

Attending the Harvard Leadership Institute for Academic Librarians (HLIAL) was one of the best professional development opportunities that I have participated in. The institute was well-planned and organized. Facilitators focused on topics that are relevant to leaders of all types, both formal and informal. Although it's only been a month since I attended the program, the concepts I learned have significantly influenced my approach to leadership. For instance, going into my meetings for the medical education informationists that I lead, I felt a sense of calm and reassurance in my capability to run the meeting and help move the objectives of our group forward. It was also reassuring to know that some of the insecurities I have, as a leader, are shared by many library leaders. An exercise made this fact clear when we were challenged to anonymously write on a post-it, three of our fears that keep us from being the best leaders we could be, and stick it on a wall (called the gallery). We then took a gallery walk and saw what the leadership fears of others in the room were. It was surprising, yet reassuring to see that most of us had the same fears and concerns about things like being a fraud (not an authentic leader), not being liked by the ones we are leading, or making mistakes. This was a powerful exercise for me, as it empowered me to embrace more leadership opportunities without the fear of failure or being perceived as inauthentic. Additionally, as a result of HLIAL, I have been able to improve on my idea to start a Professional Development Book Club for my colleagues, dedicated to reviewing resources that contribute to our development as professionals and leaders in medical librarianship. The readings assigned from the institute will be invaluable additions to our discussions, fostering continuous development.

Overall, attending the institute provided a space for me to reflect on the characteristics of people whom I consider excellent leaders in relation to who I want to be as a leader. It also provided an opportunity to network with other academic librarian leaders who were able to share their experiences and exchange ideas on how we can better serve our respective institutions. I was extremely grateful to AAHSL for awarding me the Leadership Diversity Scholarship to help support me in this career development opportunity. As I continue to lead in unofficial capacities, I will implement the things I've learned at the HLIAL and share the concepts and ideas with my colleagues so that, together, we can be the kind of academic librarianship leaders our faculty and students and community deserve.