



## Senior Vice President of Research and Collections

Linda Hall Library

Kansas City, Missouri

### THE SEARCH

The Linda Hall Library (LHL), a leading independent science research library that brings science, engineering, and technology to life through inspiring curiosity, innovation, and cultural engagement with science, seeks a dynamic and visionary leader to serve as the Senior Vice President of Research and Collections (SVP).

Recognized as one of the world's foremost research libraries devoted to science, engineering, and technology, the Linda Hall Library was established 80 years ago through a bequest from the estates of Herbert and Linda Hall for "the use of the people of Kansas City and the public generally." Through careful stewardship, valuable acquisitions, and meticulous collection management, the Halls' bequest now supports a thriving institution containing more than one million volumes published in 82 languages and dating back to 1472, devoted to a wide range of scientific subjects.

The LHL is embarking on an ambitious new strategic direction that emphasizes its role as a center of discovery and innovation with direct and broad community impact. Most importantly, they are expanding the breadth of the organization to formally include its arboretum into its brand and programmatic strategy, resulting in a new brand, *Linda Hall Library and Arboretum*.

The newly crafted strategic plan reflects a commitment to creating transformative access to--and engagement with--the LHL's resources. The LHL aims to enhance its impact by reaching beyond its physical space, redefining itself as a place where people of all ages can learn, engage with one another, and actively partake in a dialogue about our rapidly changing world.

The SVP will join at a time of innovation and transformation, working closely with senior leadership to leverage the LHL's historic strengths while advancing its contemporary relevance as it engages and informs an expanded public. The SVP will provide strategic leadership to shape the future of the LHL's research, curation, and collection programs. This role involves developing and managing internal research and scholarship initiatives, enhancing the impact of external research fellows, and creatively leveraging the LHL's extensive print, digital, and living collections. Additionally, the SVP will oversee management and development of both print and living collections as a thought leader in scientific research and

interdisciplinary scholarship, championing fundraising and grant opportunities to expand financial support. Perhaps most importantly, the SVP will work with senior leadership to leverage identified collection strengths to build a program of outward-facing research that informs scholarship, collection development, and public engagement.

Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, has been retained to support the LHL's search committee in this effort. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the firm as noted at the end of this document.

## THE LINDA HALL LIBRARY AND ARBORETUM

The Linda Hall Library, (LHL) the world's largest privately owned library of science, engineering, and technology, is recognized internationally for the breadth and depth of its holdings and its renowned History of Science Collection. As one of the leading independent science research libraries in the country, the LHL has embraced a time of transformation, redefining what it means to be a cultural institution of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and reinvigorating their mission to use their collections and other resources to inspire curiosity, innovation, and cultural engagement with science through collecting, education, and interpretation. The LHL was created by a bequest from Herbert Freeland Hall and his wife, Linda Southall Hall, who left their estate and six-million-dollars to establish a "free public library for the use of the people of Kansas City and the public generally." The LHL's first major acquisition was the library of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1946, providing a strong foundation for the collections including journals, conference proceedings, monographs, and more. What began as a magnificent act of civic philanthropy has developed into 1.5 million items in one of the finest print collections of science, technology, engineering, and rare scientific works in the world. With over 10 million pages digitized, the LHL continues to champion accessibility to the collection for researchers, scholars, and the public.

The deep connection to Kansas City and the profound commitment to sharing resources with the local community are hallmarks of the LHL. The LHL's grounds are maintained as an urban arboretum that is open to the public for learning and enjoyment, and the LHL hosts robust, engaging programmatic opportunities and exhibitions dedicated to inspiring scientific curiosity for all visitors. The LHL collects materials in 82 languages and is highly regarded for its role as an international destination for research and scholarship, its support of teachers of STEM and STEAM curricula, and the vast resources it provides to learners of all ages who wish to embark on journeys of scientific exploration. For more information on the history of the LHL and collections, please [explore here](#).

### Current Context

Dr. Eric Dorfman was appointed as President and CEO of the LHL in the summer of 2023 after a national search. President Dorfman brings an illustrious career in higher education, conservation, research, and natural history museum leadership to the LHL. Under President Dorfman's leadership, the LHL has embarked on a new strategic plan that reenvisioned what it means to be a relevant and engaging cultural

institution in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, seamlessly integrating the historical context and reputation of the LHL with a strategy for the future.

## Strategic Plan

The LHL's Strategic Plan for 2025-2027 is a bold and visionary roadmap that reaffirms its commitment to being a beacon of knowledge and innovation in the realm of science. At its core, the plan seeks to deepen humanity's understanding of science and its vital role in shaping our world through an inspiring blend of tradition and modernity. Central to this vision are four priorities: Assets, Influence, Institution, and Sustainability.

