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### Partners in Mission: A Critical Examination of the Library as a Locus for Social Justice

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# Partners in Mission: A Critical Examination of the Library as a Locus for Social Justice

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Our research explores with a critical lens  
the impact academic libraries have,  
on their own and in collaboration with campus partners,  
in promoting social justice at their institutions.

Inquiry #1:

*Who are we?*

Inquiry # 2:

*What do we do?*



## Inquiry #1: *Who are we?*

In May 2017, a demographic survey was sent to AJCU Library Directors with a request to distribute to all their library staff. The intent of this survey was to explore the question:

**What is the current race/ethnic, gender, religious, socio-economic, disability status and sexual orientation of AJCU librarians and how does this align with the make-up of our students?**



## Inquiry #1: *Who are we?*

### Response Rate of Survey:

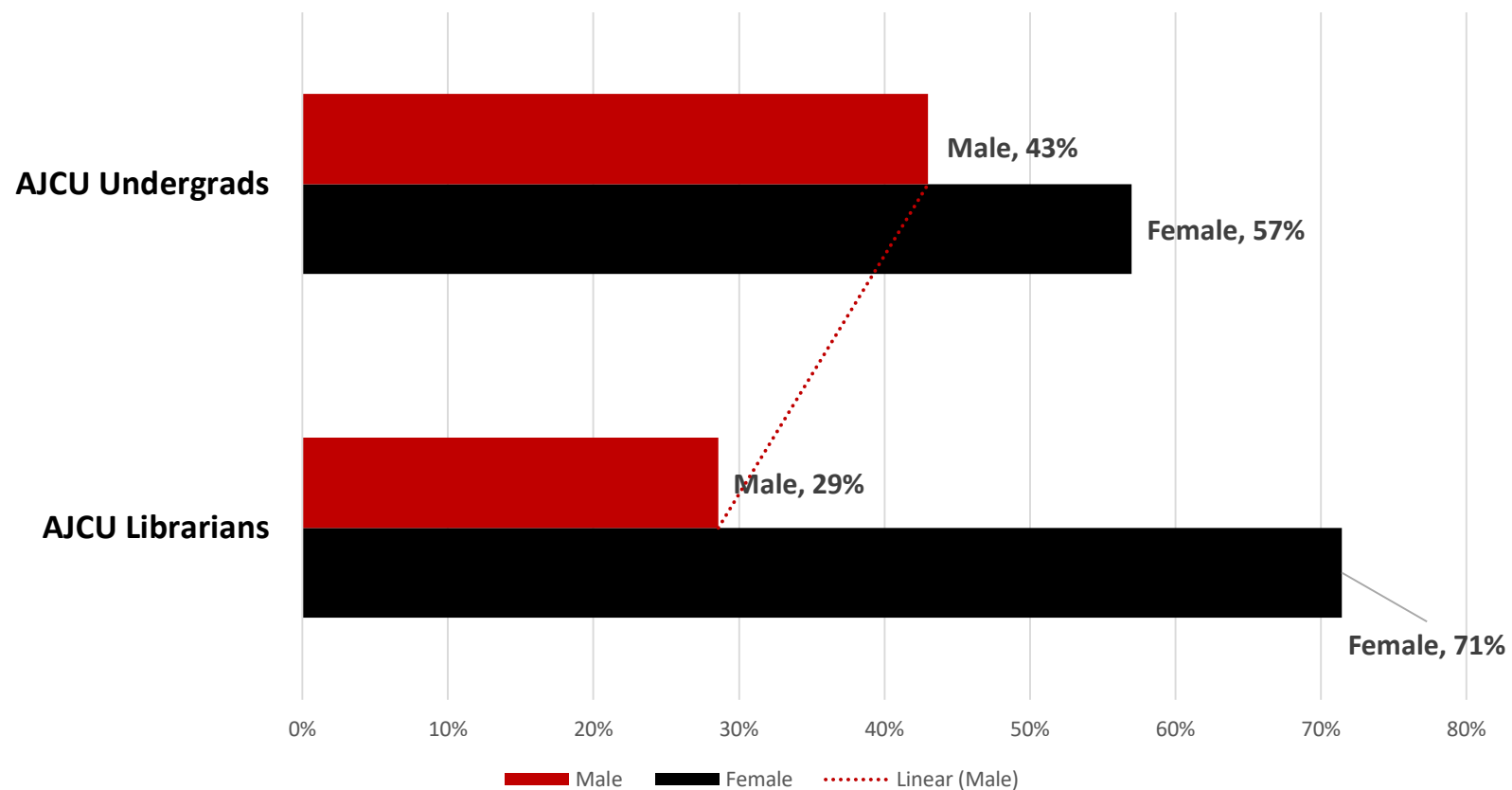
- 175 people responded\* (19%)
  - 112 professional librarians
  - 39 paraprofessionals
  - 24 other
- 90% of responders were full-time

\* We estimate 935 total library employees over AJCU schools.



