



"You Are Welcome Here!":  
Academic libraries sustaining  
inclusive communities in a time  
of political and social  
divisiveness

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# Overview

- Zeitgeist and planning
- Project
- Results
- What comes next?

# Zeitgeist and planning


# In the Zeitgeist





# Why Libraries?

- Heart of campus, for all students
  - Location and hours
- Professional history and culture
- We're human – we want to make a difference!



“The concept of **radical inclusivity** starts with the idea that in any given community there exists more privileged and less privileged populations, keeping in mind that privilege comes in many forms... A radically inclusive library goes beyond inclusion. It seeks out and works to diminish and, ultimately, eradicate systemic barriers. It asks difficult questions, amplifies voices, and magnifies talents. A radically inclusive library facilitates community conversations and development of community-based solutions.”

Gustina, M. & Guinee, E. (2017). Why social justice in the library? *Library Journal*, 142(10), p. 52.

<https://lj.libraryjournal.com/2017/06/library-services/why-social-justice-in-the-library-outreach-inreach/#>

# Planning



- Consult WMU CELCIS
- Libraries' faculty statement on diversity and inclusion
- Inspirations for public action:
  - WMU College of Education and Human Development
  - NYC "Subway Therapy"





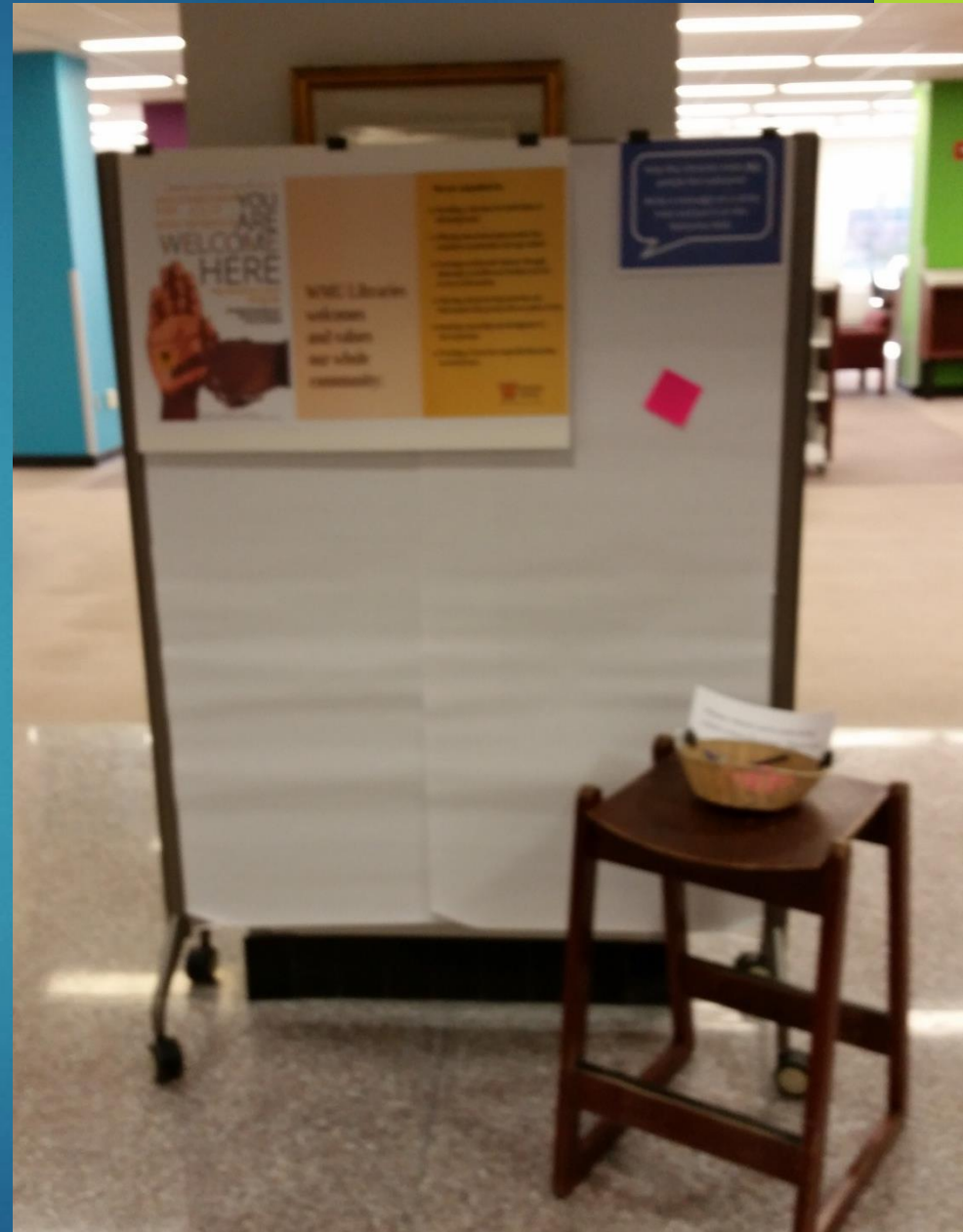




