

**Title: An Online Immersive Fellowship Training Program in Health Sciences Librarianship****Introduction**

A project team from the University of North Texas Department of Information Science (UNT DIS) requests a 17-month **Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Program grant** for \$249,190 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to develop and deploy an **online immersive health sciences librarianship fellowship training program** designed to: 1. build the health sciences librarianship competencies of library and information sciences (LIS) graduate students and librarians with less than three years of professional practice; 2. bridge gaps in current graduate LIS master's program curricula in health sciences librarianship; and 3. to fill the present need for qualified health sciences librarians. This project supports the Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Program, specifically Goal 3, Objective 3.2.

**Project Justification**

Health sciences librarians contribute to the well-being of communities through the delivery of quality health information at the point of need for health care providers, researchers, patients, and consumers. While there are relatively fewer health sciences librarians compared to the number of librarians in North America ([Koos & Scheinfeld, 2020](#)), they make a impact on the delivery of health care by saving health care providers' time, reducing health care costs, assisting with decision-making, and improving patient care ([Tan & Maggio, 2013](#)). Being a health sciences librarian requires specialized skills to work in health-related settings ([Koos & Scheinfeld, 2020](#); [Hashemian et al, 2021](#); [Zarghani et al, 2021](#)).

A high percentage of health sciences librarians will be retiring over the next 10 years, creating a positive job outlook ([Liaison International, 2023](#)). Anecdotally, the co-PIs are frequently contacted by health sciences library employers nationwide requesting graduates to fill their open positions, indicating a demand for health sciences librarians. The co-PIs reviewed the Association of Library and Information Sciences Education (ALISE) 2023 Statistical Reports to identify the current state of health sciences librarianship education in 58 LIS master's programs in the United States and Canada. Just over half (30) of the LIS master's programs offer health sciences librarianship courses, with 14 offering one course and 7 with concentrations in health sciences librarianship. This demonstrates a need to provide robust educational opportunities to create a health sciences librarianship workforce.

**Project Work Plan**

The development and delivery of the online immersive fellowship training program will take place over 17 months. The two co-PIs will be working in collaboration with an Advisory Board (AB) (5 health sciences librarians and 2 members of the target audience); 7 content experts (CE) (6 in health sciences librarianship and 1 in healthcare); and a graduate research assistant (GRA), a student in the UNT DIS M.S. in information science program with a concentration in health sciences librarianship. The health sciences librarians who agreed to serve on the AB are: Daniel Burgard, National Network of Library of Medicine Region 3 & UNT Health Science Center; Andrea Harrow, Univ. of Southern California Keck Medical Center; Michelle Kraft, Cleveland Clinic; Beverly Murphy, Duke Univ.; and Dede Rios, Univ. of Incarnate Word.

To recruit the 20 fellows for the training program, the co-PIs will email the deans/directors of the American Library Association (ALA)-accredited LIS master's programs without health sciences librarianship concentrations with information to share with their students. Also, the training program will be promoted through social media and professional association listservs (e.g. ALA and its related divisions, ALISE, Association for Information Science & Technology (ASIS&T), Medical Library Association (MLA), REFORMA, Special Libraries Association (SLA)) in order to target librarians with less than three years of professional experience.

The AB will select the fellows based on a review of their application, which will require basic demographic information, a curriculum vitae/resume, a paragraph about their career goals, and a personal statement reflecting upon their view of delivering health information services. The fellows will be immersed in an online 9-week training program that consists of weekly 1-to-1.5-hour live meetings with lectures and/or interactive activities (e.g. simulation, role-playing, and virtual reality experiences), reading and discussion through a learning management system (LMS), and three mentoring sessions with AB health sciences librarian members from June 2025 to August 2025. Prior to the training program, fellows will complete a pre-program questionnaire to assess their knowledge of MLA's [Competencies for Lifelong Learning and Professional Success](#) as well as additional skills. They will complete a post-program questionnaire to assess their knowledge following the training. The project team will analyze the quantitative and qualitative data obtained from the questionnaires.

