Search for the Carl A. Kroch University Librarian

"And the Library, the culmination of all."

– Andrew Dickson White, Co-Founder and first President of Cornell University

THE SEARCH

Cornell University seeks a visionary leader to serve as Carl A. Kroch University Librarian. This is an opportunity to lead a library system ranked 13th in the United States by the Association of Research Libraries at a renowned institution of higher education.

As an Ivy League institution and New York State's land grant university, Cornell embodies academic excellence, experimentation, openness, collaboration, and service to society. The Cornell University Library (CUL) has embraced and supported these aims since the University's founding in 1865; its recent adoption of FOLIO (a reimagined open-source library services platform) in Summer 2021 is a good example of how CUL's pioneering and civic-minded spirit continues to this day. CUL comprises 18 library units, more than 350 employees, and over 9 million volumes (in all forms), including a rapidly expanding digital collection. The annual budget is approximately $60 million.

Reporting to the Provost, who acts as the University's chief academic officer and chief budgeting officer, the University Librarian is a key member of the academic leadership team, partnering with Deans, Vice Provosts and Vice Presidents to advance and support a forward-thinking vision to propel learning, discovery and engagement. Cornell seeks a seasoned professional who thinks with boldness, acts with courage and compassion, and leads with transparency. The University Librarian must possess the professional experience and insight to grasp the strategic, administrative, structural, and financial requirements of a complex academic research library. This individual will be tasked with shepherding the development of an overarching vision for CUL's future activities and commitments; amplifying CUL's impact and visibility on and beyond campus; leading CUL and the Cornell community with respect to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging; strengthening CUL as a workplace as well as a partner and leader in local and global communities; and attracting and maximizing CUL's resources.

A search advisory committee has been formed and Isaacson, Miller, the national executive recruiting firm, has been retained to support the committee. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications can be directed to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.
CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Cornell University was founded in 1865 by Ezra Cornell and Andrew Dickson White. From the outset its purpose was to generate and disseminate contributions in all fields of knowledge, across all disciplines, both theoretical and applied. This ambition was expressed by Ezra Cornell at the official dedication of the University and the inauguration of White in 1868 as the institution's first president: "I would found an institution where any person can find instruction in any study."

Accordingly, Cornell today offers 80 undergraduate majors, more than 120 undergraduate minors, and 102 graduate fields of study, on campuses in Ithaca, New York; New York City; and Doha, Qatar. The University enrolls nearly 15,000 undergraduates and over 8,000 graduate and professional students. Twenty percent of these students are international in origin, representing over 120 countries. Cornell employs some 8,100 staff and 1,600 professorial faculty members in Ithaca and at Cornell Tech, and an additional 5,000 staff and 1,700 faculty members at Weill Cornell Medicine in New York City.

The University's operating budget is approximately $5.2 billion. As of October 2020, its investment portfolio was valued at close to $8 billion. The University is governed by a 64-member Board of Trustees, which includes representatives from the faculty, students, staff, alumni, and New York State. Cornell is one of relatively few institutions in the United States where the campus community directly elects constituent members to its highest governing body. Students are elected to serve two-year terms, while faculty and staff are elected for four-year terms, all as full voting members on the Board.

For more information, visit https://www.cornell.edu/about/.

CORNELL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Cornell University Library has a proud history of notable "firsts." Its first librarian, Daniel Willard Fiske, was also the first director of Cornell University Press, which was the first university press in the United States. CUL was one of the first academic libraries in the nation to serve undergraduate students as well as faculty, setting hours of operation that extended beyond the norms of the day. The University pioneered the use of electricity for lighting the campus in the 1880s, and the library was one of the first in the country to be lit by electricity, allowing it to be open in the evening.

In the twentieth century, CUL was among the first major academic libraries to reclassify to the Library of Congress classification system. In the 1960s and 70s, CUL saw the introduction of computer operations in acquisitions, which established Cornell as a leader in the digital arena. In the 1990s Cornell led in the application of digital imaging technologies to library and archival holdings, and CUL conducted pathbreaking studies in this area, contributing to the use of common standards for document capture, storage, and transmission. By the turn of the century CUL was at the forefront of developments in digital technology—digitization, network access, and preservation—a position it commands to this day. Standards for digitizing library materials that were developed at Cornell have been adopted by organizations around the world, including JSTOR.
Cornell's leadership position among academic libraries is also evident in its early adoption—along with a select few international colleges and universities—of FOLIO (“The Future of Libraries Is Open”), an open-source Library Services Platform (LSP) created to empower libraries to better manage resources, lower systems and support costs, and prioritize their needs through community-driven software development. FOLIO can be distinguished from its LSP predecessors in a number of ways. The project is a collaboration of librarians, developers and vendors linked in a constant feedback loop, using an agile development process to rethink library technology. FOLIO frees CUL from the constraints of legacy technology, particularly by facilitating a future-oriented, library-led development of e-resource management. FOLIO went live at CUL in July 2021, making Cornell the first large research library in the world to migrate to the platform.

