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# Building a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Libguide for the Spatial Sciences

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## INTRODUCTION

In today's higher education, faculty and student research projects often support outcomes that contribute to a more diverse and inclusive society (Stevens et al., 2023). In particular, the research and teaching of Geographic Information (GI) Sciences incorporates spatial thinking and location-based knowledge into a variety of cross-disciplinary real-world spatial studies with diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in mind. For example, a spatial science study may investigate historical local knowledge among diverse cultures in the community, or it may be focused on learning the correlation between the development of cities and the socio-economic statuses of neighborhoods. Our goal is to build a comprehensive list of DEI-related project outcomes on the main LibGuide page, viewable by the public and directly accessible to USC faculty, students, and staff for research and teaching purposes.

Such DEI efforts already woven into the fabric of spatial science studies should be part of the entire student experience in academics. A LibGuide is an efficient knowledge sharing platform that supports this purpose. To demonstrate the usefulness of a readily available collection of such studies within the university, a publicly available GI Science LibGuide has been designed to provide students, faculty, and staff with direct access to demonstrate the University of Southern California (USC) Spatial Science Institute's and USC Library's commitment to DEI (USC Libraries, 2024a).

Besides providing direct access to existing GI Science DEI resources, this LibGuide can be used to track project outcomes that are contributed, most searched on,



frequently accessed, and most utilized by students and faculty. It is anticipated that a contribution to best practices in design of domain-specific LibGuides can be proposed focused on collecting and disseminating DEI materials for research and teaching (Washington State University Libraries, 2024; USC Libraries, 2024b).

## DESIGN

Currently, the USC DEI LibGuide for the GI Sciences is designed to provide a convenient portal to collect research and teaching materials that incorporate the fundamental principles of DEI (USC, 2024). This publicly available guide is embedded within the main USC Libraries online Research Guides under the scientific domain for Spatial Sciences & GIS (USC Libraries, 2024c; Figure 1). Examples of DEI-related project contributions to the LibGuide are shown in Figure 1.

USC Libraries and other related resources supporting academic scholarship in the spatial sciences.

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**About**

In the spatial sciences institute (SSI) and at USC Libraries, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are woven into the fabric of everything we do in academics and research, into the entire student experience. This USC Libguide is designed to provide students, faculty and staff with direct access to project outcomes in support for a more equitable society that demonstrate SSI's and USC Libraries commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

We believe that students' futures depend upon diversity, equity and inclusion, in growing relationships that begin with building trust among faculty, staff, and students of diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

Our teaching faculty incorporate a variety of cross-disciplinary real-world studies, such as research into historical local knowledge and the correlation between the design of cities with socio-economic status of neighborhoods. Through the lens of environmental justice, courses investigate concepts such as racism, segregation and socio-environmental disparity in spatial measures and contexts. Our faculty-led and student research projects support outcomes that contribute to a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive society.

**Spatial Sciences Institute**

Students are provided opportunities to participate in a variety of projects. In the selection of resources below SSI students' voices are heard and honored both inside and outside the classroom, as we embrace diversity in race, ethnicity, national origin, age, cultural beliefs, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. Ultimately students flourish because of the different perspectives and strengths they bring to USC.

**Contribute to the List of DEI Related Project Outcomes**

Please see examples of SSI DEI related Projects:

- **USC GeoHealth Hub**  
Students carry out research projects for public, equal opportunity dissemination of vital geospatial data through the USC GeoHealth Hub. It also provides access to cancer and mental health resources.
- **USC Urban Trees Initiative**  
Supports equitably placed green canopies with community engagement

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URL: <https://libguides.usc.edu/spatial> [Print Page](#)

[Login to LibApps](#)

Subjects: [Geography & Spatial Studies](#)

Tags: [data](#), [geography](#), [geospatial](#), [gis](#), [location analysis](#), [spatial](#)



