



**Director, Folger Institute
Folger Shakespeare Library
Washington, DC**

Folger vision: Human experience comes alive through history, performance, and scholarship in ways that deepen shared insight and connection.

THE SEARCH

The Folger Shakespeare Library (the Folger) seeks a dynamic and inventive scholar-leader to serve as the next Director of the Folger Institute (the Institute). The Institute is committed to a vision of scholarship, specifically the study of early modern humanities, as an engine for intellectual and social impact in the twenty-first century. This leader will connect in-person and virtual visitors with compelling insights and resources that stir both heart and mind as the Folger welcomes a growing and diverse set of audiences. As a leader, the Institute Director will help shape this powerful institutional vision while deepening the Institute's fellowship and academic programming, all in support of new and established forms of scholarship, public engagement, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Reporting to the Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Director of the Institute will define and lead scholarly programs and fellowships while collaborating across the enterprise to strengthen internal partnerships and make new connections with working scholars and the general public.

The Director of the Institute will be an inspiring and creative steward of a robust advanced research program with a half century of history. The new Director will stimulate and support new directions in early modern humanities research, and dramatically expand access to both the sources and products of that research. The Director will bring vision and drive to the delivery of substantive intellectual experiences in collaboration with other Folger programs, attracting and engaging diverse audiences, and building the Institute's legacy of scholarly distinction.

The Institute is one of the largest direct funders of early modern scholarly work and gives researchers access to the world's greatest collection of Shakespeare and related materials, providing peerless support to scholars of all ranks who pursue important questions about the early modern period. In a process of change already underway, the Institute and the Folger as a whole are connecting in new cross-disciplinary ways, both on-site and online. The Folger is a place of personal, scholarly, and artistic inquiry that places Shakespeare and the period in which he lived in dialogue with a changing world. The Institute's signal contribution and opportunity is to help conceive and support research directions and scholars that extend its traditional remit, understanding that the case for studying Shakespeare and the early modern period requires institutions such as the Folger to translate the value of this research in the service of a more diverse, democratic society.

A search committee composed of senior leaders and staff from across the Folger has been formed to spearhead the search for the Institute's next Director. The Folger Shakespeare Library has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to support this consequential recruitment. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to the search firm as noted at the end of this document.

THE FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY

Established in 1932 and given to the American people by founder Henry Clay Folger and his wife Emily Jordan Folger, and with an annual budget of \$21 million, the Folger has the world's third largest collection of English books printed between 1475 and 1640, many in multiple copies. It contains another 29,000 English editions printed between 1641 and 1700, one of the top four such collections in the United States. These collections are supplemented by another 20,000 editions dated between 1701 and 1800 and a wealth of performance history, from a quarter of a million playbills to films, recordings, and stage costumes.

The Folger's Shakespeare materials include 82 copies of 235 existing First Folios of 1623, far and away the largest collection of First Folios anywhere. The Folger also holds 58 copies of the Second Folio, 23 copies of the Third Folio, and 38 copies of the Fourth Folio. Additionally, the Folger holds nearly 200 early modern quartos of Shakespeare plays and the only copy of the first edition of *Titus Andronicus* (1594).

While Shakespeare and sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English books form the core of the Library's holdings, more than 90 percent of the 22,000 linear feet of the collection are occupied by 60,000 handwritten, mostly English, manuscripts, dating from the fifteenth century; rare Renaissance continental books including 450 incunables such as a 1477 edition of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*; and 90,000 prints, drawings, photographs, paintings, and other works of art. Together, this collection constitutes the ultimate resource for exploring the early modern age in the West. Through professional theater, exhibitions, lectures, concerts, family programs, podcasts, and other events, the Folger provides millions of people each year with opportunities to experience the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries.

In partnership with local schools, the Folger is working to revolutionize the way that Shakespeare is taught in classrooms, demonstrating the ways in which the study of his time and his work deepens knowledge and hones skills across academic areas. More than two million teachers and students benefit each year from in-person workshops, lesson plans, webinars, online field trips, and the best-selling Folger Editions of Shakespeare's plays. The Folger is a leader in performance-based education, which helps to build deep reading skills critical to student success.

