

# Harnessing the Power of Academic Institutions for Change

- ❖ Giordana Mecagni – Northeastern University  
*Principles of Anti-Oppressive Community Engagement for University Educators and Researchers*
- ❖ Kate McNally– Brandeis University  
*The Processing Manual as a Tool for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*
- ❖ Emily Pfotenhauer– Wisconsin Library Services, Inc. (WiLS)  
*Curating Community Digital Collections*

- ❖ How can academic institutions reframe their approach to collecting, processing, teaching, and community engagement to center community needs and values?
- ❖ How can institutions build empathy and transparency into both internal and external practice, and leverage their expertise to lift up creator communities?
- ❖ How can institutions make strides toward putting anti-oppressive values into practice in their own contexts
  - in building collaborative partnerships with community organizations,
  - with transparency and agency in description,
  - and in training a new generation of cultural heritage workers.

# *Principles of Anti-Oppressive Community Engagement for University Educators and Researchers*

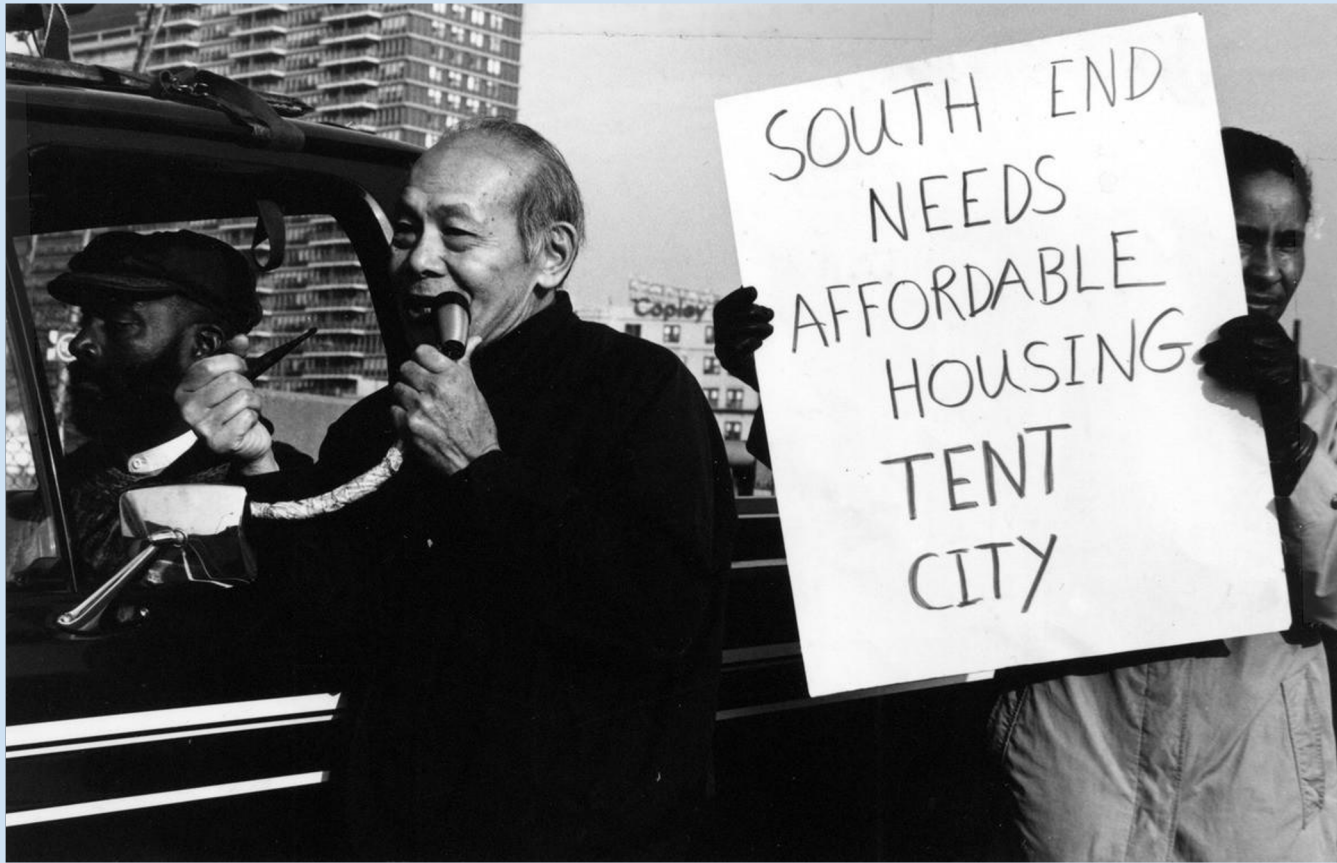
Giordana Mecagni – Northeastern University

