

Title: *High School Push-In Program to Encourage Pursuit of a Career in Library Science*

Type of Grant: Planning Grant

Project Co-Directors: Terrie Wheeler AMLS, Lynne Holden MD & Diana Delgado, MLS

Partners: Weill Cornell Medicine and Mentoring in Medicine

Introduction: This planning grant supports the following Laura Bush 21st Century goal and objective: Recruit, train, develop, and retain a diverse workforce of library and archives professionals. Objective 1.1: Develop or enhance programs specifically to encourage students of diverse and underrepresented backgrounds at the middle school, high school, and postsecondary levels to pursue careers in library and information science.

[The Samuel J Wood Library of Weill Cornell Medicine](#) (WCM) and [Mentoring in Medicine](#) (MIM) respectfully request \$149,965 in IMLS Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program funding for a two-year planning grant that would lay the foundation for a national Library Pathway Program from middle school to career. This grant would support increasing exposure and training of diverse and underrepresented background high school (and in the future middle school) students to the field of medical librarianship through health information literacy in the Community Health Ambassador Program (CHAmP). The project will be sustained by the development of an online toolkit of open educational resources that can be used in-person or virtually.

Statement of Need: The American Association of Health Sciences Librarianship (AAHSL) statistics illustrate that non-white employees ([Figure 1](#)) within our ranks have fallen in the last three years, and we need a concentrated effort to increase people of diverse and underrepresented backgrounds in health sciences librarianship to help decrease health disparities. The United States Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek H. Murthy, states that health misinformation is a serious threat to public health ([43](#)). The CHAmP program will educate high school students to identify misinformation as part of their health literacy training. With the overall racial and ethnic diversity of the country increasing, medical librarians must represent the diverse population we serve in order to promote a healthier and health literate country. At a time when American life expectancy is decreasing health literacy and identifying misinformation is crucial ([45](#)). We are planning to launch the pilot in the Bronx in order to culturally increase health literacy due its poor health outcomes and the relationship of MIM with schools in the community. This grant, if funded, represents a concentrated effort to increase the diversity of health sciences librarianship, who are representative of a broader range of demographic user groups.

Project Justification: Our research found that few programs are implemented at the high school level and none at the middle school level, yet career decisions are made at a young age ([35-40](#)). The dearth of students from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds interested in seeking careers in medical librarianship is alarming. This planning grant aims to develop a high school push-in curriculum that can be used in schools throughout the country to raise students' awareness of and interest in the career of medical librarianship, with a pilot development and implementation in New York City (NYC) schools. The push-in pilot program will be in the Bronx, which has ranked last in all New York counties for crucial health measures, and Harlem ([46](#)). The program aims include: (1) increasing the number of librarians from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds through exposure to this field while in high school, (2) informing youth how to combat misinformation, and (3) teaching reliable health information in order to support improved health literacy in underserved communities

Project Work Plan: CHAmP, a high school push-in program will introduce students to medical librarianship through health literacy project-based learning, teaching them how to access reliable medical and public health information. Augmenting the 15-year successful [MIM curricular template](#) with new information sciences lectures and activities. WCM librarians, with the assistance of a MIM Educator and Youth Engagement Specialist, along with feedback from the advisory board will create a CHAmP Internship curriculum of 15 lectures and course binding projects over the school year. Five lectures will cover information science, health literacy, and misinformation. The following ten lectures will each be based on an organ system and have an information activity for students to complete which will build on the information science skills they learned in the first five modules. After completing all 15 modules, the students should understand how to search, read, and cite medical information, and how to identify reliable public health information from misinformation. The process for creating the new innovative curriculum will include working sessions with the project personnel to identify five information science topics and corresponding age-appropriate activities with feedback from the advisory board.

We will leverage MIM's existing push-in program in two of ten NYC schools, [Mount Saint Michael Academy](#) and [Thurgood Marshall Academy for Learning and Social Change](#), to pilot the new CHAmP Internship curriculum by

implementing it for over 60 students. This exposure to information science constructs will raise their awareness of information science skills with a medical or public health application. Through pre and post-surveys and focus groups we will evaluate the students' experience. Success will be measured by increased awareness of information sciences career options, the ability to distinguish reliable health information from misinformation, and demonstrated health literacy. Results from this evaluation during the first year will drive changes to the curriculum which will be implemented in the second year and detailed in a final report. A CHAmP Internship certificate of completion will be awarded to students who complete the pilot and evaluation. The program will be sustainable and have national reach through the development of the open educational resource toolkit. The dissemination plan for the tool kit will include training of guidance counselors and media specialists, promoting it at conferences, relevant distribution lists, school systems, associations, and libraries.

Diversity Plan: The literature shows that students of diverse and underrepresented backgrounds gravitate towards careers where (1) they see individual role models of similar cultures or backgrounds to theirs, (2) they value a cohort of peers exploring a career together, (3) they show interest in a service profession, and (4) they value personal contacts. This planning grant will incorporate these factors to increase our students' interest in the library science profession. To ensure we are culturally sensitive, we have received the commitment for a national advisory board comprised of health information and library thought leaders in diversity, equity and inclusion including Sandra Franklin, MLS, AHIP, FMLA from Emory University, Shannon Jones, MLS, M.Ed, AHIP from the Medical University of South Carolina, Kawanna Bright, PhD, East Carolina University, Pamela Espinosa de los Monteros, MLIS from Ohio State University, Aidy Weeks, MSLIS, AHIP from the University of Nevada, and Barnaby Nicolas, MSIS, AHIP from New York University Langone Health. This advisory board has agreed to review our curriculum content, approaches, and delivery, making culturally sensitive recommendations. In addition, they will participate as distinguished faculty to be role model minority professionals for the students.

Project Results: Our goal is to eventually build a sustainable Library Pathway Program from middle school to career for students of diverse and underrepresented backgrounds to learn about medical librarianship and be equipped to make career decisions to pursue this field of study. This planning grant will provide a meaningful introduction to medical librarianship for students of diverse and underrepresented backgrounds as part of a high school curriculum both as a push-in concept and as an open educational resource tool kit developed to reach students throughout the country. We are currently in discussions with NY state education leaders who enthusiastically support this innovative project. We hope this pilot will yield the evidence needed to implement this curriculum through many school systems nationally.

Budget Summary: Total 2 year estimated budget: \$149,965

First Year: 1) **salaries/wages** to develop curriculum, \$20,000 2) curriculum evaluation \$10,000 3) MIM Educator, \$5,000 4) MIM Youth Engagement Specialist \$4,000 5) Advisory Board Stipend \$4,500 6) **travel**, \$200 7) **equipment/software**, \$2,500 8) **materials/supplies**, \$1,000.

Second Year: 1) **salaries/wages** to develop open educational resource, \$15,000 2) curriculum evaluation 3) \$7,500, MIM Educator 4) \$5,000 5) Youth Engagement Specialist \$2,500 6) draft final report \$2,100, 7) Advisory Board stipend, \$4,500 8) travel, \$200 9) **equipment/software**, \$4,000 10) **materials/supplies**: \$475. Total direct costs: \$88,475. Total Indirect Costs: \$61,490 (rate of 69.5% for 2022-2023). Grand Total (2 years) \$149,965.

[See Personnel](#)

[See References](#)