**Assets** will be leveraged to grow both physical and digital collections purposefully, ensuring that resources not only enrich education but also foster interdisciplinary research. This approach aims to make scientific knowledge more accessible and engaging for all audiences. The LHL aspires to expand its **Influence**, reaching out locally and globally to forge strategic partnerships that amplify its contributions to culture and science. By enhancing visibility and showcasing unique initiatives, the LHL positions itself as a dynamic hub for collaboration and discovery. The focus on strengthening the **Institution** emphasizes nurturing a skilled workforce and optimizing operations to ensure sustainability and resilience. This holistic approach fosters a vibrant institutional culture where diverse voices thrive, driving forward the mission with vigor and stability. The commitment to **Sustainability** reflects a deep responsibility towards environmental stewardship. By integrating eco-conscious practices into operations and educational programs, the LHL aims to inspire the community to embrace sustainable behaviors, paving the way for a healthier planet.

Explore more about the new strategic plan [here](#).

## ROLE OF THE SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF RESEARCH AND COLLECTIONS

This is not a typical library leadership role. While a respect for, and understanding of, best practices in library leadership are required, the SVP should also possess a bold and entrepreneurial spirit. They should be relentless in asking themselves what more can the institution do, what new audiences it can reach, and what are the most innovative ideas for bringing great content to life. This is a job for the bold.

The Senior Vice President will work closely with the senior leadership team to embrace the priorities of the strategic plan, collaboratively building sustainable and relevant growth. Reporting to the President, the SVP will manage a budget of \$5 million and oversee the library operations, collections development, curatorial, research fellows, and the arboretum teams. In collaboration with senior leadership, the SVP will provide strategic leadership to shape the future of the LHL's research, curation, and collection programs.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

The key opportunities and challenges for the SVP include:

**Enhance the research, curation, and collections programs to redefine what it means to be a cultural institution in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

The SVP will oversee the department's overall contributions to cross-disciplinary projects, actively participating in research and content development for exhibitions, publications, educational programs, and outreach initiatives. The SVP will lead and grow a robust internal research team, guiding and mentoring researchers in maintaining an active stream of publications and research funding. In addition, the role oversees and supports the LHL's fellowship program to maximize its impact. The SVP will work closely with the development team to align research priorities with financial support in an evolving philanthropic landscape, creatively seeking grant support and fundraising potential to secure external funding. Serving as a steward to the existing collections, both living and print, the SVP will focus on best practices in sustainability, accessibility, and preservation as they plan and guide collection care and future collection development. The SVP will develop and articulate an institutional perspective on the future of science and research as it pertains to the strategic priorities of the LHL, including refining a targeted acquisition strategy to grow key collection strengths intentionally. The SVP will look to expand the impact of the LHL's resources and scholarship, leveraging the strengths of the collection to support the ambitions of the strategic plan.

**Lead and manage a diverse and growing team.**

The SVP will provide leadership in a multitude of functional areas, including library services, arboretum management, fellowships, research and scholarship, and curatorial activities. Through integrating the key priorities of the new strategic plan, the SVP will have the opportunity to operationalize efficiencies and build out the team in new and responsive ways to meet Library and community priorities. The Research and Collections department is a diverse team comprised of long-tenured staff in well-established roles, as well as recent hires in newly created positions, which necessitates an eye toward understanding and recognizing existing talents and expertise while also thoughtfully recruiting and onboarding new staff. The SVP will inspire a generosity of spirit when working with the staff, merging insights and ideas of the new strategic direction with longstanding knowledge and institutional history. The SVP will actively engage with staff to find new and creative ways to build cross-collaboration and foster collegiality amongst other departments.

**Strengthen institutional reach and influence through new programmatic opportunities including leading strategy for the development of an arboretum.**

The SVP will champion the President's vision by translating strategic objectives into actionable plans, ensuring alignment, execution, and ongoing assessment across the organization. There is significant opportunity for the SVP to enhance the LHL's relevance and impact within the community and more broadly. The SVP will bridge traditional library practices with innovative programming, fostering public engagement and scientific literacy. The SVP will closely collaborate with other senior leaders, including the Vice President of Programs and Education and the Vice President of Visitor Experience, to create

interdisciplinary educational programs and exhibitions. The SVP will play a crucial role in expanding the LHL's local and global influence, ensuring it becomes a vibrant hub for learning and exploration.