The AB members will participate in developing the outline of the training program; identifying content experts; reviewing content; selecting applicants; mentoring fellows (4 fellows per the 5 AB health sciences librarian members); and reviewing program assessment data. The AB will meet 8 times from September 2024 to September 2025. AB members will participate in the opening and closing of the training program.

The CE will develop and deliver the content for the weekly modules based on the outline created by the co-PIs and AB. Each CE will create and deliver a lecture and/or interactive activities to accomplish the learning outcomes for the module(s) assigned. The co-PIs and CE will meet monthly from their selection to the deployment of the training program. The CE will participate in the opening and closing of the training program, and they will also review program assessment data.

The GRA will support the development of the training program and assist in scheduling meetings; making a project webpage to be housed on the UNT DIS website; creating the fellowship application; developing and distributing marketing materials; designing the online course in the LMS; supporting CE and fellows' technology needs in using the LMS and online conferencing software; building, collecting, and analyzing the pre-program and post-program questionnaires; and developing presentations and publications. The GRA will attend the weekly module meetings in order to enhance their knowledge of health sciences librarianship.

The project will begin on August 1, 2024, and end on December 31, 2025, with the following timeline:

- **August 2024 – October 2024:** Select and hire GRA (co-PIs), develop outline of program content and identify content experts (co-PIs, AB); create application and selection process for the program (co-PIs, GRA); build and launch a project webpage (co-PIs, GRA); develop marketing materials (co-PIs, GRA)
- **November 2024 – January 2025:** Advertise via social media, listservs, email contacts at LIS master's programs, and email contacts within MLA, ALISE, and other professional associations/organizations (co-PIs, GRA); work with content experts on content development (co-PIs)
- **February 2025 - March 2025:** Review of applications and selection of fellows (AB); notify fellows of their selection (co-PIs); work with CE on content development (co-PIs)
- **March 2025 – May 2025:** Work with CE to finalize content (co-PIs); develop pre-program and post-program questionnaires and evaluation materials (co-PIs, GRA); distribute and collect pre-program questionnaire (GRA); develop online course in the LMS and send out meeting invitations for the modules (co-PIs, GRA)
- **June 2025 – August 2025:** Deliver training program; fellows will meet weekly for a total of 9 weeks (co-PIs, AB, CE, GRA); post training program content on project webpage (GRA)
- **September 2025 – December 2025:** Distribute post-program questionnaire and evaluation (co-PIs, GRA); collect, analyze, and share assessment data with AB and CE (co-PIs, GRA); host an online resume and interview clinic for fellows (co-PIs); develop abstract for presentation at MLA and ALISE annual conferences (co-PIs, GRA); prepare manuscripts for publication in the *Journal of the Medical Library Association* and the *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* (co-PIs, GRA); update project webpage with pilot project findings and deposit into UNT Scholarly Works repository (co-PIs, GRA); share availability of training materials with LIS master's programs (co-PIs)

### Project Results

The goal is to develop a sustainable summer fellowship training program. The project results include: 1. a pipeline of individuals who have acquired increased competence in health sciences librarianship; 2. the development of openly accessible training materials to educate health sciences librarians, which could be used by professional associations and/or LIS master's programs to create and/or enhance their courses/curriculum in this area; and 3. the development of a model to educate LIS graduate students and information professionals in a specialty area of librarianship.

### Budget Summary

The total budget for the training program is \$249,190. The budget estimate includes \$39,814 for one GRA's salary and benefits for 17 months; \$15,632 for one GRA's tuition for 17 months; \$74,003 for PI/Co-PI salary and benefits; \$6,000 for PI/Co-PI travel support; \$52,000 (20 @ \$2,600 each) for fellows' stipends; \$9,500 (5 @ \$1,500 for the health sciences librarians, mentoring fellows; 2 @ \$1,000 for the target audience members, not mentoring fellows) for advisory board members' work, \$8,750 (7 @ \$1,250 each) for content experts' work; and \$43,491 for indirect costs.