

iLead: Preparing Tomorrow's Library Leaders

LB21's Goal 1, Objective 1.3: San Jose State University Research Foundation, submitting on behalf of, PI, Dr. Anthony Chow, SJSU School of Information in collaboration with Dr. Sanda Erdelez, Simmons University School of Information Sciences, proposes a one-year planning grant to design the Information Leadership (iLead) development program. As a national collaboration between LIS educators, state libraries, and national library associations, iLead will identify and curricularize leadership core competencies for librarian professionals, with an emphasis on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). Libraries and information organizations face increasing and rapidly evolving expectations for supporting EDI priorities within their communities, and recent social and health issues ([CBPP, 2022](#)) have raised glaring evidence of gaps within accessibility and inclusion. iLead will help fill these gaps by convening a diverse group of practitioners, educators, and [training experts](#) to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment and to identify core competencies, gaps in current leadership formation, and appropriate pathways for closing those gaps. We anticipate iLead will converge on at least two independent training and professional development learning opportunities – a free Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) and a graduate certificate offered through the [Web-based Information Science Education](#) (WISE) consortium – with a third option for onsite training programs also in consideration. Ultimately, these planning activities will advance the three goals of iLead: 1) Cultivate an accessible, flexible, cost effective, and impactful library leadership program that is informed by LIS-practitioner and educator experience; 2) Strengthen equity, diversity, and inclusion in both the LIS workforce and within the communities that workforce supports; and 3) Establish a better-prepared internal pipeline for tomorrow's library leaders. We request \$115,486.00 in funding.

Project Justification. As the world begins to consider a post-pandemic future, library leaders face a host of complex challenges involving new patterns of life, work, and information access. Such evolving dynamics increasingly demand new expectations for libraries and information organizations and staff, especially as one of the central priorities within our rebuilding society is an increased focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). For example, the draft 2022 ALA accreditation standards place a significant priority on EDI to ensure its significant presence in LIS professional education. As ALA states, *equity* “takes difference into account to ensure a fair process and, ultimately, a fair outcome” ([ALA, 2022](#)); *diversity* is “...recognizing, valuing, and embracing the uniqueness of each individual” (ALA, 2022); and *inclusion* is creating “an environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully; are valued for their distinctive skills, experiences, and perspectives; have equal access to resources and opportunities; and can contribute fully to the organization's success” (ALA, 2022). While it is easy to support such ideals of EDI, it is much more difficult to apply these complex constructs, especially within the different personal and work contexts coinciding with ethnic and cultural differences and worldviews.

We envision iLead will distinguish itself from other leadership programs because it is led by two Schools of Information; offers a free and openly accessible online learning opportunity to anyone; will partner closely with national organizations, BIPOC caucuses, and a global library skills provider; and will maintain strategic partnerships with libraries of all types. While other LIS leadership programs – [ALA Leadership Institute](#), [PaLA Academy of Leadership Studies \(PALS\)](#), the [Dominican University Certificate in Executive Library Leadership](#), and the [University of Rhode Island MLIS Track: Information Equity, Diverse Communities, and Critical Leadership](#) - offer many benefits, iLead's teaming structure, training formats, and priority for expanding EDI to cultivate LIS support for diverse families, groups, and individuals will ensure our project's unique and close alignment between what the field still needs and what iLead offers.

To deliver on iLead's vision, this planning grant will combine a software-aided skills analysis with ALA's Library Leadership and Management Association's [14 foundational competencies](#) to build a holistic curriculum that will be packaged and delivered to LIS professionals to provide leadership development with an EDI emphasis. Our proposed one-year planning collaboration includes San Jose State and Simmons' Schools of Information, the Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL), and the state libraries of Washington and Nevada. Such diversity within our team's ranks will actively support cultivating leaders prepared to address the complex issues facing the field today and into the future. Consequently, the curricula we will design will use and be built from an EDI lens and will yield at least two different levels of training and learning opportunities; while we will allow the collaboration to evolve these training formats, we anticipate offering a free and openly accessible MOOC and a post-baccalaureate graduate certificate, with a two-day in-person training program also under consideration.

