

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Diverse Librarianship Career Training and Education Program

SUMMARY: Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) will develop a training program that introduces 10 high school seniors from East St. Louis Senior High School to careers in librarianship. Over the course of this two-year program, a team of 5 academic librarians will mentor, educate, and train students from diverse and underrepresented minority groups (mostly low-income, African-American) in various aspects of librarianship. The sustainability of this project will leverage the already existing East St. Louis School District 189 Career Technical Education Program, a reoccurring initiative that partners with many local businesses in the region. This strategic collaboration aims to build long-lasting partnerships between SIUE's Lovejoy Library and the East St. Louis community with organizations like East St. Louis Public Library, SIUE East St. Louis Learning Resource Center, Edwardsville Public Library, St. Louis Public Library, Missouri Historical Society, and The State Historical Society of Missouri. The total funds requested from IMLS for this project is \$248,990.27.

STATEMENT OF BROAD NEED: There is a need to familiarize people of diverse backgrounds to the career path of librarianship as early as middle school and high school. As identified in the report, Positioning Library and Information Science Graduate Programs for 21st Century Practice, this proposal addresses the serious lack of diverse representation in library and information science professions. In a review of library science scholarship, we identified several barriers in recruiting and retaining librarians from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds. Among the most frequently cited are the educational achievement gaps as well as systemic challenges such as poverty and racism. There is also a lack of knowledge among library professionals about race, racism, and cultural competencies, which leads to a lack of access to mentors and hands-on library work experiences. Additionally, many low-income students of color may be deterred from seeking positions in the library field because of few paid internships. This proposal aims to address these deficiencies in librarianship.

PROJECT DESIGN: This proposal aims to build long term investment and professional interest through engaging diverse students from the East St. Louis School District 189 Career Technical Education Program.

The goals of the project are to:

- 1) Recruit two cohorts of five high school seniors from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds to work in paid positions in library settings as part of a cooperative education program.
- 2) Partner with library/cultural organizations that are embedded in diverse communities to create sustainable relationships.
- 3) Make a positive, lasting impression on cohort students by providing individualized culturally responsive mentorship and real-life experiences in library/cultural organization settings and encourage them to explore librarianship as a possible career.
- 4) Expose students to networking, professional development, peer learning, and community building opportunities by attending annual ALA conference and participating in a summer institute.
- 5) Develop a curriculum for students and library staff that emphasizes leadership training, racial equity, racial justice, inclusion, and culturally responsive education. Students will also be introduced to a traditional LIS curriculum.

This project will span two years from 2021 – 2023. In August of each year, we will recruit a cohort of 5 high school seniors, matching each student to one of the 5 academic librarians as a mentor. Students will also be placed in a partner organization to work part-time during their senior year. Activities will include: working for the partner organization 24 hours a week for 30 weeks; job-shadowing opportunities at each partner organization; trip to the 2022 & 2023 ALA Annual Conferences; and a culminating event at SIUE Lovejoy Library each summer where cohort students will present on their experiences in the program and apply these experiences in developing future programming and services. SIUE is equipped with the financial and project

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management teams necessary to carry out large-scale, grant funded, community projects. The team will ensure project success and impact by collaborating closely with partners as well as building relationships with cohort students. There will be a mentoring and project plan in place to measure success and assess goals throughout the project timeline.

DIVERSITY PLAN SUMMARY: This proposal aims to recruit low-income African American high school students into librarianship. This program will empower cohort students to visualize themselves in careers where they are underrepresented. This is crucial for low-income African American communities like East St. Louis, Illinois, which has a 60% poverty rate and where high performing students are often siloed into technical education programs or low-paying, low-skilled vocations. By partnering with the East St. Louis School District 189 Career Technical Education Program and library/cultural organizations embedded in diverse communities, we will promote the successful participation of these cohort students and help these organizations recognize top talent from diverse and underrepresented communities.

BROAD IMPACT: This project will help to address recruitment and retention needs of underrepresented groups into librarianship. This will lead to stronger diversity, inclusion, and anti-racist practices in libraries and cultivate high-level investment in communities with diverse populations. By providing support, guidance, mentorship, and engagement, students completing this program will have a pipeline to library jobs with the necessary skills, knowledge, and relevant work-based experience needed to empower them to pursue LIS degrees and library leadership positions. We envision this project as a sustainable model for library cooperative education so other institutions can incorporate high impact practices that include diversity initiatives. We believe that libraries should make a local effort to incorporate librarianship opportunities into existing high school cooperative education programs, which will have a national impact on library recruitment and bring awareness to the profession. The results of this program will be widely disseminated and discussed in subsequent conferences, publications, and workshops.

BUDGET SUMMARY:

Items	Funds Requested
PARTICIPANT SUPPORT: Five (5) high school seniors, per year, will be selected to work in a library or cultural institution through a cooperative education program, attend an on-site summer institute, and attend ALA Annual Conference.	\$15/hour x 24 hours/week for 30 weeks in both years – Totaling \$108,000. Summer institute stipend for both years – Totaling \$8000. Traveling costs for bus passes, ALA Annual Conference, and cultural activities – Totaling \$28,360. Cost for materials and supplies – Totaling \$10,000. In total, \$154,360.
PERSONNEL: <i>Project director</i> (PD): Tammie Busch <i>Co-Project directors</i> (Co-PDs): Lora Del Rio, Elizabeth Kamper, Shelly McDavid, and Simone Williams	Salary for PD and Co-PDs for 2 years: \$37,279.58 Total fringe benefits for personnel: \$10,208.50
TRAVEL: for PD and Co-PDs	Estimated airfares, lodging, subsistence, and conference registrations for both years: \$18,000.
INDIRECT COSTS	Indirect Cost: \$29,142.19. Indirect costs are calculated on the (MTDC) modified total direct at the current federally negotiated rate of 44.5%. Cognizant Agency: DHHS.
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	\$248,990.27