

Cultural Diversity Competency's Role in Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement

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Abstract:

In response to the 2010 Statement on Diversity and Inclusion then Council member Helen Wong Smith introduced the precepts of Cultural Diversity Competency (CDC) in 2014. After participating in this full-day workshop, Council and staff recommended it be offered to all members free of charge to emphasize the importance of this initiative. Cultural diversity competency is a development process allowing us to expand the archival record and share the importance of archives as essential evidence of society, especially to those traditionally under-represented in our collections. It provides the tools to function with awareness, knowledge, and interpersonal skill when engaging people of different backgrounds, assumptions, beliefs, values, and behaviors to effectively work and communicate with the diversity of cultures including those we work alongside with and those we serve. This workshop provided the four skills to employ CDC and the five stages individuals and organizations could implement to improve relations with internal and external communities. Participants were challenged to examine personal perceptions and provided with strategies to increase inclusionary practices.

The session will present the precepts of CDC and the feedback from the workshops and webinars seeking to quantify its qualitative benefits to our profession.

About the Author:

Helen Wong Smith, MLIS, CA, FSAA has worked with diverse populations for over 35 years in Hawaiian repositories including Hawaiian Collection Librarian at the University of Hawai'i Hilo and lead archivist for the Pacific Island Network of the National Park Service. Introducing Cultural Diversity Competence to SAA in 2014 she has delivered workshops, webinars, and course instruction within the profession and to graduate students.