## Inquiry #1: *Who are we?*

### Sex Breakdown AJCU Students and Librarians



**NOTE:**

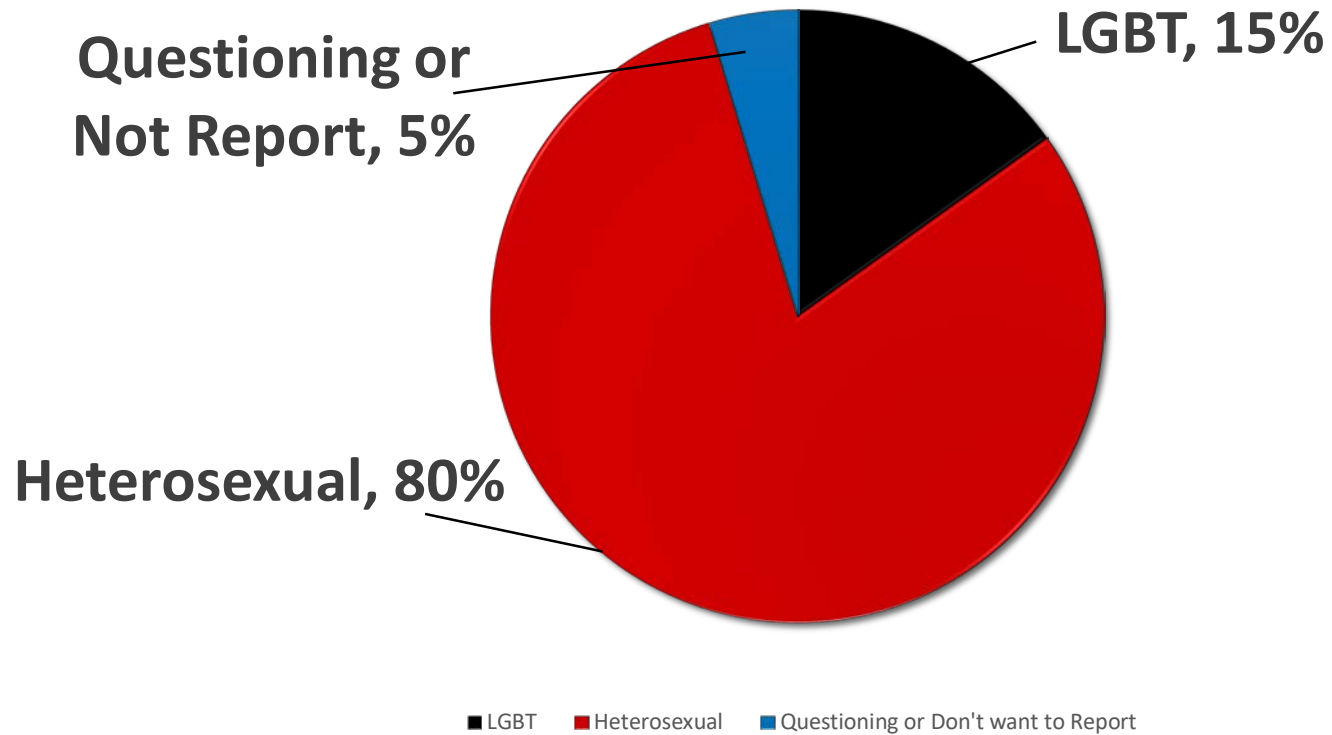
AJCU students sex breakdown matches national averages (AJCU, 2014) & (NCES, 2014).

Nationwide librarian female/male ratio is 81%/19% (ALA, 2012).



**Inquiry #1: *Who are we?***

## AJCU Library Staff Sexual Orientation Self Identification



Millennials

Of those born  
1980-1998,  
aka Millenials,  
7.3% identify as  
LGBT  
(Gates, 2017)



## Inquiry #1: *Who are we?*

# Religion

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### AJCU LIBRARY STAFF

Catholic: 24%

Protestant: 26%

Unaffiliated: 43%

- Atheist/Agnostic 19%
- Claim no religious preference 24%

Other: 7%

### MILLENNIALS

Catholic: 16%

Protestant: 36%

Unaffiliated (nones): 36%

Jewish: 2%

Other: 10%

(Pew, 2014)

