



**RECRUITING AND SELECTING  
ACADEMIC HEALTH SCIENCES LIBRARY DIRECTORS:**

**A GUIDE**

Revised Edition

[Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries \(AAHSL\)](#)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL) produced this guide to assist higher education administrators and search committees with the recruitment process. Although each institution is unique, the guide intends to provide information that can be applied to specific circumstances.

- Use the vacant director's position as an opportunity to formulate a new vision for the library, assess current needs, articulate the future direction of library services, and update the position description accordingly.
- The position description conveys the institution's vision, shapes the applicant pool, and assists in evaluating applicants.
- Appoint a search committee as soon as possible.
- During the interview, include key persons with whom the position interacts as well as constituents.
- When hiring, appraise the skills and knowledge most likely to achieve the future vision of the library.

The director or dean of an academic health sciences library has multifaceted responsibilities and interacts with a wide range of constituencies in an environment of increasing technical, financial, and political complexity. Directors must be knowledgeable about information issues and be able to envision a future for the library and work to achieve that future. Consequently, the job demands a unique combination of leadership skills and experience. A vacancy in the director's position affords an opportunity for the institution to examine its current needs and the future direction of library and information management services.

The search committee should be appointed as soon as possible. Although the composition will vary according to local circumstances, it should be representative of the constituencies the library supports and include members with library expertise. Effective communication by the search committee with candidates is crucial to the success of the recruitment process.

The position description is a useful aid throughout the recruitment process. It communicates to candidates the vision and scope of the position, shapes the applicant pool, and is a guide for the evaluation of candidates. Search committees should undertake a range of recruitment approaches to maximize the pool and diversity of qualified candidates, including broad-scale advertising and focused contacts. The guide includes recommendations for where to post jobs.

Search committees will want to evaluate applications by emphasizing unique criteria in addition to those they might use for other senior leadership positions in the academic health center. These include evaluation of how candidates evidence leadership ability, their capability to relate to constituencies, knowledge of information and technology issues, and fit with the institution's culture and vision of the future. The guide discusses how to review CVs and other sources of information for these attributes and typical career paths for directors.

Interviews provide the best opportunity to evaluate candidates and their fit with the institution, while allowing candidates to learn about the job and the institution. They should include

key persons with whom the position interacts and representatives of the library's constituencies.

The guide addresses the structure of interviews and preparation for them. During the hiring process, the knowledge, skills, competencies, and personality of candidates to identify the persons most likely to achieve the future vision for the library are appraised. The process of making the job offer should include negotiation of terms of employment that will be attractive to the candidate and provide resources to help meet institutional goals. The appointment and onboarding of the new director is the final part of the recruitment process that contributes to long-term retention.

## INTRODUCTION

- Look for candidates with unique leadership and experience especially in today's changing health care, technology, and economic environment.
- Library directors should be considered on the same level as deans or department chairs.
- Library directors work across a broad spectrum of research, clinical, and education programs.
- Know your institution's needs and future directions and compare with other health sciences academic libraries.

Recruiting and selecting the new director of an academic health sciences library is an important task for an institution. The position has multifaceted responsibilities and interacts with a wide range of constituencies in an environment of increasing technical, financial, and political complexity. Consequently, the job demands a unique combination of leadership skills and experience. These talents are especially important in today's rapidly changing health care environment and uncertain economic climate, as library directors face difficult choices in allocating resources and setting priorities to further the institutional mission. In addition, data collected by the Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL) indicate that many positions will continue to be open now and over the next decade, due to retirements and the emergence of new institutions. During the past five years due to retirements and the emergence of new and developing medical schools, there are new directors in thirty percent of AAHSL member institutions.

AAHSL has produced this guide to assist institutions in the recruitment process. Higher education administrators, professional recruiters, and search committees may consult it for guidance at various stages of the search. Current and future directors may also find it valuable in developing the pool of the next generation of library leaders.