The SVP will partner with the President in developing the strategy and expansion of the arboretum, which is envisioned as a living collection that complements the LHL's print resources and other assets, including building out a team to support this initiative. The SVP will transform the arboretum into a basis for research while enhancing its existing value as a public amenity.

**Further amplify the identity of the LHL and invigorate its reputation locally, regionally, and nationally.**

The SVP will work with senior leadership and staff to further enhance the presence and reputation of the LHL in a local and national context. The SVP will promote a brand for the LHL that builds on existing strengths as well as new programmatic opportunities that inspire patrons to engage with the collection, the library, and the grounds. By actively promoting signature programs and leveraging proximity to the metropolitan hub of Kansas City, the SVP can set the LHL apart from other research libraries in the region and the nation. Enhancing a superb environment of scholarship and orienting the LHL toward focused, meaningful engagement with local, regional, and national communities of patrons, the SVP will further distinguish the LHL as a vibrant, singular, and sought-after cultural experience.

## QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While no one person may embody all, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal qualities:

- PhD in a discipline that intersects the natural and social sciences, such as environmental sociology, environmental anthropology, science and technology studies (STS), environmental history, or a related field. A doctorate in biological sciences, ecology, climate science, botany, or a related subject would also be considered;
- Experience working on a leadership team with the ability to design, execute, and assess strategic plans;
- Demonstrated experience in managing research collections and curatorial teams, with deep knowledge of the history of science, librarianship, or related fields;
- Proven leadership in overseeing and guiding curators and researchers in the stewardship, development, and interpretation of institutional collections;
- Minimum of 7-10 years of experience providing leadership to multi-disciplinary teams;
- Proven track record of research excellence and scholarly publications;
- Experience in writing and delivering engaging popular science content in different formats including in person and virtually;
- Successful history of securing grants;
- Ability to foresee and articulate long-term trends and opportunities, driving innovative strategies for future growth; expertise in predictive modeling and/or future studies;
- Capable of connecting with diverse audiences in an engaging and impactful manner;
- Ability to creatively approach problem-solving and strategic planning to operationalize efficiencies;

- Demonstrates outstanding integrity and professionalism while collaborating effectively with others;
- Ability to navigate dissenting views with kindness and understanding, fostering a positive and respectful work environment;
- Exhibits strong leadership skills with a commitment to high professional standards and accountability.

## COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

This is a permanent, full-time position in Kansas City, Missouri with a salary range of \$175k - \$200 depending on experience.

### Kansas City

A metropolitan city with a population of about two million people, Kansas City is an intersection of arts, culture, innovation, and imagination. The city's ideal location in the heart of the country makes it a thriving national hub for arts and culture. The city is composed of several neighborhoods, including the River Market District in the north, the 18<sup>th</sup> and Vine District in the east, and the Country Club Plaza in the south. Celebrated cultural traditions include Kansas City jazz; theater, as a center of the Vaudevillian Orpheum circuit in the 1920s; the Chiefs and Royals sports franchises; and famous cuisine based on Kansas City-style barbeque, Kansas City strip steak and craft breweries. The Huffington Post ranked Kansas City as the most exciting "it" city in the United States, and it is often described as one of America's most "livable" cities, thanks to its parks, fountains, attractive neighborhoods, and affordable cost of living. Some of the major companies headquartered in the Kansas City region include AMC, American Century, Cerner Corp, Garmin International, H&R Block, Hallmark Cards, Russell Stover, and T-Mobile.

## APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller [website](#). Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Andy Lee, Managing Partner  
Courtney Cabansag, Associate  
Madeline Fitzpatrick, Managing Search Coordinator  
Isaacson, Miller

*At Linda Hall Library, we are committed to fostering a culture of Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI) that reflects the rich tapestry of the global community we serve. We believe that a diverse and inclusive environment enhances the intellectual rigor and cultural vitality of our institution, enriching the experiences of our staff, patrons, and partners. We strive to create a welcoming space where all individuals feel valued and respected. Through our collections, programs, and community engagements, we are dedicated to promoting equity and accessibility. By amplifying varied voices and*

*ensuring universal resource access, we broaden participation and maximize our impact, fostering a more inclusive and enlightened society.*

*The Linda Hall Library is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, non-disqualifying physical or mental disability, national origin, veteran status or any other basis covered by appropriate law. All employment is decided on the basis of qualifications, merit, and business need.*

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*The job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties or responsibilities that are required of the employee. Duties, responsibilities, and activities may change, or new ones may be assigned at any time with or without notice.*

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