

# NLM/AAHSL LEADERSHIP FELLOWS PROGRAM

**2021 / 2022**

## INFORMATION AND APPLICATION

**April 1, 2021**

Contact information:

AAHSL [office@aaosl.org](mailto:office@aaosl.org)    **Phone:** 206-209-5261  
NLM/AAHSL Leadership Program Director - Patricia Thibodeau,  
[plthibodeau@gmail.com](mailto:plthibodeau@gmail.com)

<https://www.aahsl.org/leadershipfellowsprogram>

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*This program has been funded in part with Federal funds from the National Library of Medicine,  
National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

## OVERVIEW

### **Announcing: The 2021-2022 Leadership Program of the National Library of Medicine (NLM) and the Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL)**

For the past 18 years, the National Library of Medicine (NLM) and the Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL) have sponsored the NLM/AAHSL Leadership Fellows Program. This leadership program identifies and brings together emerging health sciences library leaders and assists them in gaining the skills and knowledge for today's and tomorrow's academic health sciences libraries.

In addition to learning leadership models and competencies, as a fellow you will explore how to become an effective and inclusive leader. Working with a mentor who is an academic health sciences library director, you will observe a variety of leadership styles and institutional cultures. Through this mentoring relationship, you will gain firsthand an unfiltered exposure to leadership through a site visit to your mentor's institution, as well as candid conversations with your mentor, facilitated discussions among the learning community on various topics, and an intensive multi-day leadership institute. As part of the program, you will be introduced to and become part of a larger community and network of health sciences library leaders through interactions with mentors, prior fellows, and other AAHSL library directors.

Leaders must value, create, and sustain a work environment where diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging thrive. The NLM/AAHSL Leadership Fellows Program recognizes the importance of such an environment to enrich and support the mission of academic health sciences libraries. The program actively seeks applications from individuals with varying identities, experiences, and backgrounds.



*The most valuable part of the program was the people - facilitators, mentors, and fellows. We were able to share our experiences and hold open discussions about the challenges and rewards that come with being a leader. In addition, as a fellow, my site visit gave me firsthand experience with another academic health sciences library and the high level leaders both inside and outside of the library.*

Amy Blevins, Fellow 2018-2019  
Associate Director for Public Services  
Ruth Lilly Medical Library  
Indiana University School of Medicine

In addition to traditional management/administrative positions, the leadership fellows program seeks applicants with progressive leadership experience. Your leadership experience can be both within and outside the library community, such as prior work-related experience in a business or organization, or acting as a leader within a community, regional, or national organization over

the course of several years. Leadership experiences can be from non-library environments that may include serving as project coordinator, grant PI, chair of a large or complex committee, or officer of a community, regional or national organization. It can be several years within the same position, or more than one leadership role over the course of several years. Your experience should demonstrate a sustained and progressive leadership path. You are not required to have direct supervisory responsibility or administer a large library unit, but your experience should involve working with a variety of people in accomplishing a specific project, initiative, or goal.

Fellows selected to be part of the program receive funding from NLM and AAHSL for travel and other program-related expenses. The only commitment from you and your library is that you will be given release time to participate fully in all program elements.

## **Learning Objectives and Outcomes**

As a fellow participating in the NLM/AAHSL Leadership Fellows Program, you will:

- Explore leadership through a variety of lenses and program components.
- Understand the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusivity as it applies to leadership development and to the benefit of the profession, institution, and community.
- Gain valuable insight on leading across organizational, institutional, and geographic boundaries.
- Establish a network of colleagues to draw upon throughout your career.
- Consider concepts in leadership theory and develop practical skills for implementing change at organizational and professional levels.
- Develop a clear understanding of the contemporary role of academic health sciences library directors.
- Exercise and hone strategic thinking skills.
- Discuss self-awareness and its impact on leadership confidence.
- Practice interview skills for director level positions.
- Gather career guidance from your mentor and other health sciences library leaders.
- Be recognized as an emerging leader with a competitive standing when pursuing director positions.