Recruitment of an academic health sciences library director is comparable to searches for other senior academic leadership positions, such as deans and department chairs. Strategies for finding and assessing candidates, the structure of the interviews, and resources devoted to the process is like those used in other senior academic leadership searches. Candidates for all positions at this level must possess leadership qualities in addition to specific experience or technical expertise. Just as with other senior positions, input from relevant campus and external constituencies will strengthen the process [1-5].

Each institution is unique. The size and units comprising the academic health center, the relationship of the library to the university library and to information technology departments, the responsibility of the library for networks or other enterprises, and the campus and regional environment will all influence what kind of director is sought. Library directors working in an

academic setting tend to work across a broader spectrum of research. AAHSL serves as a connector for these directors by providing a community of leaders managing health sciences information resources and data in academic settings; and advancing data management practices to share knowledge and experiences with others. This guide provides information and guidelines that can be customized to specific circumstances. To understand how their library compares to other academic health sciences libraries, institutions may find it useful to consult the annual AAHSL statistics [6].

Manuals and other publications for recruiting higher education administrators and university library directors also contain valuable information and are noted in the bibliography [7-10, 12]. They provide detailed descriptions of the process involved in administrative-level searches in the academic environment and should be consulted for general guidance. Herson's study describes the experience from the applicants' perspectives, which provides useful insights for those recruiting a director [11]. This guide emphasizes what is important in filling the key position of an academic health sciences library director.

## **ACADEMIC HEALTH SCIENCES ENVIRONMENT**

- The library is at the intersection of a complex network of academic, research, and clinical needs of the institution.
- The role of the director is to ensure that the services and resources of the library appropriately support the mission, academic environment, research, clinical enterprise, and the success of the institution.

The academic health sciences library's primary role is to serve and help define the mission of its parent institution in its use and deployment of knowledge and information-based resources and services in a changing health care environment. This role remains paramount despite substantial environmental changes including the emergence of new institutions, changes in health system organization and structure, and reporting changes in academic libraries. In order to fulfill this role effectively, the library's leadership must not only have command of the business of information management but must also thoroughly understand the institution's business. The library is at the intersection of major challenges in the health care delivery system, higher education, biomedical research, computer and communications technology, data management, and scholarly communication. As the institution develops and implements policies and practices in all these areas, the library must be able to anticipate and respond to information needs in a way that advances the goals of the institution [13-18].

The library partners with its academic health center in achieving institutional success and excellence through building relationships for effective knowledge management in the four primary missions: clinical practice, education, research, and community service [19]. New roles have developed for libraries that focus on clinical and research data management and participation on teams to support research and clinical care. Implicit in all library relationships is the provision of technology and services applied to information resources and data creation, curation, storage, access and preservation. Future library leaders must be change agents, and have the ability to navigate academic, clinical, and research trends to tailor resources and services to meet their institution's needs. Examples of current trends include the integration of information resources into the electronic health record, the changing landscape of scholarly communication, systematic review services, consumer and patient education, data management and data integrity services,

and the development and deployment of technologies supporting teaching, research and health care.

### **ROLE of HEALTH SCIENCES LIBRARY DIRECTOR**

- Communicating effectively is crucial to supporting all areas of the mission of the institution.
- Library directors may find themselves in a variety of organizational types which employ many different types of position titles.

Directors hold positions of broad responsibility and high visibility. They support all the missions – education, research, clinical practice, and community service – of their institutions. They work with all components of the academic health sciences center – schools, hospitals, centers, and institutes – and often external communities as well. Directors need to be knowledgeable about information issues, and they are responsible for envisioning the future of the library and working to achieve that future. They must be able to communicate effectively and persuasively with all their constituencies to build a shared vision for the library. They must function successfully in a political environment to secure the support necessary to attain that vision. They must develop campus-wide visibility for the library that will ensure priority status for library resource needs and program development [19].