Figure 1: The main web page for the USC Diversity, Equity and Inclusion LibGuide for the GI Sciences (USC Libraries, 2024a). Link: [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - Spatial Sciences & GIS \\* - Research Guides at University of Southern California \(usc.edu\).](https://libguides.usc.edu/spatial))

All faculty are encouraged to contribute DEI-related research and teaching outcomes, such as publications and web applications, by clicking on the link “Contribute to the List of DEI Related Project Outcomes”. This link takes the contributor to a USC-authenticated data entry form designed to collect and easily manage details about DEI-related materials (Figure 2). The LibGuide editors review



the contributions on a monthly basis and then add those authorized as appropriate content by the Spatial Sciences Institute to the main LibGuide page (Figure 1).


## USC Spatial Sciences Institute Projects in Support of DEI

The USC Spatial Sciences Institute (SSI) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee wishes to keep track of the incredible and important SSI DEI-related project outcomes, so that USC is aware of all the work you are doing.

The information provided using this form will be shared with the USC SSI administrators, leadership, and DEI Committee.

Your contribution will be reviewed for consideration for inclusion in the USC Libraries Research Guide **Geography and Spatial Studies** sub-guide **Spatial Sciences & GIS**, under **SSI Diversity Equity and Inclusion** section **Spatial Sciences Institute DEI Initiatives and Collaborations: [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - Spatial Sciences & GIS](#) \* - [Research Guides at University of Southern California \(usc.edu\)](#)**

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jswift@usc.edu [Switch account](#) 

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\* Indicates required question

Email \*

Record jswift@usc.edu as the email to be included with my response

Name \*

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

Email \*

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_



Your Phone number (optional)

Your answer

Your Address (optional)

Your answer

What's the title of your publication, project, activity, event, resource, etc.? \*

Your answer

When did it take place or was implemented, completed, published, or conducted? \*

Date

mm/dd/yyyy 

Brief description: \*

Your answer



Who is the intended audience or participant group? Check all that apply. \*

- USC students
- USC faculty
- USC staff
- Non-USC students
- Non-USC faculty
- Non-USC staff
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

How does it contribute to DEI, or social justice, at USC and/or beyond? \*

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

List all USC (and non-USC, if applicable) persons involved (including yourself, if applicable): \*

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

Did you collaborate with another USC group or external organization (besides the USC SSI)? If yes, please provide the names all groups involved. If no, note as N/A. \*

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_



Provide links here (if any).

Your answer

Upload any final products such as MS theses, published journal articles, links to recordings of webinars, websites or other internet-enabled applications related to your submission here (as a single PDF document, as appropriate):

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1dc17P3kyeriKQxkhzhDOALdPYq1Bnk.Jk?usp=sharing>

Name your file(s): Last name First name (of person who submitted the form) Title of event or resource.

A copy of your responses will be emailed to [jswift@usc.edu](mailto:jswift@usc.edu).

**Submit** Page 1 of 1 Clear form

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Google Forms

Figure 2: Contribution form for collection of USC Spatial Sciences Institute Projects in Support of DEI. The link is only accessible using USC login authentication.

## CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The USC DEI LibGuide for the GI Sciences was designed to assist students and faculty to both identify and contribute to GI Science research and teaching resources that incorporate the fundamental principles of DEI throughout the university. This LibGuide will help us to bring awareness to past accomplishments integrating DEI in GI Science studies and also to identify gaps in this critical area of research and teaching.

In addition, user analytics, including tracking faculty contributions to the LibGuide and end-user searches, outbound links, and document downloads, could provide robust user metrics to better understand guide usage, including popular downloads and most searched content. Ideally, such usage data would be automatically



collected for the LibGuide editors. Lastly, the utilization of DEI materials reported through end-user targeted surveys could provide significant insights into DEI interests within the spatial sciences community.

In the future, this DEI LibGuide may serve as an initial template for any academic environment to create similarly focused guides within other disciplines, contributing to a growing body of LibGuide design and dissemination best practices for libraries (Vanderbilt University Research Guides, 2024).

## REFERENCES

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