Located a block from the US Capitol, the Folger's physical presence and ethos are grounded in democratic engagement. The Folger is deeply committed to active participation in challenging conversations that elevate shared humanity and strengthen American democracy.

Henry Clay Folger was an alumnus of Amherst College, and, in 1930, the library was placed in trust of the College. The Folger and its independent Board of Governors highly value the continuing connection to Amherst College, whose Trustees ably manage the endowment of the institution.

THE FOLGER INSTITUTE

The Folger Institute is the scholarly hub of the Folger Shakespeare Library. It serves as an international center for Shakespeare scholarship and the study of the early modern period. Each year the Institute welcomes hundreds of scholars who use the collection to advance knowledge across dozens of fields. Roughly 25 percent of the fellows supported by the Institute are scholars of Shakespeare; the balance range across related fields of interest in early modern humanities.

Founded in 1970, the Institute gathers interdisciplinary communities of scholars for collections-based research. The Institute became its own division at the Folger in 2013 and seeks to incorporate a new model for collaborative research in the humanities. The Institute also shapes research agendas, models best practices, and tests new methods for scholarship.

Through fellowships, innovative scholarly programs and exhibitions, consortium research, Critical Race Conversations, and undergraduate research, the Institute supports the curiosity-driven hunches that bring scholars to the archives for evidence and to the physical gathering spaces at the Folger for discourse and reaction. Together with colleagues across the Folger, the Institute seeks to bring public audiences together with scholarly ones to discover more about the cultures and legacies of the early modern world and the ways in which they continue to be vitally relevant in the twenty-first century.

The Institute's extensive offerings facilitate the concentrated work of reading and writing, and provide access to modern scholarship, digital resources, and collaborative spaces for trial, redirection, and recommitment. The Institute takes seriously the questions that challenge received wisdom, elude easy answers, and open the scope of our understanding of early modernity and how it connects to the world we live in today in all its complexity and conflict. This is a key tenet of the Institute and its programs.

Fellowships

Each year, the Institute hosts 250 to 300 scholars who engage in seminars, workshops, conferences, and symposia. Some 50 short-term and five long-term fellows receive direct funding to pursue discrete research questions, the proposals for which are evaluated through a rigorous peer review process. The robust residential fellowships are now joined by virtual fellowship opportunities. Considerations of access and equity will increasingly come to the fore as policy decisions moving ahead. Folger research fellowships are supported by dedicated endowments, representing individual and foundation support developed over many decades.

Guided by the belief that the inclusion of expansive and diverse intellectual communities animates knowledge creation, the Institute takes seriously the mission to set agendas and standards for research in the humanities. Inclusivity is central to this work, bringing researchers together across career stages, disciplinary boundaries, cultural perspectives, and diversity in all the ways that it manifests in personal experience and identity, from gender and sexual orientation to race, class, and physical ability.

Scholarly Programs and Exhibitions

Scholarly programs and exhibitions gather together diverse scholars at various stages in their academic careers into a dynamic and egalitarian community of practice, supporting both traditional scholarly aims as well as public engagement.

- The [Center for Shakespeare Studies](#) was founded in 1986 with a National Endowment of the Humanities (NEH) grant. The Center's first premise is that no single critical approach, historical perspective, scholarly method, or pedagogical strategy can do justice to Shakespeare's texts and contexts. The Center presents and encourages a wide variety of approaches and voices to its subject.
- [The Center for the History of British Political Thought](#) sponsors programs and publications that have remapped the main patterns of political thought and discourse in a major political culture over three seminal centuries. It was established in 1984 through an NEH grant and sustained with a 1996 endowment from the late Dr. Barbara Taft.
- [Before Farm to Table: Early Modern Foodways and Cultures](#) explored, investigated, debated, consulted, and prepared a rich feast of food for thought—and adaptation and interpretation—of early modern foodways and cultures. Funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation enable the Folger team to traverse the deep histories of foodways from Britain to the Americas. The setting at the Folger Shakespeare Library ensured that rare books and manuscripts were the basis of many findings and puzzles alike.
- [2016's First Folio! Shakespeare's American Tour](#) was curated to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. A collaborative Folger-wide undertaking, the Folger Shakespeare Library sent First Folios to all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and Washington, DC, sending the works of Shakespeare out over 43,000 miles. The culminating exhibition celebrated their return to the Folger and was the largest-ever display of First Folios in a single venue.

