

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Use the vacant director's position as an opportunity to formulate a new vision for the library, assess current needs, and articulate a future direction of library services.
- Appoint a search committee as soon as possible.
- The job description conveys the institution's vision, shapes the applicant pool, and assists in evaluating applicants.
- 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 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 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. The Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL) has produced this guide to assist university administrators and search committees with the recruitment process. Although each institution is unique, the guide attempts to provide information that can be applied to specific circumstances.

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 vacancy description will be a useful aid throughout the recruitment process. It communicates to candidates the vision 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 administrative positions in the academic health center. These include evaluation of how candidates evidence leadership ability, their capability of relating to constituencies, knowledge of information and technology issues, and fit with the institution's 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.

The hiring decision appraises the knowledge, skills, competencies, and personality of candidates to identify the persons most likely to achieve the future vision for the library. 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 a final part of the recruitment process that contributes to long-term retention.