Digital Commonwealth Annual Conference  
June 14, 2022

***I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you, I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still [the] colonizer, the speaking subject, and you are now at the center of my talk.***

*bell hooks, "Marginality as a Site of Resistance" (1990)*





Mel King, Harry Dow, Jean McGuire, Tent City Protests, 1968

“... responsively and productively demonstrate how certain archival actions contribute to, or sometimes impede, social equity and inclusion”

From: Critical Directions for Archival Approaches to Social Justice

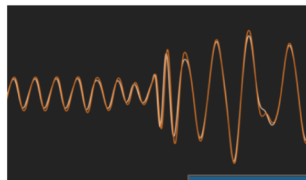
Ricardo L. Punzalan and Michelle Caswell  
The Library Quarterly 2016 86:1, 25-42

OCTOBER 20, 2017 EDIT

## LEEDh: Leadership in Engaged and Ethical DH Projects #d4d

To be LEEDh (Leadership in Engaged and Ethical DH) Certified, projects must:

- Fill a community need. Involve the community, at the beginning, at all points along the course the project, and the community must own the project at the end.
- Include academics who commit to:
  - Understanding community values by listening with their shut



LEEDh is also a fancy company

### Journal of Critical Library and Information

Current Archives Announcements About ▾

[Home](#) / [Archives](#) / Vol. 3 No. 2 (2021): Radical Empathy in Archival Practice

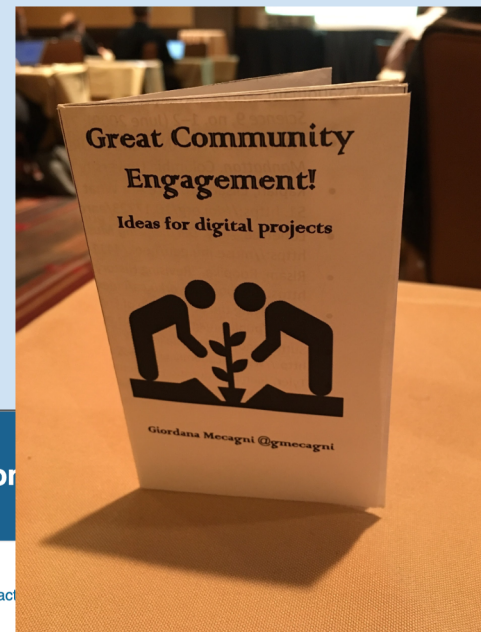
### Tear Down This (Pay)Wall!

Equality, Equity, Liberation for Archivists

**Giordana Mecagni**

Northeastern University Archives and Special Collections

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24242/jclis.v3i2.126>





Bach Nguyen Northeastern University Photography 2016

# Principles of Anti-Oppressive Community Engagement for University Educators and Researchers

Permanent URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/2047/D20432837>

## Abstract/Description:

The Principles of Anti-Oppressive Community Engagement for University Educators and Researchers are intended to mitigate the harms that can result from community-engaged teaching and research and support the development of systems of accountability between campus and community stakeholders.

Researchers are the product of many minds and several years. In 2016 Rebecca Riccio, founder and director of the Social Impact Lab at Northeastern University, convened a group of Northeastern University faculty and staff to examine the case for adopting campus-wide standards for ethical community-engaged teaching and research (CETR). The group reflected a diverse and growing ecosystem of people in a variety of community-engaged roles across campus who wanted to establish a coherent and shared framework of accountability for the unintended harms and inequity that can result from CETR. An ad-hoc community of practice was established, and while its composition has shifted over the years, members continue to share scholarly literature and research, best practices, discipline-specific applications, and our own experiences as educators and practitioners who share a commitment to racial and social justice.

In the aftermath of George Floyd's murder in 2020, three of us, Riccio, Becca Berkeley, and Giordana Micagni, began articulating these principles and practices more concretely as a commitment to holding ourselves accountable for practicing antiracist and anti-oppressive CETR. Our roles at the university - Micagni in University Archives and Special Collections, Berkeley in CETR within the Education Innovation team of the Office of the Chancellor, and Riccio in the Social Impact Lab, human services program, and School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs - call for deep community engagement and interdisciplinary collaboration on and off campus. We were therefore able to draw on years of lessons learned from the circle of colleagues described above and other collaborators with diverse identities, roles, and experiences with CETR, including community partners, faculty, staff, and students at Northeastern and other universities. Our work was also informed by a wide range of scholars and practitioners in the fields of critical service-learning and CETR, antiracism, antiracist pedagogy, and social movement building. After drafting the principles, we workshopped them through a collaborative and iterative review process, again including a wide range of university and community stakeholders. We are abundantly grateful to everyone who has been part of this journey so far.