## **BACKGROUND**

In 2000, the leadership of the AAHSL recognized there was a looming shortage of well-trained, qualified, and forward-thinking emerging leaders ready to become the next generation of academic health sciences library directors. To address this challenge and to ensure the vitality and influence of libraries far into the future, AAHSL undertook its Future Leadership Initiative. The Leadership Fellows Program, co-sponsored by NLM and AAHSL, was established and remains a highly visible and high priority program within AAHSL.



*The AAHSL Leadership Fellows Program was an incredible opportunity to see what successful leadership of health sciences libraries looks like in practice. It gave me a deeper appreciation of the range of challenges leaders in our field face, and the creative ways they find to improvise and respond. I also came away with a new group of colleagues and friends that I know I can always reach out to for personal advice. I highly recommend this program for aspiring leaders.*

Stephen Kiyoi, Fellow 2016-2017  
Head of Researcher Services, Shields Library  
University of California Davis

AAHSL continuously seeks feedback from fellows and mentors to ensure the program maintains its relevance and reflects ongoing environment changes and new leadership ideas. Prior fellows have cited a number of benefits from participating in the program including: enhanced leadership skills; credibility as a director candidate; building confidence; and gaining a community of peers who share career aspirations. Mentors gain from the program as well, noting that besides contributing to the career development of fellows, they experience personal and institutional benefits through the opportunity to reflect on their own leadership and learn from their fellow and the rest of the learning community.

To date, ninety-two (92) fellows and 73 different mentors have participated in the program. Forty-eight (48) fellows (52% of prior graduates) have received permanent director appointments. Twelve (12) prior fellows have now joined the program as mentors.

## **PROGRAM STRUCTURE & DESIGN**

The NLM/AAHSL Leadership Fellows Program balances leadership development training with personal interaction and practical experience. The program combines a group curriculum with individually based events designed to build a “community of learners.” As a fellow, you will engage in face-to-face interactions, distance learning, and firsthand experiences through a site visit. In addition to a one-year fellow/mentor relationship, there are three in-person leadership events and an opportunity for attendance at the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Annual Meeting, as well as the AAHSL Annual Meeting.

As a fellow, you will participate in six components over a one-year timeframe, with each step building upon the previous learning experience:

- Orientation
- Multi-day immersive Leadership Institute
- One-week site-visit to the mentor’s institution
- Ongoing mentoring relationship
- Monthly webinars and online discussions
- Multi-day Capstone event

The program is specifically designed to capitalize on the knowledge, wisdom, and training of mentors and program faculty by offering you experiences to observe, interact, role-play, discuss, and absorb a wide variety of topics. This approach leads to rich and long-lasting relationships with a larger leadership community made up of mentors and fellows from current and prior years.

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMPONENTS

### Orientation

The Orientation, held in conjunction with the AAHSL and AAMC Annual Meetings, is the first opportunity for you to meet the members of your learning community (fellows, mentors, and faculty), get to know each other, and develop initial learning plans for the year. The Orientation includes a program overview and explores intentional leadership, creates a personal vision of leadership, and reflects on your leadership style. After completing leadership instruments, faculty guide you through a review of your leadership profile to assist you in identifying your strengths and preferences. This leadership assessment informs the work you will do individually and with your mentor. Because the Orientation is scheduled in concert with annual meetings, the program supports your attendance at the AAMC and AAHSL Annual Meetings, exposing you to the issues and leaders of the academic health sciences community.

### Leadership Institute

This multi-day immersive event, scheduled in the late spring, delves deep into leadership topics affecting academic health sciences libraries and the larger professional community, as well as your individual career development goals. Program faculty discuss case studies and facilitate interactive exercises. You will participate in a mock interview for a director's position. Fellows, mentors, and faculty engage in informal discussions about the recruiting process, negotiating a salary and other demands, and starting a new position. This in-person mid-program event brings everyone together to further strengthen the learning community, introduces additional leadership topics, further develops leadership skills, and ensures that the program is addressing the needs of your cohort of emerging leaders.