Consortium Research

A collaborative endeavor of the Folger and more than 40 universities in the US and abroad, the Folger Institute's Consortium pursues its work through resource sharing, with each member institution contributing to projects that no one of them could accomplish alone. Since 1970, the Consortium, with a history of building institutional cooperation and promoting an extensive program of scholarly activities, has taken a leading role in advancing research and teaching in the humanities. In 1978, this model partnership was honored with an endowment from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation which continues to fund Institute activities. The Institute saw a 93% consortium renewal rate during the pandemic period, which speaks to the rich value such relationships provide the community of scholars.

Critical Race Conversations

Rooted in the Folger-wide commitment to advance racial equity, during the 2020–2021 academic year the Institute hosted a [series of free online sessions](#) to address an expansive range of topics in the field of early modern critical race studies. The Institute provided the framework and platform but turned to scholars

across disciplines and career stages to lead discussions from their own experience and expertise. Featured scholars included those who were writing fuller histories of the transformative early modern period, acknowledging deeper and more complex roots to enduring social challenges, and conducting more inclusive investigations of our contested pasts. Total views are now approaching 25,000. Through these sessions, the Institute aimed to amplify these scholars' voices in support of more equitable research agendas and a more inclusive future.

Undergraduate Research

Through a model poised for broader expansion, each January, a group of undergraduate fellows from Amherst College attends an intensive mini-seminar at the Folger, designed to help students pursue independent research projects and to stimulate their interest in collections-based study.

THE CURRENT MOMENT

The Folger Shakespeare Library closed its physical doors in 2020 to complete a capital transformation of its historic 1932 building. At a total cost of \$80 million, the project, supported by *The Wonder of Will* campaign, will [renovate and expand](#) public space, improve accessibility, and enhance the experience for all who come to the Folger. During this period of closure, the various divisions within the Folger have pivoted to providing virtual content and services for members of the community, scholars, and fellows. The Folger plans to reopen in Fall 2023 with expanded visitor services and a newly integrated and public-facing outlook.

THE ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE FOLGER INSTITUTE

Reporting to the Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Director of the Institute will serve as a key thought partner to the Director, steward the robust and distinctive advanced research program, and open new doors in early modern humanities scholarship. The Director will lead a team of four: the Associate Director for Scholarly Programs, the Associate Director for Fellowships, and two Program Assistants. Working closely with the Folger's Director and other members of the leadership team, they will collaboratively develop the Institute's policies and programs, and manage an annual budget of \$1.4 million. The Institute Director's colleagues across the Folger include: the Chief Financial Officer, the Director of Digital Access, the Director of Collections, the Chief Advancement Officer, the Director of Education, the Director of Programming, and the Director of Human Resources.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

The Institute Director will be the standard bearer for convening and stewarding robust research communities, expanding access to the collections, charting new directions for the Institute, and advancing collaboration across the Folger.

The Institute is a consequential force in humanistic inquiry. As the Folger enters a vibrant new chapter, the overarching charge for the Institute's Director comes in three overlapping parts: The Institute will engage new scholars, will build new partnerships, and, through its active support of cross-disciplinarity

and intellectual experimentation, will expand the definition of scholarly research and the creation of knowledge in the twenty-first century.