### AJCU STUDENTS

Catholic: 54%

Other Christian: 15%

Jewish: 1%

Muslim: 1%

Undeclared: 21%

Other: 7%

(AJCU, 2014) Note: FY 12-13 data



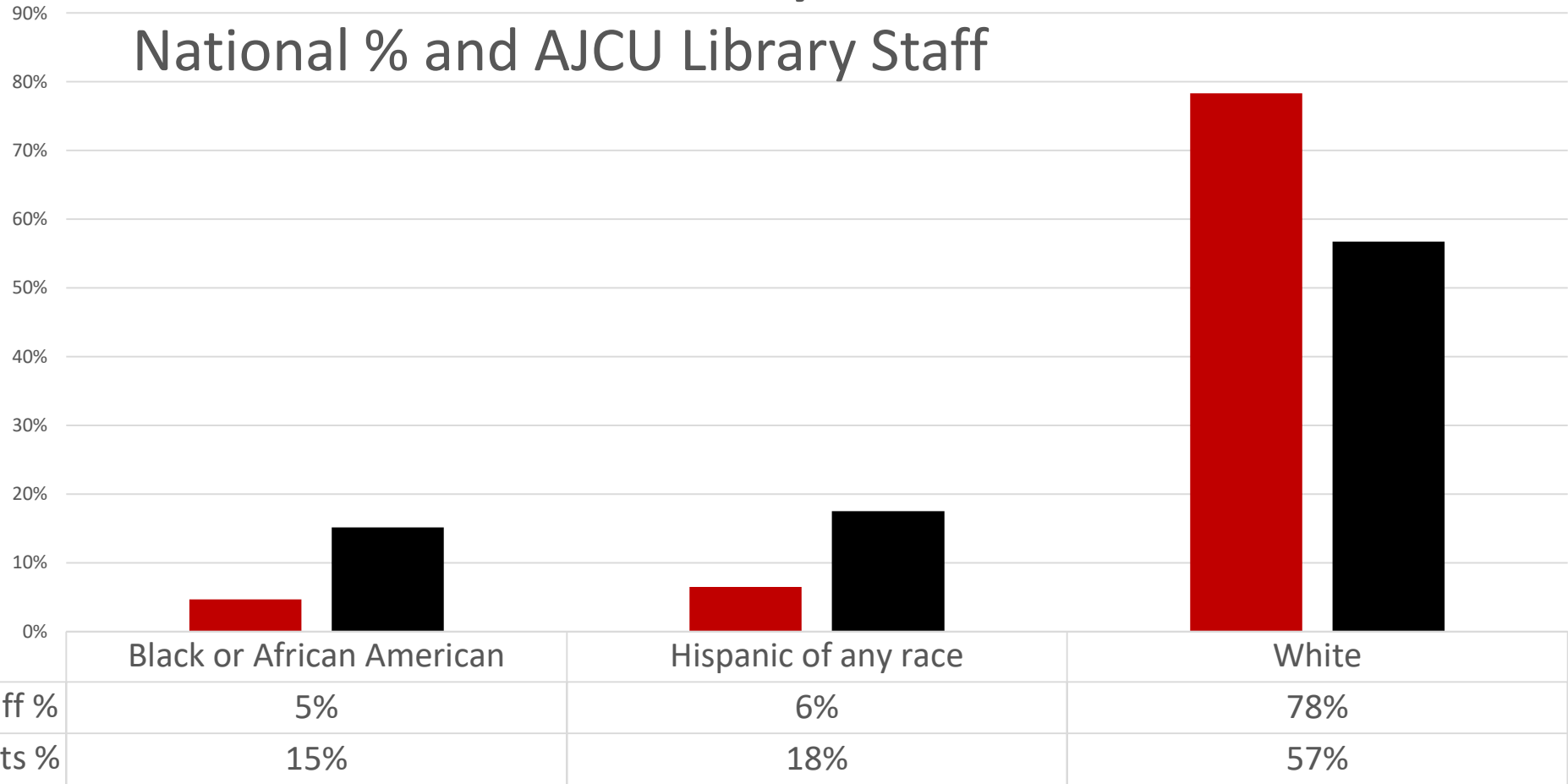


## Inquiry #1: *Who are we?*

# Race/Ethnicity

## National % and AJCU Library Staff

71% of  
AJCU  
students  
are White  
  
(AJCU, 2014)



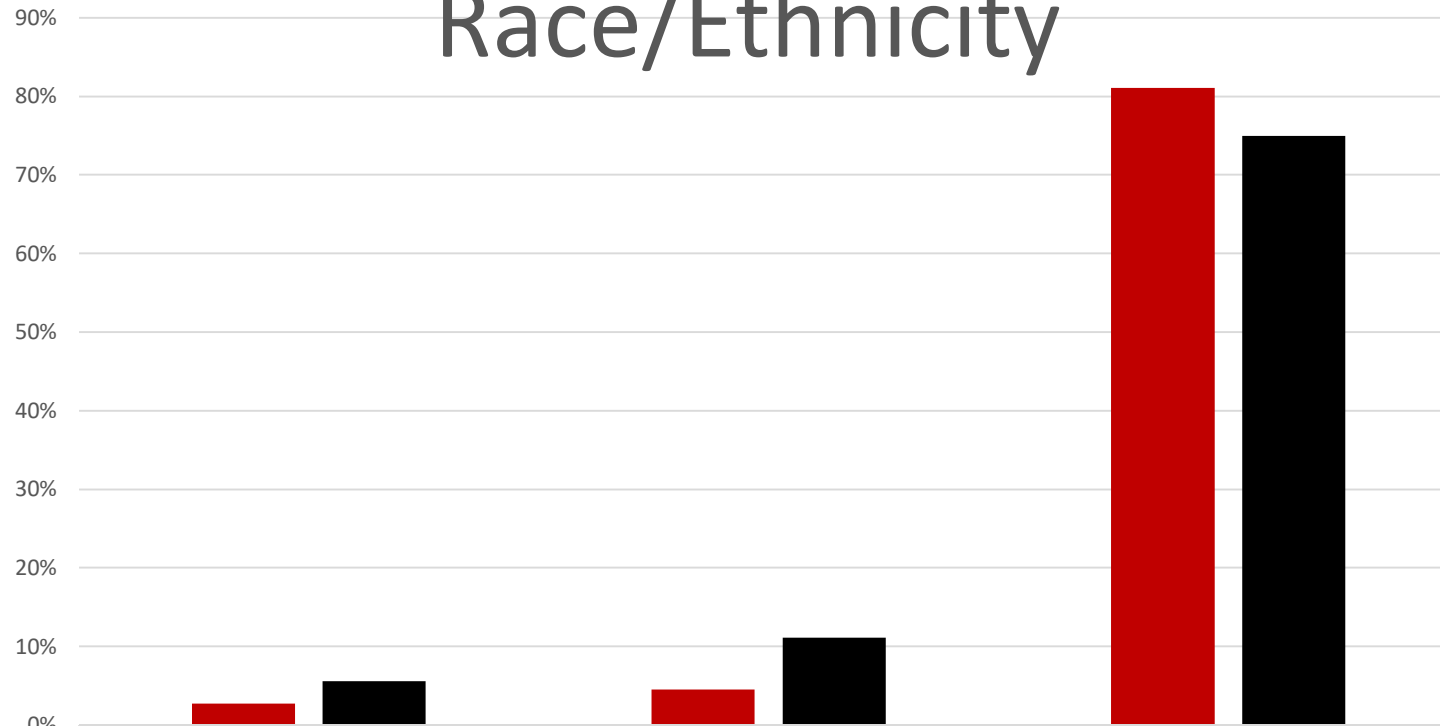


## Inquiry #1: *Who are we?*

77% of US full time faculty are White (NCES, 2017).

