

#ACRLStudentSuccess

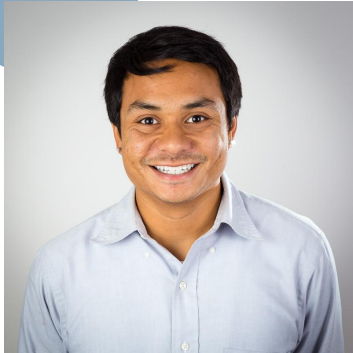
# Measured Success

Critical Perspectives on  
Student Success Librarianship





# Who We Are



- Alex Valencia
- (he/him/his)
- NC State University
- Student Success Librarian (2020- )




- Jesus Espinoza
- (he/him)
- University of Michigan
- Student Success Librarian (2019-)




- Melody Rood
- (she/her)
- University of North Carolina at Greensboro
- Student Success Librarian (2019~)



- Nicky Andrews
  - (she/they)
  - University of San Francisco
  - Instruction/First Year Experience Librarian (2019~)
- 

# Land Acknowledgement



*"We acknowledge that ACRL 2021 was originally planned to take place on the traditional land of the first people of Seattle, the Duwamish People past and present, and honor with gratitude the land itself and the Duwamish Tribe."*

[...https://www.duwamishtribe.org/land-acknowledgement](https://www.duwamishtribe.org/land-acknowledgement)