Date created:

2022

Type of resource:

Text

Abstract/Description:

The Principles of Anti-Oppressive Community Engagement for University Educators and Researchers are intended to mitigate the harms that can result from community-engaged teaching and research and support the development of systems of accountability between campus and community stakeholders.

Subjects and keywords:

community engagement  
anti-oppressive  
antiracism  
community-engaged teaching and research  
anti-oppression

Permanent URL:

<http://hdl.handle.net/2047/D20432837>

Downloads



SCAN ME



<https://bit.ly/3LuKsjf>

<http://hdl.handle.net/2047/D20432837>



## **1. Honor Communities' Autonomy and Right to Self-Determination**

We will acknowledge when we are visitors in other people's communities and respect their autonomy, agency, and right to make their own decisions about matters affecting their lives and futures; and

Respect that communities have the right to define the challenges and opportunities they face, set the priorities that will allow them to thrive, and define success on their own terms.

## **2. Respect Communities' History, Culture, Lived Experience, and Expertise**

We will enter communities as listeners and learn as much as possible about the history, culture, lived experience, and assets of the communities we engage with; and

Honor the legitimacy and value of diverse forms of knowledge and expertise without placing the burden of teaching us on community members.



### **3. Recognize the Limits of Our Lived Experience, Expertise, and Perspectives**

We will acknowledge that we are not the first or only people to problem-solve in the communities we engage with;

Educate ourselves about individuals in the community and in other disciplines and fields who already address the challenges and opportunities we are working on; and

Question the frameworks, narratives, and assumptions that have shaped our understanding of the world and the disciplines and fields in which we work.

#### **4. Reflect on Our Social Identities, Positions, and Power**

We will cultivate self-awareness and do the work of grappling with our own social identities, biases, motivations for doing community-engaged work, and elements of discomfort we may feel working in and with communities not our own;

Recognize the power and privilege associated with our positions in higher education; and

Question whether our engagement in community settings is welcome and adds value.

## **5. Build Authentic, Mutually Beneficial Relationships with Patience and Humility**

We will center community members' voices and perspectives in our understanding of our shared endeavor;

Recognize our collaborators as co-educators and practice co-design, co-creation and co-ownership of ideas, data, publications, credit, and profit resulting from our work in community; and

Build open and transparent communication channels and accept feedback with appreciation and a commitment to learn.

## **6. Manage Resources Equitably**

We will recognize that control of resources is a form of power that can perpetuate inequity in our relationships with community partners;

Ensure that our collaborators are recognized and appropriately compensated for their physical, emotional, and intellectual labor and other contributions to our work; and

Be cognizant of limited resources available to many community-based organizations and consider how best to deploy the resources available to us as equitably and effectively as possible.

## **7. Hold Ourselves Accountable**

We will hold ourselves accountable for the impact of our words and actions, regardless of our intentions, with grace, courage, and constructive dialogue about how we can do better; and

Recognize that institutions of higher education play complex roles in the communities they occupy and work internally to promote values and practices that center community interests and well-being.

## **8. Rethink Our Relationship with Time and Urgency**

We will acknowledge that the pace of building trust and relationships cannot be hastened by the academic calendar, grant deadlines, funding opportunities, and other sources of urgency; and

Cultivate patience and value the work of building and stewarding each relationship, which may involve the efforts of many individuals on and off campus.

## **9. Hold Ourselves Accountable to the Values and Practices of Anti-Oppressive Community Engagement in our Relationships with Students and in Our Classrooms**

We will respect the diverse identities and lived experiences of our students and recognize the harm that can occur in classrooms and labs because of unconscious bias and the power imbalance among instructors and students;

Give deference to students' experience of racial and social injustice and relationships with the issues and communities we are addressing; and

Study and practice antiracist and trauma-informed pedagogy to minimize the risk of such harms.

## **10. Prioritize Patience, Perspective-Taking, and Joy**

We will accept that doing the work of anti-oppressive CETR can be emotionally challenging for us while also recognizing that the burdens of social change weigh far more heavily on the people and organizations on the front lines of this work;

Embrace vulnerability and gracious listening to feedback as fundamental elements of this work, knowing we will make mistakes and accept them as lessons we can build on to improve relationships and our collaborative work;

Practice self-care, gratitude, compassion, and grace with ourselves, each other, and our community partners; and find hope, joy, and meaning in this work and the relationships it allows us to build on and off campus.