*The NLM/AAHSL Leadership Fellows Program was an invaluable and timely experience for me as a recently appointed Interim Director. It provided me with multiple opportunities to meet other directors and leaders with a wide range of experience and expertise and from a variety of disciplines. As a new director, I must give credit to my mentor, in particular, but also everyone involved with the program for their practical advice and philosophical wisdom.*

Philip Walker, Fellow 2017-2018  
Currently Director, Eskind Biomedical  
Vanderbilt University Library

## **Mentor Relationship and Site Visit**

Your relationship with your mentor is the thread that ties the program components together. If selected, you will be paired with a mentor based on your expressed professional development goals and the mentor's fields of interest and areas of expertise, as well as characteristics of the mentor's institution.

With your mentor, you will establish mutual expectations for your newly developed working relationship. You will be expected to communicate on a regular and frequent basis to discuss topics of your choosing, such as challenges faced by you, issues in your home library, and the profession, as well as progress on learning goals. During this time, you will continue to build your relationship with your mentor who can support you as you consider your next career decisions.

The individual site visit to the mentor's home library fulfills the program's goal of exposing you to diverse leadership styles and organizational developments. The site visit gives you first-hand experience under the tutelage of a highly committed and knowledgeable mentor representing the leaders of the academic health sciences library community. The design of the site visit will ensure a meaningful and instructive experience—it will be coordinated to meet you and your mentor's expectations.



*Having served as a mentor twice, I have seen transformations – new thoughts and ideas, “aha” moments, confidence building, and lifelong learning at the highest level. That happens not only for the Fellows, but for the Mentors as well, proving a growth mindset that can strengthen at any experiential level or age. The NLM/AAHSL Fellows Program functions at the highest level, building future leaders for our profession.*

M.J. Tooley, MLS, AHIP, FMLA, Mentor 2016-2017, 2018-2019  
Associate Vice President, Academic Affairs  
Executive Director, Health Sciences and Human Services Library  
Director, National Network of Libraries of Medicine,  
Southeastern/Atlantic Region  
University of Maryland Baltimore

## **Virtual Learning Community**

A Virtual Learning Community is created to encourage online exchange of information about program components and the discussion of issues and ideas that surface during the program. Prior to the Orientation, you will be connected electronically to the learning community (fellows, mentors, and faculty) to ensure continued interaction throughout the year. As a fellow, you and your mentor will be involved in developing and facilitating a monthly virtual session on a topic of importance to academic health sciences library leadership. These online topics and discussions comprise the online curriculum. The virtual curriculum has covered these topics: Versatile Leadership; Situational Leadership; Strategic Resource Allocation;

Strategic Team Building; Leading with Innovation and Creativity; Development Work; and Navigating the Organizational Structure.

### **Capstone**

The Capstone is the culminating event, which brings together program participants, faculty, and national leaders in the library and academic health professions to discuss key issues. This intensive two-day curriculum focuses on environmental forces helping to shape academic health sciences libraries. It will merge concepts raised throughout the year and recognize participants' completion of the program. The Capstone will reinforce your community of learners and will serve as a powerful networking opportunity with other leaders. Organizations represented in prior Capstone programs include the National Library of Medicine, Association of American Medical Colleges, Association of Research Libraries, American Medical Informatics Association, and other health professional and information organizations.

## **CURRICULUM TIMELINE**

An important part of the program is the interaction and shared learning among your community of fellows and mentors. While some unexpected scheduling conflicts may occur, the program expects full participation in all major events

Proposed program schedule on next page...



## PROGRAM SCHEDULE

**NOTE: Due to COVID and its impact on in-person events, these dates may change with sessions moving to an online platform and scheduled over several days and weeks.**