The CUL's tradition of forward-thinking has also proven critical to the University's continuous operation during the global pandemic. In 2016, the CUL launched its Cornell University Library Evidence Synthesis Service to meet a need for librarian support for systematic reviews and related methodologies. This service was the first of its kind established to support research outside of medicine (where evidence syntheses first originated) and provides guidance for conducting comprehensive and systematic search of the scholarly literature. In the summer of 2020, CUL librarians applied their expertise to wrangle evidence to help inform President Martha Pollack's decision to invite students back to campus for the fall semester.

A comprehensive enumeration of CUL's points of pride would be very long indeed, but a curated list would no doubt include Cornell's famed rare book and manuscript collections, which date from the founding of the University; one of the largest and most significant collections of Asian historical and literary materials in North America; an internationally recognized selection of materials in veterinary medicine; and depth in the humanities, mathematics, and science collections and libraries.

For more information on the Cornell University Library, visit https://www.library.cornell.edu/.

ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

The current Cornell University Librarian is Gerald R. Beasley, who in April 2021 announced that he would step down when his five-year term ends July 31, 2022. During the 2021-22 academic year, he is focusing on strategic research questions while Senior Vice Provost Judy Appleton joins the Library Executive Group to provide support and guidance.

The University Librarian reports to the Provost, Michael I. Kotlikoff, V.M.D., Ph.D., who is both chief academic officer and chief budgeting officer of the University. One of Provost Kotlikoff’s key initiatives at Cornell is Radical Collaboration, encouraging and enabling faculty to reach across disciplines to combine perspectives to tackle some of society's most complex challenges. He was previously the Austin O. Hooey Dean of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell (2007–2015).

CUL's annual operating budget is approximately $60 million. Its acquisitions budget is $18 million. In 2020-21, against a fundraising goal of $3 million, over $8 million was raised.

CUL's total number of staff is 361 (110 academic and 251 nonacademic employees), including Cornell University Press staff. An outline of the CUL organizational structure can be found here.
The **Library Board** is made up of 12 faculty members, two students, and several ex officio members who help the University Library maintain and promote the welfare of the University Libraries.

The 28-member **Cornell University Library Advisory Council** includes alumni, parents, and friends of CUL.

**KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

The University Librarian will have the opportunity to:

**Develop a forward-thinking vision for CUL.**

CUL is widely admired for the breadth and depth of its collections; its innovative stance with respect to information and digitization; and its willingness to take bold positions on some of the thorniest issues in the academic library landscape. These include (but are not limited to) changing modes of scholarly communication and publishing; the use of data and big data; intellectual ownership; open access, open educational resources, and how to ensure access for those in resource-limited settings; the library vendor ecosystem; and patron privacy.

Its ongoing engagement with these issues means that CUL is poised for the development and execution of an ambitious strategic vision. Projects like FOLIO have helped to lay the foundation for this vision: How should the library maintain and extend access for all? In its enabling of free and open access to knowledge and learning, how can CUL serve as a strategic partner on campus, with the surrounding community, and beyond? What are the effective ways to promote collaboration and discovery in all the disciplines? How can the University's institutional values and mission be best animated through the work of CUL? And how can Cornell's ambitions be matched to CUL's resource base? These questions—and more—should be confronted by the University Librarian, first in a strategic vision, and then in a concrete implementation plan.

**Champion and increase the visibility and impact of CUL.**

Cornell's organizational identity is bold in ideas, but practical in execution: to be successful at the University is to evince ambition on behalf of the institution, and humility on the part of the individual. The University Librarian nevertheless will work with (and within) this culture to champion the work of CUL and its people, develop galvanizing initiatives, and ensure that CUL is seen as a critical driver and enabler for the University's priorities and plans.

**Strengthen diversity, inclusion, and belonging.**

Ezra Cornell's assertion of "... any person ... any study" lies at the heart of the University's core values. The institution has a long tradition of supporting a diverse and inclusive educational environment, which extends to its workforce. A multipronged set of diversity commitments reflects the University's historic position in this arena, as well as its intentions for the present and the future.