86% of academic libraries are White (ALA, 2012)

# Race/Ethnicity



■ AJCU Librarians %

■ AJCU Paraprofessionals %

3%

6%

5%

11%

81%

75%



## Inquiry #2: *What do we do?*

Survey sent to all 28 AJCU Library directors

- 18 completed surveys (64%)

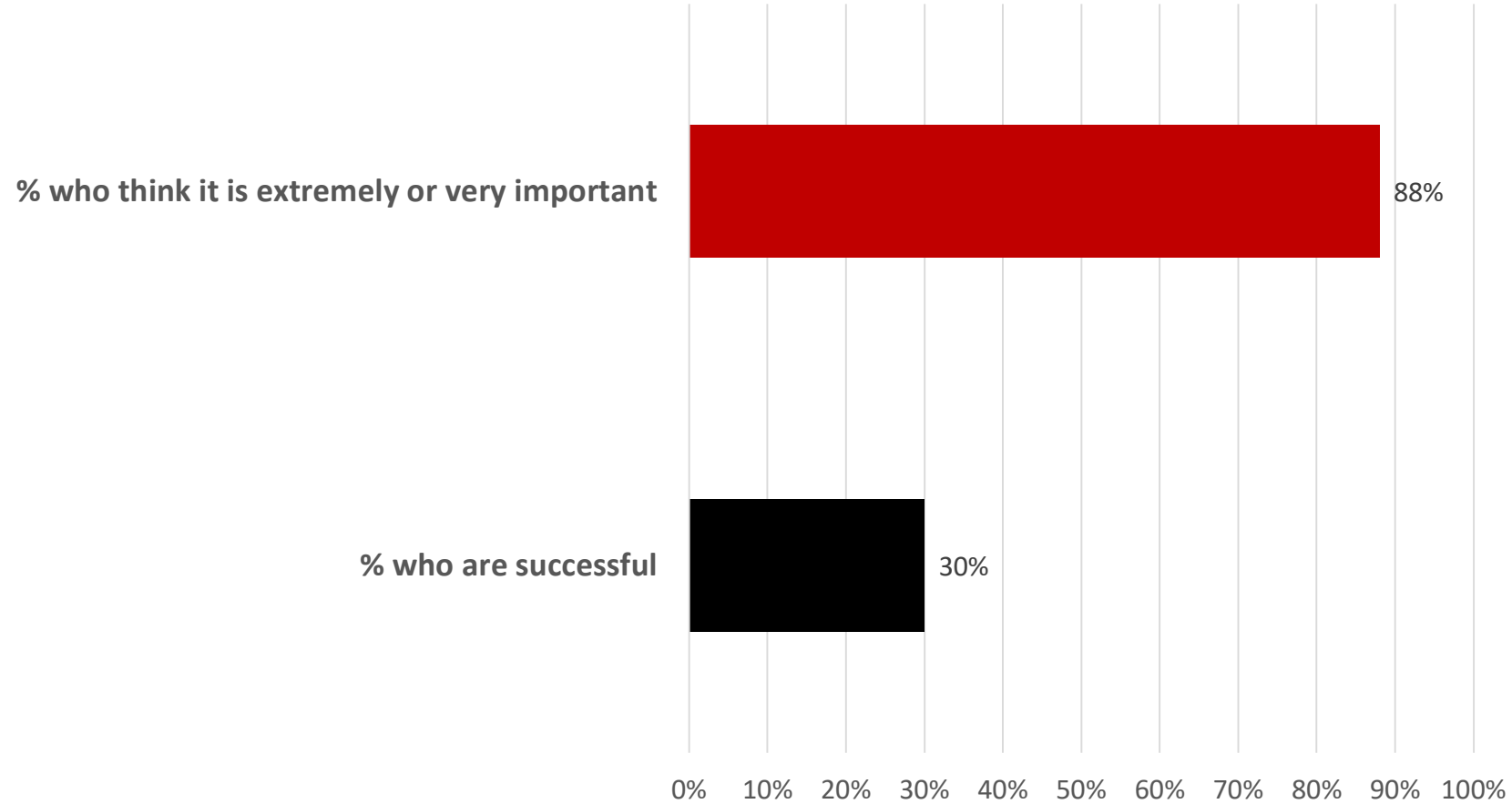
21 questions focusing on the intersection of social justice with

- Collections
- Space
- Archives & Special Collections
- Staff efforts to support social justice
- Information Literacy
- Human Resources
- Programs



