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].