The extensive range of leadership skills identified as important in business and academic settings [20-22] is also applicable to directors of academic health sciences libraries. Their potential leadership responsibilities include [23]:

- acting as chief representative and spokesperson for the library
- participating in institutional governance
- functioning as liaison with stakeholders within and outside the institution
- monitoring critical issues in the external environment
- negotiating and advocating for the library
- fundraising and grantsmanship
- leading library planning, operations, and staff
- supporting active learning among staff
- communicating effectively within the library, within the institution, externally
- acting as change agent and entrepreneur; promoting and leading innovation
- team building
- working across boundaries and effectively influencing others
- allocating resources, and
- advancing the profession through scholarly publication and leadership in local, regional, and national associations.

There are different models for the organizational structure in which the director position operates. In addition to traditional library services, areas that may fall within the director's purview include academic or research computing, informatics, educational technologies, knowledge management, repositories for publications, data services, innovation spaces, archives, and other special collections. Directors may oversee other library organizations such as regional consortia or networks. The most extensive example of this is the Network of the National Library of Medicine, which extends both fiduciary and service responsibilities to selected academic health sciences

libraries throughout the U.S. The scope of library services, including outreach to the community, may differ in public and private institutions; and may encompass library services to subsidiaries, partners, or affiliated health institutions. The AAHSL Statistics may provide helpful information about comparable libraries.

The reporting relationship may also take different forms [26]. Directors often report to an officer in the academic health sciences center, such as a provost, vice chancellor, vice president, or dean. In institutions where libraries are part of the university library system, directors can report to the university librarian, or there may be a dual reporting relationship with an academic health sciences center leader. Whatever the organizational norm for the reporting structure, the director will also need to function in a professional context that requires numerous informal linkages and collaboration. For example, libraries today often leverage their resources through joint licensing of electronic resources, and the director must establish and sustain such relationships over time.

Institutional circumstances will influence the background sought in candidates, including educational credentials or experience. A variety of position titles reflects the range of responsibilities the position is expected to assume. In addition to director and associate university librarian, sample titles include assistant dean for academic information, associate dean for information resources and systems, associate vice president for educational resources, and assistant vice chancellor for library services and instructional technology.

### **ANALYSIS OF VACANCY**

- Use the vacant position to analyze and update information and library service needs.
- Seek advice on these needs from the incumbent director or other consultants who are knowledgeable about academic health sciences libraries.
- Consider requirements for academic appointment if position is in a faculty governance structure.
- Consider compensation based on institutional peer levels as well as comparisons with similar positions at peer institutions.

A vacancy in the director's position affords an opportunity for the institution to assess its current needs and the future direction of library and information management services. Rather than assuming continuation of the status quo, it is a worthwhile exercise to examine and articulate the institution's current view of the role of the library and the position. This analysis will determine the background and skills needed in a director as well as help the institution describe the environment clearly to candidates. If the analysis is done before the appointment of the search committee, it is important that the committee understands the outcome.

Administrators and search committee members should seek expert advice in their analysis of the position. The incumbent director can be a valuable source for information on library activities and resources, trends in the field, and potential candidates. Depending on individual circumstances, a consultant may fill the role of the incumbent or may supplement it with an independent perspective. It is important for the committee to reserve for itself the tasks related to evaluating candidates.

A consultant may be asked to perform one or more functions, depending on the particular needs of the institution:

- evaluate the library, current resources, and expectations of clientele
- advise on the future vision for the library
- help define job requirements to achieve the vision
- identify qualified individuals
- communicate with potential candidates.

Consultants may be identified by recommendation from the incumbent director or by seeking recommendations from other AAHSL directors. It is important to check the background and reputation of potential consultants. The agreement with the consultant should include a scope of work which spells out what assistance is desired and guidelines for time and compensation.

Another facet of the vacancy analysis is review of the status and salary of the position. Establishing these at an appropriate level will affect the quality and level of the candidate pool. Salaries should be considered in the context of peer positions in the institution as well as norms in the profession, and geographically. A summary of salary data for AAHSL institutions provides overall information. It is included in this guide and is updated annually. Salaries, of course, are influenced by geographic location, institution, and other factors, as well as individual qualifications.

