

## **Collaborative Analysis Liaison Librarians (CALL) (Master's Level Project)**

### **Summary**

Increasing the capacity of the library workforce to keep pace with the changing scholarly environment and building community-centered science and data librarians is a key to economic and societal well-being. A team of researchers at University of Tennessee's School of Information Sciences (UT-SIS) and UT Libraries request \$887,533 (\$435,513 cost shared) for an IMLS Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Master's-level Project Grant, **CALL (Collaborative Analysis Liaison Librarians)**. CALL brings together an interdisciplinary and interagency team with UT-SIS's ALA-accredited master's degree program to educate a cohort of new leaders in library liaison roles with a focus on collaboration with researchers and the library and community engagement with science-focused agencies, and sponsors a summit to share best practices and insights from the curriculum with practicing professionals. CALL aligns with Goal #2 from IMLS' Strategic Plan, "Build Capacity," in particular the objective to "support the recruitment, training, and development of library and museum staff, boards, and volunteers, helping to grow a skilled, professional workforce." As a Community Catalysts project, it will strengthen established agency relationships, foster new collaborations with workplace mentors at participating organizations, and test and share a curriculum to prepare information professionals to work in liaison roles today and into the future.

### **Statement of Broad Need**

Today's researchers are facing large-scale challenges as they try to navigate massive quantities of digital data, work across disciplinary boundaries, and keep pace with the requirements of data management plans and preservation needs. As a result, academic and government librarians are facing rapidly evolving roles. Many librarians in research libraries are adopting a new type of liaison role, in which they take on roles once served by subject specialist librarians, but with a focus on research and engagement rather than outputs or collections. These roles include direct participation in research and building close collaborations. This repositioning of the librarian's role means that libraries need to be proactive with the communities they serve, building collaborations for research and participating directly in research and science. To practice and demonstrate this commitment, librarians must look outward to engage with the community.

Unlike the traditional model used in the past, in which libraries focused on helping researchers capture and access the end products of research, the new liaison model features advanced research participation within and across disciplines throughout the entirety of the research lifecycle. This model requires information professionals who understand how scholars in a particular discipline communicate and share information, how they communicate across disciplines, how to accomplish data management, and how to design and develop systems to support these collaborative structures (Jaguszewski & Williams, 2013). The liaisons must themselves become adept at pooling resources and collaborating with many different types of colleagues across disciplines and organizations, playing the role of the "team builders" (Streib, 2009). Recent research, however, has found that a significant percentage of LIS students feel their MLIS degree did not properly train them in areas of teamwork and research methodology (Day & Szurek, 2018), which are vital knowledge for an information professional serving a liaison role.

A focus on research, community engagement, and assessment to build vital collaborations into the future are key to the CALL project. The University of Tennessee, with its close proximity to major science organizations and successful programs educating future library professionals in science data, team science, UX, and assessment, provides an ideal environment to provide this education and training for a cohort of CALL master's students. By helping LIS students learn to extend and reshape their role through collaboration across disciplines, departments and institutions and identify user needs, CALL can play a pivotal role in helping to shape the liaison librarian of tomorrow.

### **Project Design**

The University of Tennessee's School of Information Sciences and University of Tennessee Library, with the partnership of Oak Ridge National Laboratory, USGS, and the UT Institute of Agriculture Extension, will educate a cohort of 14 future collaborative liaison librarians and build a sustainable curriculum into the future. Each student in the CALL program will be exposed to a combination of hands-on work and educational experiences, resulting in a Master's degree in Information Sciences with a specialization in liaison, research, and community outreach in a variety of science agencies. Each student will be provided with an enhanced curricular experience of a total of 36 graduate credits in Information Sciences and related relevant areas, which will include: 1) core classes in

information environments, information organization, and information access and retrieval and information technology (9 credits); 2) Courses in statistics, research methods, assessment of information agencies, and research participation (12 credits); 3) Courses in information agencies and their role in communities; science information sources or science communication, and science informatics and outreach (9 credits); and 4) Specialized tailored practicum with workplace mentors in community agencies (6 credits).

As the capstone of this curriculum, each student will participate in an invaluable experiential-intensive practicum that sees them closely mentored by our institutional partners. Students will gain first-hand experience with the roles of liaison librarians and participation in agency-focused research as the liaison. Students will also attend a professional conference, where they will be encouraged to present their research.

The University of Tennessee-led team is ideally positioned to lead CALL. PI Wade Bishop; Co-PIs Suzie Allard (UT-SIS) and Carol Tenopir (UT-SIS) and Senior Personnel Peter Fernandez, Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources Librarian at UT Libraries bring demonstrated expertise. Partners and mentors Mike Frame, Chief of Scientific Data Integration and Visualization at USGS, Michael Buschermohle, Interim Assistant Dean and Professor, Agriculture, UT Extension, and Alison Boyer, Chief Scientist at the ORNL Distributed Active Archive Center have worked with UT-SIS on science, data management, and mentoring. These agencies will enhance their collaborations with the SIS program with the PIs to provide recruitment, training, mentorship, and ongoing research support.

### **Diversity Plan**

Attention to diversity is particularly important as CALL prepares future information professionals to step into the highly collaborative roles of liaisons and team builders. Future liaison librarians need to reflect the diversity represented in their academic colleagues and clientele. UT-SIS has an excellent track record of recruiting diverse cohorts for past projects which have succeeded in placing students from different cultural, ethnic, economic, and educational backgrounds into the library and information sciences workforce. Focus will be given to recruiting students from a variety of undergraduate STEM fields.

### **Broad Impact**

The project will have current and lasting significance as we build strategic collaborations and a model for liaison education that will serve as a template for future efforts in this area. CALL will have broad impacts for academic institutions as a whole as future librarians learn ways to engage communities and better position researchers for success in a changing research environment. Through the implementation of project activities and the sharing of the curriculum, a new generation of librarians will have direction and guidance in collaboration skills as they prepare to take their place as dedicated liaison librarians. The insights and curriculum gained from the project will be widely shared at professional meetings and scholarly publications to create an adaptable, sustainable, and broadly implementable program.

### **Budget**

The funds requested from IMLS are \$887,533. An additional \$435,513 will be cost shared. Funds include: 1) Salaries--\$182,640 (\$106,303 cost shared); 2) Fringe--\$55,873 (\$29,739 cost shared); 3) Travel and registration fees--\$28,500; 4) Supplies--\$500; 4) Student support--\$421,887 (\$190,822 cost shared; and 6) Indirect Costs--\$219,133 (\$108,649 cost shared).

### **References**

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