

## 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. Hernon'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.