To accomplish this charge, the Director will focus on the following key opportunities and challenges:

Cultivate the vitality of research in the humanities

Collections-based research remains core to the Institute's identity and purpose. As the Folger re-opens its doors, the Director will shape a vision and strategy for scholarly programming and fellowships that position the Institute as a hub for scholars of the early modern that is inclusive, cohesive, and centers academic capital on the strength of scholarly inquiry over academic rank. The Institute will remain a vital community of ideas for those who know it well and will welcome new researchers and scholars to the fold. In addition to celebrating a return to in-person research fellowships, the Director will explore ongoing virtual and hybrid engagement with researchers—academic, artistic, and public-facing—to create an expansive, egalitarian, forward-looking vision for humanistic inquiry of the early modern.

Lead and champion One Folger

In guiding the scholarly arm of the Folger, the Director will strengthen the interconnectedness of the intellectual community through a *One Folger* approach to integrating different mission areas of the institution. By identifying strategic points of collaboration where humanities research questions and findings animate programming for the Folger's many audiences, the Director will collaborate with other members of the Folger's leadership team to engage with audiences that are more diverse and more immersed in technology, and who are eager for programming that speaks directly and powerfully to the human experience.

Increase the impact of inclusive humanistic inquiry

As the leader of a significant funder of humanities research, it is vital for the Director to advance efforts to bravely explore the influence and relevance of Shakespeare and other early modern writing and thought through a twenty-first century lens. The Folger's location on Capitol Hill is significant; it carries responsibility and opportunity. In addition to increased engagement with surrounding communities in Washington, DC, the Director will expand virtual partnerships through immersive digital humanities and take the lead on innovation in digital humanities research.

The Director will continue to invest in expansive and inclusive humanities research, cultivate scholarly contacts, and increase the diversity of institutional type among partners. Externally, the Director will serve as the principal liaison with funders, peer organizations, and societies to demonstrate the power of humanistic inquiry in the present and for the future.

Lead and develop a strong team

In an expansive and ambitious organization, priorities and people can be pulled in different directions. The physical dislocation of the past three years from the pandemic and the renovation has strained

interconnectedness. In partnership with the Director of the Folger, the Director of the Institute will attend to creating a shared sense of purpose and strengthening cohesion and connection across the entire enterprise. The Director will cultivate a general sense of transparency, will be attentive to professional development and opportunities for growth, and will emphasize and model the power of close collaboration.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

The ideal candidate will bring many of the following qualifications, professional experiences, and personal attributes:

- The power and breadth of intellect to guide and renew the Institute’s scholarly agenda—a PhD or equivalent is required; scholarship in the early modern period is desirable;
- Outstanding leadership abilities, including strategic vision, superb judgment, financial acumen, and institutional sophistication; a leadership style that builds excitement and emphasizes teamwork, respect, and transparency;
- Strong management skills, including understanding of best practices and effective tactics, excellent organizational and communication skills, experience in change management, and the proven ability to develop and nurture a dedicated and accomplished professional staff;
- A demonstrated track record of advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and access; a vision for strengthening diversity with respect to people, culture, and community;
- Understanding of the functions, practices, and responsibilities of research libraries of specialized materials, and of the opportunities and challenges they present for research, teaching, and public engagement;
- Intellectual curiosity and appreciation of a range of disciplines; demonstrated knowledge of and commitment to research practice and knowledge generation;
- Aptitude and appetite for cultivating, attracting, and stewarding philanthropic support;
- Personal and professional integrity of the highest degree;
- Qualities of character that demonstrate open-mindedness, compassion, self-awareness, courage, sense of humor, and collegiality;
- A deep intrinsic commitment to humanistic inquiry and civic purpose.

TO APPLY

All inquiries, nominations, and applications (including curriculum vitae and one- to three-page letters of interest responding to the objectives outlined above) should be directed in strict confidence to:

Lisa Savereid, Partner
Claire Hennessey, Managing Associate
Debbie Scheibler, Senior Associate

Isaacson Miller, Inc.
www.imsearch.com/8516

The Folger Shakespeare Library is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer and actively works to enhance its diversity.

Please see [the Folger Institute's Values](#) for more information.