June 15, 2021	Completed application packets due
August 2021	Successful candidates notified Participation confirmation due Notification letters sent to all applicants
November 2021 -- TBD  Due to COVID, <b>the Orientation will be held online</b> and will be scheduled over 3 to 4 days along with attending session at the AAHSL annual meeting and its educational program and the option for registering for the AAMC virtual meeting.	Orientation - via Zoom for 2021 – early to mid November The Orientation is usually held in conjunction with the AAHSL and AAMC Annual Meetings. <b>DUE TO COVID</b> both meetings are moving to virtual programming.  AAHSL annual meeting dates – TBD Fellows and mentors will participate in the virtual AAHSL annual business meeting and educational program in addition to the Orientation sessions  AAMC meeting – tentative dates for virtual meeting Nov. 8-10 Fellows receive funding for registering for the AAMC virtual meeting as well.
December 31, 2021	Learning Plans due Fellows/Mentors finalize site visit schedules
January – August 2022	Site visits Deadline for site visits is August 31, 2022
January – August 2022	Facilitated monthly webinars and discussions
April 5-8, 2022 Washington, DC	Leadership Institute – 3-day Immersive Program held in in a central location April 5, 2022 6-8 p.m. Prior evening dinner, Introduction/Overview April 6-8, 2022 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Immersive Leadership Institute (3 day)
Fall 2022 (Dates TBA) Washington, DC	Capstone and Graduation – 2-day program Dinner evening before Graduation evening of last day

# FELLOWS

## Time Commitment

As an applicant, you should carefully review the program schedule before applying and consider delaying the application to another year if you are aware of potential conflicts with the program's major events (Orientation, Leadership Institute, Capstone), or if you will not be able to participate on a regular basis in the monthly online discussions and communications with your mentor.

## Program and Travel Support

**Fellows from AAHSL member libraries** will be allowed a maximum of \$7,000 each for travel expenses and to attend the following events:

- Attendance at the Orientation, AAHSL Annual Meeting, and one additional day at AAMC Annual Meeting in November 2021 in San Antonio, TX. Expenses include meeting registration, air and ground transportation, lodging and meals. Attendance at the AAHSL meeting is free.
- Travel to site visit library. Expenses include air and ground transportation, lodging and meals.
- Travel to the Leadership Institute including air and ground transportation, lodging and meals
- Travel to the Capstone event and graduation in Washington, DC in the fall 2022. Expenses include air and ground transportation and up to three days' lodging and meals.

If selected, you may use the allotment for travel expenses in accordance with the AAHSL Travel Policy and guidelines provided by the program. The [policy and travel expense form](#) will govern reimbursement of expenses. Please note the use of rental cars must be approved in advance by the program director.

**Fellows NOT from AAHSL member institutions** will need to pay their own travel expenses for the following (estimated at \$7,000 to 7,500). This includes:

- Travel, meal and other expenses on the days of travel to the Orientation, Leadership Institute, Capstone event and the week-long site visit to the mentor's institution
- Registration for AAMC meeting

AAHSL supports lodging expenses and meals during the Orientation, Leadership Institute, and Capstone event, and provides free registration to the AAHSL annual meeting and educational program for all participants.

Information for becoming an [AAHSL member](#) is available on the association's website.

## Eligibility Requirements

The NLM/AAHSL Leadership Fellows Program is designed for librarians with prior management experience. In most cases, the baseline for candidates to be considered for selection is a minimum of three to five years of experience that demonstrates a career track in administrative positions or progressive leadership responsibilities. NLM and AAHSL are committed to building diverse candidate pools and ensuring diversity of participation in the program and library leadership by considering the relevance of a broad portfolio of leadership responsibilities.

Each year the program selects a small class of fellows (about five) for the incoming class. In addition to the criteria below, the program is committed to diversity and inclusion and seeks applications from individuals with varying identities and backgrounds.

The application process is open to U.S. and Canadian citizens and permanent residents. Final candidates for fellows must be from or become an AAHSL member institution for *full travel support*. As noted in the Program and Travel Support section, candidates not from AAHSL member institutions will need to pay their own program travel expenses (estimated to be \$7,000 - \$7,500). Please visit the AAHSL website for [membership information](#).

The purpose of this program is to generate a pool of new candidates for open AAHSL director positions. As a result, current directors of AAHSL member libraries are not eligible to apply for this program. A fellow will be ineligible to participate if the selected fellow accepts a position as director of an AAHSL Library prior to the start of the program.

## Criteria for Application Evaluation

1. Strong interest in pursuing a **directorship in academic health sciences libraries** regardless of type of library background or current setting.
2. Demonstrated record of leadership initiative and strong potential for future leadership contributions.
3. Clearly articulated personal and professional goals.
4. Commitment to the time and dedication required for full participation.
5. Diversity of experience, background, or perspective, particularly those underrepresented in the profession and library leadership positions.
6. A master's in library/information science or comparable graduate degree.
7. Currently working in academic health sciences libraries, hospital libraries, or other libraries or library-related environments.