Some institutions choose to appoint an internal candidate without conducting a full recruitment process. The goal of such a promotion should be the same—to find the best person for the position. The institution should still take advantage of the opportunity to reconsider the goals and direction, and the kind of leader needed. It should also weigh giving up the potential benefits of a search process in strengthening the national standing of the library and the successful candidate. A search can benefit the institution and enhance the new director's perceived competence on campus and in the external library community. If the institution ultimately feels that the best course of action is to appoint from within, it can still take advantage of this guide in coming to that decision and in negotiating with and appointing the director.

## SEARCH FIRMS

Currently, recruiters or search firms are hired to facilitate the search for a new library director. Their services include promoting the vacancy to potential candidates, packaging information about the institution and library, and conducting preliminary interviews [12]. Some institutions find that search firms are helpful in identifying candidates who are most likely to match the institution's needs; and in meeting the institution's timeline. If this option is considered, the institution should decide whether it will be more effective for the search committee or the search firm to perform these functions. Check here for a listing of [search firms](#). Some search firms will have more experience than others in recruiting academic health sciences library deans or directors.



## SEARCH COMMITTEE

- Appoint a search committee as soon as possible.
- The composition of the committee should be representative of the institution.
- The committee chair should be the candidate's principal contact.
- See previous section for information on Search Firms

The responsible administrator should recognize the importance of appointing the search committee as soon as possible. The time required to conduct the search and for the successful candidate to arrive is almost always underestimated. Although an interim director may be appointed, it is in everyone's interest to move quickly toward a permanent placement. An expeditious search and a reasonable interim arrangement convey to the outside world that an organization is well run and a desirable place to work. Protracted searches or long-term interim appointments may cause applicants to view potential employers with concern.

The search committee should be representative of the primary constituencies the library supports. Its composition will vary according to local circumstances, but consideration ought to be given to including the following:

- Representatives from schools, colleges, research hubs, hospitals, etc., and others served and supported by the library.
- Members from among different categories of users including faculty, administrators, researchers, clinicians, and students.
- If the search is being conducted by the university library to which the health sciences library reports, representatives from the constituent groups above is essential.
- Members with library expertise such as a member of the library staff who can provide an internal perspective and a channel for communication of non-confidential information with staff. Library expertise can also be contributed by someone from another campus library, a library and information science school, or a regional network.

Given the wide range of interaction with the position, it may seem equitable to include representatives from every group. This must be tempered, however, by the need to keep the committee to a size that can conduct its work effectively and communicate well with one another. Be mindful of the difficulties inherent in lining up potential meeting times for groups that include middle and upper-level administrators. Other means of soliciting input, through information gathering and participation in candidate interviews, and attendance at presentations can substitute for direct representation on the committee.

Publications by the Association of American Medical Colleges and the American Association for Higher Education provide further guidance on search committees, including the composition, chair appointment, charge, and ground rules [7,9]. A study of the selection of university library directors describes common characteristics of successful searches and the role of the search committee and administration [23].

The search committee chair or other designee typically is the principal contact for candidates with the institution, or an institutional human resources officer who is advised by the committee. The committee's attention to effective communication can be very influential in generating interest and presenting the institution in a positive light. This communication should

span the entire process, from contacting potential applicants to appointment. Candidates report the importance of being kept informed at all stages, including lulls in activity, and of establishing personal contact with someone. One search committee employed a successful strategy of assigning a member of the search committee to each candidate to be responsible for ongoing interaction.

## **POSITION QUALIFICATIONS**

- The position description is critically important for clearly and concisely communicating the associated qualifications, requirements and duties to the search committee as well as the candidate.
- Credentials usually include a terminal master's degree in library and information science from an accredited ALA program.
- Other degrees may be required but will also affect the size of the candidate pool.