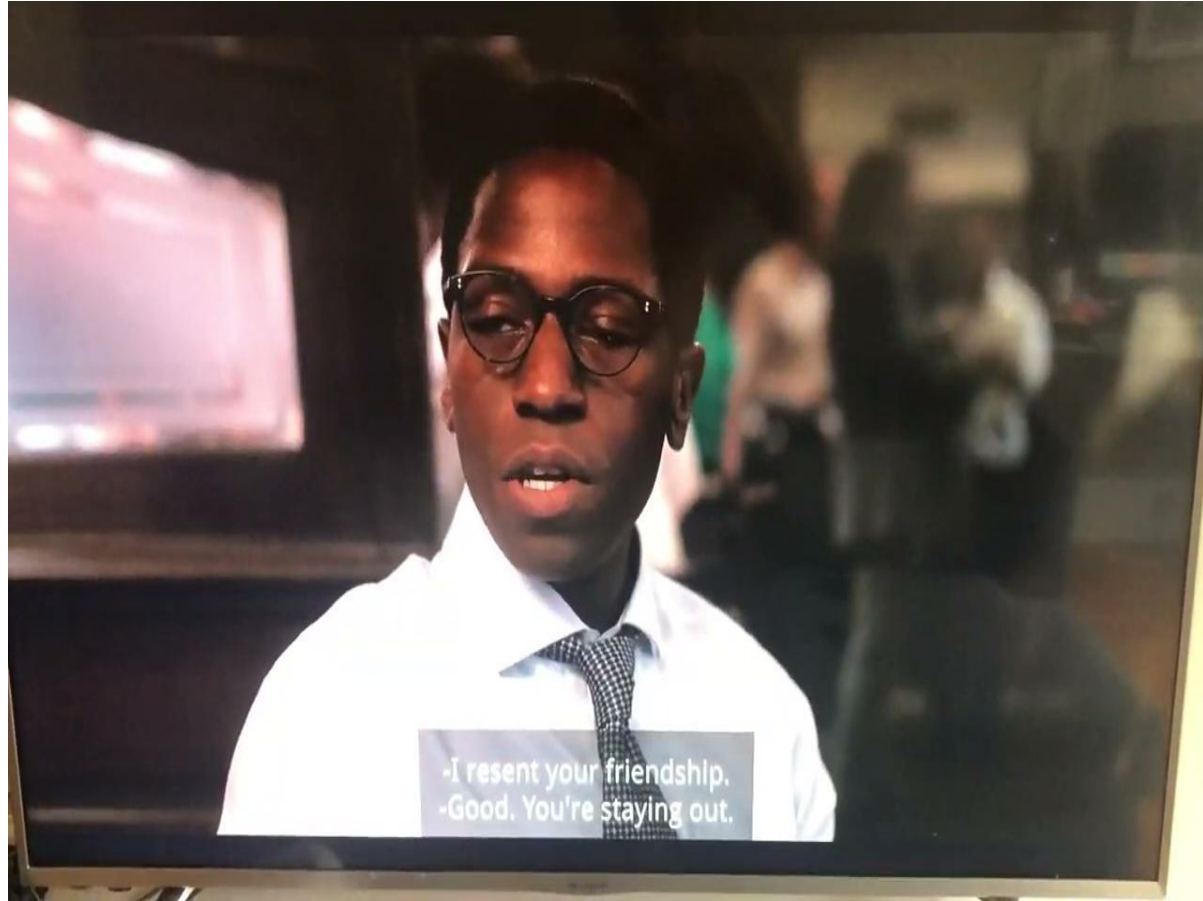
**REAL RENT  
DUWAMISH**

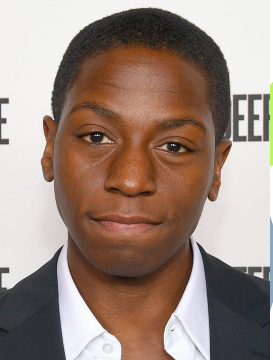


**realrentduwamish.org**

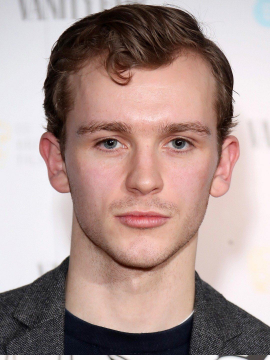


# Episode 1, Season 1: Industry 2020 HBO





Gus



Robert



Hari

## Episode 1, Season 1: Industry 2020 HBO

**Gus:** “All the outreach guys are together... of course”

**Hari:** Its a scheme for-

**Gus:** Diversity hires... I knoooww

**Robert:** Gus thinks he’s above all that

**Gus:** I resent your friendship...






# Expectations Vs. Reality



# Expectations vs. Reality

- These are new positions
    - Half of us report to other Student Success positions
  - Not a lot of guidance on how to progress
    - Generalist duties
    - Unspoken, specialist duties/expectations
    - Walking into tricky situations
    - Hiring first-gen librarians - we are least likely to know how to navigate academia
  - Other duties as assigned
    - Committee work - constantly in meetings or doing service work
    - Anti-racist, equity, diversity, inclusion, social-justice work
    - Ad-hoc student assistance
- 

# Finding Our Place

- How are we valued?
  - Navigating overlap and lack of autonomy
  - Are we hired for our skills, or for what we represent demographically?
- Feedback from peers
  - Transition from resident to permanent librarian role
- Are our duties beneath others?
  - Inheriting job duties that were clearly not enjoyed by our predecessors
  - Expectations we absorb all Library 101-style work
  - Anything can be “student success adjacent”
- Faculty relationships
  - Challenge of developing relationships with students during a one-shot
  - Connection? Get to the databases!





# What is helping?

- Mentorship
  - Official - policies, jargon, systems
  - Unofficial - local area, historical context, and food!
- Supervisory Support
  - Huge help with onboarding and welcoming process
  - Some supervisors have/had similar duties
- Kindness
  - Is kindness what we need?



# Definition, Assessment, & Perceptions



# Definition, Assessment & Perceptions

- Definition of Student Success is nebulous
  - Institutional definitions
- Assessment is an ongoing challenge
  - Literature focuses on correlation as causation
  - Among the panelists we have used things like attendance numbers, survey questions, reflection and anecdotal assessment (perceived impact and engagement during programs; continuing relationships with campus partners)
- Program level assessment is ongoing
  - Student program assessment survey





# Definition, Assessment & Perceptions

- Perceptions of Student Success work
  - As opposed to Subject Specialists our counterparts and partners on campus are folks in student life or student services - how are these partnerships valued as opposed to those with faculty?
  - Focus on serving non-traditional students



# Student Success Roles, Identity and Care

# Identity

Do you identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, or People of Color)?

27 responses

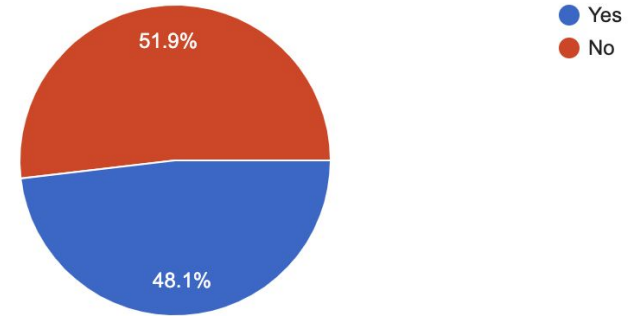
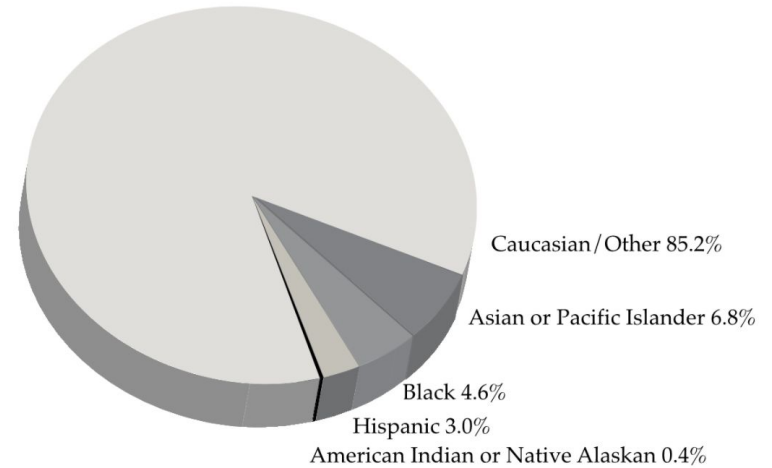