Prospective applicants who do not yet meet these requirements may benefit from taking part in other leadership programs (including a short course, institutional leadership training, etc.) prior to applying for the fellowship.

## Application

As a candidate for the fellowship, you are asked to include in your application a statement reflecting why you should be chosen as a candidate and why you want to be a director of an academic health sciences library. The statement does not need to be lengthy but must present a strong case as to why you should be selected. This information will also facilitate the process of matching fellows with mentors and will be used to focus your individual learning plan.

You must submit your application materials electronically to AAHSL by June 15, 2021. Application submission requires completing an online information sheet available at: <https://aahsl.memberclicks.net/fellows-class-2021-2022-application> and uploading the other required documents or sending them directly to [Office@AAHSL.org](mailto:Office@AAHSL.org).

AAHSL will acknowledge receipt of your application and prepare it for review by the AAHSL Future Leadership Committee. Please contact Pat Thibodeau at [plthibodeau@gmail.com](mailto:plthibodeau@gmail.com), if you do not receive an acknowledgement.

### Timeline

June 15, 2021	Completed application packets due
August 2021	Invited candidates notified of selection decisions
August 2021	Commitment to program participation due

**Fellow application packets** should include the following. Note: It is preferred, but not mandatory, that components be submitted as a single PDF or Word file (or two if the letter of reference and support is submitted at a different time).

**1. Online Fellow Information Sheet** – the fellows information sheet is an online form that can be found on the AAHSL Website at: <https://aahsl.memberclicks.net/fellows-class-2021-2022-application>.

As an applicant you will be asked to provide the following: name, current position title, library, institution, mailing address, email, telephone numbers, graduate degrees, and years of management experience.

Providing information on race/ethnicity is optional. NLM and AAHSL are committed to building diverse candidate pools and ensuring diversity of participation in the program. Over the past 14 years, more than 22% of the fellow applicants have indicated a minority status and 25% of fellows have self-identified as having racially or ethnically diverse backgrounds. We ask for demographic information to help us collect data and make appropriate enhancements to

our future outreach efforts. The information will be used for reporting purposes and to monitor the recruitment process.

## **2. Current CV**

## **3. Statement of Interest (1 page)**

Your Statement of Interest should support your application to the program. When developing your statement, consider the following:

- Why you are interested in the NLM/AAHSL Leadership Fellows Program.
- Your career goals in 3 to 5 years.
- How your background and experience has prepared you for an academic health sciences library director position.
- Other relevant academic or administrative experiences (e.g. leadership initiatives).
- Your vision of the role of the academic health sciences library director now and in the future.
- Areas of professional development and knowledge that you would like to pursue as a part of the site-visit at your mentor's institution.
- An example of how you have advanced diversity and inclusion within the profession or in your workplace.

**4. Letters of Reference – up to three letters of reference will be accepted.** The letters can be from the library director, other direct supervisor or administrator, or a colleague who has directly observed and is knowledgeable about your leadership ability, your potential and level of readiness to be an academic health sciences library director, and how the fellowship program will contribute to your development. The letters should focus on leadership level skills within the library, institution, or profession and not on management abilities.

## **5. Letter of Support from home institution for the following:**

*The Letter of Support from the home institution is strongly encouraged but is **not** mandatory for consideration. Candidates who apply without an institutional Letter of Support are asked to supply a written statement that they understand, agree to, and can support the financial and time commitments required for participation in all aspects of the program.*

- Support (time and other non-financial) for fellow's full participation in all programmatic activities (One-week site visit to mentor's home institution, webinars and discussions, Orientation, multi-day Leadership Institute, and 2-day Capstone).
- For candidates from non-AAHSL libraries:
  - Statement that the institution is becoming a member of AAHSL.
  - OR, a statement that travel expenses (including meals and incidental expenses) for participation in the Orientation, Leadership Institute, and Capstone, and all expenses (travel, lodging, per diem) for the site visit will be supported by you or your institution.