## Inquiry #2: *What do we do?*

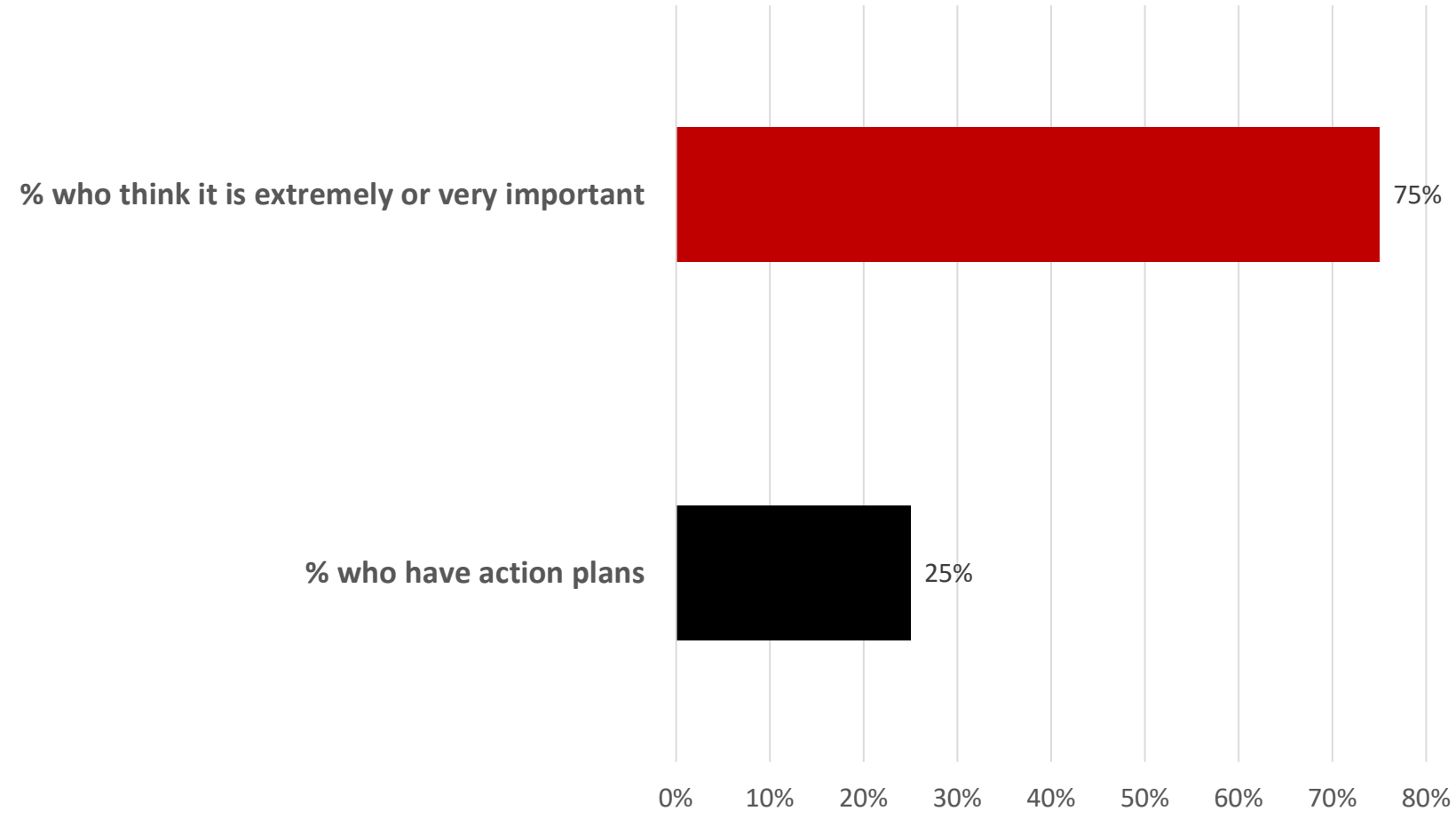
Library has been successful in hiring and retaining staff from underrepresented minority groups





## Inquiry #2: *What do we do?*

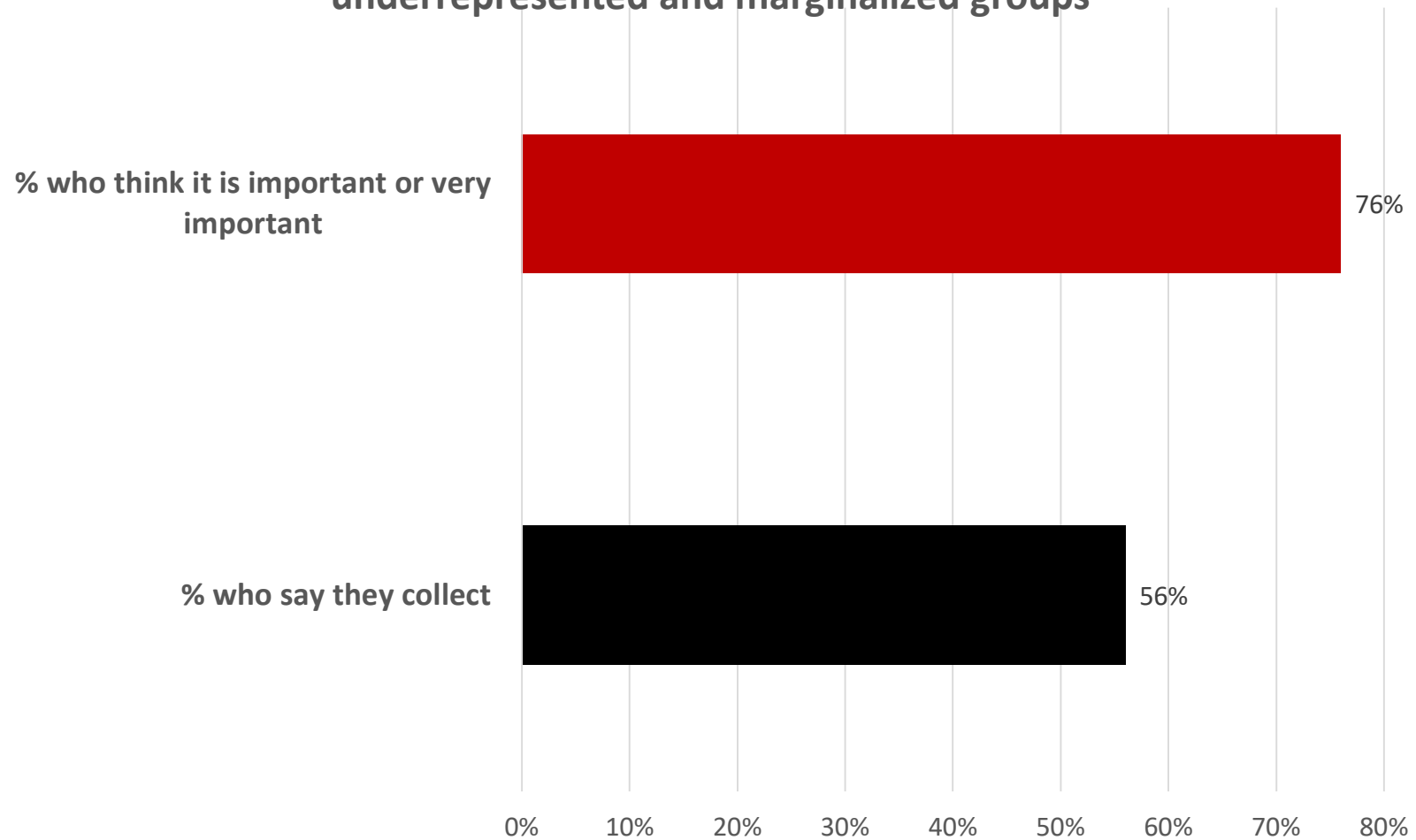
Library has developed action plans for recruiting underrepresented minorities into library and archives work