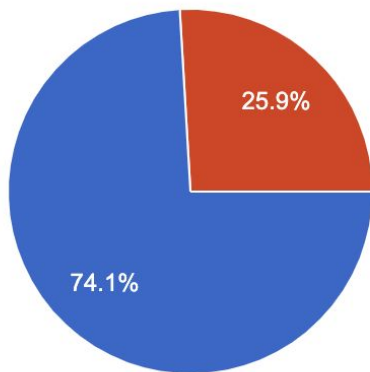
Figure 1: Race/Ethnicity of Professional Staff in US ARL University Libraries, FY 2014–2015



# First in Position

Are you the first person in this position?

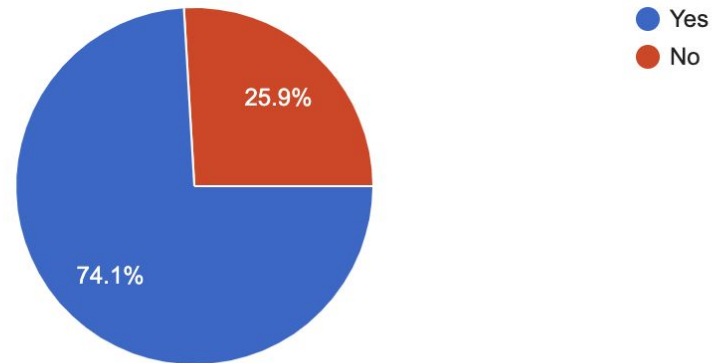
27 responses



# Early Career Librarian

Would you describe yourself as an early career librarian?

27 responses




# Potential Challenges

- Typecast
- **Job growth and Career Path??**
- Job Ambiguity
  - Being treated as a “rover”
- **Burnout**
- Traditional Library Constraints
  - Opportunities to work with faculty
- Feelings of work being “dumped”
- Transferable skills





# Chances for Opportunity

- Ownership of the role of being a liaison between the library and diverse student groups
  - Define the role
  - Finding the freedom in ambiguity
  - Opportunities for management experience
  - Develop programs that become staples
  - Professional development and advancement
  - General acknowledgement
- 



# 2020 Reflections




# 2020 Reflections: COVID-19

- Newer librarians during the pandemic
  - Time spent virtual vs. on campus
- Budget health
  - Tied to student enrollment and recruitment
  - Increased workload for Student Success departments and offices
- Increased use of “Student Success” as an umbrella term
  - Used to justify decisions that seemed dangerous
- Quick switch to virtual setting
  - Noticed a lack of sympathy for student realities
- Anxiety around job security



# COVID-19 continued

- Pressure to recreate the “in-person experience”
    - Many ongoing engagement events moved to less engaging formats
      - Library’s involvement with orientation
      - Welcome week events
    - Outreach & Engagement
      - Fewer student facing engagements and a shift in collaboration expectations
      - Perception of not doing work
      - Effort vs. Reality and how that affects annual reviews
      - Opportunity to look at events with a new lens
- 

# Summer Protests

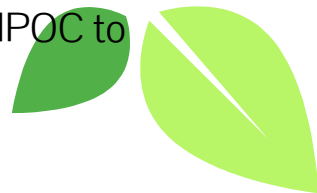
- New or renewed interests in EDI and Anti-Racism
- Sense of urgency
- Promises were made last summer
- Waiting for the follow through & accountability with predominantly white management
- Departmental vs. institutional support





# Takeaways

- We are all new in our roles, weathering instability - things are precarious but also have huge potential to solidify and improve
- We love our students, but our pride and care for them cannot stand-in for our own well-being and professional growth
- We notice when we're being given “grunt” work that nobody else wants to do, but we also notice when people invest in our professional development with things we want to explore
- We are committed to our work, and hope to stay in libraries for a long time. However retention requires institutional change beyond the ability of BIPOC to endure racism in the workplace



The image features a white background with several decorative green elements on the left side. There are four solid green shapes: a large circle at the top left, a smaller circle at the top center, a leaf-shaped shape at the bottom left, and another leaf-shaped shape at the bottom center. A large, teardrop-shaped leaf is positioned in the upper middle, containing a close-up photograph of green wheat stalks with developing grain heads.

# Thanks!

Join the listserv:  
[StudentSuccessLibrarians@wiw.org](mailto:StudentSuccessLibrarians@wiw.org)