Careful crafting of a position description will be useful to the search committee and potential applicants throughout the recruitment process. It communicates to candidates the vision of the position, shapes the applicant pool, and is a guide for evaluation of candidates. The description should include information about the institution, the environment in which the library director will be expected to lead, the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities that the library director needs, and the desired education, experience, and attributes for applicants for the position.

The customary terminal degree for librarians is a master's degree in library and information science from a program accredited by the American Library Association (ALA). Other degrees may also add to the candidates' preparation for a director's position, such as M.B.A.s or M.P.A.s, or an advanced degree in medical informatics or a similar field. Whether or not to require or prefer additional degrees will depend on the responsibilities of the position. However, doing so will also narrow the pool of qualified candidates or weight the search toward educational qualifications.

The experience requirements may address the setting in which the candidate's experience has taken place, length of experience, progressive nature of duties, characteristics of responsibilities, and knowledge of topics. As with all job advertisements, the stated requirements need to be balanced. The goal is to help focus the candidate pool and indicate what is important to the institution, but not immediately eliminate candidates with potential. Reducing the size of the pool will occur again when applications are screened.

## **RECRUITING CANDIDATES**

- Advertise to as wide an audience as is appropriate for the position and use existing lists and posting sites such as AAHSL.org. Director openings are posted on the AAHSL website.
- Use personal contacts whenever possible.
- Identify leadership programs, such as the [NLM/AAHSL Leadership Fellows Program](#), to solicit highly qualified candidates.

- Post the position to job boards to attract and recruit a diverse pool of non-white candidates. The diversity of candidates, like the diversity of the profession, has changed in recent years.
- Professional search firms can do valuable outreach to potential candidates to fulfill the role.

Recruitment employs dual strategies – broad-scale advertising and focused contacts [9]. Advertising has the potential to reach a wide audience and locate qualified individuals otherwise unidentified and helps ensure that all potential candidates are given a fair opportunity to consider the position. AAHSL lists on its [website](#) postings of current vacancies for directors that are provided by the institutions. In addition, vacancies can be advertised in online job listings and email distribution lists of other professional associations. Resources listing employment opportunities are available online. The choices of where to post announcements will depend on the characteristics of the job as established by the institution, but an effort should be made to notify a broad audience. Institutions may have additional requirements for recruitment. Recommendations for possible locations for postings have been compiled by AAHSL and are included in this document.

Advertisements will be supplemented by focused contacts with individuals. Personal communication can be used to ask for recommendations and to encourage individuals to consider the position. This can take the form of letters or emails to members of a group, such as AAHSL. Targeted communication is particularly effective when it is directed to persons identified as especially qualified candidates. This outreach should be as individualized as possible, initiated by one or more persons, such as a representative of the search firm, the committee chair, with telephone or other follow-up communication tailored to the potential candidate. If homework is done before and after the contact, personal communication can be the most fruitful source of candidates.

Current directors of other academic health sciences libraries are another important source for identification of potential candidates. They may be able to recommend qualified individuals. They are familiar with their peers and have often assisted colleagues in taking on broader responsibilities and in acquiring skills that will prepare them for leadership roles. Since 2002, AAHSL has co-sponsored with the National Library of Medicine a program to identify and develop candidates for director roles, the [NLM/AAHSL Leadership Fellows Program](#) and makes the program's [rosters of graduates](#) available on its website.

Efforts to encourage applicants from diverse backgrounds are undertaken in the context of the potential pool. Although the makeup of professionals employed in health sciences libraries, and the library profession, has historically been predominantly white and female, a more diverse group is entering the pipeline of graduates and library leadership positions. The Association of Research Libraries, which includes some academic medical libraries, reported in 2020 that 78% of its medical library directors were female [28]. Of all the directors reporting data in for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, 73% were female and 16% were non-white. [25]

Search committees and recruiting firms should consider advertising and contacts targeted to identify and encourage minority applicants. Current data on gender and race and ethnicity of librarians are maintained and available from professional organizations [6,24, 25].