The letters mentioned in items #4 and #5 may be combined.

For questions about the application process, or to nominate a candidate for consideration, please contact Pat Thibodeau, Director, AAHSL Future Leadership Program, at [plthibodeau@gmail.com](mailto:plthibodeau@gmail.com) or 919-619-6906.

## **MENTORS**

### **Travel Support**

NLM/AAHSL will financially support the following for mentors:

- One day's lodging and meals to attend the Orientation at the AAHSL and AAMC Annual Meetings, usually in November.
- Air and ground transportation, lodging, and additional meals to attend the multi-day Leadership Institute in the Spring
- Air and ground transportation and up to three days' lodging and meals to attend the Capstone in the Fall.

### **Mentors Application**

The NLM/AAHSL Leadership Fellows Program seeks academic health sciences library directors to serve as mentors for program fellows. The program accepts a small class of fellows (about five) and each fellow is matched with a mentor. Mentors actively participate in the program's success by contributing to the leadership development components.

Mentors are selected based on their interest in the leadership program and their ability to commit time to the program. The time commitment involves participating in the in-person meetings, communicating regularly with their fellow, hosting a site visit for the fellow, and participating in the online discussions and virtual learning sessions. During in-person activities, you will participate in all discussions and exercises and share your knowledge and experiences with the fellows. Mentors will be asked to assist their fellow in facilitating a virtual (online) session and contributing to the Institute content through the development of case studies or other learning exercises.

As with fellows, the program is committed to diversity and inclusion and seeks applications from individuals with varying identities and backgrounds.

If selected, you will be paired with a fellow based on the fellow's expressed professional development areas and your fields of interest and areas of expertise, as well as characteristics of the institution.

As a mentor you should meet the following criteria:

- Five years' experience at director level (exceptions may be made for fewer years).
- Membership in AAHSL.
- U.S. or Canadian citizenship or permanent residency.
- Interest in and ability to commit time from November 2021 to October 2022 to the program components outlined in the program schedule (SEE page 6), including

mentors' orientation, program Orientation, Leadership Institute, Virtual Learning Community, Capstone, one-week Site Visit and regular communication with your fellow.

You may contact the Committee Chair Terrie Wheeler ([tew2004@med.cornell.edu](mailto:tew2004@med.cornell.edu)) or Program Director Pat Thibodeau ([plthibodeau@gmail.com](mailto:plthibodeau@gmail.com)) with questions about the program or serving as a mentor.



*As a two-time mentor, I have learned enormously from the questions my fellow asks, and from looking at my own institution with a fresh eye.*

*Additionally, it's been a wonderful networking opportunity. And of course, it feels wonderful to share my own areas of experience as well as that of my staff and my institution.*

Barbara Cavanaugh, Mentor 2013-14, 2017-2018,  
Currently Assistant University Librarian of for Health Sciences & STEM Libraries  
University of Pennsylvania

## **Preliminary Mentor Application**

If you are interested in becoming a mentor, you should send a preliminary email message to Pat Thibodeau ([plthibodeau@gmail.com](mailto:plthibodeau@gmail.com)) by the deadline date below.

The preliminary email should include:

- **A brief statement of your interest** in participating in the NLM/AAHSL Leadership Fellows Program as a mentor, including what you and your institution could offer a fellow and the cohort in terms of professional development, your own experience, your unique areas of expertise, and/or institutional areas of focus.

Please include a brief paragraph about your library/institution:

- The type of institution (private, public, government)
  - The reporting structure for the library, i.e. to whom the director reports
  - The schools or areas served by the library, including any relationships to hospitals or health systems
- **A current CV.**

The selection committee evaluates fellow candidates and determines the types of institutions needed for appropriate matches. Input from fellow candidates may be sought about their preferences for a match. After initial decisions about potential matches for fellows and



mentors are made, each selected mentor is asked to confirm commitment to the program.

**Timeline**

- June 15, 2021      Deadline for indication of preliminary interest in being in mentor pool
- August 2021      Mentors are asked to confirm participation and are notified of pairing decisions