## Inquiry #2: *What do we do?*

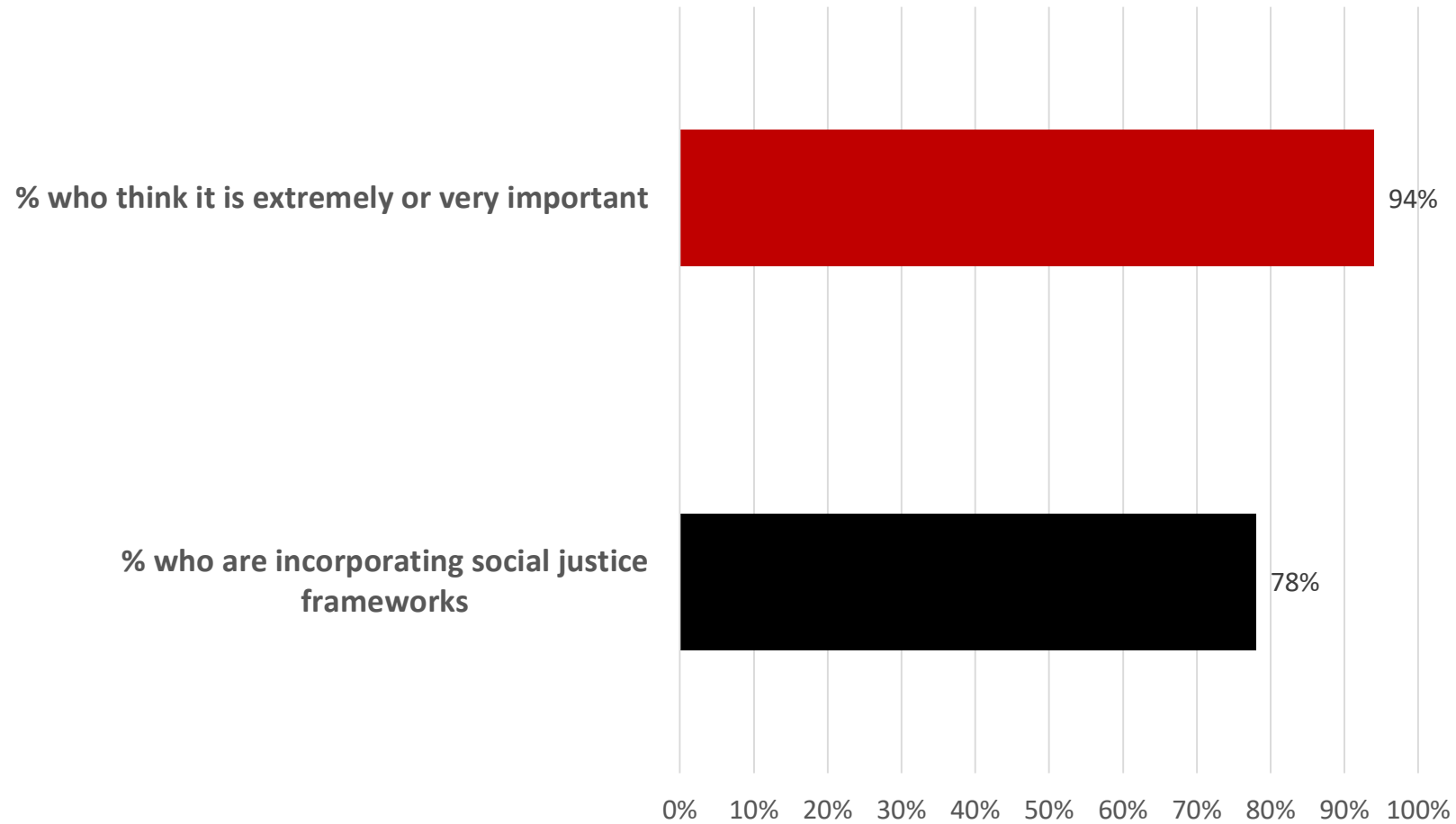
**My archives collect and preserve materials related to underrepresented and marginalized groups**