Networking and recruiting opportunities as well as a diversity and inclusion plan needs to be part of everyday institutional activities to be effective at the time of a search [26]. Search committees and recruiting firms should seek to maximize the pool of qualified candidates from the beginning. Many other senior positions in academic health sciences centers enjoy a larger potential

pool of applicants than is true for library directors. Consequently, it is advisable to undertake a wide range of recruitment approaches.

## SCREENING APPLICANTS

- Evaluation of candidates must consider leadership abilities and knowledge of libraries and information policy issues.
- Candidates' experience and background should reflect the knowledge and responsibilities required by the position.
- When a library degree is not required, the candidate's understanding of library and information technology environments should be carefully evaluated.
- Evaluate internal candidates using the same criteria for recruiting externally.

Search committees and recruiting firms will want to evaluate all applications for these positions emphasizing the criteria used for senior leadership positions in the academic health sciences center.

More important for library director positions is evaluation of how the candidates evidence leadership ability, their capability of relating to constituencies, knowledge of information and technology issues, fit with the institution's vision of the future, and the specific requirements and responsibilities of the director's position. This requires an in-depth review of CVs and other sources of information.

Candidates need to have an overall mastery of library functions and involvement in broader information issues. The content of their technical expertise is not as important as the ability to lead, advocate and negotiate for the library within the institution and the community. They need to be effective leaders of people, managers of technologies, and possess and maintain strong understanding of current library issues such as scholarly communication, content licensing, information costs, and copyright to position the library effectively. Their ability to secure institutional and external funding, to manage a complex budget, and to communicate a funding plan with a high return on investment will help determine the library's success. They must be able to speak the languages of the communities the library serves, including understanding issues relevant to clinical and research information systems and data curation. If the institution is seeking candidates with advanced degrees in related disciplines other than a library background, it is important to consider the person's service and teaching orientation and knowledge of the acquisition, management, and utilization of information resources.

Search committees and recruiters should look at the range of areas and the breadth of responsibility that candidates have had in their current and prior positions and at their experience in interacting with groups outside the library. The candidates' record of professional activities can be reviewed for evidence of further involvement with information issues and leadership in professional associations. These are valuable not only for the experience candidates gain but also as evidence of their visibility to peers. Candidates can also demonstrate leadership and contact with constituencies through university service. The relevance and depth of these activities ought to be evaluated, not just their existence.

The conventional career path to an academic health sciences library director position may progress through a deputy or associate director position at a comparable library or may move from another director position, such as from a smaller to a larger library. In some libraries, division or department heads may have had a level of responsibility analogous to deputy or associate director

positions. Libraries are tending to create flatter organizational structures which may not provide the conventional growth opportunities described above. Depending on the organizational structure of the library, leadership roles may be defined in other ways as well.

Search committees and recruiters should be open to consideration of candidates with other, more diverse, backgrounds or with nontraditional career paths to a directorship. Hospital library directors, for example, have expertise in information services in clinical and education settings and have made successful transitions to positions in academic health sciences center libraries.

Librarians may also have degrees with an emphasis in information science or postgraduate education in informatics or have additional degrees in these areas. Should the position not require a library degree, more scrutiny should be paid to the candidates' understanding of both library and information technology environments. The decision to structure a job in this manner depends on the institution, including the areas of responsibility assigned to the position, as well as the qualifications of the individual.

Checking candidates' references is an essential part of evaluating applicants. References may be checked before or after the interview to those supplied by the candidate. Structured conversations with references should be conducted for the top group of candidates. Further recommendations for conducting reference interviews, and credential checks are available from the American Association for Higher Education [9].