The University Librarian will be an active participant and driver in these efforts, both within CUL and throughout the campus. Success in this area will include bolstering the culture within CUL, strengthening diversity—in all its dimensions—in the workforce, and engaging with and leading initiatives to diversify the profession.
Build on and nurture the tradition of engagement, collaboration, shared enterprise, and success of the Library.

Cornell as a university is decentralized, with its colleges and schools enjoying considerable autonomy. As a result, units have enjoyed significant degrees of freedom that have spurred an entrepreneurial spirit throughout campus. It is the responsibility of the deans to make use of this spirit and simultaneously encourage collaboration and partnership. The University Librarian also has this latitude, and also must serve as a catalyzing contributor.

Within CUL, the University Librarian will strike the right balance between departmental innovation and collective coordination, empowering staff while ensuring a unified sense of purpose. The University Librarian will show a passion for understanding the work that takes place across CUL, as well as for the people who do that work. The result will be a culture that is inclusive, appreciative and mutually respectful (to its citizens), energetic in its engagement (with one another as well as pushing outward into the community), and motivating and inspiring (to all).

Manage and oversee Cornell University Library’s financial and human resources.

Cornell’s strategic and operational requirements are significant, and its resources, while impressive, are finite. The University Librarian will raise funds for CUL and its collections and work not just with individual donors but organizational sources of support including foundations, corporations, and government entities.

The University Librarian will also be a compassionate and courageous manager of human as well as financial resources. To promote a healthy workplace and staff retention, the University Librarian will foster a setting where colleagueship, mentorship, and professional growth opportunities are seen and felt.

In managing financial and human resources, when needed, the University Librarian will also have clarity to make difficult decisions—and the ability to construct and communicate a framework of principles that informs those decisions.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The next University Librarian will be a fearless and innovative leader with a record of professional success in the world of research libraries. The University Librarian will welcome collaboration at all levels and possess the drive, creativity, and competence that will inspire those who work in and with the Cornell University Library.

The ideal candidate will possess many of the following skills, qualities, competencies, and personal qualities:

- **Professional experience and knowledge:** Breadth and depth of expertise in both academic research libraries and higher education. Intellectual curiosity for a nuanced understanding of the issues all disciplines face. Enthusiasm, openness, and professionalism to drive partnerships with and service to all constituents across the academy. A proven record of leading an academic research library,
navigating a complex environment, and successfully fundraising with individual, foundation, and corporate donors.

- **Leadership experience:** Demonstrated strategic ambition, with the capacity to craft and execute on a collaborative vision. Boldness and an orientation that embraces risk rather than merely tolerating it. Decisiveness with a will to act, married with openness to feedback and the contributions of others. Institutional sophistication, including the ability to read organizational cultures and articulate the importance of the library. A leadership style that builds excitement through direct dialogue and emphasizes teamwork, mutual respect, and transparency.

- **Demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging:** Evidence of actions and achievements in strengthening all with respect to workplace culture, campus engagement, community engagement, institutional programming, and library priorities for acquisition, cataloguing, and exhibits. The ambition and ability to stake a leadership position in the University and beyond its walls in advancing strategy, tactics, action, and social and organizational change in service to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

- **Managerial experience:** A history of effective, inclusive administrative management in settings comparable to CUL. Demonstrated record of successful stewardship of physical, financial, technological and human resources. Exquisite communication skills--listening skills and expressive skills--that inspire, build trust and confidence, and motivate. Follow-through.

- **Personal qualities:** Commitment to support the mission, develop and implement a vision, and uphold the values of Cornell University. Flexibility, patience, good problem-solving skills, and humility, with a good sense of humor preferred. Positive energy, talent, and enthusiasm for engaging in the life of the campus. Openness, humility, and personal and professional integrity.

**FOR CONSIDERATION**

Questions, nominations, and applications should be submitted electronically and in confidence to:

Anita Tien, Partner
Ellen Egiton, Associate
Isaacson, Miller
http://www.imsearch.com/8070

_Diversity and Inclusion are a part of Cornell University’s heritage. We are a recognized employer and educator valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities. We also recognize a lawful preference in employment practices for Native Americans living on or near Indian reservations._

_Cornell University embraces diversity and seeks candidates who will contribute to a climate that supports students, faculty, and staff of all identities and backgrounds. We strongly encourage individuals from underrepresented and/or marginalized identities to apply._