## Inquiry #2: *What do we do?*

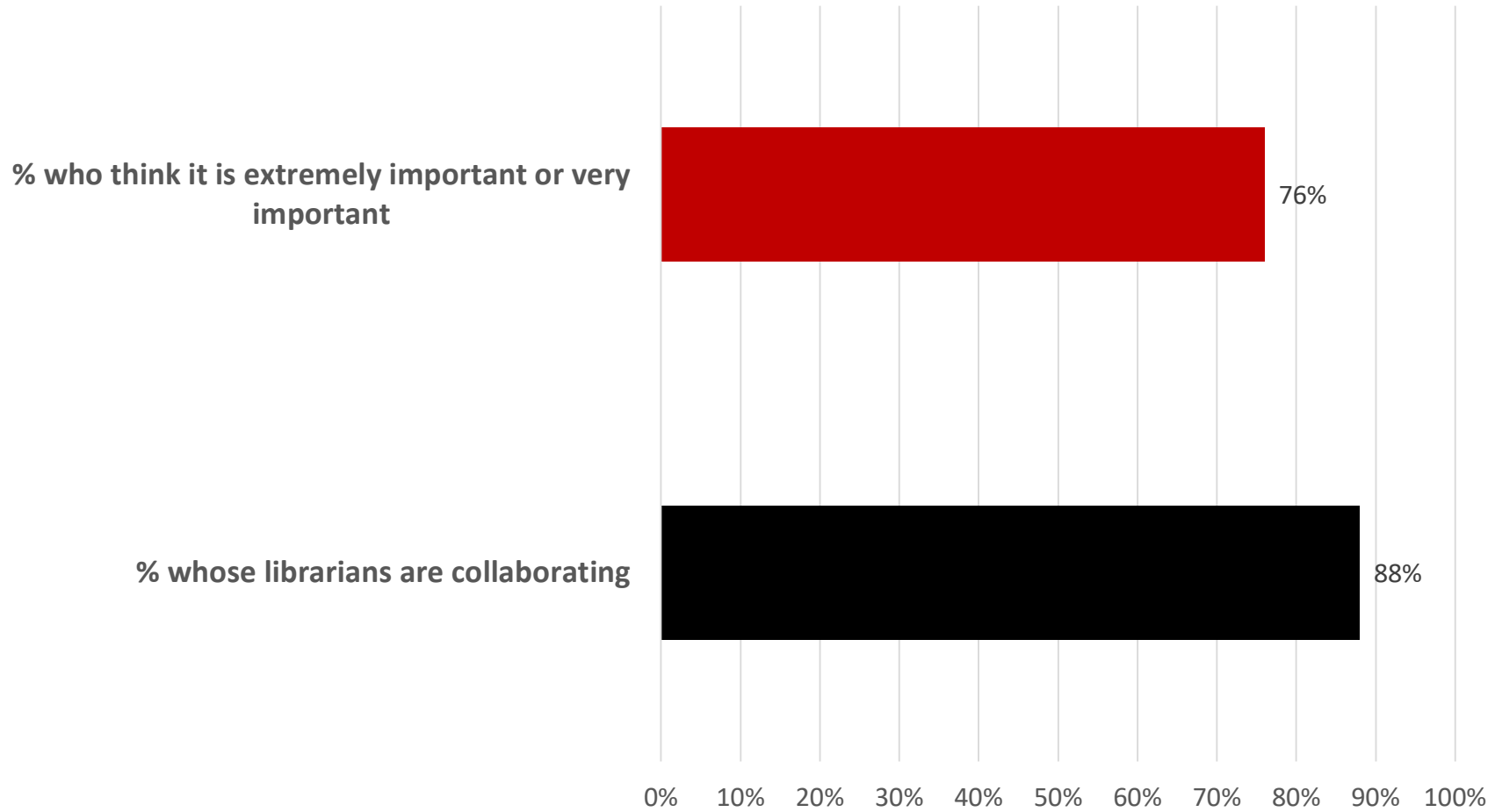
### Incorporating social justice frameworks into information literacy education