## INTERVIEWS

- Interviews provide opportunities for the institution to evaluate the candidate and the candidate to learn more about the job and the institution.
- Include key persons with whom the position interacts and representatives of the library's constituencies in the interviews as well as the search committee.
- Provide interviewers with information about the position requirements, the library, and the candidate.
- For candidates, provide information about the institution the position requirements, and the library.
- Virtual screening interviews may be conducted by the search committee for selecting applicants for in-person interviews.
- Interview structures should parallel those for other senior leaders and involve formal and informal meetings, typically taking place over the course of one or more days.

Interviews are a two-way process. They provide the best opportunity to evaluate candidates, and they also allow the candidates to learn about the job and the parent organization. To be effective, interviews should involve the key persons with whom the position interacts and representatives of the library's constituencies. The savvy candidate expects to meet with the key leaders who determine the future of the institution and are most responsible for the library. These may include the president, vice president, deans, university librarian, and budget and information officers. Examples of key leaders include but may not be limited to the search committee, the person to whom the position reports, deans or representatives of professional schools and hospitals, library staff, and library users should be included in the interview schedule. The interview is also the

opportunity to include those who may have partnerships with the library, such as: other libraries, library school, area hospital libraries, regional network, institutional peers, information technology departments, and disciplines that may be important locally such as telemedicine or virtual learning. The incumbent director usually is not involved in the evaluation of candidates.

The structure of the interviews should parallel those for other senior leaders. They will usually require one or more days and should include both formal and informal settings. Both small group and one-on-one sessions may be employed as appropriate. Typically, the candidates will be asked to make a presentation or lead an open forum, where they can demonstrate their leadership acumen, areas of expertise, and public communication skills. These sessions will also allow more people to participate in the interviews.

The interviewers should be prepared with information about candidates, desired characteristics, and awareness of basic protocols for interviewing. Also provide interviewers with procedures for collecting evaluative comments from other participants for review by the search committee.

Prior to the interview, candidates should be provided with comprehensive information about the position and the community, including a detailed itinerary for their visit to the institution. During the interview, make them as comfortable as possible including courtesies such as transportation, introductions, accompanying candidates to meeting locations, and breaks in the schedule.

The most important trait for interviewers is the ability to listen. Interviewers should focus on relevant past performance, ask follow-up questions, keep the interview on track, and allow candidates to do most of the talking. Pritchard provides examples of topics for inquiry that will elicit information on management, leadership, and political skills of library director candidates [12]. Fear's work is a helpful source for further discussion of interviewing technique in general situations [30], and Arthur discusses competency-based interviewing [31].

Search committees need to be sensitive when there are internal candidates for the position [32]. Internal candidates should be treated in the same manner as external candidates, as part of a national search, with the same interview and equal consideration. Care also needs to be taken before, during, and after the interview about what is said in public about the search. In most cases, internal candidates should not participate in interviews of other candidates.

Interviews are successful when they help both the institution, and the candidate decide whether their partnership would be successful. In addition to the two-way evaluation process, interviews can promote a positive message about the role of the position and the library as well as about the institutional culture and faculty support and development, involve library constituencies, and begin building future relationships with the director.

## **NEGOTIATION AND APPOINTMENT**

- Recommendations are based on the search committee's assessment and analysis of interviewers' comments as well as its earlier review of the candidates.

- Both the appointing officer and candidate will have employment terms that need to be considered, discussed, and negotiated.
- Salary is an important point in negotiations, but many other terms may need to be negotiated as well.

The search committee's discussion and deliberation in preparation for its recommendation to the appointing officer are based on its own assessment, analysis of comments of interviewers, evaluations of attendees from townhalls or presentations, and careful review of the earlier research on the candidates. Follow-up queries to check on any new questions may be needed. The results are evaluated in the context of the preliminary analysis of the position and requirements. The best decision appraises the knowledge, skills, competencies, and personality of the persons that will make them most likely to achieve the future vision for the library.

