pdf)

The document outlines key missions for multicultural library services, management and operations, core actions, and other strategies and resources to implement the multicultural library. Central to the document is the core principle that libraries adopt an “integrated service approach” where core services for diverse and multicultural populations are centralized and not separate or set apart. To achieve that expectation, we have identified new objectives for the Libraries that incorporate the DowMRC’s services and resources physically and virtually to create seamless access to human and library resources on multiculturalism and repurpose the Center’s space to allow for internationalization of the Center and to create community space for teaching and learning.

### Collections

- Reuniting printed materials currently housed in the DowMRC with materials in the Hale Library stacks to increase browsability, provide a larger selection of materials to choose from in the main collection, and reduce confusion for users who now need to go to multiple locations for materials on a common theme.
- Continue to provide a ready reference collection (e.g. dictionaries, cultural atlases) and new books display in the DowMRC to encourage use of multicultural materials.
- Add international reading/language learning material to the Libraries’ collections.
- Expand virtual multicultural collections including finding aids for print materials and increased digital collections

### Services:

- Centralize information and reference services on second floor to meet basic needs for multicultural information for all K-State students and provide appointment-based service for individuals and classes with more advanced/specialized needs in the DowMRC
- Develop language learning and practice center in DowMRC
- Provide classroom and individual instruction for American Ethnic Studies and other multidisciplinary and multicultural courses.

- Continue to develop outreach/community support programs and services that help the university community gain access to cultural, heritage, and educational materials and programs.

Space:

- Create a learning space in the DowMRC with a collaborative workstation and adaptable, comfortable furniture for small group discussion, study, and teaching as well as informal gathering.
- Add individual computer workstations.

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