# Project

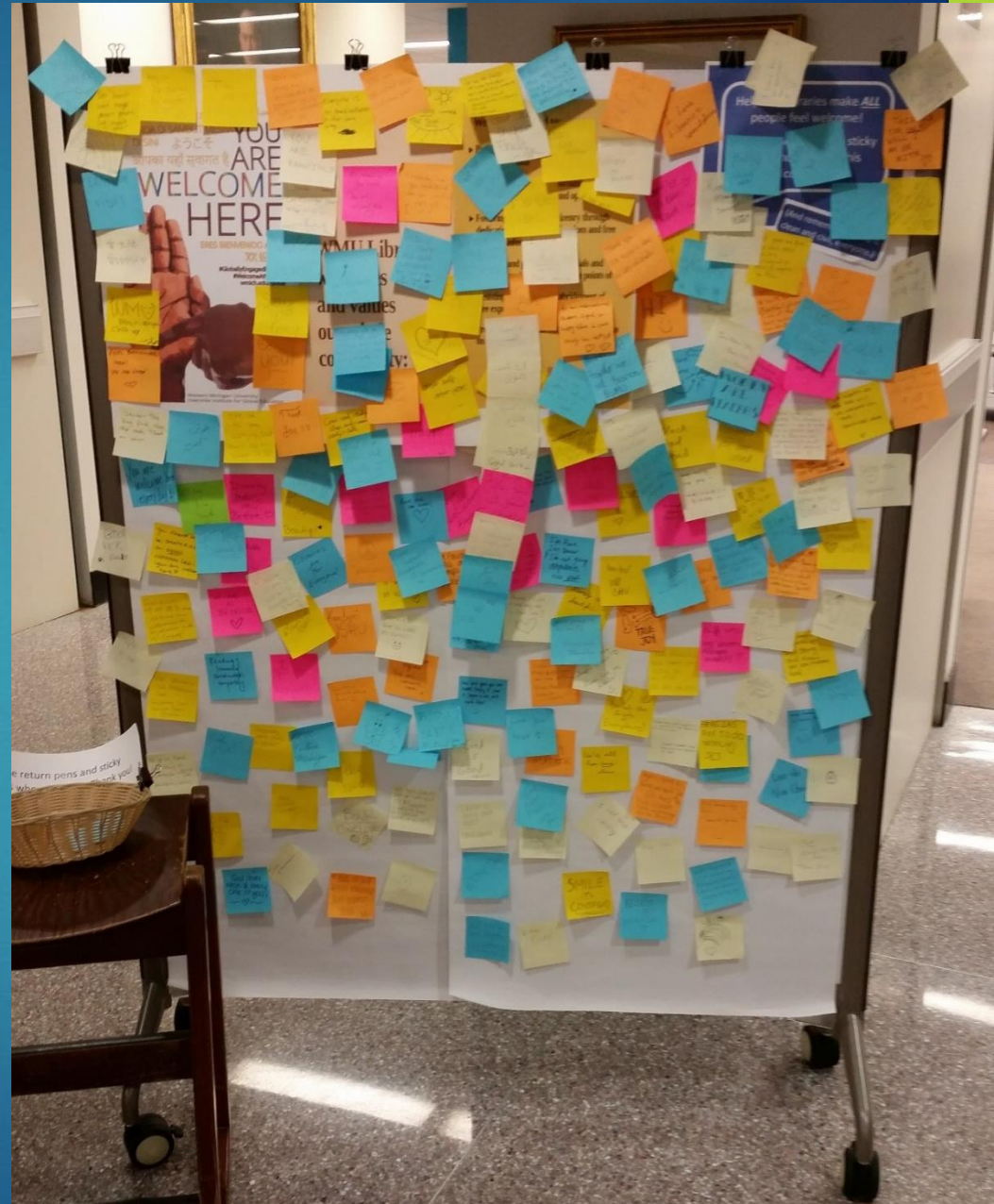
# Welcome Board

- Anonymous
- Short
- Colorful
- Inviting
- Positive tone



# Management

- ▶ Monitor
- ▶ Censor?
- ▶ Press
- ▶ Archive





# Results



# Results

## Sticky notes observations

- Languages
- Art
- Themes
- Conversations

# Results

## Languages

- Arabic
- American Sign Language
- Chinese
- German
- Japanese
- Latin
- Spanish
- Unconfirmed



*I love you* ♡

*I love you. [American Sign Language]*



# Results

## Art

Common images:

- Heart
- Smiley face
- Arrows (!)

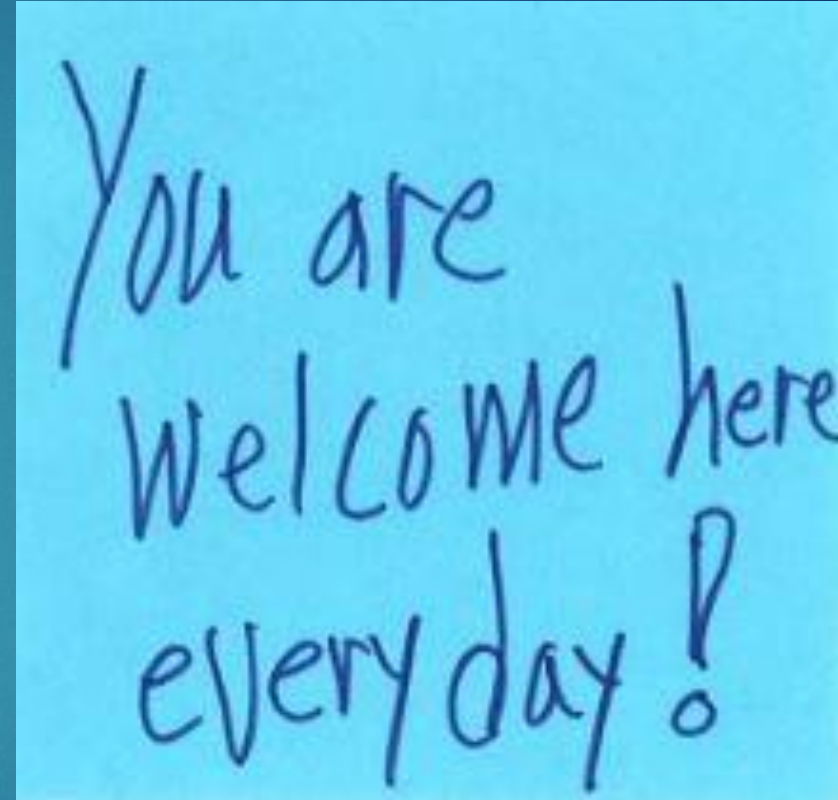


# Results

## Themes

Related to  
“Welcome” project

- reference to marginalized group
- reference to welcome poster
- welcoming message