The process of making the offer reflects the values of the institution. The appointing officer, who makes the final decision and extends the offer to the successful candidate, continues to effectively promote the position and signal the resources the institution is willing to devote to the library. Among other points, the appointing officer can articulate the match between the institution and the candidate, the advantages of being a member of the institution's leadership team, and the nature of the relationship with the officer [3]. Personal assistance in facilitating employment for a spouse or partner and relocation can also influence the candidate's decision. As with other senior administrative positions, both the appointing officer and the candidate expect to negotiate terms of employment. The candidate will have ideas regarding resources and conditions that would help in meeting institutional goals, based on what was learned about the library during the recruitment process, past experiences, and knowledge of other academic health centers. One good source of comparative data on academic health sciences libraries is the annual AAHSL statistics [6].

The negotiation phase is an appropriate time to reach agreement on individual terms and library conditions. Possible negotiation points include:

- salary and other compensation
- signing bonus
- start-up package
- moving allowance
- title, faculty status, and tenure if applicable
- start and length of term of appointment
- criteria for performance evaluation and conditions of termination
- reporting relationship(s)
- responsibilities of position and units reporting to the library director
- adjustments to library staffing levels
- one-time or recurring adjustments to library budget for staff, collections, facilities, or other expenses.

The final offer letter or letter of appointment reflects these understandings.

The appointment is a chance to welcome the new director and pave the way for successful entry into the new environment. The other candidates, especially internal ones, and library staff ought to be notified before the public announcement is made. The announcement, focusing

attention on the qualifications of the individual and on the enterprise of the library, contributes to positive expectations for the appointment. A plan to orient the new director is also valuable. Introductions to colleagues in the institution and the community will make it easier for the director to begin professional acquaintances, and a mentor arranged by the appointing officer can provide guidance on institutional policies and norms. These final steps in the recruitment process will pay dividends in getting the director off to a good start and to long-term retention.

Retention is an important component of recruitment. Ongoing attention to the importance of the position, adequate resources, and communication with other senior administrators will also influence the ability to keep good directors. More than a quarter of current AAHSL directors are new to their positions within the past three years, projections of anticipated vacancies in coming years suggest that institutions will face challenges both in recruiting and retaining top-notch directors [30].

## SALARIES

The following information on salaries of directors is taken from the 46<sup>th</sup> annual statistical compilation of the Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries [6]. Salary data for 2023-2024 are reported for 117 director positions in libraries serving medical schools in the United States and Canada (117 individual libraries, 3 of which were from Canadian libraries).

Salaries should be considered in the context of those of peer positions in the institution as well as norms in the profession. Salaries are also influenced by location, institutional characteristics (including its size, complexity, and public/private status), and other factors, as well as individual qualifications.

The third quartile salary for library directors as reported in the AAHSL statistics is \$180,584 overall (i.e., 25% of the respondents earn more than that amount). This number reflects U.S. libraries only. Only three Canadian libraries reported salary data this year, so that data is withheld to avoid disclosure of personal information. The mean salary for U.S. director salaries is \$153,933; the median is \$145,000. The reported director salaries range from \$72,722 to \$292,168 for public schools, and \$90,570 to \$350,000 for private schools.

The third quartile salaries vary by [NNLM regional area](#) as follows:

Region 1	\$192,212
Region 2	\$180,584
Region 3	\$158,856
Region 4	\$165,066
Region 5	\$132,993
Region 6	\$153,891
Region 7	\$222,493
Canada	Data withheld to prevent disclosure



The third quartile salary for public institutions (63 of the reported positions) is \$166,767, and for private institutions (54 of the reported positions) is \$192,229.

On average, directors have 25 years of experience and supervise 20 FTE. Composite AAHSL salaries are analyzed for the effect of variables of position level, years of experience, gender, geographic area, medical school type, and position permanence.

Data from: Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries. Annual statistics of medical school libraries in the United States and Canada. 46<sup>th</sup> ed. Seattle, WA, 2023-2024. (online version of salary data is available to members each March at [aahsl.countingopinions.com](http://aahsl.countingopinions.com) and a copy can be purchased by non-members by contacting AAHSL at [office@aaahsl.org](mailto:office@aaahsl.org))

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