Project Work Plan. The project will be led by Co-PIs Drs. Anthony Chow and José Aguiñaga from San Jose State University's School of Information and Dr. Sanda Erdelez, Interim Dean of Simmons' College of Organizational, Computational and Information Sciences – who together will govern vision, collaboration, and deliverable objectives. To support day-to-day efforts, iLead will be managed by two co-directors, Dr. Sue Alman and Martín J Gómez, and will receive collaborative support from an operational steering committee composed of state libraries (with Nevada and Washington confirmed as of this Phase I proposal, and California and Massachusetts likely to join) and national library associations – including the likely participation of the Association of LIS Educators (ALISE) Council of Deans, Directors, and Chairs (DDC) and the Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL). The project will be guided by a national advisory board composed of representatives from a diverse group of participating state and national library associations, including CLA, WLA, NLA, APALA, CALA, REFORMA, AILA, and BCALA. Current strategic library partners, who will assist with both identifying leadership core competencies and recruitment, include the San Francisco Public Library (SFPL) in California and King County Public Library (KCPL) in Washington. Other urban and rural library partners will also be identified in each state by the time of our Phase II proposal.

Project Activities. One Year Only – Task 1: Convene project steering committee – to finalize project plan and meet quarterly to confirm progress (9/23, 12/23, 3/24, and 6/24). Task 2: Finalize national advisory committee (9/23-10/23) with representatives from diverse organizations to avoid embedding bias within EDI training. Task 3: Research existing leadership and EDI programs to identify gaps and synergies (9/23-11/23). Task 4: Identify leadership and EDI core competencies (10/23-12/23). Task 5: Convene national advisory committee to consult on identified/emerging needs (11/23). Task 6: Design curriculum outline with learning outcomes (11/23-2/24). Task 7: Develop iLead MOOC wireframe and specifications ([View RDMLA exemplar](#)). Task 8: Identify and finalize strategic partners for implementation (2/24-4/24). Task 9: Identify and finalize potential coaches and mentors for implementation. Task 10: Prepare implementation grant proposal (2/24-8/24). Task 11: Submit planning activities findings report (8/24). [See Schedule of Completion.](#)

Diversity Plan. The project has been organized to build in diversity at all levels. Firstly, our advisory-, PI-, and project director-level managers all represent different demographics and identities. Secondly, our steering and advisory teams involve national BIPOC organizations as well as library systems representing the unique perspectives of local and regional demographics. Thirdly, our recruited coaches and mentors will represent assorted demographics and identities while also possessing expertise in leadership and EDI, combinations that translate the conceptual to the personal. These built-in perspectives will ensure not only the diversity of the team we include but also the diversity-emphasizing priorities of our entire curriculum and professional training program. With the success of this planning project, its implementation will enhance EDI throughout the current and future LIS workforce by focusing on the competencies of our country's LIS leaders. Such a plan will yield EDI deliverables in the near and long term.

Project Results. This planning project's goals are to 1) Research and identify leadership and EDI core competencies; 2) Design a curriculum outline that specifies measurable learning outcomes; 3) Design an LIS practitioner- and educator-informed accessible, flexible, cost-effective, and impactful library leadership program focused on EDI; and 4) Design iLead MOOC shell. To achieve these goals, a national coalition will identify and design the iLead leadership development program. While we will allow for the efforts of the project to finalize our deliverables' forms based on the needs assessment, we envision delivering a MOOC - a free program that removes traditional barriers such as cost, access, and convenience - a graduate post-baccalaureate certificate, which represents a more traditional and formal professional development opportunity - and, potentially, an in-person program. All three expected programs (1) reflect a diverse and impactful set of learning opportunities that will advance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the LIS workforce, and (2) are sustainable and will continue after the grant period. The benefit to society will be a better-prepared LIS workforce empowered with an EDI lens to serve their communities' diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds and needs (IMLS RFP).

Budget. Cumulative salaries and wages for SJSU senior personnel total \$22,168.00 (for PI Chow, Co-PI Aguiñaga, and co-project director Alman), fringe benefits (\$1,906.00), and travel (\$5,000). Subawards include co-project director Gomez (\$12,500.00); Simmons University, for two faculty salaries, travel, and an instructional designer (\$35,630); and Service Contract for [Skilltype](#) (\$5,000.00), who will develop a plan for large-scale competency analysis. Indirect Cost @ 46.5% (\$33,282.00). **The total funding requested is \$115,486.00.**