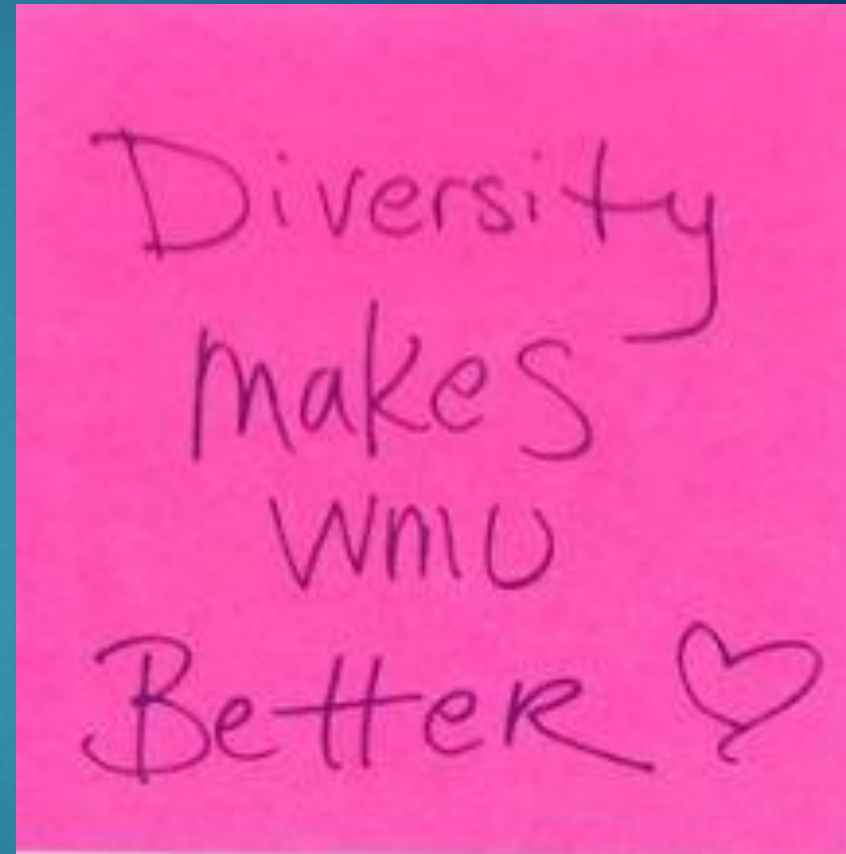


# Results

## Themes:

Diversity and inclusion

- diversity
- equality
- inclusion
- song lyrics reference
- unity



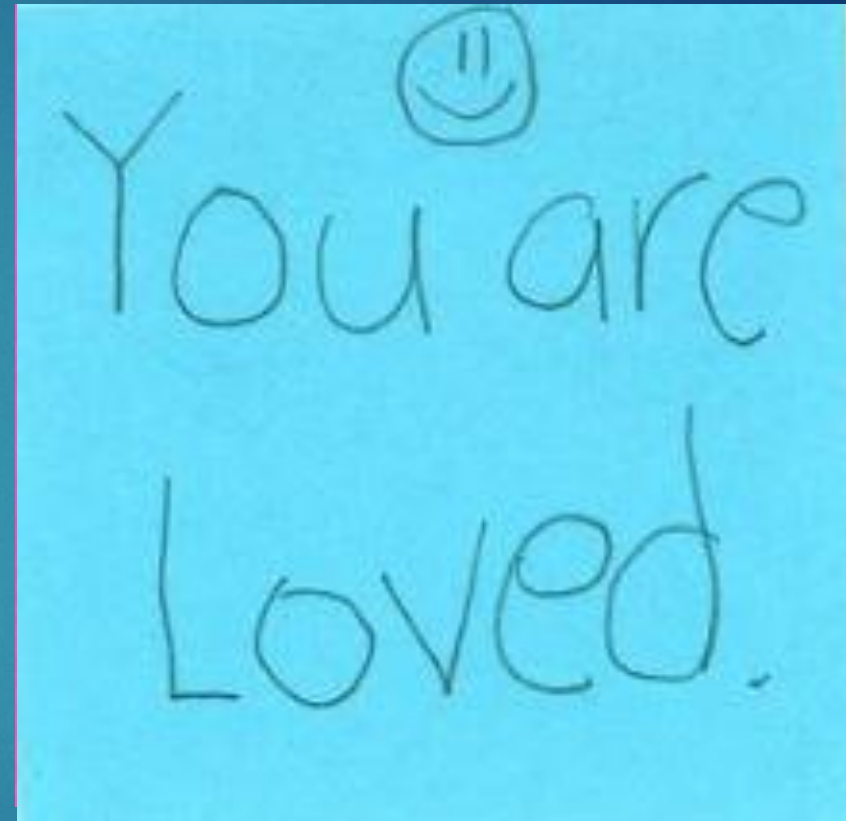


# Results

## Themes

Emotions/Well wishes

- emotion expressed
- encouraging message
- Positivity
- Religion references

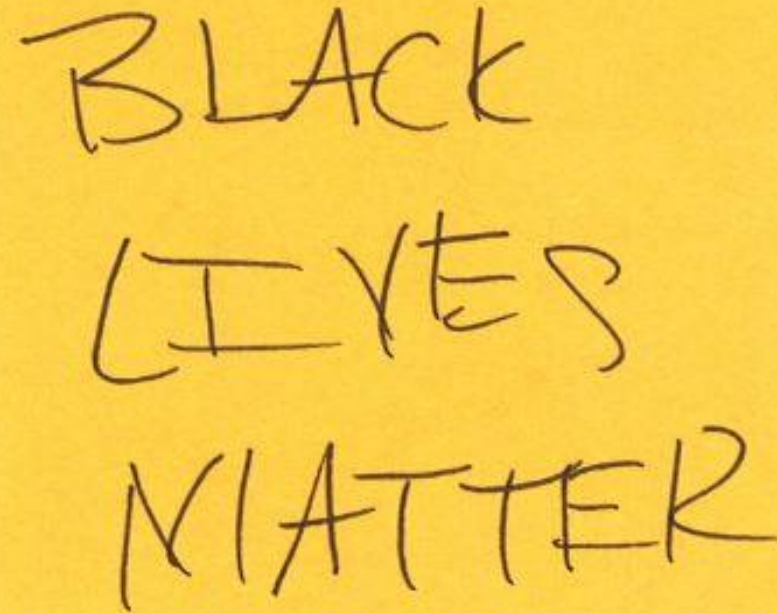


# Results

## Themes

### Political/Social Issues

- political reference
- social movement



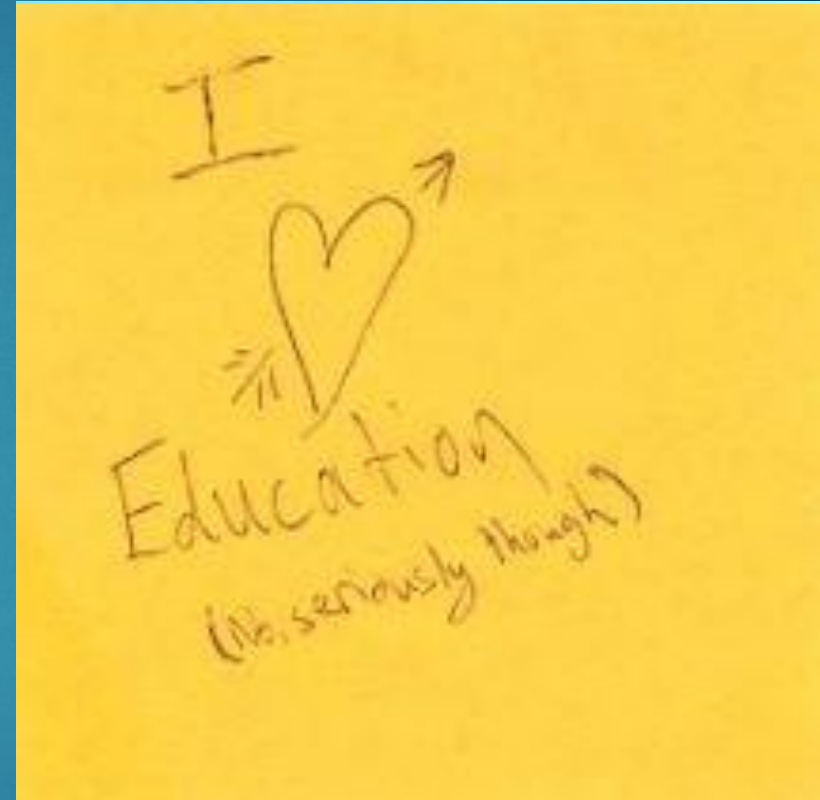
BLACK  
LIVES  
MATTER

# Results

## Themes

## Location

- education
- libraries
- local









# Results

What can we conclude from the sticky note messages?

- Engaged
- Public/private expression
- Individual expression
- Addressed marginalized groups
- Marginalized expressed selves
- Generosity



What Comes Next?

# Future Plans

- Outreach to student groups
- Social justice workshops
- Inclusivity and social justice in instruction
- ACRL Diversity Alliance

# Other Initiatives



- Events
- Collections
- Online subject guides
- Librarian outreach to diverse student groups
- Space, resources
- Inclusive instruction



# Suggestions



- Contact diverse student organizations on your campus
- Try something!
- Plan location and timing
- Collect comments
- Monitoring and archiving
- Expect the unexpected, and be ready to deal with it
- Have fun!

# Resources

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# Questions?

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