## Inquiry #2: *What do we do?*

### Librarians collaborate with faculty on social justice research projects/community based action research

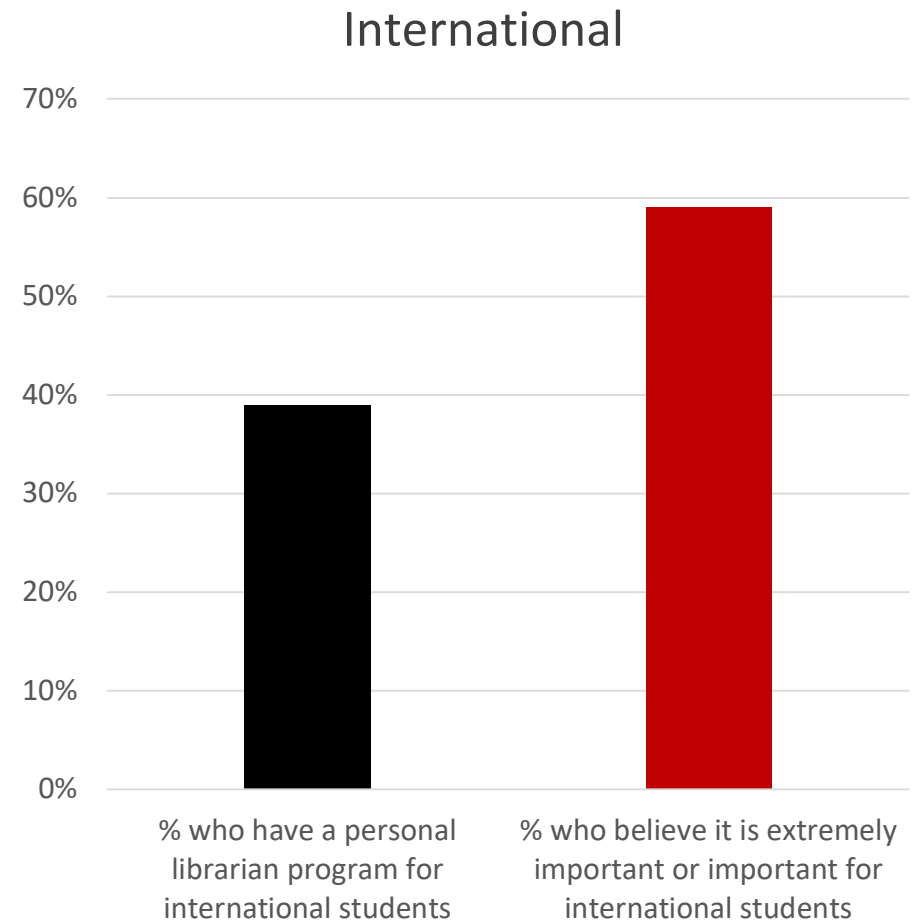
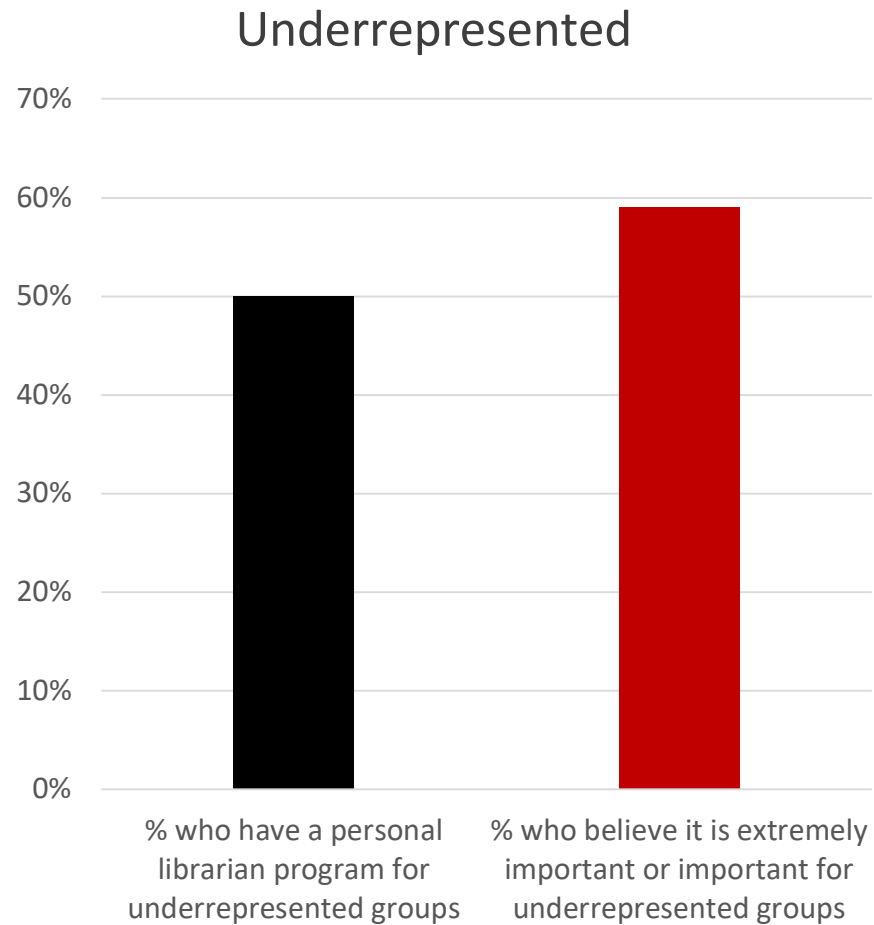






## Inquiry #2: *What do we do?*

Having a personal librarian or similar program assigned to international students or devoted to underrepresented or marginalized groups



# What We Learned

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## STAFF DIVERSITY

- ❑ 71% of AJCU librarians are female. Librarianship is a female dominated profession and AJCU female/male ratio is less than average. Current students (nationally and AJCU) are about 57% female.
- ❑ AJCU library staff is more diverse in sexual orientation than the national averages and college age students.
- ❑ AJCU library staff race/ethnicity appears to be similar to AJCU students, on average. There is a significant difference between AJCU demographics and national student demographics. Future student demographics are projected to be more racially diverse.
- ❑ More young people are identifying as religiously unaffiliated. Similar patterns are seen with library staff.



# What We Learned

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## RECRUITMENT

- Library directors acknowledge the need to recruit and retain a diverse staff and the creation of action plans. What support might be needed for them to create and implement action plans?

## LIBRARY PRACTICES

- There is a significant gap in importance versus practice in collecting unique/archival material from underrepresented communities.
- AJCU librarians are actively incorporating social justice frameworks into research instruction.



# What Actions Can We Take

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## **Staff Diversity**

- Look to hire more Hispanic and African American library staff. Consider encouraging staff to get an MLS.
- Library directors collaborate to create and adopt a diversity action plan.
- AJCU collects diversity data on a regular basis.



# What Actions Can We Take

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## **Collections**

- In order to increase collections from underrepresented groups, these groups in the community and relevant community organizations must be identified.
- Develop workshops for archiving and preserving collections.

## **Instruction**

- Promote courses that incorporate social justice frameworks into research instruction.

# References

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**QUESTIONS?**